

Avatar 1531

Chapter 1531: Dependable Scheme

Wind continued to blow, and sand continued to fill the sky.

Han Wenqing's 1v3 wasn't simply out of bravery. Tyranny had chosen this map specifically, and he was taking advantage of it perfectly. Desert Dust moved effortlessly and nimbly compared to his three opponents. From time to time, his attacks would strike the sand, producing a change in the flow of sand. For Happy, it was an enormous hindrance.

Fang Rui and Su Mucheng could rely on their experience to adapt to the flow of sand. However, with Han Wenqing constantly changing the flow, they had to focus much of their efforts onto adapting to the sand beneath them. As for Tang Rou, she was having an even more difficult time. Her experience in Glory was lacking, and had to rely on her reaction speed and hand speed to deal with the sand. The amount of effort she had to put in just to move around was frightening.

As such, Han Wenqing was able to hold them off despite it being a 1v3.

He didn't need to win over his opponents. He just needed to keep them here until his teammates took care of Happy's Little Cold Hands.

Happy obviously understood what Tyranny intended to do. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim continued to pursue Zhang Xinjie's Immovable Rock. He trusted his teammates. If they could get past Han Wenqing and get to An Wenyi, forming a defensive wall for him, An Wenyi could start putting his healing to use. It would become a 4v4 with Happy having the upper hand. Happy would have a healer, while Tyranny would not. What's more, Tyranny's healer would be in a 1v1 against Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu's decision to pursue Zhang Xinjie's Immovable Rock seemed like it had been out of helplessness due to the Sacred Fire. But now, it had become a key chess piece on the board. However, for this chess piece to shine, it needed Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, and Tang Rou to break open the situation.

3v1, break through...

The task given to them didn't seem hard at all. Those who understood Happy's strategy felt amazed at Ye Xiu's decision to target Immovable Rock. To them, it was a godlike play that would turn the tides of the match.

But no one would have expected that the three on Happy would be unable to get past Han Wenqing!

You couldn't blame the three for not trying. Neither of them were playing poorly. The pro players watching the match put themselves in their shoes. Facing Han Wenqing's attacks, none of them felt like they would be able to break out of his blockade easily.

It takes time to adapt to the sand.

They looked at the flow of the sand and how Desert Dust was constantly changing the direction of the flow. They thought to themselves: how would they break through this situation?

It was a habit that pro players had to improve themselves. It was only these types of difficult situations would would lead to this kind of serious thinking.

Time passed.

Dancing Rain would send out a few long-ranged attacks from time to time, but it wasn't enough to affect the assault onto Little Cold Hands by Tyranny's three long-ranged attackers. Happy's three players weren't taking much damage, but An Wenyi was having a rough time. He was being bombarded with spells and bullets from an Elementalist and two Gunners. What's worse, two of these attackers specialized in AoE attacks, making it feel like he had nowhere to run to.

"I don't believe it!!" A message from Fang Rui jumped out. Boundless Sea suddenly took a large step forward. Su Mucheng saw this and had Dancing Ran retreat.

Yes yes yes...

The pro players watching the match nodded their heads. They were taking advantage of the fact that Strikers had very low range. Their weakness was that the area under their control was small. Retreat and go around. It might take more time than going in a straight line, but it was definitely one way to get past him.

Boundless Sea and Dancing Rain didn't only retreat. One went left, while the other went right, so Han Wenqing could only deal with one of them.

But Han Wenqing wasn't troubled at all. He didn't even glance at the two of them. It seemed like he knew how they would respond. His Desert Dust focused solely on Tang Rou's Soft Mist.

The two had previously fought in the group arena. It had been an intense fight. In the end, Tang Rou relied on her health advantage to win over Han Wenqing.

However, in the team competition, this time, Tang Rou was losing.

The map affected her too much. In this environment, Tang Rou had no way to only concentrate on attacking. After a few exchanges, Desert Dust used an Emperor's Fist, pushing Soft Mist ten steps back.

Turn around, sprint!

Desert Dust was ahead of Dancing Rain and Boundless Sea, and he headed straight for Little Cold Hands.

Kill!

His intentions were obvious.

Boundless Sea and Dancing Rain gave chase. Suddenly, a storm of fire rained down on them.

A swap!

Tyranny had made a swap. Han Wenqing's Desert Dust attacked Little Cold Hands, while the three long-ranged attackers targeted Dancing Rain and Boundless Sea.

Blossoms of light and magic explosions swallowed the two of them. Even though Boundless Sea activated Qi Wave Shield as a defensive option, he couldn't completely protect both of them with it. Dancing Rain didn't have any defensive skills.

Breaking out forcefully would be unwise. Su Mucheng could only have Dancing Rain return fire to see if she could create an opening.

"This isn't too bad for Happy," Li Yibo analyzed the recent changes in the fight.

"If this continues, both healers will be in a 1v1, and it'll likely end in a trade: healer for healer," Li Yibo continued.

"I see..." Pan Lin nodded. The broadcast switched over to the fight between Ye Xiu and Zhang Xinjie.

The king of 1v1s against a squishy Cleric. It was obvious who would win. It was simply a matter of time.

The Sacred Fire on Lord Grim had worn off a long time ago. He quickly used several movement skills to close in on Immovable Rock. The two were rather far from the rest of the battle. They were no longer on the sand dune.

Ye Xiu didn't show any mercy, while Zhang Xinjie did his best to survive.

The two Master Tacticians knew where the key to this battle was. It could even be said that this key had been formed because of their clash in tactics.

However, neither of them spared a moment to take a look at the situation over there.

Even against a Cleric, Ye Xiu didn't relax. Because from Immovable Rock's direction of escape, he could see Zhang Xinjie's intention.

Not far ahead was the support zone!

The switching of players was protected by the system. No attacks could interrupt it. If Zhang Xinjie reached there, he could swap with Tyranny's sixth player, Lin Jingyan.

Of course, there was a time restriction on switching players. Players couldn't just keep switching back and forth however they liked. However, just one switch was enough. Tyranny would be able to protect their important healer. As for the other end, Tyranny held the initiative. If Happy couldn't save their healer, and Zhang Xinjie's Immovable Rock was able to escape, it would be disastrous for Happy.

Even if Little Cold Hands was rescued in the end, it wouldn't be a problem for Tyranny. They would certainly retreat back ahead of time and rescue Zhang Xinjie.

Tyranny would not lose out either way. Zhang Xinjie liked safe and reliable plans.

Ye Xiu obviously wasn't going to let him have his way. Lord Grim held onto Immovable Rock tightly, not giving him a chance to run.

Zhang Xinjie obviously couldn't pray that Ye Xiu would make a mistake. He never believed in placing his hopes on luck. He persevered and waited. He was waiting for an opportunity, waiting for an opening when Ye Xiu attacked.

It's here!

Zhang Xinjie was calm and cautious. This sort of personality made it easy for people to mistake him for having low hand speed. However, ever since he had joined the Alliance, he had never fallen out of the top ten in hand speed!

Glory's number one healer was top-tier in reaction speed and hand speed even among pro players.

Charge!

The robed Cleric suddenly used this bold Knight skill.

For spectators familiar with the Glory competitive scene, it wasn't anything novel. Pro characters were meant solely for PvP. As a result, many of their skill choices were different than those who needed to do dungeon quests.

For healers focused on PvP, learning a low-level skill from a Priest class like a Knight was nothing strange. When the opponent closed in, this sort of movement skill was very useful.

Immovable Rock had used Charge when he first tried to escape, but in the end, his movement capabilities couldn't compare to an unspecialized. He was quickly caught. Zhang Xinjie didn't hastily use Charge as soon as he could. He couldn't underestimate Ye Xiu.

Even if it was an instant cast skill, it required the right timing.

He finally found an opportunity. He instantly Charged out like a warrior.

Hua!

As soon as he used Charge, his vision was blocked.

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened in its shield form. Ye Xiu had reacted in the end. The shield was big, and the edges of the shield were able to block the Charge.

Clerics looked amazing when they used Charge. Their weapon was oftentimes a cross. When they used Charge, their cross would float in front of them, radiating with a holy light as if it were guiding the Cleric. Unfortunately, this holy light encountered a shield.

Charge couldn't be completely nulled with a shield. What's more, because of how big the umbrella shield was, it was rather light. In terms of priority, it was considered a weak shield. Even though a Cleric's Charge couldn't compare to a Knight's, it couldn't be completely blocked.

Immovable Rock's Silver weapon, Backlight Cross, shined with white light, pulling Immovable Rock forward.

Lord Grim twisted his body, forcing his center of mass down to stop himself from sliding back.

The distance that Lord Grim slid back was rather unexpected. The terrain was the reason. The two were situated on loose sand. With a push, the sand gave way. The friction from sand couldn't compare to that of solid ground. By the time, Lord Grim's feet had sunk far enough into the sand to create enough resistance to stop the Charge, the skill duration was almost over.

Immovable Rock had pushed farther than expected, but it still wasn't enough to reach the support zone. Suddenly, light burst out from Immovable Rock's Backlight Cross, creating a circle of light. It looked astonishing, but the surface of the sand didn't seem to be affected by it. However, Lord Grim, who was still holding up the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, was directly pushed back several steps by this light.

Paladin skill: Angel's Might!

Chapter 1532: Post Match What-ifs

Paladin skill: Angel's Might.

The skill forced the target back. It ignored Super Armor and resistance from shields.

After the Blue Rain home game against Happy, many analysts had mentioned that if Blue Rain's healer, Xu Jingxi, had used an Angel's Might against Boundless Sea and Steamed Bun Invasion, the outcome of that match would have been very different.

There were always all sorts of what-ifs after a match. And in this match between Happy and Tyranny, there were what-ifs as well, and Angel's Might had once again become a hot topic.

Happy had lost.

The Angel's Might from Zhang Xinjie's Immovable Rock hadn't been the only turning point, but it was the most important one in the team competition. Angel's Might forced Lord Grim back, and Zhang Xinjie was able to take advantage of that opportunity to reach the support zone. By the time Lord Grim was able to recover, his opponent had become Lin Jingyan's Dark Thunder.

Post-match analysis had pointed out that Lord Grim could have theoretically intercepted Immovable Rock before he reached the support zone. But in the end, he was one step too slow.

One reason was that Zhang Xinjie's reaction speed and hand speed weren't slow. Another reason was that perhaps Ye Xiu had gotten old, or perhaps it was because the exhaustion that Tyranny had built up onto Ye Xiu had finally taken effect.

He had been just a hair off. No one could pinpoint the exact reason, not even Ye Xiu himself.

Happy needed to face the reality of it. The outcome of the second round between Happy and Tyranny ended in Happy's defeat.

The two teams had returned back to the starting point. This set would be decided in the third game, and because Tyranny had placed higher than Happy in the regular season, the game would be held in Tyranny's home stadium. However, the home stadium advantage was only limited to additional morale from the home team's fans and income from ticket sales. Neither team had the advantage of choosing the maps in the deciding match. The maps would be chosen randomly, and they would be maps that no Glory player had ever seen before. The Glory game company had created maps specifically for the playoffs. Before these maps were used, no team would have information on them. The maps would be randomly picked from this collection of playoff maps on the day of the match.

It seemed as if neither side had the map advantage. However, Tyranny consisted of experienced old generals. Their ability to adapt to maps was absolutely higher than Happy's rookies.

With the match taking place in Tyranny's home stadium, even though they wouldn't be choosing the maps, the support from the crowd would certainly have a positive effect on their morale.

The break between game two and game three was two days. It would be unwise for Happy to fly to City H and then fly back. As a result, during these two days, Tyranny could adjust their mindsets to face this final deciding game in the environment that they were most familiar with. As for Happy? Their only choice was to slowly digest their recent defeat in this unfamiliar environment.

The night that match ended, in this unfamiliar city and unfamiliar hotel, there were few people on Happy who were able to sleep soundly.

Chen Guo was someone who always worried, and sure enough, she wasn't able to sleep. She rolled around in her bed, wanting to find someone to chat with, but at the same time, she didn't want to bother anyone else. Unable to calm down, she browsed the Internet for three or four hours. Half the time, she was simply staring at a blank page.

There was still one more game left. It could be said that the battle had only just begun. Why did she need to be so nervous?

Chen Guo consoled herself, and then took a look at the page she had just opened. What a coincidence, it was a poll showing their chances in the next game.

Tyranny – 87.3%

Happy – 12.7%

"Fuck!" Chen Guo couldn't help but curse. The poll was too lopsided! The first game had been Happy's home game against Tyranny. At that time, people had favored Tyranny, but in the end, Happy had won. As a result, in Happy's away game against Tyranny, although people still favored Tyranny, the support for Happy had been considerably higher. Why did it suddenly become this lopsided for the third game?

Chen Guo was irritated, thinking that it was unfair. But in her heart, she knew that her uneasiness and worry was because she might be unconsciously thinking the same thing...

Even though half of those three or four hours were her staring blankly at the computer, she had still looked over quite a few comments on their prospects.

Chen Guo had a certain level of ability now. She was no longer the same as before, where she simply believed anything that seemed somewhat reasonable. When she read commentaries online, even when it was by a well-known analyst, she wouldn't blindly believe it. She would think on her own and come up with her own opinion. But the more she looked, the more nervous she became because she agreed with many of these opinions. She couldn't come up with anything to refute them.

Such as the advantage that Tyranny had with the random maps.

Such as Happy having trouble adjusting in an unfamiliar environment.

Such as the blow to Happy's morale after their recent defeat.

These were all valid points. No matter how much Chen Guo didn't want to think about them, they would still be there.

Especially the part about morale. Chen Guo had personally seen the disappointment and listlessness from Happy after the loss.

Everyone in Happy is strong! After a night's rest, they'll be back to normal! Chen Guo kept telling herself this, but she herself couldn't fall asleep.

After browsing the Internet for those three or four hours, she still couldn't sleep. After seeing how big the gap was between the two teams in the poll, she definitely couldn't sleep.

Chen Guo furiously gave a vote for Happy. Nothing changed. The disparity continued to stare back at her.

At this moment, her QQ flashed. Chen Guo checked. It was Ye Xiu.

"You're not going to sleep?" Ye Xiu asked.

"You're not sleeping either." Chen Guo saw that, like herself, Ye Xiu hadn't slept. She wasn't happy at all about it, though – it only made her feel more depressed. In her eyes, Ye Xiu was Happy's unshakeable pillar. No matter what situation they were in, he would never waver. But it looked like even he couldn't sleep. It seemed like the problem was far more grave than she had imagine.

"Oh, I got up to steal veggies," Ye Xiu said**.

"....." Chen Guo was speechless. She had been with the guy for two years. When had he ever cared about veggies?

"Why can't I steal your veggies?" Ye Xiu asked.

Chen Guo was furious. She hadn't taken care of her farm for many years and hadn't harvested her veggies in a long time. Once someone stole your veggies, you wouldn't have any veggies left for anyone else to steal. These were the basics. Did he really think he could trick her, saying that he got up to steal her veggies?

"Go to bed. Everything will be fine," Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo really wanted to ask what he meant by "fine," but in the end, she simply typed out an "Okay."

** (TLN: The author is talking about Happy Farm, which was a very popular farming social network game in China that came out in 2008. You can steal other people's veggies in this game. The most notable clone/rip-off of Happy Farm is FarmVille (released in 2009).

She turned off her computer and went to bed. Chen Guo tossed and turned restlessly. She would go to sleep for a bit and then wake up. Who knew how many times she had woken up during the night? When she got up to take a look at herself in the morning, she had two dark bags under her eyes.

Ah, our morale! Chen Guo thought to herself. How was she supposed to see everyone? Her nervousness and uneasiness were obvious. It might infect the others.

Chen Guo was still feeling gloomy when she heard a knock from the door.

“Who is it?” Chen Guo asked.

“Are you up, Guo Guo?” Tang Rou answered.

Chen Guo opened the door. Tang Rou was standing outside in her pajamas. When Tang Rou saw Chen Guo, she immediately let out a laugh.

“Looks like you didn’t sleep well again,” Tang Rou said.

“Why do you mean again...” Chen Guo mumbled unhappily. It was true, though. Ever since Team Happy had become official, Chen Guo had often lost a lot of sleep. Every night before a match, she would toss and turn, unable to sleep. Whenever Happy won a match, she wouldn’t be able to sleep because she was too excited. Whenever Happy lost a match, she wouldn’t be able to sleep because she was too depressed. Back when she was an Excellent Era fan, it would only happen occasionally. Now that she was completely invested into Happy, from the Challenger League to the playoffs, Chen Guo had countless sleepless nights.

“Hurry up and get ready. Let’s get breakfast!” Tang Rou said.

Chen Guo went to wash her face and asked, “What about everyone else?”

“Ye Xiu told everyone that was up to go to the practice room,” Tang Rou said.

“Why wasn’t I told?” Chen Guo was puzzled.

Tang Rou bent down and picked up a slip of paper from under Chen Guo’s door. She handed it over to Chen Guo for her to take a look.

“A slip of paper? How crude!” Chen Guo looked down on it in disdain.

“He was afraid of disturbing the others!” Tang Rou said.

Chen Guo stared blankly. It was a good method to communicate with them without disturbing anyone. There was no set time either. It was simply whenever you got up.

Chen Guo wasn’t in the mood to try go back to bed. She quickly tidied herself up. She didn’t bother putting on any makeup to hide the bags under her eyes and dragged Tang Rou out the door with her. She wasn’t in the mood to eat breakfast, but since Tang Rou wanted to, she couldn’t just let her starve.

After eating breakfast, the two went to the practice room.

In away games, the home team would provide them practice rooms. The big teams would have practice rooms specifically for away teams. In the early days, when teams sought victory by fair means or foul, teams used to intentionally make the away team practice rooms worse to affect the away team’s practice and mood. Later, the Alliance took charge and eliminated this sort of underhanded move by investigating the practice rooms given to away teams ahead of time. Nowadays, no team would suffer from this sort of practice.

Happy had used Tyranny’s away-team practice room before in the regular season and the previous game. The room was quite nice. With Tyranny’s personality, they would never fall so low as to engage in these types of dirty practices.

When the two arrived at the practice room, Ye Xiu was already there. There was also Su Mucheng, Qiao Yifan, Luo Ji, and An Wenyi. The others weren't there.

Chen Guo looked around. She couldn't tell how they were doing from their expressions, but at the very least, no one had dark circles under their eyes like her.

She casually gave them a greeting. Chen Guo and Tang Rou went to find their seats. No one said anything. Only the sound of keyboard tapping and mouse clicking could be heard. Ye Xiu got up and waved to Tang Rou. "Here's a video I want you to take a look at."

"Sure," Tang Rou nodded her head and opened the video that Ye Xiu sent her. It was a video of Soft Mist showing clips from last night's match. Soon afterwards, Ye Xiu got up from his seat and headed over towards her.

Chapter 1533: Everyone With Their Own Video

Chen Guo's attention immediately shifted to Tang Rou's computer screen. Ye Xiu must have compiled the video last night to help Tang Rou improve.

"How is it?" Ye Xiu went behind Tang Rou and watched the video together with her.

Tang Rou didn't answer back, watching the video carefully. Chen Guo was also thinking, but... even at her skill level, she could tell that the video didn't quite look like the usual analysis clips that Ye Xiu gathered after a match. The angle, distance, and rhythm didn't look right.

Tang Rou's brows were beginning to furrow. It seemed like she was also having trouble understanding what she was watching.

"You're not going to listen to the sound? It'll be better that way!" Ye Xiu advised.

Oh! He recorded his own voice? So that's the case! Ye Xiu had never done that before! Chen Guo suddenly understood. Even though she was curious, she didn't fight over the headphones. She watched as Tang Rou take the headphones and put them on. Her expression became even more puzzled. Then, she stopped looking at the clip and turned her head to look at Ye Xiu.

"How was my music choice? You play music. What do you think?" Ye Xiu was in high spirits.

"Pretty good..."

"Music choice?" Chen Guo was starting to feel puzzled again. Tang Rou removed her headphones and handed them over to Chen Guo. Chen Guo immediately put them on. Hype music started playing as she watched the video...

The video became more fun to watch, but at the same time, it also indicated that this wasn't a video reviewing her mistakes in last night's match. It was a compilation of highlights showing off her skill.

"It's pretty good, right?" Ye Xiu asked Chen Guo for her opinion.

"This was what you were working on all of last night?" Chen Guo asked.

“Yup!” Ye Xiu nodded his head.

“...”

“Amazing, right?”

“Yeah... amazing...” Chen Guo struggled to nod her head. She had hoped that Ye Xiu would give her an explanation, but...”

“Haha,” Ye Xiu laughed and then left.

“Hey hey hey!” Chen Guo couldn’t bear it anymore and caught up to him.

“Hm?”

Ye Xiu dragged Ye Xiu to a corner and lowered her voice: “You spent all of last night making this type of video? What are you planning?”

“I’m planning on showing it to everyone!” Ye Xiu said.

“What’s the point?” Chen Guo asked.

“For them to watch?” Ye Xiu was starting to get confused, seeing Chen Guo’s expression.

“Just to watch, nothing else?”

Ye Xiu thought about it: “Well, there’s music to accompany it, so they can listen too...”

“You... want everyone to watch these videos to raise the team’s morale!” Chen Guo said.

“It’s better than looking at those post-match reviews, no? Weren’t you reading through those all night yesterday?” Ye Xiu said.

Chen Guo wanted to refute it, but she couldn’t. Everyone knew about her habits. There was no point hiding it!

“It’ll liven up the mood!” Ye Xiu said to her.

“...” Chen Guo was speechless.

“Every match brings new possibilities. Whether it’s a win or a loss, the past doesn’t mean anything. During these two days, it wouldn’t be good to try to force anything. In fact, it would probably mess up our original rhythm. Rather than having that happen, it’d be better to give everyone some confidence. We can only keep moving forward,” Ye Xiu began speaking more seriously.

“Why didn’t you just say this to them?” Chen Guo said.

“Because...” Ye Xiu turned his head back, “Not everyone’s up yet.”

“You’re so annoying,” Chen Guo walked away furiously, ignoring Ye Xiu. She returned to her seat and looked at Tang Rou. She had put on her headphones and was watching the video again.

“What do you think?” Chen Guo asked.

“It feels pretty good watching it,” Tang Rou smiled.

The others on Happy arrived at the practice room one after the other. Each of them received their own highlight video. The ones who played last night had clips from last night. Those who hadn't played last night had clips from past matches. The contents of those videos were all highlight clips showing off their skill.

"Wow! Wow! Wow!" Fang Rui watched his highlight video and made a lot of noise, "What a high quality video! I didn't know you had talent in this area."

"I'm only so-so," Ye Xiu replied modestly.

"I'm going to upload it," Fang Rui said. Shortly afterwards, Chen Guo discovered that Fang Rui really had uploaded his highlight video to Glory's most popular video-sharing site. Most of those videos were players trying to show off. A God wanted to squeeze in there too and fight them for the top spot?

The outcome was obvious.

"The Golden Right Hand – The Greatest – The Matchless – The Magnificent Qi Master – Boundless Sea." Such a ridiculous title was eye-catching enough. When people clicked on it, they saw that it was indeed Boundless Sea. It wasn't anything new, though. It consisted of clips from last night's match, and anyone could make this sort of clip. But when everyone saw who had posted the video, they exploded. The uploader was Fang Rui himself. The account had been verified by the site. It was Fang Rui without a doubt!

As a result, it no longer mattered what the contents of the video were. Fang Rui's name alone was enough to make the video trending.

Not long afterwards, it was no longer just that site. The video was uploaded everywhere to all the major video-sharing sites. In some places, there were even news articles that had been published. The widespread opinion was criticism of Fang Rui not using this time to review last night's match, instead using the time to make a highlight video of himself and uploaded it to the Internet to show off. What sort of mentality was that?

What mentality?

Chen Guo didn't know either!

But Wei Chen couldn't endure it anymore, seeing Fang Rui's smug look. He also uploaded his. However, he hadn't played last night. Most of the clips were from past matches, and he also wasn't as popular as Fang Rui, so the video wasn't as popular either. Although his video also caused quite a bit of commotion, it couldn't compare to Fang Rui's.

What is Happy doing?

Even though Wei Chen's video showed off past clips, his video had been uploaded shortly after Fang Rui's. It was a very subtle detail that many people caught onto.

And how could Steamed Bun not join in? Wei Chen called out to him, and Steamed Bun also uploaded his video.

Steamed Bun had been the sixth player in yesterday's team competition. By the time he came out, the match was already over. He didn't make any crazy plays, but even so, he had enough moments to make a beautiful video.

"Another one, another one..."

The Glory community was astonished. They felt like they had grasped Happy's thoughts. Who on Happy would be next?

But the others on Happy weren't the type to blindly join in. They had some fun observing what all the commotion was about, but that was it. Then, they took their own videos and carefully hid them away. Because of their understanding of their teammates, even if they didn't upload them, they couldn't rule out the possibility of those three from doing it for them.

Unfortunately for Luo Ji, by the time he realized it, it was too late.

"Let me help you!" Steamed Bun's devotion to righteousness inspired reverence. He took Luo Ji's video and uploaded it.

"NO!" Luo Ji hastily tried to stop him.

But it was futile to think that Luo Ji could overpower Steamed Bun in real life.

"There's no need to be polite," Steamed Bun blocked Luo Ji with one hand, while uploading Luo Ji's video with the other.

"Sure enough!"

The Glory community had been waiting for Happy's fourth video.

"It's from Bao Rongxing again?" Everyone was slightly surprised, but when they saw the video, they saw that it was Luo Ji's Concealed Light.

Luo Ji hadn't played last night, but he had been the star of the first game with Tyranny. It had given the Alliance quite a bit of trouble. They weren't sure if they should give him MVP of the match in the team competition.

They could give it to him, but he didn't actually have any eye-catching moments in combat. They could choose not to, but that match had been decided by him single-handedly. In the end, the MVP title for the team competition was given to Luo Ji. Without him, Happy would not have won so decisively. This was the reasoning given by the broadcast.

The video showed Luo Ji creating that decisive play in the team competition.

In the lonely depths of the forest, Concealed Light wandered around, ordering his summons around. The bustling scene all around, along with the accompanying music, made for a fun watch.

"Amazing!" Players typed out in the comments below. It had undoubtedly been a brilliant play. There was not a single mistake. The work done by the summons was like a symphony.

The people wanted more. The video-sharing site received a spike in users. Countless people were refreshing for Happy's next video.

But there was none.

The others had hidden away their videos, refusing to let Fang Rui, Wei Chen, or Steamed Bun do as they pleased with them. The video uploads stopped there.

After a night of hard work, this was what he came up with? Seeing Fang Rui and the others pester Qiao Yifan and An Wenyi to upload their videos, Chen Guo continued to be speechless.

But she could at least feel that the team was in a much better mood compared to last night. Everyone was in high spirits as they watched these videos.

Afterwards, now that everyone was up, Ye Xiu said the words that Chen Guo was wondering why he didn't say it. He added another sentence after "We can only keep moving forward."

"Let's watch today's match tonight."

Tonight's match was Samsara versus Tiny Herb. The winner would move onto the finals. But seeing where they would be watching it, Chen Guo was surprised. Ye Xiu said that they were going to watch the match, but he had never mentioned that they would be watching it with Tyranny...

They would soon be going into a fight to the death. Wouldn't it be awkward gathering together now?

Chen Guo felt somewhat uncomfortable and talked very carefully. When she looked at the others on Happy, she saw that the rookies looked somewhat uncomfortable too. It was only Ye Xiu and the other experienced players who were at ease, especially Fang Rui. He was having a good time chatting with his old friend, Lin Jingyan.

Why'd we need to watch it with Tyranny? Chen Guo tried to understand. She felt like there was some purpose to it, but it wasn't convenient to ask Ye Xiu right now.

The match began.

"I'm betting on Samsara winning. Does anyone on Tyranny dare to bet against me?" Wei Chen asked arrogantly.

"We favor Samsara too," Zhang Xinjie replied.

Chapter 1534: A Change in Eras

Samsara, Tiny Herb. These two teams were currently the only two teams in the Alliance with two championships. However, Samsara's two championships were consecutive, more impressive than Tiny Herb's, which were interrupted in between. In addition, they were also on their way to their third consecutive championship, but Tiny Herb? They had already gone two years without anything.

The majority of the current Tiny Herb was no longer the Tiny Herb that had obtained two championships. Their God of Healing, Fang Shiqian, their unassuming yet diligent and reliable Knight, Deng Fusheng, had already left Tiny Herb and Glory.

After Tiny Herb's two championship wins, they went through a reconstruction. People could see that now, Tiny Herb's most important player, Magician Wang Jiexi, had begun the countdown on his time at

Tiny Herb. Many players who debuted in the third season had already retired, and though team aces would usually retire later than normal players, of the Season 3 debuts, Seaside's All-Star level ace Zhao Yang had already retired last year and 301 Degrees' captain Yang Cong had also abdicated from this position as the core of the team after Bai Shu joined. He was clearly getting ready to leave things to his juniors as well.

Wang Jiexi was still a member of Tiny Herb's main roster, an irreplaceable ace player. The most irreplaceable player.

How much longer would Tiny Herb spend depending on Wang Jiexi? Everyone who cared about Tiny Herb cared about this question. Just from onstage performance, it didn't seem like Wang Jiexi had declined in any way, but he was still getting old. There was only one explanation for his stable performance despite the erosion of age: he was over-exerting himself.

Yang Cong, having abdicated from his position of ace, might slowly only play in rotation and become a substitute player if he continued to lower the standards to which he held his own performance. With this pace, he'd still be able to play at decently high level for a good two, maybe even three years.

What about Wang Jiexi?

If he continued the way he was, leading Tiny Herb on this charge to the finish, how long would he be able to last?

Everyone was worried, but they couldn't help but admire him for his spirit and willingness to sacrifice himself for his team. If he was willing to persist, then they were willing to bear witness to what he had left to give and hope this kind of sacrifice could earn him something in return.

However, the obstacle in Wang Jiexi's way, in Tiny Herb's way, was Samsara. The mighty Samsara.

Compared to Tiny Herb, Samsara was a team currently in its prime. Their players had mostly joined in Season 5 and 6, and they were all at the peak age of their pro careers. Even the younger ones, like Sun Xiang, for example, had debuted in Season 7 with experience in weaker teams and powerhouse teams and even the Challenger League before coming to Samsara. Sun Xiang's four years in the pro Glory scene had been even more comprehensive than many veterans.

In Season 8, Samsara beat Blue Rain in the finals.

In Season 9, Samsara struck down Tyranny in the finals.

This season, they met Tiny Herb in the semi-finals.

Samsara was going through these former championship teams one after the other. It seemed like they were using this method to announce to the people of Glory that a new chapter had begun in the Alliance, and Samsara was the author of this new chapter. Though many people were unwilling to accept this, they couldn't deny that Samsara was a strong team.

Take the two teams currently watching this match together.

Tyranny was an old team with old players who refused to leave the stage. They felt an even deeper desire. As for Happy? As a new team with newcomers, they should've been a team of an even newer era than Samsara, but this team just had to have Ye Xiu in it, and Wei Chen, and Su Mucheng from the

Golden Generation, as well as Fang Rui who was from the same generation as Samsara's Zhou Zekai. It was complicated and hard to say what sort of attitude Happy would have for Samsara.

However, for this match between Tiny Herb and Samsara, the two teams didn't hesitate to place their bets on a Samsara victory.

The home team Samsara didn't choose any map with particular strategic value, just something they were more familiar with, and then faced Tiny Herb head on.

Five to three.

Zhou Zekai, the fourth player on Samsara's side, closed the curtains on the group area.

In the following team competition, Samsara used their map advantage, not underestimating their opponent in the slightest.

Zhang Xinjie generally never gave uncertain answers, and therefore very rarely made predictions of matches. However, this time, he gave a very clear cut answer, "Samsara will win."

Yes, Samsara will win.

The situation was already clear enough.

"Any opinions on Samsara? Feel free to tell us; it's not like you'll need it." Ye Xiu smiled.

There was no way that Zhang Xinjie wouldn't get what Ye Xiu was after. He smiled and ignored the question. Behind him, Zhang Jiale leaned over, rebutting Ye Xiu. "How about you talk about your opinion on Samsara."

"They're really good," Ye Xiu said.

"No shit," Zhang Jiale replied.

"Even better than last year," Ye Xiu then added.

Silence.

Last year, Tyranny had fallen to Samsara in the finals. Tyranny's players had been unable to keep up the fight against time. This time? Their abilities had been eroded by yet another year, while Samsara had only grown stronger.

It really was time for a new era to begin.

Even if one of them managed to snipe Samsara this year, no matter if it was Ye Xiu or Tyranny's veterans, they didn't have the power to compete with Samsara further.

Samsara would start anew next year, but what about them? Their era had been one to be left behind.

"Even if we're just a rock they stumble over, we'll make them fall as harshly as we can," Han Wenqing said.

Everyone understood what he meant. They could only make their trip and delay them, but they wouldn't be able to trap them. Today, they could only be that small rock in their way. No matter how stubborn Han Wenqing was, he still had to accept the inevitable.

"Then we'll crush them under our feet." Unexpectedly, someone spoke up from behind Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu turned his head and saw Tang Rou, as well as Steamed Bun, Qiao Yifan, Mo Fan, An Wenyi, Luo Ji...

They weren't from the same era as the veterans. The veterans might be worn-away pebbles, but they weren't. For Ye Xiu and co, this was an ending, but for them, it was only the beginning.

"You're right," Ye Xiu chuckled. "Then, let's lay the best path possible for you!"

"Crush Samsara!" Zhang Jiale added.

"What are you spazzing out about? Your destiny is to be crushed by us," Ye Xiu mocked.

"Fuck!" Zhang Jiale bristled. He got too into it, forgetting for a moment that these guys were fighting to the death with them next.

"Let's go. You guys should go and prepare for your defeat as well!" Ye Xiu said, getting up.

The match wasn't over, but even Zhang Xinjie dared to say the result. There was no more suspense to the match. It had been over for a while now. Ye Xiu led Happy's players out first.

"Is it really okay to let those guys walk off all smug like that?" Zhang Jiale raged. He was very much displeased with the lack of response to Ye Xiu's trash talk.

"If there was any use in trash talking, then why even bother competing with matches?" Han Wenqing said.

"Actually it's because we can't win in trash talk, no?" Lin Jingyan said honestly.

There was a moment of silence.

"Fuck." Shockingly enough, Han Wenqing cursed, unable to say anything against that.

"Hey!" That was when Song Qiyang, attention still on the match, suddenly gave a cry of surprise.

Everyone looked over.

The match that they had thought was set in stone had suddenly rippled. Though in the end it didn't manage to change the final result, but...

"I made too hasty a judgement," Zhang Xinjie decided. That meant that while those ripples made by Tiny Herb's new generation players Liu Xiaobie, Gao Yingjie, and the others didn't manage to turn the tables, it did create the hope of a comeback.

Samsara won, one step closer to their goal of three consecutive championships. Tiny Herb lost, but people unexpectedly saw in this match that Tiny Herb had a future that wasn't as simple as it seemed at first glance. Perhaps it wasn't as people had feared, that Tiny Herb would crumble with Wang Jiexi's departure.

Tomorrow. Everyone had a tomorrow.

For Happy, tomorrow was the last day off before the deciding match of the quarterfinals.

“Well, what must be said must be said.” Happy’s members gathered in the practice room once again in the morning, with Ye Xiu making a speech.

“Never mind all of you, even I’ve never played in the third game of a set before,” Ye Xiu said.

“Neither have I,” Wei Chen added.

“You haven’t even done this for as long as I have!” Fang Rui retorted.

“Shut up, all of you!” Chen Guo yelled.

Silence fell.

“Continue,” Chen Guo directed at Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu let out the breath he had held in, as he was used to thinking that the “shut up” was also directed at him.

“We don’t know the map beforehand, so there’s no way of making arrangements for it. Even the lineup will be decided last minute. So we all have to prepare to be called up at any moment. I want you all to keep that in mind,” Ye Xiu continued.

“Understood.” Everyone nodded.

“We won’t make arrangements today. You should all take time to prepare yourselves however you want. Either way, we need to be in top shape for tomorrow’s match. You heard what we said last night. Since Tyranny’s Han Wenqing has casted Tyranny as a pebble, then we have no choice but to adhere to that and kick them aside,” Ye Xiu said.

Everyone laughed. They had all heard Han Wenqing’s words, but they all knew that this wasn’t a role he had casted Tyranny for, just musing over things from the perspective of a veteran. Ye Xiu had obviously been included as part of the pebble metaphor, but now Ye Xiu had decided to go off from that. It was obviously a joke!

“Kick them aside!!” Steamed Bun cheered.

Happy’s members facepalmed. Okay, so it wasn’t that obvious to some people.

“Our target is the championship. Did anyone take a look at what happened last night after we left?” Ye Xiu asked.

“I saw some comments online and went to finish watching the match,” An Wenyi said. “Tiny Herb almost made a comeback.”

“Oh?” Many of them made noises of surprise. As expected, most of them hadn’t bothered to pay the match any attention after leaving.

“See that? That’s competition. Nothing is certain until the very last moment. Even like last night when we were all certain of a steady victory on Samsara’s side, miracles can still happen,” Ye Xiu said.

“To most people, our victory in the Challenger League was a miracle, and winning the championship will be even more of a miracle. Since they like miracles so much, then we have no choice but to create another miracle for them to witness,” Ye Xiu said.

They all laughed again. Miracles were miracles. He was joking again.

“Let’s create our miracle!” However, this joke gained everyone’s support. Whether out loud, or silently to themselves, they all cheered.

Chapter 1535: Settling the Ten Year Rivalry

The day of the decisive battle between Happy and Tyranny finally arrived, and this showdown was drawing a great deal of attention. The other semifinals match between Samsara and Tiny Herb had already been decided, with Samsara entering the finals. The victor of today’s match would be the the team competing against Samsara for this year’s championship.

Tyranny was the team that had met Samsara in last season’s finals. This season, many people thought that they weren’t doing well, but unexpectedly, having curbed their domineering attitude, they were able to quietly kill their way to this level. The other team, Happy, a new team, a new team that had killed its way here from the Challenger League, was already standing at the doorstep of the finals. Even if their path ended here, this was a sight that had never been witnessed before in Glory history.

Ye Xiu, this name with which everyone was both familiar and not. He had left this stage, but he had not vanished, and now, he led this new team to stand once again before the world’s eyes.

I’m back!

Just like he had said after winning the Challenger League, he had indeed returned here, his sword pointing toward the highest stage. But now, he first needed to conquer this city.

The final match, Tyranny’s home game. There was not an empty seat in sight.

The two teams had only just entered the stadium when the audience rose up in a surging roar, as though this was already the highlight. Tyranny’s fans made use of their numbers advantage, rallying and cheering on their team with vigor. The small bit of noise from Happy’s fans in the away team section was completely smothered.

Even though this was a life-or-death match, the pre-match customs were still the same. The two teams entered, acknowledged the crowd, and then headed toward their respective player areas.

But those who watched these matches often all knew that one person would stay behind at this time.

Ye Xiu!

Regular season, playoffs, he was always Happy’s first player. After the necessary greetings before the match’s start, he usually just stayed onstage, directly going to compete in the first battle.

This time was no different. Ye Xiu once again remained onstage. In that short moment, Happy’s fans proudly burst forth with especially loud cheers.

Ye Xiu, first to battle, the invincible symbol. From the regular season to the playoffs, not a single person had yet managed to refute that.

But just a moment later, the proud cheers of the Happy fans were once again drowned out by the roars of the Tyranny fans. Because this time, Team Tyranny made a tit-for-tat response.

They, too, had a player remaining onstage.

Their captain, Han Wenqing. After avoiding Ye Xiu in the group arena for two matches of this season's playoffs, this time, he avoided no longer, heading straight forward to stand before Ye Xiu.

"Hehe," Ye Xiu chuckled. "If you backed down from this again, that really wouldn't be like you at all."

"Stop talking nonsense," Han Wenqing said.

The two of them turned around, heading in opposite directions. It seemed as though they were walking away from each other, but in reality, they were both stepping toward that battlefield. That battlefield where one of them would have to die.

First match of the group arena: Happy, Ye Xiu, Lord Grim; Tyranny, Han Wenqing, Desert Dust.

The judge was taken aback.

The roster for this third match was decided on the spot, and after deciding, they were supposed to notify this judge.

Now, seeing the actions of Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing, they were undoubtedly the first players of the two teams, but the problem was, neither of them had reported to the judge!

If this process wasn't followed, then strictly speaking, this match between Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing would be invalid.

But these two people were walking so steadfastly toward their own competitor booths, without the slightest sign of turning around.

And the atmosphere of the stadium had truly been ignited.

These ten year opponents, in this match where the fates of their respective teams would be decided, completely and violently collided together at last. To settle these ten years, there was perhaps no scene more perfect than this. So perfect, that even the judge couldn't bring himself to break the atmosphere over a technicality.

Just let it be...

The judge compromised, skipping past this step and treating it as though the two players had already reported to him.

Only now did the giant display screen light up with the names of the first group arena combatants.

Ye Xiu, Han Wenqing!

Even though they had already seen the answer, when these two names were displayed, the crowd couldn't help but become excited once again, especially those old fans who had been following Glory for

many years now. For them, there was simply so much weight behind a showdown between these two names.

“Captain! Destroy him!!” Even though that was the case, the manly men of Tyranny were resolute and determined. They weren’t hoping for this ten year culminating battle to be interesting enough to live up to the two players’ fame or anything. They were most looking forward to seeing their captain’s Desert Dust knock Ye Xiu’s character to the ground in one punch.

Bang bang bang! Bang bang bang!

A number of Tyranny’s fans had brought props to cheer their team on, and they now began drumming them. All sorts of bright sounds mixed together into a cacophony in the stadium. But it didn’t matter what it sounded like, it was all to cheer Han Wenqing on.

The countdown to the battle began, and the system began to randomly select the map. The large question mark, representing the random selection, rotated around and around.

Selected.

Group arena map: Lava Arena.

Because it was a map specially designed by the Glory developers for the playoffs, it didn’t exist in the Glory map. Just from the name, no one was sure what kind of map this was. Now that the map was announced, they had to give some introduction and description of this map. The large display and the projection in the stadium, as well as the broadcast, quickly gave everyone an overview and described some of the map’s features.

The map as a whole was very easy to describe. It was shaped like a tic-tac-toe grid surrounded by a ring, and everywhere else was covered with hot lava. Clearly, this was a map with status effects. Characters that fell into the lava would certainly suffer damage from burns.

The structure could be understood at a glance, the effects could be understood at a glance. There wasn’t much new or strange that could be discussed about this map.

When the characters loaded onto the map, the battle officially began. Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim spawned in the south, Han Wenqing’s Desert Dust in the north. As soon as they entered the map, these two most experienced players in the pro circle looked around, and as soon as they saw the roiling and bubbling lava, they basically understood what this map was about.

The two of them both moved very quickly, but their camera views were in constant motion, observing everything that they passed by. The map seemed as though it could be understood in a glance, but when it came to the details, the length and width of each section of the map could impact any battles that occurred there. The two players were both rapidly gathering all the information that they noticed.

Very soon, the two of them appeared in each other’s sights. There wasn’t much that could serve as an obstacle on this map, so the players’ views were quite unobstructed.

Bang.

Ye Xiu made the first greeting with a gunshot, but at this distance, there was of course no threat. Desert Dust was in fact still outside of Lord Grim's attack range. But in the same moment, Lord Grim was already charging toward where Desert Dust stood.

How could Han Wenqing back down?

He came forth first in the group arena, meeting Ye Xiu head on. Having reached this point, he of course would not retreat.

"I'll use you to test the power of this lava!" Ye Xiu shouted in the chat. Lord Grim opened fire again, and this time, Desert Dust was already within his attack range. But the two characters were separated by lava. A simple jump wasn't enough to cross over. Desert Dust was forced to walk a small semicircle along the path.

It looked like Ye Xiu had controlled Lord Grim thoughtlessly to charge over here, but his final attacking position caused Han Wenqing a great deal of trouble.

Just in this moment, the audience discovered that this map was relatively disadvantageous toward Desert Dust.

Attack range was one part of it, but more important was that the structure of this map, understandable in a glance, allowed Ye Xiu to easily anticipate Han Wenqing's movements. If he wanted to attack Ye Xiu's Lord Grim, there was only that one path he could choose to take. Taking any other paths would be like circling around the other side of the planet to reach his destination.

And in this kind of high-level confrontation, if your movements were seen through, then you would be suppressed.

So as Desert Dust took this roundabout path, he was stung again and again by Lord Grim's long ranged attacks. Even worse, even if Desert Dust managed to make his way through the attacks along this road, Lord Grim certainly wouldn't wait around for him to close in.

But Han Wenqing wouldn't back down just like that, nor would Tyranny's fans waver at seeing this kind of difficulty.

The cheers became louder, Desert Dust's movement became faster!

It was the final match between them, did he have anything to hold back? No! After saving strength for an entire season, if he didn't let it out now, he would have no more chance.

Lord Grim's long ranged attacks came from the Gunner and Mage classes – gunshots, flashes. But ultimately, they were unable to stop Desert Dust's advance.

As expected, Ye Xiu didn't stand around waiting for Han Wenqing. Seeing Desert Dust approach one step after another, Lord Grim began to back away.

Attack and retreat, using the map, Ye Xiu began kiting Han Wenqing.

Han Wenqing still did not retreat. He focused everything on Lord Grim's attacks, dodged, and then advanced.

One step, two steps...

He was closing in.

Whoosh!

Lord Grim suddenly pulled a flash of light, Shining Cut! He used this Assassin skill to swiftly move, instantly pulling apart the distance between their characters again.

Those who were keeping track of the distance instantly felt their hearts shatter. And then they thought about how many such skills Lord Grim had, and they thought about how the cooldowns for these skills weren't very long, enough to be used nonstop, and their shattered hearts felt like shattering once again.

But Han Wenqing didn't care. It was as though he didn't understand this principle. He stubbornly, persistently, continued to chase.

Ordinary movement, with the occasional Swift Run. Aside from this, there was the Reinforced Iron Bones that could allow him to withstand attacks, but he did not use it. There were the skills that could give him similar bursts of speed like Soaring Tiger, but he did not use those.

Han Wenqing was chasing him tightly, but at the same time, he was saving up, and also at the same time, he didn't forget to study his surroundings.

The general setting was just this. Now, it was the details of the map that would decide many things.

This was a chase that was extremely disadvantageous for him, but Ye Xiu didn't have it easy, either. In this life-or-death match, both of them understood very clearly the consequences of a single misstep.

Chapter 1536: An Opportunity Not Seized

The roiling heat from the lava caused the outlines of the two characters to appear hazy.

"Han Wenqing's in a shaky situation!" Commentator Pan Lin exclaimed, after seeing Desert Dust repeatedly close in, only for Lord Grim to use a movement skill to pull away again.

"But he hasn't been shaken off," Li Yibo said calmly from the side.

This thrilling fight had put Pan Lin in an excited state, commentating almost nonstop. But Li Yibo, during this intense match, was in fact uncommonly calm.

This match, for him, was also filled with many memories!

As first-generation players, Ye Xiu and Han Wenqing's rivalry was a symbol of their time. In that era, the Alliance had just begun, and many technical and tactical aspects of Glory were still in their formative stages. In that setting, individual strength would become the deciding factor of a match. And Li Yibo, as a member of Team Tyranny, could be said to have completely experienced this symbol of that era. To this day, he still remembered when Excellent Era had won their third consecutive championship, the helplessness and despair that Ye Xiu's domination had brought upon them.

Everyone in the team had felt discouraged and frustrated. But their captain Han Wenqing had never bowed down. Even if he only had a sliver of health remaining, he was the kind of person who would fight relentlessly until the very end.

Scene after scene from those old seasons played through Li Yibo's mind. In comparison, he truly didn't feel that Desert Dust closing in or widening the gap was any problem. Han Wenqing had faced far more despairing situations in the past without wavering.

It was just as Li Yibo had calmly said to Pan Lin: He still hadn't been shaken off!

"Ah, chance!" Pan Lin suddenly shouted.

The expanse of lava to the right of these two characters came to an end and suddenly narrowed. Lord Grim was sticking to the side, looking like he wanted to turn right, but at this moment if Desert Dust suddenly used a jumping skill, it should be strong enough for him to directly leap across the lava to arrive in front of Lord Grim.

It was indeed a chance! Li Yibo's eyes lit up.

But to everyone's surprise, although Lord Grim looked like he was about to turn right, after taking one step, he suddenly began to Swift Run left.

"Ah!" Pan Lin already let out a shout of surprise. If Desert Dust had leapt like he thought he would, never mind catching Lord Grim, he would simply be a thousand miles off.

But Desert Dust hadn't moved, as though Han Wenqing hadn't detected that chance at all.

"Hehe, it was a feint, but unfortunately he didn't fool Han Wenqing," Li Yibo said, as though nothing had happened. With regard to this match, his position couldn't be clearer. He resolutely supported Tyranny's Han Wenqing! But he couldn't let it show too obviously, so he pretended to be very calm.

"Right now, Lord Grim is heading left, Desert Dust continues to chase him. But Coach Li! If Han Wenqing had seen through Ye Xiu's feint, then he should have also seen that Ye Xiu was preparing to control Lord Grim to move left, right? Then why didn't he make any anticipating movements? If he had, then he'd be able to catch him, right?" Pan Lin asked.

Li Yibo hesitated.

That was right, why hadn't he? Desert Dust also had a few explosive instant-movement skills, and Han Wenqing had been saving them all this time. But just now had been a pretty good opportunity. Why hadn't he used them?

"There was a chance, but it still wasn't good enough..." At this time, Yu Wenzhou was also responding to Huang Shaotian's message.

"This still wasn't good enough? I'd say it was pretty perfect!" But this time, Huang Shaotian disagreed with Yu Wenzhou's analysis. His earlier message had been just like what Pan Lin had said, about how Han Wenqing could have made a predictive movement in that moment.

"To you, maybe it was enough, but for him it may not have been enough." This was what Yu Wenzhou replied.

Huang Shaotian paused, understanding Yu Wenzhou's meaning.

Huang Shaotian hadn't had a firm grasp of that opportunity either, but a 50% chance of success was good enough for him to take action. In desperate times, 10% was good enough too.

But for Han Wenqing? He was no longer at peak performance, and judging from his attitude and choices over the course of this season, he was very aware of this fact as well. A few years ago, if faced with that opportunity, Han Wenqing probably would have controlled Desert Dust forward without a second thought. He might have even been fooled by Ye Xiu's feint. But now, a false action, or an opportunity with a lower chance of success, wouldn't spur him into action lightly.

He had changed, but in reality he wasn't actually beginning to retreat or anything. He was just valuing his own drive and vigor, because he knew that he no longer had the ability to repeatedly enter a high-intensity explosive state.

While Yu Wenzhou and Huang Shaotian discussed Han Wenqing's choice from the perspective of opportunity, a discussion amongst the players of another team took it a step further.

"He didn't seize that chance, but he established a stronger suppressive atmosphere," said Jiang Botao of Samsara.

Samsara had already entered the finals. The outcome of this match would tell them their opponent. Everyone on the team was curious about the result, and they were now gathered in front of the television to watch this match.

"From the performance, it looks like Ye Xiu has the advantage, but in reality he doesn't have the initiative, hm?" Jiang Botao said, consulting the teammate next to him.

"Mm." Zhou Zekai nodded.

"If it continues like this..." Because he also didn't fully understand the map, Sun Xiang couldn't make any particularly insightful predictions either.

"Who do you think will win?" Jiang Botao, smiling, suddenly asked Sun Xiang.

Sun Xiang was silent for a while, before opening his mouth. "I hope Ye Xiu wins."

"Understood." Jiang Botao continued to smile. After a year on the same team, he of course understood Sun Xiang's personality. He hoped that Ye Xiu would win, and he hoped that Happy would win, but it definitely wasn't because of any feelings of attachment toward Excellent Era or One Autumn Leaf. He hoped for this only because of last year's failure in the Challenger League.

He received One Autumn Leaf from Ye Xiu, only for Ye Xiu to turn around with a new character, pull together a new team, and ferociously defeat him. Never mind an arrogant and proud youth like him, anyone in his place would feel incomparably depressed.

Even though Samsara had won twice against Happy during the regular season, those matches didn't have the decisive finality that the Challenger League finals or the League playoffs did. Sun Xiang's frustration and depression couldn't be soothed by those two victories. He needed a more decisive stage.

The playoffs!

Seeing that Happy had the chance to make it to the playoffs, Sun Xiang was genuinely happy. The reason for this was, naturally, that he wanted to meet them on this stage. And then, when the final rankings and the playoffs bracket came out, it was revealed that there was only one chance for the two teams to meet – in the finals.

For Sun Xiang, this stage couldn't be more perfect. It was a hundred times more decisive than the Challenger League stage had been. But Sun Xiang was still a bit worried for Happy, fearing that they wouldn't be able to enter the finals.

But now, Happy, Tyranny, this last match's outcome would determine who would meet Samsara in the playoffs. Out of all of Samsara, Sun Xiang was the most concerned about this. Half an hour before the match began, he was already waiting in front of the television.

"Turn around and face him! What are you running for!" Sun Xiang was much more immersed in the battle than anyone else.

But Ye Xiu's Lord Grim still didn't turn around.

The chase continued for another round, and a fork appeared up ahead once again. This was already the end of the map. Straight ahead was lava, so there was no way to continue forward. Only left, or right.

All this time, it had looked like Desert Dust was Ye Xiu's kite, only responding to his attacks. But at this moment, he suddenly made a movement before any attack came.

Desert Dust suddenly headed left.

Just as everyone was wondering whether it was intentional, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was already moving right.

A mistake in prediction?

Even as everyone wondered this, Desert Dust was already nimbly switching directions to head right. But it looked like the path he took wasn't headed directly for Lord Grim. It seemed to be slanted, leaving him some space.

Positioning himself to force Lord Grim toward the right!

The experts all saw through it.

Slanting leftward was a predictive move against the scenario that the opponent would go left. Ye Xiu of course could very easily not go left. And Han Wenqing didn't care that his prediction wasn't correct, because his goal was simply to force Ye Xiu to go right.

What was the point of going right?

Turning right here meant sticking to the very south of this map. Not far from here was the position where Desert Dust had spawned. That was to say, that area was the area that Han Wenqing had studied at the very start of the match, before the two sides had met. And to Ye Xiu, that area was a foreign area he had just stumbled into.

The difference was between having glanced at it once before, and only beginning to glance at it now.

Would victory be determined by such a small difference?

Everyone watched as Ye Xiu's Lord Grim headed toward the area that Han Wenqing had seen before. But then, he suddenly moved horizontally to the right, straight toward the lava!

What was he doing?

Everyone was only wondering, but Han Wenqing's actions were even faster than their questions.

Desert Dust also immediately cut toward the lava.

Lord Grim jumped up...

Suicide? Of course not. In midair, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened, the spokes of the umbrella unfolded, Rotor Wing!

Lord Grim directly flew across the lava, heading toward the path that he had taken here.

What about Han Wenqing? He could turn right and see the path he had taken, but this lava in the middle wasn't something he could cross just with a jump. Ye Xiu had clearly waited for him to reach this position before taking that action.

What was more awkward was that Han Wenqing couldn't control Desert Dust to immediately turn and run after him. Ye Xiu had full control over his flight path with the Rotor Wing, so if Han Wenqing tried to seize a position, Ye Xiu could simply turn around in midair. Lord Grim jumped first, then activated the skill, giving him many possible positions to choose and leaving himself this room to breathe.

Just a bit of maneuvering, with so much hidden within. The audience couldn't grasp any of this in this moment, but all of the experts understood the difficult situation Han Wenqing was currently in.

But the more difficult the situation, the faster Han Wenqing made his decision. Desert Dust resolutely rushed forward.

Had he judged where Lord Grim would fly? But after seeing him move like this, Ye Xiu could simply control Lord Grim to fly back! But just at that moment, Desert Dust's legs left the ground. He had actually jumped...

Was he crazy?

Everyone was shocked. It seemed as though Han Wenqing wanted to directly attack Lord Grim in midair, but no matter what, a Striker couldn't jump that kind of distance, right?

And this jump, wasn't it a bit short? It definitely wasn't at the limit...

Wait a second. That thing sticking out of the bubbling lava, what was that?

Chapter 1537: Achilles' Heel

The audience didn't have time to check closely what the thing floating in the lava was when Desert Dust dropped down. The lava splashed like water where his foot landed. It was only then did they notice that he had stepped onto that thing.

His character didn't sink. This time, everyone could see clearly that the thing floating in the lava was a small rock, which could be used as a foothold.

With how fast the lava and hot air flowed, it was a wonder how Han Wenqing had discovered this hidden foothold. Nevertheless, they knew that once he landed on the foothold, he would be able to act again.

Soaring Tiger!

The force from the kick pushed the lava aside as Desert Dust flew into the air.

Soaring Tiger didn't allow him to fly, but it was still a powerful jump. Han Wenqing adjusted his jumping angle well. Desert Dust was like an artillery shell as he headed straight for Lord Grim, who had activated Rotor Wings. After they crashed into each other, where would they land? Perhaps even Han Wenqing didn't know. He was only certain of one thing. Whether he fell into the lava or the water, he would definitely be able to drag Lord Grim together with him.

Not good!

Ye Xiu felt a bad premonition when he saw Desert Dust leap towards the lava. He didn't think the old rival of his was discouraged to the point of wanting to kill himself.

During Han Wenqing's first jump, Ye Xiu had anticipated where he would land. Even though he wasn't able to see the landing spot, Ye Xiu was certain that Han Wenqing had found a place for him to jump again from.

Soaring Tiger!

Ye Xiu had made the prediction the moment Han Wenqing acted. By the time he realized that Han Wenqing would use this skill, Desert Dust had already landed on that small rock and used Soaring Tiger to rocket towards Lord Grim.

However, this prediction was enough for Ye Xiu to react. Life and death in a match depended on these small moments.

Lord Grim dropped down.

An unexpected response. Forward, backwards, left, right, up, the audience had helped imagine the different scenarios for Ye Xiu. However, no one had expected him to go down. From everyone's perspective, by moving down, Lord Grim would be exactly where Han Wenqing wanted him to be.

Maybe it was precisely this reason that Han Wenqing would be caught off guard? Some people thought of themselves as clever coming up with this reasoning. For example, Pan Lin. He was just about to say his thoughts, but the changes in the battle were too fast. There was no time for him to interject.

Boom boom boom!

Explosions suddenly sounded from in the air.

Lord Grim had retracted his Rotor Wings. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was held in front of him, sending Anti-Tank Missiles towards the incoming Desert Dust.

Desert Dust had no way to dodge these missiles from in the air. Soaring Tiger was still being used though, so his character wouldn't be knocked back by the explosions.

Desert Dust might not be knocked back, but Lord Grim would.

Using the recoil from the Anti-Tank Missiles, Lord Grim dropped even faster diagonally downwards.

The lava was still beneath him. However, Lord Grim had plenty of skills in his arsenal. He had methods to move around in the air and get himself to shore.

As for Desert Dust? Soaring Tiger had missed, and he had no way to move around in the air. It seemed like Han Wenqing could only watch as his Desert Dust fell into the lava.

Han Wenqing's play had been too risky!

Countless people sighed. However, the two players on stage didn't think it was over.

Han Wenqing hadn't given up, and Ye Xiu didn't think that he was safe yet.

Amidst the smoke and fire from the explosions, Desert Dust dropped down at a speed far faster than Lord Grim.

Thousand Ton Drop!

Han Wenqing had unexpectedly used this skill, and what he wanted was to fall down faster. When he reached Lord Grim's height, he cancelled Thousand Ton Drop.

Launching Kick!

Desert Dust moved sideways in the air, his legs kicking out.

He was falling directly downwards, while Lord Grim was falling down diagonally. There was quite a bit of distance between them. However, Han Wenqing reacted extremely fast. The moment the Anti-Tank Missiles were fired, he had predicted that Lord Grim would fall down diagonally. It was at that moment he used Thousand Ton Drop.

One was moving diagonally downwards, while the other was moving straight downwards. The two characters had begun moving at slightly different times. However, Thousand Ton Drop was faster. In the blink of an eye, Han Wenqing had caught up, and Lord Grim was within Launching Kick's range. Even if unspecialized characters had plenty of ways to move around in the air, Han Wenqing's response had been too fast. Ye Xiu had no time to use another skill!

In that instant, Ye Xiu could only have Lord Grim raise his umbrella above him. He had to at least try to parry it. By parrying it, he could keep control of his character. If he was directly hit by Desert Dust's Launching Kick, Lord Grim would be sent flying towards wherever Han Wenqing wanted.

Their attacks met in the air.

Ye Xiu watched the approaching attack carefully. Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was held at a certain angle, ready to use the force from the kick to move where he wanted to.

But Desert Dust had the same idea too. When his Launching Kick landed on the umbrella, Lord Grim used the force to fall down even faster, while Desert Dust twisted his body in the air, using his other leg to kick. Whirlwind Kick!

Combo!

Despite being in the air, Han Wenqing was able to complete a two-hit combo. His Launching Kick landed on the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella followed by a Whirlwind Kick. He was still falling down too, and he was even able to move horizontally again in the air...

Everyone was struck dumb. How many inputs had been needed for him to borrow the force from Launching Kick to position his Whirlwind Kick?

Pa!

This time, the sound of a kick hitting flesh could be heard.

It hit?

Tyranny's fans were feeling excited, but when they took another look...

No!

Lord Grim had suddenly swung his arm. In his hand was part of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. He had actually been able to parry Desert Dust's Whirlwind Kick.

This is?

The spectators weren't able to tell what skill Lord Grim had used. It wasn't possible for the parry to be from a normal attack. Whirlwind Kick had a higher priority than normal attacks, and Lord Grim would have certainly been sent flying.

Pa pa pa pa pa...

The audience kept hearing the sound of punches and kicks hitting flesh again and again.

Desert Dust had the upper hand?

No!

It wasn't only Desert Dust punching and kicking. Lord Grim's unspecialized was also using Fighter skills to contend with Desert Dust at this close distance.

It was close combat at a distance that couldn't get any closer.

There was almost zero distance between them. Let alone a sword, even a dagger would be too long. Only punches and kicks could be used at this distance.

Tyranny's fans felt exhilarated.

If they fought like this, how could their captain not have the advantage? It was true that unspecialized characters had Fighter skills, but how could they compare to a true Striker? What's more, Han Wenqing

had immersed himself with this class for ten years. At close combat, if he said he was second, who dared to say they were first?

Not even Ye Xiu dared to!

This time, they were right. Ye Xiu was proficient at all classes, but even so, his skill in this area couldn't compare to Han Wenqing, who had been perfecting it for ten years. In addition, there was a difference in their classes. Strikers were specialized in close combat. Desert Dust was outfitted in equipment specifically to buff his close combat capabilities. As for Lord Grim? Even though he had a full set of Silver equipment, it was more all-rounded.

So that's the case!

The eyes of the various pro players watching the match suddenly lit up.

Ye Xiu was very well-rounded. When he came out of retirement with his unspecialized, Lord Grim, he was displaying his knowledge as the Glory Textbook to the limit. Everyone felt their heads hurt facing him because no one could keep up with the constantly changing unspecialized. As a result, they would often be on the defensive.

However, Han Wenqing, Ye Xiu's rival of ten years, was now forcefully suppressing Ye Xiu because he wasn't competing with Ye Xiu all-around, or trying to figure out the constantly changing unspecialized. He was pulling Ye Xiu into his domain.

By limiting the fight to close combat, even if Ye Xiu was proficient in all areas, many of his unspecialized skills couldn't be used in these conditions. He could only use the same method of fighting as Han Wenqing to compete. His fundamentals at close combat may be exceptional, but it couldn't compare to Han Wenqing's.

The pro players watching immediately thought of ways to pull Ye Xiu into their area of expertise, but as they thought about it, most of the players immediately felt grieved.

Even if they fought with Ye Xiu in their own domain, it wouldn't be enough to give them an overwhelming advantage against him. It seemed like only a God like Han Wenqing with ten years of experience in one area would be able to have this effect.

The viewers all had their own thoughts, but the match continued.

Everyone felt like Han Wenqing would be able to hold the upper hand with this way of fighting, but they forgot that this situation couldn't continue forever because the two were in the air.

Lord Grim's previous escape route had been cut off by Desert Dust. The two fought as they dropped towards the lava.

Han Wenqing didn't seem to notice. He was completely unconcerned. Desert Dust's offense didn't expose any openings, so Ye Xiu was helpless. He wanted to try get away, but at this close of a distance, he could only fight. Skills from other classes? There was no point thinking about them. If those skills were used, Han Wenqing would mercilessly interrupt them because they were too slow.

The instant the two characters were about to fall into the lava, Desert Dust suddenly trembled.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

He had unexpectedly activated this skill at such a crucial moment. Was he planning on using his increased defense and Super Armor to find an opportunity after they fell into the lava?

Everyone thought those were his intentions, when Desert Dust suddenly used High Kick!

High Kick had a knock-up effect. Han Wenqing hadn't used the skill before. He knew that Ye Xiu would definitely tank a movement displacement skill like High Kick and use the opportunity to escape, but even so, he decided to use it at this moment.

Why?

Even Ye Xiu hesitated. If that kick had come earlier, he definitely would have took the hit. But using it at this moment? No matter how he looked at it, it must be some sort of trap.

Block!

Ye Xiu reacted based on his understanding of Han Wenqing. He didn't tank this very suspicious kick. He put up his arms to block it, but the kick suddenly changed direction and missed. Then, his legs suddenly swung down. Desert Dust's upper body seemed to want to rise up as a result.

This is... Eagle Stamp!

This strange way of using the skill made Ye Xiu hesitate again. He could only hastily try to block the attack.

Pa!

The kick struck Lord Grim's arms. Desert Dust used the momentum to leap into the air, while Lord Grim dropped down into the lava.

Flames immediately enveloped Lord Grim. The lava constantly dealt damage to Lord Grim.

And at the same time, pa pa pa pa...

At max level, Eagle Stamp could be used five times. Desert Dust had only used one previously, so he followed again another four times.

"Han Wenqing, this isn't right!!!" At this moment of life and death, Ye Xiu still had the time to trash talk. Lord Grim was half immersed in the lava, the fire damage eating away at his health. As for Desert Dust? He was stepping on Lord Grim again, pogo-sticking off his head!

By using Eagle Stamp, would Desert Dust be able to get back to land? No! But by doing this, he would fall into the lava later, and Lord Grim would take more damage from the lava. As a result, Desert Dust would have a health lead. The brave Han Wenqing only had victory on his mind against Ye Xiu, and he would take these little selfish schemes too.

Chapter 1538: The Boiling Rock

Desert Dust looked like an eagle spreading his wings as he used Eagle Stamp. The stadium erupted with applause. They might not understand Han Wenqing's true intentions, but the scene in front of them was showing Desert Dust repeatedly stepping on Lord Grim, forcing him into the lava. So what if Desert Dust would soon fall into the lava too! It was more than enough to make the Tyranny fans feel like they had the upper hand.

"It's not going to be so easy!" The more perceptive viewers had already noticed that there were movements coming from Lord Grim. How could Ye Xiu be so easy to deal with? Of course not, just a second ago, he had the time to type out some trash talk!

Hand seals!

Hidden by the waves of lava from the fall, Lord Grim's two hands moved in a blur. A Ninjutsu seal was instantly completed.

Even though Lord Grim would certainly fall into the lava, he had been able to escape from Desert Dust's range, allowing him to use other skills.

Poof!

With a gentle poof, Lord Grim turned into a cloud of smoke. The shadow clone had been instantly destroyed by the heat from the lava.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Lord Grim had used the Ninja skill commonly used for movement.

Where was his real body?

Pa! Splash!

Two sounds one after the other. Lord Grim appeared where the shadow clone had just disappeared from...

What's going on? Everyone was confused.

That obviously couldn't have been where Ye Xiu had planned on moving to. There was only explanation, his Shadow Clone Technique had somehow been interrupted.

A replay. A replay was needed. No one understood what had happened in that instant.

Only the two players on stage knew.

Eagle Stamp... number six!

After the five kicks from Eagle Stamp, Ye Xiu immediately used a Shadow Clone Technique. However, he hadn't expected a sixth kick to follow, and this sixth kick had interrupted his Shadow Clone Technique. The shadow clone destroyed by the lava had been a failed clone. The real body hadn't been able to escape and was stepped on again.

A sixth kick from Eagle Stamp had indeed been outside of Ye Xiu's expectations, but he didn't think it was impossible.

Eagle Stamp's limit was five kicks. After the Level 75 level cap increase, the max level for Eagle Stamp had increased as well. The number of times it could be used was still five, but this max level increase was only the max level that could be added using skill points. Equipment that increased skill levels could break through this max level limit and continue raising it.

Evidently, Desert Dust had equipment that raised Eagle Stamp's level, and it looked like it raised it high enough for him to use six kicks.

Unless you saw it in action, there was no way to know. Silver equipment stats were hidden. After ten years, the current Desert Dust had no Orange equipment.

The viewers still didn't know what had happened, but they did see that the Shadow Clone Technique had been interrupted. In any case, applause first!

Amidst the applause, Lord Grim swung his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella out of the lava like a dragon flying out from the sea. The lava slid down from it, creating a rain of fire.

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was in its original form as it swung towards Desert Dust.

The original umbrella form was considered a Priest weapon. As a result, some people were able to determine what skill Lord Grim had suddenly used.

Knight skill: Heroic Leap!

There was nothing Han Wenqing could do! Nothing. He could predict the Shadow Clone Technique because it was a sub-Level 20 skill. It was a skill that was a part of an unspecialized's toolkit. Shadow Clone Technique was extremely useful in his situation, which was why he had paused after five kicks from Eagle Stamp. He had left an opening for Ye Xiu. When he saw Lord Grim form the seals, he had Desert Dust kick a sixth time, interrupting the Ninjutsu art.

But a Heroic Leap...

If it was Level 20+ skill, it meant that it was a bonus skill added onto the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's Priest form. Apart from class advancement and class awakening skills, any mid or high level skill of the same class could be added to a weapon. Teams frequently took advantage of this point. They made changes to the skills attached to their weapons to give a surprise to their opponents. However, there had never been a weapon like the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella before. It had 12 different forms, which meant 12 different high-level skills encompassing all six superclasses. The surprise was too big and couldn't be eliminated.

Han Wenqing could predict the Shadow Clone Technique, but there was no way he could have predicted a Heroic Leap.

Han Wenqing had made some precautions though.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

Before Desert Dust had used Eagle Stamp, he had activated Reinforced Iron Bones. The buff was still active on him. Han Wenqing had the Super Armor active in case that Ye Xiu did something outside of his predictions. He hadn't thought that he could truly completely suppress Ye Xiu. If not, the legendary dynasty established in the early years of the Alliance wouldn't have been by Excellent Era, but Tyranny.

Lord Grim jumped high out of the lava with a Heroic Leap. The strike from his umbrella looked extremely imposing too. But Han Wenqing knew that the strike was flashy but not threatening. The attack priority from Heroic Leap didn't come until the user landed on the ground. No matter how fearsome Lord Grim may look, just one punch from his Desert Dust would be enough to send him flying.

But Han Wenqing didn't want to do this.

Send him flying away? Ye Xiu could take the opportunity to get back onto the land. And then with Desert Dust in the lava, wouldn't that just be suicide?

The plan stays the same!

He wasn't afraid of falling into the lava, but no matter what, he needed to drag Lord Grim with him.

Desert Dust readied himself. Han Wenqing stared closely at the path of Lord Grim's weapon.

Shua!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella changed forms!

As expected!

Han Wenqing hadn't been surprised at all. He had guessed that Ye Xiu wouldn't actually use Heroic Leap to attack him. The attack wouldn't even be able to break Desert Dust's Super Armor.

Ye Xiu will definitely use a different attack.

Han Wenqing had guessed right. His line of sight never left the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella.

As the umbrella quickly changed forms, it swung towards Desert Dust.

I've been waiting!

Desert Dust's two hands clapped together, Empty-Handed Blade Block!

Locked in place!

He locked the umbrella in place firmly. A Dismantle skill. A block and then a throw.

Go down!

Desert Dust wanted to use the umbrella to throw Lord Grim back into the lava, but to his surprise, his throw failed.

How?

In all his years as a Striker, he had never seen Empty-Handed Blade Block miss after blocking an attack. A Dismantle skill had two parts, a block and a throw. Although it consisted of two parts, they were linked together. After the block, it shouldn't be possible to avoid the throw.

At this moment, although the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had been blocked, it hadn't finished transforming. The umbrella pulled open, and the ribs of the umbrella squeezed together in the form of an arc. It hung there as if it would fall off at any moment.

This form is... a scythe!

From Knight sword into scythe. A scythe was a Priest weapon, so it wouldn't affect the Heroic Leap because it was Priest skill too.

Priest skills...

Lord Grim pulled back on the umbrella. The form changed again, and the umbrella split into two halves, which flew back to Lord Grim's hands as if they had grown wings.

Fly back...

Han Wenqing realized what had happened.

Spirit Guidance!

Exorcist skill, Spirit Guidance. It was an attack, where the weapon flew towards the target. In other words, when the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed from Knight sword to Priest scythe, it was considered as a flying weapon and not in Lord Grim's hands.

Dismantle skills worked on flying weapons, but in that case it could only block, not throw. The other person was more than ten steps away from you, how were you supposed to throw him?

Although Lord Grim was extremely close to Desert Dust, that was how the system judged it. Empty-Handed Blade Block had blocked a flying weapon, so the block hadn't locked Lord Grim in place. As a result, Lord Grim could dodge the throw.

After dealing with Desert Dust's attack, the umbrella split into tonfas. A cold light glinted.

Brawler skill, Poison Needle!

Another skill attached to a weapon. At this close of a distance, there was nowhere to run.

The Poison Needle hit. The damage wasn't high, nor was the DoT threatening. However, Poison Needle broke Super Armor!

Lord Grim's Poison Needle was only level one, even so, it removed Super Armor for up to five seconds. For the current situation, it was more than enough. Five seconds was enough for the two to fall into the lava eight times.

The moment Poison Needle came out, Lord Grim took a step forward.

There was nowhere to run to in the air, and with his Super Armor broken, Han Wenqing's Desert Dust could only try to parry the blows.

Pa pa pa... splash... pa pa...

Eagle Stamp!

Lord Grim also used an Eagle Stamp. It didn't matter if it dealt damage or if Han Wenqing parried it. With three Eagle Stamps, Desert Dust fell into the lava. Lord Grim finished it with two more stamps.

The applause was still going...

Tyranny's fans obviously didn't want to give Ye Xiu applause. Happy's fans were in Tyranny's home stadium and weren't able to make such loud noises. The applause had been for Desert Dust breaking Lord Grim's Shadow Clone Technique, sending him into the lava again.

But the reversal had happened too quickly. While the crowd was still clapping, Lord Grim used Heroic Leap, Soul Guidance to cheat Desert Dust's Empty-Handed Block, Poison Needle to break the Super Armor, and then Eagle Stamp to send Desert Dust into the lava!

This was how fast top pro players played. Using seconds to count was too slow. Tyranny's fans hadn't been able to stop their applause when Ye Xiu finished his series of inputs. Their captain was now the one in the lava.

Words couldn't describe how fast the reversal had been. How long could characters stay in the air? Even in this short amount of time, several back-and-forths had occurred.

In the end, Desert Dust had fallen into the lava. Lord Grim used Eagle Stamp to get into the air, and then with the skills available to him, who knew if he would be able to get back to land.

There was nothing Han Wenqing could do. However, he knew that if he let Lord Grim get back to land, the fight would be over!

He had to drag him down no matter what!

Desert Dust flickered in the lava, Cloud Body! His hand moved in a blur to grab Lord Grim's retracting foot at a tricky angle.

Just a bit off!!!

Desert Dust hadn't fallen to the bottom yet. His body was still sinking. Although he could stretch his hands out, the sinking made him miss just by a bit.

Suddenly, Lord Grim dropped down into Desert Dust's hands.

How?

The more vigilant spectators thought that this was some sort of trap from Ye Xiu, but the experts could immediately tell that Ye Xiu hadn't intended for this to happen. Ye Xiu couldn't have done anything about it. The grab from Desert Dust hadn't been a normal grab.

Grappler skill: Overhead Toss!

In today's life and death match, Han Wenqing had given Desert Dust this skill.

Overhead Toss. It was a grab with extremely high priority against those in the air. It was through this high priority that he was able to reach his target.

Toss!

Lava splashed everywhere.

This time, Lord Grim didn't just drop into it. After being tossed by Desert Dust, Lord Grim split apart the lava. The lava fell back and swallowed Lord Grim whole.

Everyone was dumbstruck. They didn't know what happened when the lava swallowed someone completely. From their intuition, shouldn't the person be burned into nothing but bones?

Han Wenqing didn't dare relax though. He stepped forward, relying on his intuition to continue attacking Lord Grim. But before he could take a second step, a figure suddenly appeared from behind Desert Dust. It was as if a mass of flames had crashed into Desert Dust.

Ninjutsu – Underground Tunneling Technique!

Chapter 1539: Beneath the Lava

Underground Tunneling Technique!

The crowd gaped at the sight of Lord Grim emerging from the lava, resembling the Human Torch.

Even though they knew this was only a game, to see someone drill underneath the lava and then emerge slashing out with their whole body on fire was still an awesome sight to see.

Applaud him?

We can't! This was Ye Xiu, how could we applaud? Tyranny fans forcibly suppressed their impulses. The applause that was originally meant for Han Wenqing when he interrupted Shadow Clone Technique turned into background accompaniment for Ye Xiu's retaliation in an instant. Tyranny fans were conflicted.

They had to suppress it. Everyone gritted their teeth. It wasn't like they could boo such a spectacular play. That would be too heartless.

"Go Captain Han!" Tyranny fans could only change the topic like this. They were determined not to show any appreciation to Ye Xiu's performance!

Even Han Wenqing, who had been ready for a follow up, did not expect Ye Xiu's retaliation to be so swift and fierce.

Underground Tunneling Technique, then a blade that went straight for the neck. Blood spurted out, and was instantly turned to steam by the scalding lava.

Desert Dust turned his body sharply and a fist flew out.

Did Ye Xiu want to follow up Underground Tunneling Technique with a Neck Bind Technique? Almost any somewhat-experienced Glory player would make this assessment, let alone Han Wenqing, who had ten years' experience. Both Han Wenqing's assessment and the follow-up strike were reflexive; it was precise and fast, and no Ninja could possibly continue their combo after his interrupting strike.

But there was no follow-up to begin with.

Han Wenqing's reaction was followed immediately by distress.

Underground Tunneling Technique followed by Neck Bind Technique was a common Ninja tactic, but the bastard in front of him wasn't a Ninja. Underground Tunneling Technique was already an additional skill

bound to the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella. He wouldn't waste another on Neck Bind Technique just for this simple combo.

Han Wenqing's second assessment was correct. His reflexive strike had missed. Lord Grim did not use a Neck Bind Technique.

Then what is he going to do?

His mind immediately filled with the hundreds of Glory skills that existed. There was no way to make a judgment call.

He'd have to go by his experience and instincts!

Han Wenqing did not wait for Desert Dust to stabilize his stance, and directly sent out a Stomach Kick. Desert Dust raised his leg and then thrust directly backwards.

Oh oh oh oh!

Clap clap clap clap!

Tyranny fans were quick to cheer and applaud. This kick was perfect! The target was behind him and out of sight, yet he still managed to find Lord Grim's chest so accurately. This was experience, this was awareness.

But they saw a blur straight after.

The Lord Grim that took a Stomach Kick was actually a Shadow Clone. Where was the real one? The real one was directly behind Desert Dust, and the blade that came from the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was viciously thrust into Desert Dust's waist.

From the viciousness and deadliness, you could instantly tell this was an Assassin skill.

Flickering Stab!

The skill only had a range of one unit away and didn't sound as impressive as Teleporting Stab, which could ambush from three units away. But true experts knew that the one-unit distance of Flickering Stab was far more abrupt than the three-unit distance of Teleporting Stab, and was much harder or even almost impossible to guard against.

Once again, the Tyranny fans' cheering and applause became accompaniment for Lord Grim's attack. This time they couldn't even spare the time to feel peeved. Seeing their captain come out at a disadvantage again made them extremely agitated. They really wanted to just whip out their account cards, log into the arena and tear Lord Grim a new one personally!

The blade slid out, bringing along with it beads of blood. But on this glowing red lava, the crimson blood was no longer striking to the eye, and it was visible for a second before it was evaporated into steam.

Back combo!

Ye Xiu would never miss an opportunity like this. Lord Grim continued to strike at Desert Dust's back.

The lava gurgled and splashed.

The two characters stood in the middle of the field of lava. It seemed unlikely that they would be able to escape. The lava's damage was not low, and any damage done by attacks on each other was just adding fuel to the fire. Anyone could see that this battle would not last for much longer. One combo was enough to defeat a character when combined with the lava damage. Victory would be decided within several seconds or even sooner.

Han Wenqing was currently at a disadvantage. Would he just lose like this?

Not yet!

Desert Dust suddenly twisted around.

Double Tiger Palm?

Ye Xiu's experience was incomparably rich. He could tell which skill his opponent was about to use just from the way they squared their shoulders. He quickly had Lord Grim retreat a tiny step.

Bam!

Hit?

Ye Xiu was stunned.

The skill was indeed Double Tiger Palm. But what hit Lord Grim was not a palm, but an elbow!

Compared to the palm, attacking with the elbows would halve the effective attack range. But using the skill while twisting his body would increase the speed at which it was released.

So there was even an effect like this.

Even Ye Xiu was taken aback. He found that Han Wenqing had made many changes, of which there was no shortage of research and reform of the Striker's battle tactics. However, using Double Tiger Palm like so was never seen before. Ye Xiu wasn't sure if Han Wenqing was never given the chance, or if under the current life-threatening situation, this creation was forged on the spot from ten years of experience.

One hit to snatch back the initiative. Following the twist of his body, Desert Dust launched his offensive.

Ferocious Tiger Flurry!

Directly following up with a high level skill. Straightforward and valiant.

Would Ferocious Tiger Flurry be enough to finish his opponent, combined with the damage over time from the lava?

No one could make this call in this moment. First, the unfamiliarity with the map meant the exact damage of the lava was unknown. Secondly, Ferocious Tiger Flurry was similar to a Blade Master's Formless Phantom Blade; they were skills that required continual input to keep unleashing attacks, and the damage would thus depend on both the attacker's execution and the defender's reaction. The skill had begun, but the details would decide whether the full damage would be dealt in the end.

Right now, first punch, hit!

Double Tiger Palm comboing into a Ferocious Tiger Flurry. The first punch came from quickly extending the bent elbow. The strike was as natural as it was fast. There was no way to dodge or parry it. Han Wenqing did not decide to follow up with Ferocious Tiger Flurry just because he wanted to look courageous or heroic.

After the second hit, a disturbance could be seen in the lava. Then, a fist followed and hit again. However, the system's combo count jumped twice. Three hits, four hits!

What? Many people were confused. How was it a four-hit combo?

"The third hit came from under the lava," Li Yibo was rather quick to notice this time in the broadcast. He realised the third hit was a kick. But because Desert Dust's body was submerged in the lava, which was not see-through like water, most people missed it.

Five hits!

The combo counter ticked up once again. But this time, there was a collective, regretful sigh from the stadium, because this time, Ye Xiu finally reacted. Lord Grim raised a half-section of the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella, and used an attack to parry the hit.

Attacking to parry was to defend with an attack. The damage may or may not be fully mitigated, but regardless, it still counted as a hit for the attacker, and was different from directly avoiding the attack.

Directly after, six hits!

This attack was also parried, this time by the other half-section of the Umbrella in Lord Grim's other hand.

"He's dual-wielding!" Someone yelled.

Dual-wielding was the counter to parrying. It could also be used very effectively to parry with attacks. In many situations, using a skill to parry while dual-wielding could successfully parry an attack which would otherwise have much higher priority than the skill that was used. However, Han Wenqing's Desert Dust unleashed Ferocious Tiger Flurry, his attack speed increased explosively. It was absolutely impossible to dual-wield parry the whole skill. At this point, dual-wielding can only hope to keep up with the increased attack speed. Using only a single weapon would be able to parry one strike of Ferocious Tiger Flurry, and then leave the defender open to a second hit.

Despite this, only using the weapon's dual-wield attribute in combination with normal attacks, how could he hope to completely stop the priority of a level 70 skill?

Every attack looked like it was parried, but in the end the attack still pressed onto his body. The attack damage was only reduced by tiny amounts.

Tiny amounts would still add up when the attacks came continuously. Right now, the major damage over time did not come from the attacks, but rather the lava's burn damage. Lord Grim had the advantage in health from the initiative he gained earlier. Now, Desert Dust was retaliating, attempting to catch up from the deficit. Ye Xiu doing his best to parry was clearly a method to reduce as much of Desert Dust's damage output as possible.

Everyone was fixated nervously on the two characters' health bars. Lord Grim had more health, but it was also decreasing faster. Desert Dust had less health, but was only taking lava damage right now.

If this continued, who would win?

Their health bars were both depleting, and the values were getting closer.

The attacks from Ferocious Tiger Flurry were coming to an end.

They're even!

The health bars of both sides were the same right now!

The stadium erupted in joy. Tyranny's fans were excitedly anticipating their victory! The health bars were even, but there was the last and strongest hit of Ferocious Tiger Flurry left! This final strike will put Desert Dust in the lead. Although the lead was tiny, the lava damage would decide who would win, because their health bars were so close to being depleted. As long as Desert Dust avoided taking damage after this final strike, victory would surely be his!

Bang!

The final punch of Ferocious Tiger Flurry sent Lord Grim flying backwards. The distance between the two characters widened, and close combat skills would not have an effect anymore. The lava was about to determine the winner.

A flash of sword light was seen!

Sword Draw!

Lord Grim, who was currently flying backwards, somehow managed to send out a Sword Draw. Desert Dust could not take another hit, and at this moment all the Tyranny fans' hearts jumped to their throats.

Right at that moment, they saw Desert Dust roll towards the side!

It's all over!

Tyranny fans cried out in their minds.

In this key moment, how did the captain make such a mistake? Sword Draw's slash was horizontal, what good would a horizontal roll do? Do you want to hide under the lava? That wouldn't help either! Ye Xiu was crafty, this Sword Draw had an angle to it and maximized its coverage. Even the lava had been slashed apart.

Eh?

A spark of hope lit up the fans' hearts. In the lava that was slashed apart by the Sword Draw, a molten rock was visible!

Ching!

The sword light landed on this rock. What about Desert Dust? After the roll, he ended up on the other side of the rock. Han Wenqing knew well in advance that Ye Xiu would rush to attack during the

knockback and right after the last strike of Ferocious Tiger Flurry. He had an escape route in mind. Sheltering behind that rock would block any attack from the front.

He won!!

Tyranny's fans were already cheering victoriously. The two health bars were sliding towards nothingness, and Lord Grim's was shorter, so it would reach zero first. Even though securing a win by that tiny margin wasn't meaningful for the group arena, a win was a win. More so, this win was against Ye Xiu, who had never lost an individual round yet. Was there any better feeling?

But just at that moment, Desert Dust's life suddenly ticked down a chunk during the steady decrease due to the lava.

Glory!

When the large letters declared the end of the match, the last one standing was... Lord Grim?

WHAT!!

The stadium immediately exploded.

How.. how was this possible?

Where did that burst of damage come from? Did lava somehow have burst damage? If so, why would it suddenly happen at this moment in particular? That would be too cruel of a prank, right?

The righteous Tyranny fans all stood up in sync, as if they wanted to charge onto the stage. What the hell was this? There had to be some kind of explanation!!!

What the hell happened? What the hell happened?!

It wasn't just the Tyranny fans who were confused by this sudden burst of damage. The broadcast team, the referees, the pro players... too many people were baffled.

This kind of situation called for an instant replay. There had to be an explanation for this. Right now, it hadn't been found, so everything was being played back on the big screen. Even the holographic projection technology gave up the usual display of the winning character's model. There was no need to draw needless aggro from the crowd – the holograms were also replaying the last moments of the fight.

The stadium was quiet as the grave. Everyone's eyes were fixated on the replay of that single moment.

Once, twice, three times. The moment was very short, and could only be replayed like so. But where to look?

Some people were watching Lord Grim's actions. Some were watching Desert Dust. Some were watching the change in the flowing lava. At this moment, the system's final damage summary was pulled out. The system would not lie; it faithfully recorded every bit of the match from start to finish. These records would paint a picture and put everyone a step closer to the answer.

Lord Grim's last damage taken: Ferocious Tiger Flurry's last punch, plus lava damage.

Desert Dust's last damage taken: lava damage, and... Waltzing Wave Sword?

Spellblade skill, Waltzing Wave Sword.

The silence in the stadium is still deafening. After the system's damage summary appeared, the replay could finally zoom in to the area of interest.

Under the lava, Waltzing Wave Sword moved soundlessly. Any visible trace of movement was completely obscured by the intense battle of the two characters, which churned the lava furiously.

Waltzing Wave Sword actually happened before the Sword Draw.

Just like Desert Dust's kick from under the lava during Ferocious Tiger Flurry, Waltzing Wave Sword was unleashed silently from under the lava. By the time the sword flickered, it was already the sword light from Sword Draw.

The Sword Draw was blocked by the rock. But Waltzing Wave Sword's attack was not in a straight line; it traveled in an arc. It looped around the molten rock and managed to catch Desert Dust.

Turns out it wasn't some burst damage from the lava. It did come from the player's own hand, Lord Grim's attack.

The silence was crushing...

The long silence was finally broken violently.

"Ye Xiu, you're fucking shameless!!!"

"Ye Xiu go die in a hole!!!"

"Kill him!!!"

Chapter 1540: No Need For Comfort

Tyranny's fans could accept defeat. They had always prioritized the process over the end outcome. The 1v1 had been intense and high-level. It was absolutely a rare scene, and everyone was more than satisfied with it.

Although from Tyranny's perspective, this outcome was truly very very very annoying. A second earlier, they had thought that Ye Xiu would lose. His 1v1 win streak would finally be broken. This sort of excitement would have reached the same levels as when Tyranny had toppled Excellent Era's dynasty in the fourth season.

But it was only for one second.

Life was a rollercoaster. This single second fully embodied this saying. Tyranny's fans could accept the defeat, but they could not accept the sudden drop from excitement to disappointment.

The main culprit: Ye Xiu!

Tyranny's fans had always hated Ye Xiu. Right now, how could they be in the mood to congratulate the winner?

Han Wenqing walked out from Tyranny's player booth. The angry clamor from Tyranny's fans suddenly quieted down.

Their hearts hurt for their captain.

Wouldn't he be the one who felt the sudden up and down the most?

Wouldn't he be the one who felt the worst?

The noise from the crowd became quieter and quieter. Everyone was looking at Han Wenqing, who was walking down from the stage. His posture was as straight as ever. His footsteps were firm and powerful. As he walked, he waved his hands towards Tyranny's fans. Then, he waved towards everyone in the crowd. It was the same as he always did every time a match ended.

Sure enough, their captain wouldn't fall from a defeat, even if it had been from such an unexpected and disgusting reversal. The crowd instantly erupted again! Instead of wasting their efforts cursing at Ye Xiu, it'd be better to give their captain some applause.

Han Wenqing continued to wave his hands amidst the thunderous applause. And just like this, he walked back to Tyranny's seats.

Everyone in Tyranny stood up and applauded their captain.

Console him? No need.

Their captain would never console a teammate who had lost. At the same time, he didn't need any comforting either when he lost.

A defeat was nothing special. Tyranny had experienced it many times. Needing someone to comfort them was too shameful. If a man couldn't even accept defeat, how could anyone comfort him?

"I've calculated how much damage the lava does. I recommend that Lin Jingyan go up next," There wasn't a single word about the battle that had just transpired. Tyranny's vice-captain Zhang Xinjie directly brought up their arrangements for their next battle.

"Okay," Han Wenqing nodded his head.

"Okay, I'll go," Lin Jingyan nodded his head. He left Tyranny's bench and headed towards the stage.

"From the previous fight, we can see that Ye Xiu has added Heroic Leap, Poison Needle, Underground Tunneling Technique, Flickering Stab, and Waltzing Wave Slash onto his weapon forms," When they finally talked about the battle that had just ended, it was from a review perspective. When the skill "Waltzing Wave Slash" was mentioned, the cause for the sudden reversal, their expressions didn't change in the slightest.

"That's not even half," Han Wenqing said regretfully.

"Yes, the tempo is just too fast," Zhang Xinjie said.

The fight between the two had happened mostly in the air. Once they fell into the lava, the lava dealt the majority of the damage came. The number of skills that the two could use effectively while in the lava was in fact quite limited. Lord Grim could attach a total of 12 bonus skills onto his Myriad

Manifestations Umbrella, and he had only used 5 of those 12 thus far. That meant there were still 7 unknown skills. It would be an unknown factor in the team competition. The vice captain and captain of Tyranny were mainly concerned about this unknown factor.

Lin Jingyan probably wouldn't be able to find any more of those bonus skills because Lord Grim's health was almost zero. He was probably at 1 or 2% health. The battle would be over in an instant.

At the start of the second round, Ye Xiu even announced in the public chat: "You've won."

"Haha, I'd be quite happy if you surrendered," Lin Jingyan replied.

"I can't do that! You'd better hurry!" Ye Xiu replied.

Lin Jingyan's Dark Thunder set out. Boos from the crowd soon followed. The boos obviously weren't for Lin Jingyan, but Ye Xiu! Ye Xiu's words were one thing, but his actions showed otherwise. His Lord Grim was healing himself at the moment.

Holy light flashed. When the match started, Lord Grim remained where he was and immediately started healing. Although with only low-level skills and no healing buffs, Lord Grim's healing capabilities could only be used as emergency saves. Trying to completely heal himself to full like this wasn't possible.

The 1v1 map wasn't large. Even though Lin Jingyan was playing on this map for the first time, he had been watching the previous fight. And with everyone analyzing the map together, they had grasped bits and pieces of the map. His movements were firm, and he headed straight for the enemy spawn point.

"Hey, you'd better not be healing!" Lin Jingyan suddenly said in the chat.

"You really are going to win. I've been seen through!" Ye Xiu replied.

Lin Jingyan was helpless. It looked like he couldn't take the easy way out. He had to be careful too. He couldn't let Ye Xiu take out too much of health.

Soon, Lord Grim entered his line of sight. White light was flashing and flashing. Lord Grim had been healing the entire time, no? Ye Xiu soon saw the approaching Dark Thunder as well, and immediately typed out into the chat: "Can't you wait a bit longer?"

Lin Jingyan ignored him. They were about to start fighting. He needed to concentrate. He couldn't give Ye Xiu any opportunities. Chat? It was now time for him to ignore everything.

In terms of range, Lord Grim had a long range than Dark Thunder, so Dark Thunder had to enter Lord Grim's range first. Lin Jingyan immediately became even more cautious. Dark Thunder started to slow down as he carefully observed Lord Grim's movements and the terrain around him.

"I guess that's it," Ye Xiu sighed. During this time, he had been able to heal 6% of his health back. It was now a 7% health Lord Grim against a 100% health Dark Thunder.

It was very possible for one touch into death in this map due to the lava. Lin Jingyan subconsciously had his Dark Thunder stay farther away from the lava. If he wasn't careful and was knocked into the lava, it would be devastating for him.

As he grew nearer, Lord Grim still didn't act. Dark Thunder only needed three more steps for Lord Grim to enter his attack range, when finally, Lord Grim raised his umbrella in front of him.

Lin Jingyan immediately moved his mouse back and forth, so Dark Thunder would move erratically. He wouldn't be moving in a straight line nor in a predictable left and right zig-zag. He wasn't going to make it easy for Ye Xiu to hit him.

Bang bang!

Two gunshots. Ye Xiu had Lord Grim attack. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella's gun form was a rifle, which could fire two times in a row.

The damage from normal attacks posed no threat, but if he could dodge them, why not dodge them?

After dodging the two bullets, he looked at Lord Grim again. Lord Grim wasn't facing him, but rather, to the side.

He wants to play dirty!

Lin Jingyan had been Fang Rui's partner for many years. He was very acute towards this sort of playing. Turning to the side to prevent the enemy from seeing everything. Fang Rui was an expert at it. He hid his character's hands, so the opponent wouldn't be able to figure out what skill he was planning on using.

The hand movements were crucial, so what skill did he plan on using?

Shadow Clone Technique?

That was Lin Jingyan's first thought. Ninjas had been the first to come up with this technique of hiding their hands. Who made it so most of their skills required hand seals! Shadow Clone Technique required hand seals, and Ye Xiu often used it. Lin Jingyan's thought process was very logical. He immediately had his character roll to the side, while swinging his claw towards the side.

One Night Eight Desolates!

This was the name of Dark Thunder's Silver weapon. He had four claws on each hand. The color and luster were rather dull and didn't give off any light. These claws swung in a semicircle motion.

"Old Lin, you over thought it!" Ye Xiu messaged.

One Night Eight Desolates missed. After Dark Thunder rolled, he adjusted his view, and now he was facing Lord Grim directly.

There weren't any hand movements, just the muzzle of a gun.

Boom boom boom!

Anti-Tank Missiles.