

## Avatar 1591

### Chapter 1591: Establishing Dominance

Lose? Win?

Samsara's fans were in a daze. Happy's fans were in a daze. Unlike the pro players, they hadn't fully grasped what had just happened. Their judgement had been very simple: whoever had more health was winning.

Of course, this sort of judgement wasn't wrong. Yes, whoever had more health was winning. The end outcome of the battle could be considered a reversal from Ye Xiu. It was just that the reversal had been too quick. In the previous second, the two characters seemed to be evenly matched. Suddenly, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer was pinned to a stalagmite, seemingly powerless. Then, just when he was finally able to escape, a silver blade went in and a red blade came out, marking the end of the battle.

How could it be?

How could it be?

Samsara's fans were at a loss. Happy's fans were also at a loss. They had thought that they would lose this fight. Getting Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer down to such a low amount of health was still an acceptable result though.

This sort of thought was just them comforting themselves. Whether it was the confrontation between the current and former number one, or Ye Xiu's legendary 1v1 win streak, none of Happy's fans wanted to see Ye Xiu lose. As for whether it was good or bad for the group arena as a whole, this sort of rational reasoning wasn't something that fans gave consideration to.

But contrary to their expectations, they had won.

Just like they had hoped, Ye Xiu had won. Just before, they had been constructing mental barriers, coming up with a reason to comfort themselves. All of a sudden, everything was flipped on top of their heads. Everyone was in a daze for a long time, all the way until Zhou Zekai left the player booth. Reality finally sunk in. The fans gathered at the away team seats began to cheer.

How did he win?

They didn't know, but it wasn't important. Ye Xiu had won, so let's celebrate first! They could always go back and slowly analyze it at a later time.

The audience could take on this mentality, but the commentators, Pan Lin and Li Yibo, couldn't. There was no later in a live broadcast. The two had to discuss the sudden reversal from Ye Xiu.

As a result, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella during that reversal became the focus of the discussion.

"The Dragon Tooth had closed the distance beforehand, so when Colliding Stab was used, it came out at point blank range."

“The greatsword form of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella is truly gigantic. The area covered by Colliding Stab is quite large, making it quite difficult to dodge!”

“Look, the moment Colliding Stab came out, Lord Grim pulled out the tachi from his umbrella’s handle. This small movement misled Zhou Zekai into misjudging the attack.

“Yes, yes. What an elaborate scheme!”

The two spoke back and forth, not at all stingy with their praise. The two were even thinking of the future. Whenever Ye Xiu was in a 1v1, they should just immediately start out by declaring Ye Xiu’s victory. Then, wouldn’t anything they said after that be untouchable?

Through this evaluation, the two were able to move past the reversal. But for the pro players, while this feint was very important, it wasn’t as simple as that.

Ye Xiu. Zhou Zekai. The two players with the title of number one were very similar to each other in many ways. Just take how they played. Compared to normal players who cared strongly about hand speed, the deepest impression that these two players gave wasn’t speed but precision.

The two were exceptionally precise. Because of this precision, the two frequently made plays with little room for error. Zhou Zekai was able to perform such an impressive display of Gun Fu because of this precision. Ye Xiu dared to rush down Zhou Zekai despite only having 5% of his health remaining because of this precision.

Apart from precision, their decision-making and intuition were similar. When either of them took control, it was extremely difficult for the opponent to find an opening to counterattack.

At the end of the battle, Lord Grim had pinned Cloud Piercer against a stalagmite and fought at close combat. Was there no such opportunity before? No!

He had intentionally saved this move for the very end at the deciding moment. Everyone was shocked at his decision to rush down Zhou Zekai with only 5% health remaining on Lord Grim. But in reality, Ye Xiu hadn’t been looking at his own health, but rather Cloud Piercer’s 14%. As they traded blows, he knew that Zhou Zekai was waiting for an opportunity to finish him off in one combo. He was the same.

But his Lord Grim could also heal. The three instant cast heals could be added onto his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. However, during this entire battle, he had never used any of them. It was hard to not be suspicious. The spectating pro players had been certain that he was saving these heals for a final explosive burst. They thought that he had chosen not to use these heals before because he had been waiting for the right opportunity. When their health dropped low enough, he would heal, and Zhou Zekai wouldn’t be able to react in time.

The pro players had been partially correct. Ye Xiu had been waiting for the right opportunity. However, he wasn’t waiting for an opportunity to heal. Instead, he had been waiting for an opportunity to counterattack, waiting until Cloud Piercer’s health was low enough for him to kill him in one combo. He had also been waiting for Zhou Zekai to rush him down.

When performing a rush, attacking the opponent would be the priority, while defense would be secondary. Ye Xiu had been watching Cloud Piercer’s health carefully. He seized the moment Zhou Zekai decided to rush at him and counter-rushed him.

The two were fighting at close-range, and a Sharpshooter couldn't compare to an unspecialized in close combat. And this time, Ye Xiu wasn't going to give him any opportunity to trade. He would wipe out that 14% in one go.

Everyone saw what happened afterwards. Lord Grim completely suppressed Cloud Piercer. Apart from taking some damage when forcing the Colliding Stab, Cloud Piercer was unable to do anything. An opening had appeared because Lord Grim wasn't able to continue his combo, but Ye Xiu had been ready. Cloud Piercer was only hit away from death. With a teleport, Lord Grim gave the final fatal strike.

What the pro players saw wasn't just technical prowess, but their control over the pace of the fight.

Ye Xiu had won, a very close win, but if you considered how he had taken such a massive amount of damage from the Thunder Snipe at the start and then made a comeback from a disadvantageous position, he had been the one with a stronger grasp over the pace of the fight.

Of course, Lord Grim's class as an unspecialized and his transforming Myriad Manifestations Umbrella contributed greatly towards this achievement. If he wasn't an unspecialized, without the possibility of healing, Zhou Zekai wouldn't have waited until Lord Grim only had 5% health before trying to rush him down. If Lord Grim couldn't heal, Zhou Zekai would have likely rushed him down to decide the fight when Lord Grim had over 10% of his health left.

In the online game, in PvP, if the winner relied on a class advantage or an equipment advantage to win, the loser would often spite the winner for having an unfair advantage.

But on the pro stage, everyone would exploit the slightest of advantages to win. Ye Xiu was no different. His unspecialized and his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella gave other pro players a huge headache. They really wanted to be like the in-game players: if you didn't have that stupid umbrella or if you weren't playing a broken class, I would have won.

But then again, when Ye Xiu had been using a Battle Mage, hadn't they been getting slapped left and right as well?

The pro players applauded. It had been a spectacular fight. The winner showed terrifying skill, but the loser did as well. When watching a match, they often pretended as if they were the ones playing. Their expressions were grave. Clearly, none of them dared to say that it might have gone differently if they had been the ones playing.

Game two of the finals. The first round of the group arena had ended. In Samsara's home stadium, Happy had won the first round. Ye Xiu continued his legendary win streak, and this time, he had defeated Zhou Zekai, the number one player. With this win, he shut up the haters, who argued that his win streak was because he was avoiding those ace players in the group arena.

Even Zhou Zekai had lost against him. If that wasn't enough to legitimize his win streak, did he need to play 1v2s?

The Samsara fans in the crowd were silent. Their ace, the god in their eyes, had lost? He had come out specifically to play against Ye Xiu, coming out full force, yet he had lost?

Samsara's fans weren't used to this. For a moment, they were having trouble accepting reality to the point of even forgetting to give a consolation applause to the loser. In their eyes, there were only cheers and praise for Zhou Zekai. Consoling him as the loser didn't feel right...

"Then, it's my turn." At Samsara's bench, Jiang Botao got up and went to welcome Zhou Zekai back.

"Mm." Zhou Zekai nodded his head. He was always quiet, so it was hard to tell what he was feeling.

"4% health, huh. He's probably going to heal now..." Jiang Botao muttered as he walked towards the stage.

The atmosphere in the stadium was heavy. Samsara had forgotten to console Zhou Zekai, who had lost. They had also forgotten to cheer to give their Jiang Botao encouragement. They were still trying to take in the fact that Zhou Zekai had lost.

But Jiang Botao didn't appear to be concerned.

4%.

Lord Grim only had a few drops of health left. From the perspective of the group arena as a whole, Zhou Zekai's loss wasn't bad. It was just that because of how important the fight had been to the audience, because Zhou Zekai had gone first to play against Ye Xiu, because it was a challenge that Zhou Zekai had taken the initiative to put out.

In the end, he lost.

It made Samsara's fans feel embarrassed and ashamed...

Zhou Zekai had never given them these feelings before. There were even a few girls out in the audience who burst out into tears.

But Zhou Zekai's teammate, Samsara's vice-captain Jiang Botao, wasn't affected by the atmosphere. He walked calmly onto the stage and into the player booth.

The characters loaded. The map loaded. The match began.

"Hello, senior! I'm coming!" Zhou Zekai had been silent, but as soon as Jiang Botao went onto the stage, he greeted Ye Xiu enthusiastically.

"Coming to surrender?" Ye Xiu replied.

"No way," said Jiang Botao, "I'm here to experience how fearsome you seniors are."

## **Chapter 1592: Healer**

The exchange between Ye Xiu and Jiang Botao before the match began hadn't been broadcasted or recorded, so only those who'd been onstage at the time knew that Jiang Botao's message was a callback to what they'd said earlier. The audience didn't know anything about it, so they just treated it as a polite challenge.

But Lord Grim only had 4% health left. For a Spellblade, most Wave Formation attacks would be enough to knock out that much health. From the very beginning, this faceoff would be a very lopsided one.

But Happy's supporters didn't lose faith. Those who thought that a match was already over at low health, why not go talk to last match's Lin Jingyan!

It wasn't just Happy's supporters, either. Even Pan Lin and Li Yibo clearly had a lot of faith in Ye Xiu right now.

"Lord Grim still has 4% health," said Pan Lin.

"Yes. With Jiang Botao's Spellblade, one Wave Formation could probably take him out," said Li Yibo.

No matter what, this was the situation. It wouldn't be wrong to explain it.

"Let's see what Ye Xiu will do," said Pan Lin.

Heal, of course... That was what Li Yibo thought, but he didn't voice the thought. What if that guy didn't heal?

"Heal, this guy's definitely going to heal again." Among the pro players, countless people were already pointing it out.

"He always does that, the same old thing!"

"Having this kind of character appear in the group arena is so broken, the Alliance should do something about it."

Someone coughed. It was Tiny Herb's Xu Bin.

Lord Grim was able to heal by relying on the low-level skills of the Cleric and Paladin classes. The low-level skills of these classes weren't limited to just unspecialized, though. The other Priest classes, the Knight and Exorcist, could learn them too. And reality showed that the players of these two classes wouldn't pass on this kind of opportunity. In particular, the Cleric's Small Cure and the Paladin's Recover were practically a necessity for their classes. Healing during a solo battle wasn't patented by the unspecialized Lord Grim, it was something that these two classes often did as well. Defeating an opponent during the group arena and then hiding at the start of the next battle to heal was commonly done when it came to them.

But their presence was far weaker than that of Ye Xiu and Lord Grim. Xu Bin's cough didn't catch much attention, and the other players were all rising in rebellion to denounce this kind of practice. They completely overlooked the fact that they were attacking more than just Ye Xiu.

Xu Bin felt incredibly awkward. If he jumped up now to say something, wouldn't that just be the same as eating these attacks? Helpless, he could only maintain his silence, pretending that he had nothing to do with this. As he looked around, he couldn't help but see someone else wearing a similarly awkward expression, looking like he wanted to distance himself.

The two of them met eyes, reaching a tacit mutual understanding.

Xu Bin, Knight player.

Tian Sen, Exorcist player.

Both were Priest classes, group arena healers that everyone was now attacking for being dirty, shameless, sneaky, foul, cheating, undignified, unoriginal...

“He’s definitely going to heal, is that even a question? Look at how he’s scurrying around so sneakily, he’s looking for somewhere to hide, right? How much is he planning to heal? All the way?” Finally, the topic had one single target again. Just in time, Huang Shaotian turned the conversation subject back to the ongoing match.

Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim was currently moving, not toward the center road, and not circling around. Just like Huang Shaotian had said, he looked like he was searching for a place to hide and heal up for all eternity.

“Look, he’s about to heal right now!”

“He’s healing!”

“He’s really healing!”

“Small Heal!”

“Fuck, just like we thought, he’s just that disgraceful! Of course he heals!” Huang Shaotian rattled on, far noisier than the broadcast commentator Pan Lin. How could Pan Lin dare use this kind of mocking speech to criticize Ye Xiu!

“Shame on him!”

“Yeah!”

“So unfair!”

“We have to change the competition rules.”

As the discussion progressed, Xu Bin and Tian Sen, as well as the other Knight and Exorcist players, all lowered their heads. Even though they knew that everyone was talking about Ye Xiu and had just forgotten about them for the moment, they simply had no way to face this calmly.

“He’s still showing off in the chat, he thinks he’s so honorable!” Huang Shaotian continued to shout.

At the moment, Ye Xiu had just sent a message in the chat: “Are you at the center yet? Hold on, I’m healing first.”

Jiang Botao’s Empty Waves had just arrived at the center of the map without seeing Lord Grim. He’d already been thinking that Ye Xiu might heal, and with this message, the other player made it very clear. He was very straightforward, very confident. He just told him directly.

But Jiang Botao wasn’t just going to wait there! If he waited for Ye Xiu to voluntarily show up, then he’d probably be waiting until Lord Grim was completely reborn.

Jiang Botao controlled Empty Waves to move forward, toward Lord Grim’s spawn point. Along the way, he changed his path constantly, adjusting his view. Because he’d watched the previous match from off-stage, he knew that Ye Xiu had ways of covering himself. Fortunately, Samsara had chosen this map and

so they were more familiar with it. After seeing Ye Xiu's tactic earlier, as long as they paid attention, it wouldn't have much effect against them anymore.

Jiang Botao was now on guard against this tactic as he controlled Empty Waves to move forward, but he didn't discover anything. Soon, the dripstone along his path had all been carefully sifted through, and the only remaining possible places for Lord Grim to hide were in front of him. There were three stalagmites, standing in a triangle, relatively close together. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was probably right behind one of them.

Jiang Botao didn't let Empty Waves approach to investigate. When the distance was close enough, he quietly lifted his sword and began to cast.

The short sword Divine Chain rippled,

Over here!

Jiang Botao didn't wait for Lord Grim to appear. Empty Waves lifted his sword and swung it, releasing a Waltzing Wave Formation that circled around toward that stalagmite.

The stadium was silent.

By this point, Samsara's fans had basically recovered from the emotions of Zhou Zekai's defeat, but seeing their vice-captain bravely fighting onstage right now, they couldn't reward him with applause.

Because, with the omniscient view, they could see that behind that stalagmite wasn't Lord Grim, but a Goblin that he had summoned.

"Little Lu did you see that? If you're too simple and naive, you're no match for Ye Xiu..." Seeing this scene, Huang Shaotian sighed and gave this lesson to his junior sitting next to him.

"Simple and naive? You're talking about Jiang Botao?" When Misty Rain's Li Hua heard this, he couldn't help but interject, surprised.

"Of course not, I'm just using an example. That guy definitely isn't," said Huang Shaotian.

Jiang Botao, Season 6 debut. After joining Samsara, he began making a name for himself. Under Zhou Zekai's light, the Samsara players all seemed less eye-catching. But as opponents that had interacted with him onstage, everyone was clear that Samsara's Jiang Botao was not an easy character to deal with. At the very least, simple and naive definitely was not a phrase that could describe him.

### **Chapter 1593: A Senior's Fearsomeness**

Electric Wave Formation, Waltzing Wave Slash.

The weakest summon, the Goblin, couldn't resist these two powerful attacks, but so what? The viewers could clearly see that Lord Grim wasn't inside the Electric Wave Formation's range. By the time the lightning struck the Goblin, Lord Grim had finished forming the hand seals for Shadow Clone Technique, launching a sneak attack from Empty Waves' side.

But!

After drawing out a Waltzing Wave Slash, Empty Waves' Silver weapon, Divine Chain, didn't stop and headed directly towards his side. Killing intent emanated from the edge of its blades as it tore through the air. A Wave Wheel Slasher flew directly towards Lord Grim.

Ye Xiu was caught off guard. His Lord Grim had only just landed when the Wave Wheel Slasher arrived. There was no time for him to dodge. Guard? Parry? It would be useless. Wave Wheel Slasher was a skill with grab priority. Even if he tried using his shield to block it, the Wave Wheel Slasher would still tear apart its defenses, locking him in place and dealing damage. A Dismantle skill could work, but Dismantle skills required the proper timing. Using it now would be too late.

There was unexpectedly nothing he could do?

All of the viewers including the pro players thought that the Wave Wheel Slasher was inescapable. Suddenly, Lord Grim swung his arm, sending out a flash of sword light. Magic waves specific to Spellblades swirled around the light. It looked exactly the same as Empty Waves' slash. It was also a Wave Wheel Slasher. Wave Wheel Slasher against Wave Wheel Slasher.

The two streaks of sword light intertwined.

In a collision between two of the same skills, the outcome would be decided based on attack power as well as factors such as timing.

Lord Grim's attack had been hasty, and the magic emanating from his sword couldn't compare to a true Spellblade's. The Level 20 Spellblade class advancement skill "Killing Intent Wave" specifically buffed wave skills. Unspecialized could not learn class advancement skills, so his wave skills would naturally lose to a Spellblade's.

Lord Grim lost the priority battle. The undulating magic swallowed him, forcing Lord Grim to stagger back. However, the imprisonment from the Wave Wheel Slasher was shattered by the collision. Lord Grim's Wave Wheel Slasher fell short compared to Empty Waves', but it couldn't be considered useless. It had nulled Wave Wheel Slasher's grab effect, achieving Ye Xiu's goal. After staggering back two steps, he immediately steadied himself and rushed forward again.

Although Spellblades were part of the Swordsman superclass, their strengths lay in mid-ranged combat. Close combat wasn't their class's expertise. The moment Empty Waves swung out a Wave Wheel Slasher, Jiang Botao had Empty Waves step to the side to pull away. Lord Grim was able to negate his Wave Wheel Slasher's grab effect, but the shockwave still pushed him back two steps. Even though he was able to immediately steady himself and rush back, Empty Waves had already followed with his next attack. A streak of scarlet fire roared towards him, a Flame Wave Slash.

Fire Wave Slash was the strongest of the Wave Slashes and had the strongest knockback. Forcing your way through it wasn't possible. It wasn't just flames. It also contained powerful undulating magic.

Unable to get past it, he could only dodge. However, Ye Xiu knew that this attack was just the beginning.

Fire Wave Slash, Ice Wave Slash, and Light Wave Slash. These three Wave Slashes containing fire, ice, and light were often used together. This combo was nicknamed "Three Fold Wave". The Fire Wave Slash had already put Ye Xiu in a fluster. How could ice and light not follow?

And the ice and light quickly followed!



Lord Grim turned and used the Assassin skill, Shining Cut. Cold light flashed as the Fire Wave Slash brushed past him. When he looked towards Empty Waves again, as expected, it was the “Three Fold Wave.” The second Light Wave Slash had arrived next.

As the name implied, Light Wave Slash was extremely fast, but Jiang Botao had underestimated the speed of Lord Grim’s movement skill. The Light Wave Slash flashed past him, missing Lord Grim!

Thunderous applause.

Ye Xiu didn’t know, but the viewers watching did. The Waltzing Wave Slash from before hadn’t hit the Goblin behind the stalactite, instead circling around it before returning like a boomerang. To dodge the Light Wave Slash, Lord Grim had used Shining Cut. However, although he was able to dodge the Light Wave Slash, the Waltzing Wave Slash had looped around, striking him in the back.

Lord Grim lost his balance and stumbled forward.

Naive? Pure?

Sure enough, none of those traits had any relation to Jiang Botao. How could a naive and pure person set up such a tricky and crafty trap?

Ice Wave Slash!

The third wave of the “Three Fold Wave” swept towards the stumbling Lord Grim. Jiang Botao had calculated how he would follow up and was about to go through with it, when he saw Lord Grim suddenly raise his umbrella. With a whoosh, the umbrella opened. Lord Grim used his shield to block the Ice Wave Slash.

Jiang Botao felt a tremble in his heart. He had calculated the distance and timing of these consecutive Wave Slashes. Even a machine wouldn’t have been able to react in time. For Ye Xiu to do so, he must have been prepared ahead of time.

The thought flashed through his mind. The Ice Wave Slash hit the canvas of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. The shards of ice seemed to come alive, shooting back towards Empty Waves.

He really was ready for it!

This wasn’t just a block, but a skill: Shield Counter!

Shield Counter absorbed and reflected damage depending on the level of the skill. Lord Grim’s Shield Counter could only be level one, so the reflected ice shards was very sparse. However, the speed of the ice shards was no less than before. Jiang Botao had wanted to chain together his attacks, so he positioned Empty Waves as close as possible to Lord Grim. But that only made it more difficult for him to dodge the reflected Ice Wave Slash now.

The reflected damage from a level one Shield Counter was insignificant, but the threat from Ice Wave Slash wasn’t the damage but rather its Freeze effect. The Freeze effect would be drastically reduced from the Shield Counter, but it still couldn’t be ignored and had to be dodged.

Spellblades wore plate armor, so their movements were slow. Dragged down by the heavy weight of his armor, Empty Waves was just barely able to dodge the ice shards, but by this time, Lord Grim had closed in.

With a bang, Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella struck Empty Waves' armor. Knights also wore plate armor. With their heavy weight, the knockback from a Charge could send a Spellblade flying. But Lord Grim's Charge was much weaker. Against a plate armored Spellblade, all it could do was send the opponent stumbling back a few steps.

But this was what Ye Xiu wanted. He wanted to take the initiative, not send Empty Waves flying away.

"What do you think? Have you gotten a taste of this senior's fearsomeness?"

As he typed, Lord Grim rushed forward. His Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed into a spear, stabbing towards Empty Waves' head.

Jiang Botao didn't have time to reply back to Ye Xiu's message. Empty Waves held up his weapon, Divine Chains, in an attempt to parry the Dragon Tooth. Suddenly, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed. The canvas retracted, and the parry missed. All that remained in Jiang Botao's sigh was the muzzle of a gun.

Boom boom boom!

Three Anti-Tank Missiles fired. How could Empty Waves dodge something at point blank distance? Blast after blast, Empty Waves was swallowed by smoke and light.

Flash!

A sword was unsheathed. Two streaks of light followed, creating a cross in the air.

Empty Waves was still inside the smoke and light from the explosions. However, he was able to swing his shortsword, Divine Chains, downwards from the previous parry position. Ghost Slash!

Ghostblades and Spellblades primarily dealt magic damage. As a result, when one class used the other class's skills, the skills were quite powerful. This Ghost Slash collided with Lord Grim's Gore Cross.

Ghost Slash had a blow-away effect and impressive attack priority. The slash shattered the sword light from Gore Cross, and Lord Grim was forced to jump back to avoid the blow.

The Divine Chains swung back up, using a Spellblade skill: Earth Wave Slash\*.

The earth was swept up as it headed towards Lord Grim. By this time, the flames from the explosion had yet to completely disperse. From Jiang Botao's screen, only a fuzzy haze could be seen, but even so, he was able to push out two attacks.

With a turn, Lord Grim dodged the Earth Wave Slash. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella swung horizontally, while changing forms into a scythe, a Priest weapon. Using an Exorcist skill "Hook", it went straight for Empty Waves' throat.

Jiang Botao's vision had returned to normal. He rolled on the ground, dodging the attack. He slashed upwards with his sword, counter attacking with a Storm Wave Slash.

The two began fighting back and forth. Lord Grim had too little health. Even though he had been furiously healing himself at the start of the match, he wasn't able to heal too much. No one had expected him to win this fight. It was just a question of how much damage he was able to deal to Jiang Botao. In the end, he was able to take down 24% of Empty Waves' health before falling.

Using 4% health in exchange for 24% was a very good result. Happy was happy. They got up and welcomed Ye Xiu down from the stage. Of course, in reality, their applause was mainly for Ye Xiu's win in the first round against Zhou Zekai. That had been a huge boost to their morale. Ye Xiu had been in the player booth the entire time, so he didn't know. However, the others remembered how quiet the stadium had been when Zhou Zekai lost.

Mo Fan was Happy's second player for the group arena. He clapped very mechanically alongside everyone else, waiting for Ye Xiu to come back before heading onto the stage.

"Be careful, that guy's got a very black heart," Ye Xiu reminded.

No one knew if Mo Fan heard him or not, but he was on his way towards the stage now. On the side, Fang Rui booed at Ye Xiu: "Is there anyone with a blacker heart than yours?"

"Of course not! Boss is the best at everything!" Steamed Bun replied back for Ye Xiu.

#### **Chapter 1594: Young Growth**

Both sides had sent out their second player in the group arena, but the atmosphere in the stadium seemed to have paused at the first matchup. When Mo Fan walked towards the stage, the crowd members in the away team seats clapped wildly, but because the Samsara fans were still downcast, the overall atmosphere felt rather oppressive. No boos or taunts were thrown towards the opposing side.

The atmosphere in the stadium could affect how a player performed, especially more emotional players. For them, the more intense the crowd, the more exhilarating it was. It didn't matter if the cheers were aimed towards them or the other side, the cheers could help ignite their fighting spirit all the same.

The atmosphere in Samsara's stadium was abnormal. It was only the second player in the group arena, but because of Zhou Zekai's defeat, the crowd seemed to be dispirited and cold.

However, this ice-cold atmosphere seemed to be far more comfortable for Mo Fan compared to the past. His footsteps were light and quick as he walked towards the stage.

The match soon began, and the two characters loaded in.

The map wasn't a random map, so the group arena lineups were predetermined. Jiang Botao knew who his next opponent would be.

But while Mo Fan's Deception loaded into the map, Jiang Botao was in a similar mood as the crowd. He was still thinking about the previous match and was having trouble readjusting his mindset. ( B oxnovel.com )

Ye Xiu's Lord Grim only had 4% of his health remaining from his battle with Zhou Zekai. However, with that 4%, he was able to take out 24% of Jiang Botao's Empty Waves. This was not a good outcome.

But if you considered that Ye Xiu had healed at the start and his true health wasn't really 4%, it wasn't too bad.

But he couldn't seem to forget how he had believed that he had seen through Ye Xiu, but in reality, he hadn't, and Ye Xiu was still able to get off a combo on him.

Even though he was able to quickly stabilize his footing again, he had indeed experienced Ye Xiu's fearsomeness.

He hadn't looked down on Ye Xiu. At the start of the fight, there had been a psychological battle. Jiang Botao's words hadn't been fierce. There was no unadorned ridicule. He had used a rather passive-aggressive method to get at his opponent. This was because he knew that to these experienced old players, that sort of unadorned trash talk wouldn't faze them. On the contrary, the seemingly more careless but sincere remarks were more likely to tilt them.

Jiang Botao wasn't the first on Samsara to go up, but before the match had started, he had talked with Ye Xiu quite a bit.

It didn't seem like he was trying to provoke Ye Xiu. He just seemed to be calmly stating a fact. However, Ye Xiu exposed his intentions to teach them a lesson. Jiang Botao's calm and collected provocation had clearly succeeded.

He had wanted to trigger this sort of mentality from Ye Xiu. That way, when he faced Zhou Zekai, he might play more rashly and become distracted by Jiang Botao's words. Even if he won against Zhou Zekai with this mentality, when he faced Jiang Botao, he might play poorly from being too excited...

In short, Jiang Botao's goal was to break his concentration.

However, it ignited Ye Xiu's fighting spirit instead. Then, he beat Zhou Zekai and fought against Jiang Botao well enough to display his "fearsomeness".

Jiang Botao was at a loss. He wasn't sure if his mental attack had worked or not.

If the skill gap had been wide, then this sort of mental attack was useless. But Ye Xiu was facing Zhou Zekai! There wasn't a wide skill gap.

That was why Jiang Botao was rather inclined to believe that Ye Xiu hadn't been provoked by him in the end.

Was the attitude that Ye Xiu displayed just in order to make me overly optimistic?

This was the "fearsomeness" that Jiang Botao experienced. The subtleties in this psychological battle couldn't be completely uncovered in just a few minutes. The psychological battle was no less fierce than the battle on stage.

Loading complete!

When these words popped up, the scene instantly shifted to his character's view. The countdown finished, and Jiang Botao immediately refocused.

Ye Xiu? Who? What did he do? No idea!

His opponent was Mo Fan. What he needed to do was beat him, that was all.

Jiang Botao's attention quickly returned to the match, to the opponent he would be facing next, to Happy's Mo Fan.

A quiet, persistent, patient, and explosive player.

He played rather unorthodoxly, but what was more astonishing was that after an entire season, these unorthodox traits still remained. Jiang Botao was very curious to how Happy practiced. Had there been any guidance for this rookie?

Could they all be self-made geniuses? But Happy didn't only have one rookie though. The others weren't as unorthodox as him.

Unless Happy told him the answer, thinking about it was pointless. Knowing the reason wasn't important anyways. As long as he could see what condition his opponent was in, that was all that was needed.

Empty Waves began to move, going straight towards the center. At the same time, Jiang Botao typed out in the chat: "Straight to the center? Going around? Thanks."

No response. Jiang Botao wasn't surprised. Up until now, no one had seen Mo Fan say anything during a match, let alone respond to trash talk.

Jiang Botao hadn't expected any response from Mo Fan, and reality proved that he was right.

Empty Waves quickly reached the center of the map. The center of the map had a huge stalactite that connected the ground and ceiling.

Before Jiang Botao got close to it, he looked around, and sure enough, Mo Fan's Deception had taken a roundabout path. ( B oxnovel.c om )

Mo Fan would circle around 9 times out of 10 to set up an ambush, and it looked like this time was no exception.

But this was Samsara's map. When choosing a map, the map should be advantageous to your side but disadvantageous to the other side. The map should help the players on your side perform, while restricting the players on the other side. That was how a map should be picked.

Mo Fan's playstyle was restricted by this map. Seeing that the other side hadn't gone straight towards the center, Jiang Botao had Empty Waves find a spot and wait there quietly.

There were three stalactites in his immediate surroundings. The closest one was still a distance away. If Mo Fan wanted to ambush him from there, he would still be able to react in time. By positioning himself here, he seemed to have shut down Mo Fan's preferred methods.

"Would you like my coordinates?" Jiang Botao had finished finding a spot. He continued to check his surroundings and tried to communicate with Mo Fan.

Mo Fan spoke more in the game than in real life, but when playing in a match, he didn't like to talk with his opponent, especially if it was to respond to this sort of useless chatter.

I don't need your coordinates because I already see you...

Deception was hidden behind one of the three stalactites close to Empty Waves.

It wasn't easy to ambush him at this distance, so Mo Fan patiently waited.

But Jiang Botao didn't move.

In these circumstances, if Jiang Botao didn't move and he didn't move, he would be the one penalized. Mo Fan had made this mistake before, and he still remembered it clearly.

He checked the time and made sure that the other side wasn't going to move. Mo Fan was helpless. He could only act.

Deception peeked out his head from behind the stalactite.

Jiang Botao had been checking his surroundings the entire time. Suddenly, he noticed a flash of cold light from one of the stalactites. Deception had thrown a Shuriken towards him.

Empty Waves dodged it and then quickly moved forward, swinging his Divine Chains. Jiang Botao didn't think a simple swing of his weapon would hit Deception, who only had a small part of his body exposed. As a result, when he swung his Divine Chains, he used Waltzing Wave Slash to curve his attack.

Deception pulled back and then took out his ninjato. He stabbed it into the stalactite and then leapt onto it.

Jiang Botao couldn't see what Deception was doing, but he also wasn't charging in. After all, Spellblades were a mid-range class.

Empty Waves moved laterally to expand his vision.

At this distance, Empty Waves could see Deception above. Mo Fan's attempt at a sneak attack was like child's play. Mo Fan had completely overlooked the characteristics of his opponent's class.

But no one had expected Deceptions to move along with Empty Waves. Empty Waves moved to the side to widen his vision, while Deception also circled around to keep himself hidden.

He had predicted what Jiang Botao would do!

At Happy's player bench, Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and the others gave off smiles of gratitude.

Mo Fan was becoming more and more like a pro player. For example, predicting what the opponent would do based off of the opponent's strengths.

He had been trained in an unorthodox way. His playstyle was unique to him, but his thoughts, his intuition, and his approach towards the game was becoming more and more like a pro players'.

He was playing the game like it was a competitive match rather than like his former scrap-picking days. With this change in perspective, he was gradually forming his own way to better utilize his strengths to win.

The more time went on, the less Ye Xiu worried about Mo Fan's future. Mo Fan might not like talking to others, but that didn't mean he refused to change. He had his own way of doing things. It might be

slower than if he listened directly to his advice, but what he found in the end would definitely be the most suitable and the best for him.

“It’s good to be young!” Wei Chen suddenly sighed. He had also seen Mo Fan’s quiet growth and hated how he wouldn’t have the same opportunity as him ever again. If not, no matter how difficult it was, he would certainly try his hardest to break through and improve.

Growth was the domain of the young!

### **Chapter 1595: Calm Terror**

Waltzing Wave Slash, missed.

There was not a soul in sight.

The others on Happy were gratified seeing Mo Fan’s read on Jiang Botao, but this alone wouldn’t be enough to baffle him. Mo Fan had learned to make decisions according to the opponent’s class. How could an even more experienced player like Jiang Botao not be able to either?

Deception was a Ninja. Ninjas could use their ninjato to climb up walls, and no pro player would ever overlook this ability when playing against a Ninja. Because Empty Waves was a certain distance away from the stalactite, he could see the majority of it. When he moved to the side to take a look from a different angle, he also moved forward, which allowed him to see the entire height of the stalactite.

But there was nothing below or above.

Jiang Botao reacted at lightning speed. Empty Waves immediately went back to his previous position.

Deception was instantly exposed. Empty Waves slashed upwards, sending a Light Wave Slash towards him. The slash came out at the speed of light, tearing through Deception. Poof!

“It’s a Shadow Clone Technique!!” Pan Lin shouted as if he were crying out in surprise in place of Jiang Botao. In reality, with their omniscient view over the battle, they had already known this would happen. As Mo Fan’s Deception circled around to prevent Empty Waves from seeing him, he also used a Shadow Clone Technique. The shadow clone remained hanging on the stalactite, while the real body dropped to the ground and then disappeared.

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Deception had used Underground Tunneling Technique to hide and then strike at the right opportunity.

Hua!

Deception drilled out of the ground, earth still crumbling away from him, as he aimed straight for Empty Waves’ throat.

But by this time, Empty Waves had retracted his Divine Chains, Guard!

Ding!

Their weapons collided. Empty Waves used the impact to slide backwards. He was even able to react to such a sudden Underground Tunneling Technique?

Earthquake Sword!

Empty Waves threw out an Earth Wave Slash. It was too close, too fast, and this time, Mo Fan wasn't able to react in time. Deception was hit by the attack.

It wasn't that Jiang Botao's reaction speed had been godly, but rather that he had been ready. He had seen through Mo Fan's plans. The Light Wave Slash had simply been a bait.

After Earth, Fire and Ice! Two successive wave slashes one after the other. However, when the ice crystals swept over, all that was frozen was a straw dummy.

Substitution Technique!

Mo Fan had used a Ninja skill to escape this combo. This was why the "Three Fold Wave" was always "Light, Fire, Ice" in that order. Otherwise, the combo could be broken. Earth Wave Slash didn't have the same speed as Light Wave Slash. As a result, there was an opening between the following Fire and Ice Wave Slashes, which Mo Fan seized, using a Substitution Technique to escape.

Substitution Technique teleported the user to a random location, so Mo Fan didn't know where he would end up at himself. It would naturally be even more difficult for the opponent to follow since there was no logic behind it.

Mo Fan had taken advantage of this randomness multiple times in the group arena against Tyranny. He gambled again and again, and in the end, he was able to beat Tyranny's Qin Muyun.

That fight had left a deep impression on many people. And now that Mo Fan had used Substitution Technique again, their first thought was that it wasn't to escape but rather to attack!

Jiang Botao also realized this point. Empty Waves didn't just stand there stupidly. He looked all around him, swinging his sword in a circle.

Magic burst from his blade, covering all of Empty Waves.

Nebula Wave Slash, the Level 75 Spellblade skill. When used, the magic would be shaped randomly. But the magic could also be controlled by the user. One way was to have it spread around 360 degrees. This skill was extremely flexible, allowing the user to use it in surprising ways. After this skill came out, it became hugely popular among Spellblade players. Spellblades mainly added points into their Wave Slashes or Wave Formations. However, the Nebula Wave Slash was so fun and useful that even players who specialized in Wave Formations would spend their skill points to learn and level it.

Pro players obviously wouldn't learn it just because it was fun. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves specialized in Wave Slashes. As a result, he had spent a lot of effort coming up with ways to use this skill.

Mo Fan really had used the Substitution Technique to attack. He didn't want to repeat the same strategy as before, but he simply realized the fact that the Substitution Technique's random teleport could catch the opponent off guard. He was just taking advantage of it right now.



He threw a Storm Shuriken towards Empty Waves and rushed forward to close in. But then, he saw Empty Waves turn in a circle, creating a protective barrier around him with a Nebula Wave Slash.

Shua!

The fast and powerful Storm Shuriken was blocked by the Nebula Wave Slash and deflected to the side. The priority of Nebula Wave Slash wasn't low, having properties of both offense and defense. For a moment, Mo Fan wasn't able to find any openings.

When Jiang Botao turned and used Nebula Wave Slash, he had located Deception. The Nebula Wave Slash appeared to be a complete circle, but after Jiang Botao found Deception, he immediately made some slight adjustments. In the end, the Nebular Wave Slash formed a large crescent moon. His shortsword, Divine Chains, swung towards Deception. Instead of spreading outwards, the magic swept towards that direction.

The AoE covered at least five or six body lengths. The magic wave was neither concentrated nor dispersed. It was like a wall that was pushing towards Deception.

Dodge?

Dodge where?

Up? Down? Left? Right?

In the end, Jiang Botao was able to turn the Nebula Wave Slash into a gigantic AoE attack. Deception's escape routes had been sealed, and his escape tools, Shadow Clone Technique and Substitution Technique were on cooldown.

But Mo Fan didn't just sit there doing nothing. Deception immediately retreated backwards. The Nebula Wave Slash was shaped like a crescent moon, which meant that there was more room to escape from the sides. Deception wanted to take advantage of this point.

But as the Nebula Wave Slash expanded, it quickly patched up these openings on the side. The magic was densely weaved together with no openings. This time, Mo Fan was helpless. The retreating Deception was swallowed by the Nebula Wave Slash...

Everyone looked towards Deception's health... but they discovered that the powerful Nebula Wave Slash didn't deal as much damage as everyone had expected.

This Level 75 skill had a very high base damage, but because of how spread out it was, the damage was reduced considerably.

Loud thunder, but only small drops of rain...

That was the feeling this attack gave off. Some people felt disappointed. Some people saw this attack as nothing more than the start of a combo.

Empty Waves got up and gave chase, sending out Wave Slash after Wave Slash, magic slash after magic slash striking Deception. The combo meter soared as Deception's health plummeted. There was unexpectedly nothing Mo Fan could do. Empty Waves didn't only include the unbreakable "Three Fold Wave", but also many other Wave Slash skill. Even so, Mo Fan wasn't able to find an opening to escape?

Escaping was what Mo Fan was best at. In terms of escaping, Mo Fan was number one even in the pro scene.

But right now, his Deception had unexpectedly been completely locked into place by Empty Waves.

By Empty Waves, a Spellblade!

This was worthy of astonishment.

Although Spellblades were Swordsman, they were considered a mid-ranged magic class. There were two ways to play Spellblades. The first was to specialize in Wave Formations, larger AoEs and strong CC. The other way was to specialize in Wave Slashes, stronger DPS but weaker CC. Their mid-range meant that they didn't have the same oppressiveness as close-ranged classes.

However, Jiang Botao's Empty Waves had linked together his Wave Slashes so tightly that not even a master at escaping like Mo Fan was able to get away.

How is he doing it?

Those familiar with Spellblades were in awe. They couldn't see the reason. They could only be in awe at Jiang Botao's skill. No wonder he was the number one Spellblade. He could do what others couldn't.

As for the pro players, they quickly discovered the secret.

Prediction and positioning!

Whenever Jiang Botao's Empty Waves used a Wave Slash, he would never be in the same spot. He was fully putting to use the characteristics of every Wave Slash, searching for the most suitable position to send his attack where he wanted it to go, striking Deception and continuing the combo.

Every attack was a read. This was because Mo Fan wasn't just doing nothing. He was trying to find an opening, and every struggle from Deception was read perfectly by Jiang Botao.

"No, he isn't just reading him..." Ye Xiu said.

"He's constantly putting out bait. Every attack he makes leaves what seems like an opening, but this opening will quickly be patched up by his next attack. Mo Fan is too sharp. His reactions are too fast. The moment he sees the opening, he immediately goes for it. However, by then, Jiang Botao has already patched it with another attack, which then leaves another opening... it's a strategy that works against Mo Fan specifically. He's taking advantage of Mo Fan's strengths, rather than his weaknesses. That guy's quite terrifying." Ye Xiu said.

"It never feels like he's that great of a player though..." Chen Guo said.

"Because he's too calm." Ye Xiu said.

### **Chapter 1596: Vice Captain's Song**

In recent years, Jiang Botao's placings in the All-Star rankings were quite high. Everyone felt like he was an amazing player, but whenever people were asked to say what specifically was amazing about him,

nine times out of ten, they wouldn't be able to answer back. They had that feeling in their heart, but they didn't know how to describe it in words.

Even Team Samsara themselves couldn't seem to find the right words to describe their vice-captain. In the end, his fame seemed to simply be because he was the vice-captain of a championship team.

And now, Ye Xiu had given him high praise: terrifying!

A calm terror!

Chen Guo couldn't immediately understand what Ye Xiu meant by that. She really wanted to drag Ye Xiu over and explain it more clearly, but right now, Mo Fan's situation was more concerning.

A calm terror... it wasn't important that she understood it. What was more important was whether Mo Fan could.

A 27 hit combo!

This was the number on the combo counter. It was extremely eye-catching. Even a close-ranged class would have difficulty pulling off this long of a combo. Spellblades had it somewhat easier to get a high-hit combo since their wave swords counted for several hits, but a 27 hit combo in one breath wasn't easy at all.

Spellblades were Swordsman, but unlike Blade Masters and Berserkers, their strikes didn't feel like strikes. For those classes, combos were an important metric to measure a player's skill. On the other hand, Spellblades were more similar to Mage classes like Elementalists and Witches. Although they could also combo, no one measured an Elementalist's skill based off how long their combos were. It would almost be forcing the Elementalist into doing something they shouldn't be doing.

As a result, if these types of Mage classes ever put out long combos, it was mainly a sign that they were crushing a noob. However, this was the Glory championship finals, a battle between the very best players. No matter how new or how much of an underdog Happy was, to reach this step, it was impossible for them to be noobs.

There were no noobs in the finals. Mo Fan may be a rookie, but he was undoubtedly a troublesome opponent. Even so, Jiang Botao was able to get his Spellblade to perform such a long combo against this sort of opponent on the finals stage!

This obviously wasn't him crushing a noob. It was an unprecedented display of brilliance. When the combo reached 30, the crowd went wild. After Zhou Zekai lost to Ye Xiu, Samsara's fans seemed to be unable to accept it and became dispirited. But starting from that Nebula Wave Sword, their spirits reignited. With each hit, their spirits rose to new heights. When the combo counter hit 30, a Spellblade performing a 30-hit combo, their blood was boiling!

Cheers, applause, the entire stadium was filled with shouts of Jiang Botao's name. The silence had finally been broken, and the one who did it was Jiang Botao, Samsara's vice-captain.

The crowd suddenly started to sing. No one knew who started it, but the person wasn't able to get the whole crowd going. It didn't seem like many people knew the song. Even the fans singing it weren't in unison. It was a mess of noise, and the song lyrics were unclear. Their unfamiliarity with the song leaked

in every way it could. Even so, they continued to sing and sing. Suddenly, a powerful and united chant began to reverberate in everyone's ears as if the entire song had been a build up for this chorus.

When you're in joy, that's when he strikes.

When you're in joy, that's when he strikes.

...

Those who couldn't sing, those who didn't know the lyrics, when this phrase came, the entire stadium seemed to echo with this chant, again and again.

This was the song of Samsara's vice captain. Even the fans weren't familiar with it. When they sang it, not many fans knew it. In fact, very very few fans knew it. This was because their team had Zhou Zekai, and all the flashy stuff was done by him. Numerous songs had been composed for Zhou Zekai, but the fans hadn't forgotten about their vice-captain. Even though he wasn't a flashy player, just like their song said: when the opponent's feeling happy, their vice-captain strikes. They would always remember this point clearly.

Like today.

Their Zhou Zekai had unexpectedly lost. The fans didn't care what exactly their opponents were feeling, but in any case, they believed that their opponents would definitely be in glee seeing Zhou Zekai's defeat.

The crowd had become depressed a result. But at this moment, their vice-captain stood up, executing a rarely-seen high-hit combo from a Spellblade, awakening the crowd and burning down their opponent's delight.

Their vice-captain didn't disappoint them. They had been so downtrodden that they had forgotten to put their hopes onto him, yet he still stood up and gave them the support they needed.

It was because he was always so reliable in these crucial moments that Jiang Botao became so popular. Placing high on the All-Star rankings wasn't that easy. It showed that he truly had support from a huge number of fans.

"You can do it!"

"You have to win!"

"We are the champions!"

The chant ended, and the cheering began again. Samsara's home crowd had recovered, and the Happy fans in the away team seats were once again surrounded in enemy territory.

Mo Fan wouldn't know about any of this. Even if he knew, he probably wouldn't have any reaction. He definitely wasn't the "you" in the song, he hadn't been in joy.

30 hits!

Mo Fan hadn't been able to escape. He had tried to search for openings, but his opponent would always patch those immediately. Mo Fan could faintly feel something. But even though a 30-hit combo sounded

long, in reality, it was only a matter of seconds. He didn't have time to think carefully about what that feeling was. Suddenly, the attacks stopped.

Spellblade skills were strong, but also had relatively long cooldowns. After this combo, an opening soon appeared because he didn't have any suitable skills to continue it.

Dodge?

Charge?

These two thoughts flashed through Mo Fan's mind.

Charge!

Empty Waves was in front of him, four and a half steps away. For a Ninja, this distance was negligible. Running and then re-establishing an offense might not get him this sort of opportunity.

Deception rushed out, forming hand seals.

Ninjutsu – Ground Shrinking Technique!

Four and a half steps became two steps. Deception had closed in onto Empty Waves. However, all he saw was the cold light from Empty Waves' Divine Chains. It wasn't magic, but a sharp sword light.

Moonlight Slash!

With a flash of light, Deception was launched into the air. Naturally, the second part of the "Dual Moon Slash" followed, Full Moonlight Slash.

Full Moonlight Slash's Blow-Away effect pushed Deception away, giving Empty Waves space to swing his sword again.

Wave Wheel Slasher!

The waves of magic locked Deception into place...

That four and a half steps of distance hadn't been an opportunity, it had been bait. His set-up hadn't worked on Ye Xiu, but he didn't lose confidence in himself. Facing Mo Fan, he calmly made these arrangements. His utilization of Mo Fan's strengths and weaknesses became the core of his set-up. Mo Fan seemed to have stepped into a quagmire. The more he moved, the deeper he fell.

Earth Wave Sword!

Empty Waves slashed again with his sword, sending an Earth Wave Sword at Deception. Peng! Purple smoke suddenly spread out, engulfing Deception and the Earth Wave Sword.

Ninjutsu – Smoke Bomb!

Jiang Botao reacted quickly. His Earth Wave Sword had missed. He couldn't see where Mo Fan was, and he didn't know whether Mo Fan would run or attack him. As a result, he had Empty Waves retreat. First, open up some distance between them. Then, he saw a figure dart out from the purple smoke from where the Earth Wave Sword had swept towards.

Shadow Clone Technique?

Deception had been in the air when he threw out the Earth Wave Sword. To dodge the attack, he could have only used a skill.

Ghost Slash!

Jiang Botao had been ready. He swung his Divine Chains, using a Ghost Slash straight towards Deception, sending him flying. But then, one, two, three...

Deception after Deception rushed out from the purple smoke, while the sword light from his Ghost Slash was still moving.

It wasn't Shadow Clone Technique. It was Shadow Dance!

Jiang Botao couldn't help but be surprised. He knew that there was an opening before the Earth Wave Sword would arrive when Wave Wheel Slasher ended. If Mo Fan took advantage of the opening well enough, he could dodge it. But Mo Fan had actually been able to use Shadow Dance during this tiny opening.

Ninja hand seals could be considered as a cast time. It was just that the cast time depended on the player's hand speed. Using Shadow Dance with such a tiny opening was truly brave, yet to actually succeed showed how frightening his hand speed was.

What was more amazing was that... Shadow Dance succeeded, but he didn't hurry to attack. He first sent out a bait to lure him into attacking. Then, while he was still in the attack's ending lag, he attacked.

Wasn't this what he had just been doing to Mo Fan? This punk... a tooth for a tooth so fast?

For a moment, Empty Waves was surrounded by shadow clones. For a Spellblade, it wasn't easy to deal with attacks from all sides. Empty Waves swung his sword, using normal attacks to parry and block what attacks he could. An opening! He raised his sword, Waltzing Wave Sword!

This Waltzing Wave Sword's arc was extremely large. As soon as it came out, it started to curve, dispersing the Deception shadow clone to his side. It didn't stop there, continuing its arc towards the next one!

Jiang Botao's Waltzing Wave Sword was used adeptly. He had it go around him. After it hit a target, its power would decrease, but it would keep going, hitting target after target.

In an instant, the Waltzing Wave Sword went in a large arc, destroying three of Deception's shadow clones. A huge hole was created in the encirclement. Empty Wave swung his sword again, a Fire Wave Sword opening a path as he rushed out!

But Mo Fan refused to let him go. He cancelled his Shadow Dance and intercepted Empty Waves, Ninjutsu – Exploding Flame Dragon!

Boom!

Two balls of fire erupted.

The Fire Wave Sword's burst was extremely strong, sending Deception flying far away. But at the same time, Empty Waves was also hit full force by Deception's attack.

Exploding Flame Dragon. A Level 75 Ninja skill. Even when matched against the Spellblade's most powerful wave slash, its damage wouldn't lose out.

### **Chapter 1597: A Good But Unsustainable Game**

Mo Fan suddenly went aggressive. To outsiders, it seemed to simply be a different choice due to the circumstances, a change in tempo. But to Happy, it was another breakthrough for Mo Fan.

Mo Fan had grown as a scrap picker. His instinct was to prioritize his survival, now and in the past. His entire play style revolved around survival.

In his previous matches, there were times when he rushed his opponent, but this sort of blow for blow combat was mostly out of helplessness. However, his decision to trade Exploding Flame Dragon for Fire Wave Slash was a proactive choice. This was a step forward towards his future.

Turn around and go again!

The moment Deception touched the ground, he immediately turned around to attack again. He threw a Shuriken to open up a path and quickly formed hand seals.

Ninjutsu – Hundred Streams

Hundreds of streams of water rushed towards Jiang Botao's Empty Waves, but the distance was a bit far. Empty Waves was able to dodge it with ease. However, in that time, Deception turned into a blur and suddenly appeared in front of him.

Ninjutsu – Flickering Pursuit!

Ninjutsu – Bird Fall!

Annihilation!

Attack attack attack! Mo Fan suddenly became extremely aggressive. It was as if he had become a different person. Even if it could be considered a breakthrough, it felt rather exaggerated.

Undaunted by dangers, he attacked furiously.

At this point, even his teammates on Happy felt surprised at Mo Fan's sudden shift in mentality, let alone Jiang Botao.

Deception weaved forward, backwards, to the side, from above, from below, all around Empty Waves, searching everywhere he could for an opening to attack. Empty Waves seemed to be at a loss. Jiang Botao was clearly caught off guard.

Samsara had obviously studied their opponents in the finals, and stand-out players like Mo Fan, who had clear and defined playstyles, were relatively easier to grasp. In the first game in the finals, Mo Fan hadn't given them much trouble. It had only been three days since then, yet it was almost like he was a

different person. They had never seen him play this way in the finals, in the semifinals, in the regular season. It just had to be now!

“Nice! Beautiful!!!” Chen Guo cheered.

“Yeah, good job!!!” Ye Xiu nodded his head.

What he saw wasn’t just Mo Fan doing what he had never done before. What he saw was Mo Fan’s purpose and goal.

For someone like him who prioritized survival, why would he suddenly charge in aggressively all of a sudden? Because he noticed that Jiang Botao’s Empty Waves currently had no skills available to use. Spellblade skills were powerful, but their cooldowns were long. Not caring about combos was hard for normal players, but for pro players, it was worse for a Spellblade to overuse their skills to continue a combo.

To produce a combo, attacks needed to be chained together fast enough. However, for Spellblades, if they tried to chain their skills together that fast, their cooldowns wouldn’t be able to keep up and soon, they would have no skills left to use.

To guarantee that there were always skills that could be used, classes like Spellblades could not pursue these types of long and flashy combos.

Jiang Botao had performed this type of combo in this match though. The spectators had been in awe watching it, even singing their vice-captain’s song. However, the pro players knew what this thirty-hit Spellblade combo would entail. Mo Fan had caught on, choosing to rush down Jiang Botao, doing what he didn’t like to do.

Jiang Botao hadn’t expected this to happen. He had performed that combo in order to stir the crowd. How could he not know that their fans were downcast after Zhou Zekai’s defeat?

If he could take out Ye Xiu beautifully, he could boost their morale. Unfortunately, he failed. Instead, Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim used his 4% to take out his 24%. The crowd’s morale sunk even lower.

As a result, when he fought against Mo Fan, he did a risky Spellblade combo.

The reason that he took this risk was because he reckoned that Mo Fan wouldn’t seize the opening that came afterwards. That player would always play his own way, refusing to interact with his opponent, regardless if it was for better or for worse.

But he was wrong. Not only did Mo Fan take advantage of the opening, he was very decisive, staking everything on it.

Mo Fan still hadn’t opened up to interacting with his teammates, but he had opened a new page on the stage.

Mo Fan went all out, showing a fighting strength that he had never shown before. Jiang Botao did his best to defend.

He’s playing beautifully!



Ye Xiu agreed with Chen Guo. But... beautiful wasn't enough.

Mo Fan had taken advantage of the opening, but he wasn't able to fully utilize it. He knew that Jiang Botao didn't have many skills he could use, but he also couldn't finish the battle here. Jiang Botao just needed to defend himself until his skills came back off cooldown, but did Mo Fan have a way to fight his opponent once those skills came off cooldown? Could take it another step and adjust his mentality to hold on to his current advantage?

It looked like he didn't...

In the end, he lacked experience.

Mo Fan was able to seize this opportunity, but he wasn't able to fully take advantage of it. He could burst, but he didn't have the control to maintain a drawn-out offense.

To do the latter, he needed to have a deeper understanding of his opponent and his opponent's class.

Happy had, of course, analyzed Jiang Botao. At this point, Mo Fan had a good understanding of every class in Glory, but for right now, it wasn't enough.

He had created an advantageous situation for himself, but he didn't have the experience to maintain it. It was unfortunate, but it showed hope for the future.

He lost.

In the end, Mo Fan lost.

Jiang Botao had only been caught off guard for an instant. He quickly regained his footing. Even though he hadn't been able to retaliate much, he was able to stabilize the situation. Then, once his skills came off cooldown, he started his counterattack. In the end, he was able to gain back the upper hand and beat Mo Fan.

However, Empty Waves only had 11% of his health left. This outcome was far worse than Jiang Botao had expected. He had thought he had complete control over the battle, but he had been caught off guard by Mo Fan's sudden outburst. The lead that he had was reduced to just 11%. It hadn't been easy for him to reinvigorate the crowd, but unfortunately, most of his efforts had been ruined by Mo Fan's counterattack. Luckily, he was still able to win in the end. The Samsara fans didn't feel that their singing had been for nothing. Their vice-captain didn't let them down, so their mood was much better than before.

Mo Fan left the stage amidst congratulatory applause. Usually, his non-interactive playstyle was frequently met with boos in away team stadiums. Today, he had shown a surprising amount of aggression. For a moment, Samsara's fans couldn't find anything to pick at. Instead of booing, they applauded his performance.

Mo Fan never cared though. He quietly walked back to his team.

"Nice job!" Everyone on Happy exclaimed.

Mo Fan looked at the stage and at the screen.

11%. It was a small difference. Just a bit more and he could have won. No matter how well you played, what was the point if you lost?

Mo Fan wasn't happy with the result. As he walked back to his seat, he clenched his fists tightly, staring intently at Jiang Botao's 11% health Empty Waves.

"Keep up the good work. There will be more chances in the future," Su Mucheng waved her hands towards Mo Fan and said.

Mo Fan stared blankly at her. Before he could nod his head, Su Mucheng turned around and headed towards the stage. She was Happy's next player.

The Samsara crowd had returned to their usual state, cheering excitedly for their team. Even though Empty Waves only had 11% health left, they had hopes for Jiang Botao. The fans at the away team seats cheered for their team, but the shouts from Samsara's fans drowned them out.

Su Mucheng wasn't as expressionless as Mo Fan. She wore a smile on her face as she walked onto the stage.

Su Mucheng was Happy's third player in the group arena. She would be playing against Jiang Botao. The match began.

Dripstone Cave. For Sharpshooters, it provided them space and cover. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain was a Gunner as well, and she could take advantage of the space as well. Because she was longer ranged, it wasn't as good for her as it was for a Sharpshooter, but in general, the map was favorable for Su Mucheng.

There was no way to choose a perfect map that would make it difficult for every opponent. After all, there would be class overlap between teams. Both teams could have players with similar play styles as well. When it was advantageous for one team, it could also be advantageous for the other team. When choosing a map, you could only do your best.

In today's match, Su Mucheng was Happy's winner. When the battle began, she immediately headed for the center of the cave.

Samsara's Jiang Botao took his time though, seeing what the circumstances were. With only 11% of his health remaining, he decided not to go straight for the center, instead choosing to circle around from the left.

Su Mucheng gradually approached the center of the map. She naturally didn't see any traces of him. She didn't continue forward, instead stopping immediately.

She didn't lean to the left or right. She centered herself at the center and lifted her handcannon.

She looked ahead, to the left, and to the right. For other classes, the purpose of having a wide field of view was to find the opponent earlier. However, for Launchers, their attacks could be launched from afar.

It didn't matter what route Empty Waves took. It seemed like he wouldn't be able to escape from Dancing Rain's artillery fire.

The broadcast cut the screen into two. One part showed Dancing Rain's point of view, while the other showed Empty Waves'.

The dripstone was sparsely scattered throughout the cave. Trying to move completely hidden was impossible, and it didn't look like Empty Waves was trying to hide himself. He simply went along a straight line. What was the point of circling around then? Many members of the crowd couldn't help but ask.

### **Chapter 1598: Still One Eye**

The commentators analyzed Empty Waves' movements from different angles. Once Ye Xiu had left the stage, Pan Lin and Li Yibo felt a huge weight off their chests. Their discussions became more colorful and vivid. As the distance between the two players grew nearer, the small screen showing Su Mucheng's perspective grew larger.

Where was Empty Waves moving to? The viewers knew, but would Su Mucheng be able to tell?

What was the secret behind Jiang Botao's movements?

Everyone was trying to figure it out! Empty Waves rushed out from a stalagmite and appeared in Su Mucheng's view.

Secret?

The discussion between Pan Lin and Li Yibo stopped. The two had been chatting, thinking up all sorts of possibilities. The one possibility that they hadn't talked about was that there was no ulterior motive behind Jiang Botao's movements...

How could they say that!

The two had the same thought. If they said north, when it was actually south, how could they show their faces? Ye Xiu was an exception. Facing Ye Xiu, they would try not to make any predictions, but they couldn't do that with everyone. There wouldn't be any commentary then.

"Hurry up and talk!!"

The two characters had encountered each other, but the commentary had suddenly stopped. The director wasn't happy at all and yelled at them.

Talk? Fuck off!

Pan Lin cursed inwardly, but he had to talk.

"What a surprise... Jiang Botao... just let Empty Waves appear in Su Mucheng's view..." Pan Lin said powerlessly.

The ones most surprised were him and Li Yibo. All of their previous analysis had been wrong.

"What is he thinking?" Even Li Yibo didn't pretend like he knew and simply stated the truth.

"We can only wait and see," Pan Lin remarked, and then the two went silent again.

As soon as Empty Waves appeared, Dancing Rain aimed her cannon at him, but didn't immediately fire at him.

Dancing Rain had the range to attack him. However, the farther away the target, the more time there was for the target to dodge. It was hard to guarantee that she would hit him. Su Mucheng didn't feel like her attacks would be much of a threat at this distance. She was better off just doing nothing.

Empty Waves didn't rush towards her either. He continued to circle around as if it was just another day in the park.

He had already been exposed. What was the point of circling around?

Su Mucheng turned, following his movements. Soon, everyone noticed a peculiarity. Whether it was closeby or far away, the dripstones were arranged neatly along a jagged line.

Empty Waves took cover behind these dripstones. The logic behind this positioning was the same as when Ye Xiu evaded Zhou Zekai in the first fight of the group arena. Sure enough, Samsara had also discovered this method.

Su Mucheng immediately had Dancing Rain rush out, changing her angle to find Empty Waves.

None!

Empty Waves was nowhere to be seen. Which stalagmite was he hiding behind? Su Mucheng wasn't sure.

The spectators could see his location clearly. When Empty Waves escaped from Su Mucheng's line of sight, he immediately began to move inwards to get closer to Dancing Rain. He was aiming for three stalagmites, each one taller than the other. It would allow him to close in without being seen.

If she moved just a bit more to the side, she would find him!!

The Happy fans were praying anxiously. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain was just one step off...

Step!

Dancing Rain finally took that awaited step, widening her vision. However, Empty Waves had already moved from the shortest stalagmite to the next shortest one and was now onto the tallest one. With this switch, Su Mucheng's line of sight was blocked by a stalagmite.

Jiang Botao was predicting her movements and acting accordingly!

Everyone could see this. Jiang Botao hadn't taken advantage of the map too much in his previous two fights. As a result, everyone had overlooked the fact that Samsara had chosen this map. This time, he utilized the map to the fullest, efficiently closing the distance between Empty Waves and Dancing Rain. The distance between the tallest stalagmite and Dancing Rain was completely within the attack range of a Spellblade. Spellblades wouldn't fear Launchers in a confrontation at this distance.

He reached it!

Thunderous applause followed. Jiang Botao reached his goal just as they had expected. As for Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain? It seemed like she was still carefully investigating Empty Waves' whereabouts.

He can attack!

Everyone thought.

Then, they saw Su Mucheng's camera suddenly turn around. Dancing Rain stepped to the side and opened fire!

Boom boom boom!

The first to attack was unexpectedly Dancing Rain. Three Anti-Tank Missiles fired. With a bang, a Stinger burst apart like fireworks in the air.

Then, a roll!

Boom boom boom!

Three consecutive explosions. Empty Waves swung his sword, intercepting the three Anti-Tank Missiles with a Fire Wave Sword! This was the reason why Spellblades didn't fear Launchers at this distance. Their wave swords had a higher priority than Launcher artillery shells. A collision between their magic and the Launcher's artillery shells would result in an explosion, and their magic would still continue along its original trajectory!

Hu!

The Fire Wave Sword continued to sweep towards Dancing Rain, who rolled away to just barely dodge it.

Bang!

The Stinger split apart in the air. Eight missiles rained down. Spellblades could use their wave swords to intercept these missiles, but these missiles were spread out like an angel scattering flowers. It wasn't possible to intercept them all with one swing. As a result, Empty Waves dodged to the side. Dancing Rain got up from her roll and then set-up a Mounted Gun.

Light filled Jiang Botao's screen. A Laser Beam shot towards him. The two were fighting at mid-range. The Laser Beam moved faster than anyone could react. Jiang Botao had expected there to be a follow-up to the Stinger and was planning on continuing to dodge, but the Mounted Gun had strengthened Laser Beam. Even though he predicted correctly, he wasn't able to dodge it.

"With so little health, why bother making it so complicated!"

Su Mucheng typed out. The 11% health was instantly obliterated under her Launcher's heavy firepower.

The crowd was dumbfounded.

Jiang Botao had circled around and avoided being seen by Su Mucheng. Empty Waves successfully got into range. Everything seemed to be going smoothly. But how did it become Su Mucheng making the first move? It had only been an instant, and Empty Waves was dead?

The viewers couldn't understand. Too many people couldn't understand. Jiang Botao himself didn't understand either.

Had he exposed an opening?

No...

After casually walking out into view, Jiang Botao had seen Dancing Rain's position. The route that he had chosen to follow afterwards would allow him to hide from Dancing Rain no matter what she did. Yet Su Mucheng had been the first to draw first blood, putting him on the backfoot. His movements had been completely seen through. How did she do it? Instinct? Or did she guess it?

Happy hadn't chosen this map, so how could they have such a strong understanding of the map?

He truly didn't understand why he had lost!

Jiang Botao tried to struggle. But with only 11% health, it wasn't enough. Being able to survive for so long was thanks to his class being a Speblade. Plate armor offered high defense.

He fell...

Empty Waves died. His ghost floated up, and his screen turned gray. Jiang Botao stared blankly at the surrounding battlefield as his ghost floated higher and higher.

Suddenly.. Jiang Botao saw something floating above that stalagmite. It seemed to be some sort of spinning round object...

That's... Electronic Eye...

Jiang Botao was speechless. He hadn't thought that Dancing Rain would bring along this skill.

Electronic Eye was a Mechanic skill. The user could see whatever the eye saw. This was the skill that Su Mucheng had placed on her weapon. Everything was answered.

He had carefully observed Dancing Rain, calculated a route, and made predictions. It turned out that a simple Electronic Eye had ruined all of his plans. Dancing Rain might not be able to see him, but the Electronic Eye could.

The broadcast had finally found the reason as well. A replay was performed from the Electronic Eye's perspective. It wasn't as clear as a character's point of view, but it was clear enough to see Empty Waves' movements. Su Mucheng had grasped Jiang Botao's intentions very early on, but she calmly went along with it. She waited until the final moment to get the first attack off before Jiang Botao, cleanly sweeping away the rest of his health.

Jiang Botao walked down from the stage.

The Samsara fans had been hoping that Jiang Botao would be able to deal a lot of damage to Su Mucheng like what Ye Xiu had done to him, but instead, Su Mucheng finished him off cleanly. It was rather disappointing, but when they thought of Jiang Botao's brilliant performance in the previous fight, their moods instantly lifted. Both sides were now at their third player. Su Mucheng had won with 100% of her health intact. The match was completely even. However, the Samsara fans had complete confidence in their next players.

Lu Boyuan!

An All-Star, the number one Grappler in Glory, got up and walked towards the stage.

Applause was sent towards Jiang Botao.

Applause was also sent towards Lu Boyuan.

We are the champions!

Samsara's fans roared.

### **Chapter 1599: Extremely Far versus Extremely Close**

Lu Boyuan had once given an amazing performance in the Season 8 finals between Samsara and Blue Rain. He had been a huge reason for Samsara's first championship trophy. After that year's finals, Lu Boyuan's fame soared. In the All-Star voting the next year, he placed thirteenth, replacing the previous All-Star Grappler player, Li Yihui, a former Tiny Herb and current Team 301 player. From then on, Lu Boyuan stood at the peak of his class. As for Li Yihui, he had once been an All-Star as well, but because of the transfer, he quickly disappeared from everyone's sights. The title of number one Grappler became uncontested.

This season, Lu Boyuan had successfully entered the All-Stars again. Although it wasn't high, only 22nd, anyone who made it into All-Stars was one of Glory's most popular players. Moreover, Samsara had invited another top player, Sun Xiang, into the team, along with a legendary character like One Autumn Leaf to accompany him. As a result, there was a lot of competition within Samsara's fan base for who got the votes. Lu Boyuan squeezing into the ranks of the 24 All-Stars wasn't easy. If he was less skilled or less popular, the other stars on Samsara might have taken away the spotlight from him.

Zhou Zekai, Sun Xiang, Jiang Botao. These three Samsara players placed above tenth on the All-Star rankings. Their 4th All-Star, the 22nd Lu Boyuan, was put as Samsara's third player in the group arena.

The crowd cheered and clapped, showing how popular he was. The players on Samsara were making their existence known one after the other to let everyone understand that they weren't just a one-man team.

The match began amidst the applause. Because of Su Mucheng's perfect victory in the last fight, both sides were at full health. Dancing Rain had used up a bit of mana, but it was more than enough to last another 1v1 fight. There was practically no difference in their conditions going into the fight. On the other hand, their classes were as different as they could be.

This main difference was their range.

Launchers had the longest range out of any class. As for Grapplers? Even among the Fighter classes, Grapplers had 2/3 the attack range of Strikers, who specialized in close combat. Not only did they need to land a hit on their opponent, they needed to grab their opponent. In order to deal damage to their opponents, they needed to be at point blank range.

The atmosphere in the stadium was quite good. On the other hand, the commentators, Pan Lin and Li Yibo, were in a not so good mood. Their faces had been slapped too hard. They still talked about the battle between the longest range and shortest range classes, cleverly shifting the topic to a discussion

between classes rather than a discussion between players. That way, there would be no way for their faces to get slapped. It was a safe plan.

Soon, the two characters met at the center of the cave.

Su Mucheng didn't hesitate. Dancing Rain immediately fired at him. Lu Boyuan didn't hesitate either and dodged.

Facing heavy gunfire from a Launcher, it would be hard for him to force his way through. However, Lu Boyuan didn't plan on doing that. After locating Dancing Rain, he began to survey his surroundings. When Dancing Rain started shooting at him, he had already planned out a route in his head. His Chaotic Cloudy Mountain quickly hid behind a stalagmite.

Stalactites and stalagmites were scattered around Dripstone Cave. In the previous fight, even though Jiang Botao was finished off by Su Mucheng with one combo, he had showed a deep understanding of the map. If not for Su Mucheng's "Electronic Eye", it was hard to say how that fight would have turned out.

Jiang Botao had utilized the map well, and Lu Boyuan wouldn't be any less familiar with it than him. However, compared to Jiang Botao, he knew about Su Mucheng's "Electronic Eye", so he was naturally on guard against it. "Electronic Eye" was a small robot about the size of a ping pong ball. If it just floated in the air the entire time, it wouldn't be too hard to notice, but in the last match, Su Mucheng had the Electronic Eye drop down to a certain spot, making it much harder to see.

The broadcast also knew that Su Mucheng had this skill up her sleeve, so they kept a close watch by displaying her point of view as the main viewpoint. Before, they had only given a smaller screen in the corner. As a result, they hadn't noticed the Electronic Eye interface until the replay.

This time, the broadcast was mindful of it. However, Su Mucheng hadn't used Electronic Eye, even when Lu Boyuan hid behind the stalagmite. She didn't hurry and send out the Electronic Eye to scout around. Instead, Dancing Rain moved to the side to see if she could find Chaotic Cloudy Mountain from a different angle.

With a turn, she was able to see half of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's body. Dancing Rain immediately started shooting. Lu Boyuan had been paying attention to her though. He shrunk back and retreated. Dancing Rain continued to fire as she pulled away. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had retreated quickly, but Dancing Rain had promptly followed after him. Soon, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain circled halfway around the stalagmite. On the other hand, for Dancing Rain to circle around that far, she would have to cover much more distance. If the two decided to spin around this stalagmite, Dancing Rain's radius would be ten times that of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's. How was she going to keep up?

As a result, Dancing Rain stopped. She aimed away from Chaotic Cloudy Mountain and fired.

The flames from the explosion burst forth in front of the stalagmite. Su Mucheng wanted to use the AoE from Launcher attacks to hit him. Even though her attacks wouldn't directly hit Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, they would still deal some damage. Unless Lu Boyuan wanted to just sit there and take damage, he would certainly expose himself sooner or later.



Su Mucheng's plan was quite good, but it had been within Lu Boyuan's expectations. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain didn't stick close to the stalagmite. He was using it more as a way to block Su Mucheng's line of sight rather than to block her attacks.

How much of Su Mucheng's vision was blocked depended on the distance between them. Lu Boyuan had a good grasp of this dead angle for Dancing Rain's previous position. He was using the dead angle to hide and move. Amidst the explosions, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had used the dead angle to get behind a different stalagmite.

However, the viewers noticed that Su Mucheng had finally used Electronic Eye. She didn't use it to scout ahead but to circle around that stalagmite. That stalagmite blocking Su Mucheng's vision was also blocking Lu Boyuan's vision. She took advantage of that fact and quietly advanced as she attacked.

Soon, the Electronic Eye got behind the stalagmite. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had already left. The Electronic Eye circled around two times, locating the next stalagmite that Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was hiding behind.

Dancing Rain continued to move silently, but her movements had clearly quickened. This time, when she sent out the Electronic Eye, she didn't have it scout ahead. Instead, she had it take a different path than Dancing Rain to get a more comprehensive view of her surroundings. As a result, the stalagmites no longer blocked her vision. Su Mucheng had a complete grasp of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's location.

Lu Boyuan once again tried to use Dancing Rain's dead angle to get to another stalagmite. A crosshair lit up at his feet. By the time he noticed it, it was too late. A Heat-Seeking Missile crashed to the ground, and the ensuing mushroom cloud engulfed him. Dancing Rain came out from behind the stalagmite, her cannon aimed at the mushroom cloud, ready to shoot. Suddenly, a formless power grasped onto her, and she was sucked into the mushroom cloud.

Cloud Grasping Fist!

Su Mucheng had figured out what it was.

The mushroom cloud dispersed. Qi was swirling around the palms of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's palms. From his stance, wasn't that the Qi Master's "Cloud Grasping Fist"?

In the previous fight, Jiang Botao's plans had been ruined by Su Mucheng's Electronic Eye. In this fight, Su Mucheng's plans were ruined by Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's Cloud Grasping Fist.

The crowd erupted into cheers. Samsara's fans had been worried for Lu Boyuan because they thought that Su Mucheng had complete control over the situation. They hadn't expected a sudden reversal. How did he do it?

The stadium's electronic screen did a replay, showing what Lu Boyuan had done.

When the Heat-Seeking Missile descended, Lu Boyuan had no intentions of dodging. He immediately activated Reinforced Iron Bones. Even though this Heat-Seeking Missile dealt heavy damage to him, because of his Super Armor, he wasn't sent flying away. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain used the explosion as cover for his Cloud Grasping Fist. No matter how many eyes Su Mucheng had, she couldn't have known about Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's counterattack. Lu Boyuan had predicted that Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain would expose herself in order to make follow-up attacks. Sure enough, Dancing Rain came out from

hiding. He immediately grabbed her, and in the blink of an eye, Dancing Rain was pulled in front of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain. The distance between the two sides was now zero!

Spinning Throw!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's movements were incomparably fluid. After pulling Dancing Rain in front of him, he grasped onto her firmly, twisted his body, and threw her into the air. At the same time, he also jumped into the air upside down. His legs wrapped around Dancing Rain's neck.

Aerial Twist!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain flipped around, sending Dancing Rain crashing to the ground. The Grapplers' relentless tossing had just begun.

### **Chapter 1600: Tank**

Spinning Throw, Aerial Twist!

Two skills in quick succession. Dancing Rain's health dropped in chunks like an elevator going down. However, the combo counter was only two.

For combos, Grapplers were in an even worse situation than spell-based classes like Elementalists, Witches, Spellblades. This was because of how grab skills worked. Other classes could rely on their experience and instinct to find a way to break out of a combo. But since Grappler grabs could not be broken out of, if Grapplers could combo, then there would be no counter play.

Long combos were very difficult to pull off with spell-based classes like Elementalists and Witches. However, long combos were impossible for Grapplers. Let alone against a pro player, Grappler combos were extremely limited even against a motionless sandbag.

As a result, when looking at a Grappler, statistics on combos were completely ignored. Using a DoT attack to increase the combo count wasn't considered a combo, and chaining together skills couldn't be done by Grapplers. Grapplers had to rely on reads to perform inescapable combos that the system didn't count.

Aerial Twist!

Dancing Rain was ruthlessly thrown towards the ground. It was hard not to think of the character as the player. It was as if Su Mucheng had been thrown towards the ground headfirst. Thinking of how Su Mucheng's beautiful face would look like afterwards, even the Samsara's fans couldn't help but sigh.

Lu Boyuan obviously didn't care. As soon as Chaotic Cloudy Mountain landed on the ground, he rolled and then stood up. As for Dancing Rain? Knockdowns from grabs could not be Quick Recovered. She could only wait until her face slammed into the ground. However, Dancing Rain didn't immediately stand up. She lay on the ground and turned, aiming her cannon at Chaotic Cloudy Mountain.

Boom!

Light flashed.

Su Mucheng's response showed her experience against Grapplers. No matter how she got back onto her feet, her opponent would have a way to counter it. She had to attack first or use some other method to disrupt him before he reached her.

Su Mucheng had experience playing against Grapplers, but Lu Boyuan had taken her experience into consideration. Light flashed. A missile shot out, but Chaotic Cloudy Mountain suddenly dropped down.

You think I can't hit you if you stay flat on the ground? How could Glory have such a huge flaw? Ground sweeping attacks were meant for these situations. Even basic attacks had a ground sweeping effect if they landed. Lying flat on the ground and not getting up wasn't an invincible buff.

Elbow Drop!

Dancing Rain wasn't getting up, so Chaotic Cloudy Mountain might as well get down to the ground too. His elbow went straight for Dancing Rain's throat.

Su Mucheng had been waiting for Lu Boyuan to attack. Dancing Rain rolled to dodge the strike. Suddenly, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain stretched out his arm. Elbow Drop was cancelled, and his hand grabbed onto her. One Hand Grab.

Dancing Rain was suddenly pulled back. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain fell to the ground, but Dancing Rain was dragged back to the ground as well. In one fluid movement, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain rolled and got up. On the other hand, because Dancing Rain was knocked down by the skill, she was slightly slower.

This was the foothold that Grapplers needed to continue their attacks after grabbing an opponent. As for the side that was grabbed, breaking out from this hold was the key to taking back the initiative.

And this was much more difficult for long-ranged classes like Launchers. As a class that was extremely bad at close combat, having a Grappler close in meant that she was already halfway to losing. Su Mucheng needed to bring back victory from defeat.

Roll!

Dancing Rain immediately tried to get up. This wasn't the smartest choice, but on occasion, choosing the bad option could catch the opponent off guard, making it a good option.

But unfortunately, Lu Boyuan wasn't caught off guard.

After Chaotic Cloudy Mountain got back onto his feet, he immediately locked onto what choices Dancing Rain could do to get up. Lu Boyuan never overlooked the options that seemed bad and that no good player would choose to do.

Ground Toss!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain planned on pinning her back to the ground. Just when he was about to grab Dancing Rain's head, he suddenly heard a loud boom. Fire and smoke flashed from beneath Dancing Rain, immediately sending her to the left. She had used the recoil from her shot to bounce away.

He missed!

He missed his grab. He immediately rushed forward to try again, but the moment Dancing Rain dodged the grab, she aimed her cannon towards him.

Boom boom boom!

Three Anti-Tank Missiles at such a close range. These three missiles aimed towards three different points. It could be seen that she had complete mastery over this low-level skill.

Dodge!

Lu Boyuan had been ready for an attack, but the AoE covered by these three missiles had been outside of his expectations. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain tried to dodge, but he was still hit by one of them in the end. The explosion pushed him back.

He had been wary of her attacks, yet he still hadn't been able to dodge in time. This time, Su Mucheng had blocked Lu Boyuan through pure technical skill. At this distance, Lu Boyuan wasn't able to keep up.

With one of the missiles hitting, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain lost the initiative. The distance between the two sides started pulling apart, and a distance of two or three steps was already too far for Chaotic Cloudy Mountain to grab Dancing Rain.

Dancing Rain hadn't completely gotten back onto her feet, but she was still able to leap back. The distance of two steps became four steps. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had finally steadied himself and immediately rushed forward. But then, Dancing Rain's cannon flashed again.

I can't back down!

If he were ten or twenty steps away, Lu Boyuan might not have forced it. But the two sides were only three or four steps away. Even though he couldn't grab her at this distance, it was still favorable for him. He couldn't use Grappler skills, but Launchers were greatly restricted too. Their weakness of a slow firing speed was fully exposed, and there was no threat of combos from them.

Forward!

Lu Boyuan didn't hesitate. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain dodged. He had his body sway left and right irregularly as he charged forward to meet the attack.

This wasn't a read. At the same time, Su Mucheng had no way of reading his irregular swaying either.

This was a gamble!

At this distance, it was impossible for Chaotic Cloudy Mountain to react once the artillery shell was fired. Dancing Rain didn't have time to make any precise calculations either.

One attack!

Everything depended on this one attack.

If this attack hit, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain would be forced back and the distance would widen even farther.

If the attack missed, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain would close the distance, and Dancing Rain would once again be within his grab range.

Would the attack hit?

The entire stadium went silent. Everyone watched as Chaotic Cloudy Mountain swayed left and right as he ran towards Dancing Rain. Dancing Rain aimed steady, yet there was no pull of the trigger. Although she was also retreating, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain moved much faster than her. She would soon be caught, yet she seemed to be waiting. What was she waiting for?

Close! Reach out!

Lu Boyuan hadn't expected Su Mucheng to not do anything. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had closed in, his hand reaching towards her. Even if she attacked now, he should still be able to grab her, right?

Probably... right?

Just before he grabbed onto her, her cannon suddenly lit up with a bright blue light.

Not good!

Lu Boyuan realized it, but it was too late.

There was no explosion. It was just a sudden release of energy.

The artillery shell flew out slowly, but it was flashing with blue light, crackling like lightning.

X-1 Extruder!

At the last moment, Su Mucheng had Dancing Rain use X-1 Extruder. It was a rare Launcher skill with CC.

Was this a read? A set-up?

No.

It was another show of technical prowess!

X-1 Extruder gave off light when used that warned the opponent. It also moved rather slowly. If she had used it immediately, even at a distance of three or four steps, Lu Boyuan would have easily dodged it. If it missed, Su Mucheng wouldn't have a second chance.

Launchers had low attack speed. This attack speed wasn't referring to how fast the missiles flew, but rather the amount of time it took for them to reload and shoot again. Whether it was a basic attack or a skill, it required reloading. Launchers were slow because of this reloading process. No matter how fast your hands were, it wouldn't matter. The only way to speed up this reloading process was by wearing equipment that increased attack speed.

Launchers couldn't combo at such a close distance because of this reason. Once they fired a shot, by the time they fired the next one, the opponent would have already closed in. As a result, there was only one chance.

Su Mucheng let Chaotic Cloudy Mountain get near her. She waited until he was about to grab her before launching an X-1 Extruder.

Attack speed couldn't be changed through faster inputs. However, the input was what gave the command to use the skill. The faster the command was completed, the earlier the skill would be used.

An X-1 Extruder one step away.

Su Mucheng relied on this daring move to strike Lu Boyuan.

There was nothing Lu Boyuan could do. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was immediately sucked into the X-1 Extruder and then sent flying away. He could only watch Dancing Rain move farther and farther away. The effects of X-1 Extruder could not be disrupted.