

Avatar 1631

Chapter 1631: Perseverance Creating an Opportunity

The broadcast, the pro players, and the more skilled viewers were focused on Fang Rui's battle with Lu Boyuan and Fang Minghua. Only the viewers who were mostly there to watch the flashy stuff continued to linger on the battle in the trash room.

The battle taking place there was indeed incredible as well, and it could also decide the match. However, from an overall perspective, Fang Rui's suppression towards the two Samsara players was the true match point. The outcome of this match would likely depend on Fang Rui.

And right now, he had vastly exceeded everyone's expectations. To think he would be able to hold them off in a 1v2 for so long. Samsara's two players were unexpectedly unable to get past him.

Of course, if Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain wanted to go, Fang Rui wouldn't mind at all. Fang Rui's goal was clear. He wanted to stall Fang Minghua's Laughing Song. If Lu Boyuan was going to give him trouble, then he would deal with him. If Lu Boyuan wanted to leave, then he would be more than happy to let him leave.

Lu Boyuan had already abandoned Du Ming once. Whether it was from a strategic perspective or a mental one, he couldn't abandon Fang Minghua too. Samsara was already down one player in the team competition, and down a total of three points overall.

This bastard...

Lu Boyuan grit his teeth, trying to catch Boundless Sea. He just needed to grab him once, and the deadlock would be over. Fang Minghua also understood this reasoning and did his best to help Lu Boyuan.

But Fang Rui was just too crafty. He was bringing out his dirtiness to his limits. Boundless Sea weaved in and out, and there were plenty of times where he had brushed past Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's fingers. The difference was just by a hair.

This wasn't a matter of luck.

Fang Rui was playing at his peak. It wasn't like he couldn't dodge more safely, but he was intentionally making the margin of error as small as possible. He had done this ever since Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's first attempt to block him. From beginning to end, he had gotten past Lu Boyuan as efficiently as he could so that he could have more time to deal with Fang Minghua's Laughing Song. If not, there was no way he would have been able to hold down Samsara's two players for so long. This was why the pro players were so astonished. For such precise movements, once or twice, nothing too special. But for him to do it again and again for so long? How focused did he have to be? How tiring must it be?

Yes, very tiring!

Fang Rui soon could feel the fatigue hitting him, and he had only held them down for not even a minute.

He had been mentally prepared, though. He knew how difficult it would be. In Ye Xiu's 1v3, Ye Xiu had used his overwhelming disadvantage to keep his opponents' attention on him. However, for his 1v2, he needed to take the initiative and proactively seize control of the battle.

And he did it.

So far, only the word "perfect" could describe what he had accomplished.

He was exhausted, yet he was still constantly racking his brains to win control over his opponents.

He had played to his limits in the group arena as well. After only a short rest, he had to play again in the team competition.

Persevere, persevere to the end!

Fang Rui knew how important his task was. If it was said that their foundation had been established through Ye Xiu's 1v3, then their final path to victory would be brought out by him.

He had never thought of himself as this team's core. All he wanted was to perform well enough to match his pay and position. He knew that this was a moment that could likely decide the match. All he needed to do was to persevere.

He didn't set himself a goal, counting down. Fang Rui only had one thought: persevere, persevere until the end. He would hold down these two players until the moment they won. Before that moment came, he would never relax.

One minute...

One and a half minutes...

Two minutes...

Two and a half minutes...

Fang Rui persevered, playing absolutely perfectly. Not even the slightest opening could be seen in his plays. More and more people started shifting their attention to his side. More and more people were noticing the inconceivable. The pro players had forgotten about their bets long ago.

One minute. That had been the upper limit of their bets. There had only been a single person who called out this time, Team Wind Howl's Ruan Yongbin. The second highest bet was 45 seconds. When Ruan Yongbin shouted out one minute, no one had taken him seriously. Everyone knew that Ruan Yongbin and Fang Rui were former teammates, and the two had a good relationship with each other. He had yelled out one minute as a way to cheer his friend on.

But now, a minute?

Wrong. Everyone had been wrong, very wrong. Even Fang Rui's friend, Ruan Yongbin had underestimated Fang Rui's capabilities.

Two and a half minutes. This was the current record, and it was still going. His perfect playing made it so that Fang Minghua's Laughing Song couldn't escape, which in turn made it so that Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain couldn't leave.

The battle in the trash room had lasted for two and a half minutes too. It was no longer two separate battles. The two sides had grouped together, turning it into a 3v4.

Samsara was at a numbers disadvantage, but these three top ten players were nothing to scoff at. From the looks of it, they were actually the ones on the offensive. The three were using Little Cold Hands as their breakthrough point, constantly sending out attacks towards him.

On Happy's side, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had become Little Cold Hands' flower protector. He practically never moved more than an inch away from him. Su Mucheng and Qiao Yifan were on the side, providing them support.

Fang Rui was playing out of his mind in the 1v2 to win Happy this 4v3, yet Happy wasn't able to turn this into an intense back and forth. In fact, they were the ones on the defensive. It was hard not to feel that it was a bit of a pity. However, the experts knew that although Happy was on the defensive, they weren't feeling burdened. Their defensive position was because they saw what the opponents wanted and were going along with them.

Focusing the healer was a very standard strategy, but no team's healer had ever been so disgustingly focused like Happy's during the season. With so much experience facing this strategy, Happy was very proficient in these situations. What's more, they had put in great effort into practicing and studying how to take advantage of this weakness since their very beginnings.

For other teams, when the enemy focused their healer, their conditioned reflex was to protect their healer. But for Happy, when the enemy focused their healer, their conditioned reflex was to look for opportunities to kill their opponents.

This sort of intuition had become Happy's style. Even if they hadn't made any preparations before the match, if they ever came across this situation, Happy's players would instinctively look for ways to turn it around.

Every team's protection over their healer was purely defensive. Only Happy was different. Their protection over their healer was extremely aggressive. Their healer had originally been their weakness, but as the season went and their weakness improved, Happy had also set up all sorts of barbs. You could target their weak point, then you wouldn't come out unscathed. More often than not, it would end up being your guillotine.

It wasn't that Samsara didn't know this point. As their opponent in the finals, they had researched Happy thoroughly. However, their current situation was out of helplessness.

They were attacking, Happy was defending. However, the health they were losing wasn't low. On the other hand, Happy had a healer healing them. After two and a half minutes, the damage was building up.

“!!!!”

The three of them hadn't sent out this message just once. They were also very surprised to see that their support still hadn't arrived yet. The thought of Fang Rui stalling their two players for this long hadn't even crossed their minds. If they had known, they definitely wouldn't have fought in this way. They

would have created an opportunity to get out of the trash room and reconvene with their other two players.

But they didn't know, so they kept waiting. Half a minute, a minute and a half, two and a half minutes...

The inconceivable had happened. Fang Rui had held down Lu Boyuan and Fang Minghua for a two and a half minutes.

At this point, the three of them had lost the possibility of turning this around!

During these two and a half minutes, it wouldn't have been impossible to have Lu Boyuan abandon Fang Minghua and go in to help the rest of his teammates. Or the three could have escaped from the trash room and made contact again with Fang Minghua and Lu Boyuan. However, turning points happened in an instant. After two and a half minutes, the three of them couldn't keep up the same aggressive offense as before. They had no choice but to be more cautious about their character's health. Who let them attack so unrestrained before? The reason that they had been so unrestrained was because they kept thinking that their support would arrive at any second. How could they have known that not a single sign of them would come even at this point?

Rush out of the trash room now?

The three looked at the health on their characters. If they gave in even a little, Happy's four would definitely counterattack with everything they had. During those two and a half minutes, they could have forcefully made their way out. However, if they forced their way out now, they would definitely lose one or two people.

Having already lost a player, Samsara was down by three points. Until the last moment, Samsara didn't want to take the risk of losing another. No matter how they looked at it, hoping for the 2v1 over there to have a breakthrough was more reliable than the three of them forcing their way out.

The three minute mark was approaching. In the end, Samsara chose to wait.

The spectating pro players didn't feel like Samsara was doing anything wrong. Right now, everything was because of Fang Rui, because of his miracle. At the beginning, everyone just thought that Fang Rui's stalling would just help Happy win some time and widen the lead a bit more. But now, Fang Rui's stalling had become the deciding point of this match.

How much longer could Fang Rui hold on for? If Lu Boyuan and Fang Minghua successfully broke through right now and successfully got to their teammates, Happy would have a lead, but not a win. The tradeoff would truly be somewhat disappointing.

Time continued to pass.

Everyone's attention continued to be focused on Boundless Sea's battle with Samsara's two players.

Angel's Might!

Suddenly, Laughing Song's cross let out a brilliant light. Fang Rui had held down the two of them long enough for Laughing Song's Angel's Might to come off cooldown.

Chapter 1632: Unbreakable Wall

2 minutes and 45 seconds, the cooldown on Angel's Might. Fang Rui had held off Fang Minghua and Lu Boyuan for nearly three minutes, until this skill came off cooldown.

Fang Minghua immediately had Laughing Song use Angel's Might. Angle, position, and timing. Fang Minghua wanted to use this opportunity to finally break this stalemate.

The halo of light burst forth!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea couldn't dodge it or resist it. He could only be forced back. And this time, his previous Cloud Pushing Palm wouldn't work. It wasn't that he couldn't use it, but that the distance was too far. Because of their positioning, if he pushed Laughing Song with Cloud Pushing Palm, he would just be helping him leave faster.

After Laughing Song cast Angel's Might, he immediately turned and ran. Lu Boyuan didn't have Chaotic Cloudy Mountain follow after him to protect him. Instead, he sprinted straight towards Boundless Sea. Even though it looked like this Angel's Might had given Fang Minghua enough space to escape, Lu Boyuan felt uneasy. He wanted to use this opportunity to completely shut down Boundless Sea and prevent any future regrets.

Charge!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain sprinted towards Boundless Sea, who was starting to lower himself. Boundless Sea's two hands moved towards the ground.

This trick again?

No one would fall for Fang Rui's act this time, but maybe he was doing it precisely for this reason? With Fang Rui's dirtiness, what couldn't he do?

Thinking about it was too complicated, so Lu Boyuan didn't bother thinking too deeply on whether Fang Rui would repeat the same trick. He regarded it as a possibility, and when he attacked, all he would have to do was be on guard against it, no?

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain sprinted over diagonally. Lu Boyuan had calculated how far Boundless Sea would be pushed. By rushing over right now, he would reach Boundless Sea's final destination. Lu Boyuan had set his sights on that location, and Boundless Sea was moving towards it just as he was expecting.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain didn't stop to take a rest. He jumped.

Aerial Twist!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain dropped from the air, his two legs grabbing towards Boundless Sea's neck. By doing it this way, Boundless Sea's Landmine Quake wouldn't be able to affect him.

Fall!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's two legs moved towards Boundless Sea. This 1v2 would finally end here. Even though Fang Rui wasn't able to last long enough to clinch Happy's victory, no one overlooked Fang

Rui's efforts and impact on the match during these three minutes. His freakish plays had vastly exceeded everyone's expectations. He had played spectacularly. He wasn't able to win Happy the game, but he had helped Happy win an enormous lead.

If... many people, including Samsara fans, were thinking about ifs.

If Happy's four players hadn't been Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Qiao Yifan, and An Wenyi, and instead been what Li Xuan had envisioned: Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Li Xuan, and Zhang Xinjie, players on an equal level as Samsara's three players, the time won by Fang Rui might have been able to lock in Happy's win...

What a pity!

While praising Fang Rui's performance, everyone couldn't help but feel a bit regretful about the outcome.

But just when everyone was thinking this, Boundless Sea's head suddenly dropped, and then...

Missed!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's Aerial Twist missed?

Quite a few crowd members, including people watching at home, couldn't help but stand up in shock. They needed to confirm that it wasn't that the attack missed, but Boundless Sea had dodged it.

Yes! He dodged it!

Boundless Sea rolled to get away from Chaotic Cloudy Mountain. Afterwards, he went straight for Laughing Song.

Qi Flowing Cloud!

Boundless Sea activated this buff again. Angel's Might had come off cooldown. The same went for Qi Flowing Cloud. Boundless Sea moved as if he were riding the wind, quickly closing the distance between himself and Laughing Song. Behind him, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's two legs formed a weird arc as he landed on the ground. He didn't have time to make another move, and unexpectedly fell to the ground just like that...

Lu Boyuan's mind was a mess.

He hadn't felt like his Aerial Twist would hit for certain. After all, there hadn't been any set-up. He was just using the knockback from Angel's Might. He wouldn't be too surprised if Boundless Sea dodged it, and he had thought of countermeasures in case he did dodge it.

But he was very surprised right now.

Not surprised at how Boundless Sea dodged it, but when.

Not just Lu Boyuan, but everyone had thought that the Aerial Twist would hit, yet Boundless Sea was able to complete a dodge. Fang Rui's movements had been so precise and tight that even a needle wouldn't be able to get through...

Lu Boyuan had panicked at that moment, and instinctively did what he had planned on doing if Fang Rui dodged the Aerial Twist. He cancelled Aerial Twist, and turned it into a Circle Sweep Kick. His two legs went into a weird arc because he had used this skill...

But Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was too close to the ground. Because Boundless Sea had lowered himself, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's target had been low to the ground. And with how precise Fang Rui's timing was, when the Aerial Twist missed, there was no time for him to make another move. Even though Lu Boyuan was able to use the skill, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was only able to do half of a Circle Sweep Kick before hitting the ground. As a result, he looked like he was kneeling now.

"This guy..." Let alone the normal viewers, even the pro players were all stunned. Fang Rui's condition and playing couldn't be described with just "great," "spectacular," "on fire," those usual descriptions. Fang Rui himself might not even fully realize what exactly he had achieved during these few minutes. But everything that happened on stage would leave its mark on stage, in everyone's mind, and turn into Happy's win!

Boundless Sea had once again caught up to Laughing Song. With a Downwards Qi Flow, he knocked Laughing Song down and then with a Fling, he threw Laughing Song behind him.

Three minutes!

Samsara's two players had once again been stopped by Fang Rui. Just how long could he last?

No, this was no longer the right question.

It should be, how long were Samsara's two going to take to break through Boundless Sea's airtight wall?

As for Ye Xiu and the others? They should be taking advantage of this opportunity, no? Even if they couldn't see what Fang Rui was doing, it had been three minutes, yet Samsara's support still hadn't arrived. The others on Happy should have realized by now what sort of situation Fang Rui had set up for them. The opportunity had been created by Fang Rui, but they had to be the ones to grasp it!

Chapter 1633: Godly Play and a Clumsy Method

Attack!

Fang Rui had fought hard for this opportunity, yet why weren't the others on Happy attacking?

Anyone that wasn't a Samsara fan was practically screaming in their heart. They didn't want to see Fang Rui's godly performance be buried because his teammates weren't doing anything.

The camera turned around.

The crowd turned around.

Fang Rui had brought about an opportunity. The following question was whether this opportunity would be grasped. Happy playing safer previously could be explained by not expecting such a godly performance from Fang Rui. However, now that the battle had gone on for so long, and Fang Rui was

still stopping Samsara's support from arriving, if Happy didn't make a more aggressive move, it would be rather puzzling.

Attack!

Countless people clenched their fists, waiting for this moment to happen. The Happy fans in the stadium had already stood up, but none of them made any noise. They stared intently at the stage, their attention on the ongoing battle in the trash room.

Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi.

Lord Grim, Dancing Rain, One Inch Ash, Little Cold Hands.

It's time!

Go!

Use everything you have and win!

Explosions rumbled. The battle taking place here had never stopped, but at this moment, everyone seemed to hear a change in the tempo from these explosions. Dancing Rain's artillery fire had begun pushing forward, and Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had finally moved away from Little Cold Hands.

Armor-Piercing Missile! Colliding Stab!

Under Dancing Rain's cover, Lord Grim rushed out, colliding with One Autumn Leaf, who had been focused on attacking Little Cold Hands. Facing the character that had once been his, Ye Xiu didn't hold back. The sharp sword in Lord Grim's hands stabbed towards One Autumn Leaf's chest in an attempt to push him back.

Little Cold Hands had started casting a spell. Holy light began to spread outwards, enveloping his surroundings. This was the Cleric's AoE heal, God's Protection. The skill began as soon as the chant began and ended when the chant ended. During the skill's duration, all allies within its range, including the healer, would receive powerful heals. The amount of mana needed to keep up the chant was massive, significant enough to reduce how much longer the Cleric would be able to heal in the future. The healing efficiency of God's Protection was actually quite low, and the range was very limited. As a result, the skill was rarely seen in pro play. Pro players preferred using their own methods to achieve the same effect but at a much smaller cost.

But for An Wenyi, this was his weak spot. Even though he was improving, it had only been about a year. It wasn't possible for him to become a healing god in such a short amount of time.

An Wenyi was clear about where his weaknesses lay, so he chose to use God's Protection, a skill that normal players thought of as a godly skill, but pro players considered as beneath them.

Suddenly, Lord Grim, Little Cold Hands, and One Inch Ash were bathed in holy light. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had a range advantage, so she was rarely threatened by Samsara. Although she wasn't inside the healing range, she also didn't need to be healed.

God's Protection only covered three characters, making it even more wasteful. But anyone could see that this skill was the signal for their fierce counterattack.

Bang bang bang bang bang!

Gunshots rang!

No matter how subpar An Wenyi may be as a healer, for Samsara's trio, he was their biggest threat.

Cloud Piercer's dual guns fired countless bullets towards Little Cold Hands. During God's Protection, the healer wouldn't be able to move. Once the chant was interrupted, the skill would cease. Lord Grim, who had been guarding Little Cold Hands previously, had finally moved away. Samsara had gotten this far by sticking to their strategy. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf dragged Lord Grim away, while Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer immediately attacked Little Cold Hands. Their focus wasn't misplaced.

Lord Grim had moved away, but a new guardian had taken his place.

One Inch Ash activated Shadow Image, summoning a ghost that shielded Little Cold Hands. An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands had previously helped him block bullets, and this time, Qiao Yifan was returning the favor.

Their talent might not be extraordinary, and they might not have any crazy technical skill, but they could still use this clumsy method to contend with their opponent. Even if their opponent was Zhou Zekai, Glory's Number One, an existence far above them. But at this moment, they knew that Zhou Zekai must be feeling more anxious than them. Their clumsy method was extremely effective at restraining their opponents' attacks!

Gunshots rang again, but Happy's offense couldn't be stopped. Happy had begun their counterattack. Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng, the Golden Partners, led the way, while Qiao Yifan and An Wenyi, the two rookies, supported them from behind using their clumsy methods. Everyone suddenly felt like it might not necessarily be the case that Happy would be better off with players better than their rookies.

Qiao Yifan and An Wenyi weren't Gods, nor were they top players. However, they had their own way of playing, their own way of competing.

A godly healer could rely on their own skill and reactions to prove large-scale healing. But An Wenyi was using a skill that people looked down on, God's Protection, to the same effect.

A godly Ghostblade player could create an inescapable net through their ghost boundaries, making every step taken by their opponents difficult. But Qiao Yifan, even if it was just using his ghosts to block bullets, he made himself known at the most crucial moment, thwarting his opponents' plans just the same.

They weren't the best, but they had their own remarkable aspects.

What they did might not be the most optimal, but their impact on the battle was just as considerable.

Victory was approaching them step by step. This was Samsara's home stadium, a demonic stadium where Samsara had never lost. But at this moment, Happy, a team that had started only last season in the Challenger League, was once again setting a new record, creating a miracle, creating history.

In the second game of the finals, Happy won against Samsara, ending Samsara's perfect win record this season in their home stadium. There were countless highlights in this match alone, but the one that left the deepest impression on everyone was Fang Rui and his godly play that decided the match.

Golden Right Hand?

Today, what everyone witnessed was a pair of God Hands!

Chapter 1634: Joyful in Victory, Calm in Defeat

“Happy wins!! Second match of the finals, Samsara’s home game, Happy obtained victory, they did it!!!” In the televised broadcast, Pan Lin excitedly announced the final result of the match.

Happy’s performance was infectious. Many neutral parties in the audience ended up hoping for a Happy victory. Pan Lin was one such person. He was a commentator, so he should have been the most impartial, and no matter what hope he might have in his heart, he shouldn’t display it so passionately. But in this moment, he couldn’t hold himself back any more. As a professional commentator, even if he sometimes couldn’t analyze a match well enough, even if he was sometimes laughed at and faceslapped, Pan Lin still truly loved this work, and Glory as a game.

A commentator couldn’t be biased, but he wasn’t a robot, there were times where he couldn’t restrain himself. Such as now, like too many other people, he was infected by Fang Rui’s godlike performance and he didn’t want to see Happy miss this opportunity. And now, Happy fulfilled all hopes; the audience and Pan Lin found their hopes fulfilled. In this moment, he couldn’t think about too much, he was completely wrapped up in satisfaction just like those in the audience.

“Samsara’s players also all performed well, but Happy’s players performed better, especially Fang Rui!” After expressing his emotions, Pan Lin probably quickly realized that his self-control had slipped, and he quickly recovered the correct tone.

“Yes. Fang Rui is unquestionably the MVP of today’s match.” Li Yibo was quite loyal to his partner, immediately adding on to the sentence to help Pan Lin recover. He was much calmer than Pan Lin. After all, he was a pro player who had experienced the struggle for the championship, so he was quite worldly.

“Yes, yes. Aside from that, Ye Xiu’s performance was very eye-catching,” said Pan Lin.

“Of course,” Li Yibo agreed.

Defeating Zhou Zekai in the group arena, 1v3 in the team round, hand speed flying toward 500 APM. If Fang Rui’s godlike performance hadn’t upstaged him, awarding today’s MVP to Ye Xiu would also be entirely rational.

By now, the players had all walked out of the competitor booths onstage. But after Happy’s players gathered together, they swept in a circle, but didn’t find their hero of the match, Fang Rui.

“This guy, is he trying to be all dramatic?” Su Mucheng laughed.

Ye Xiu also laughed. He looked at Fang Rui’s competitor booth, and then at the replay on the large screen in the stadium.

Even though this was Samsara’s home stadium, they wouldn’t purposely ignore the outstanding performances of the opposing players. If they lost, they still needed to lose with dignity. Right now, the

screen was showing from multiple angles simultaneously the most thrilling moment of the match, Fang Rui's performance. And this was what Ye Xiu and the others, standing at Fang Rui's side, hadn't seen.

Accurate judgment to the extreme, flawless technique, a dirty method of expression. Using these, Fang Rui pinned down Lu Boyuan and Fang Minghua from start to finish.

Yes, from start to finish.

One minute? Two minutes? Three minutes? Four minutes?

None of these were the limit, and at the very end everyone had basically forgotten this statistic, because it had already lost meaning. From start to finish, Lu Boyuan and Fang Minghua had been unable to escape. Did they still need this statistic?

It was a shocking performance, but as Ye Xiu watched and watched, his original smile grew a bit heavy. He glanced at Fang Rui's booth again, and seeing that there was still no movement, he quickly walked over.

The rest of Happy all realized this as well, and they quickly followed. When the stadium saw this sudden movement of the Happy players, they also seemed to realize something, and they began whispered discussion.

They pulled open the door of Fang Rui's competitor booth. Ye Xiu looked inside, and saw Fang Rui sitting there in the competitor chair in a very comfortable position, almost lying down. When he heard the door open, this guy turned his head, and seeing that it was Ye Xiu, he grinned and said, "Incredible, right?"

"Incredible!" Ye Xiu nodded.

"We won."

"We won!"

"Hahahahaha..." Fang Rui laughed loudly, but as he laughed and laughed, it was clear that he was out of breath.

"It wasn't for nothing!" he said fiercely, and then stood up from his chair. Reluctant to leave, he savored the sight of the screen displaying their victory, and then walked toward Ye Xiu.

"You all came to see the miracle?" Fang Rui laughed, seeing all of Happy gathered behind Ye Xiu.

Seeing that Fang Rui was still in perfect condition, everyone let out a sigh of relief. When the audience saw Fang Rui appear, the Happy fans sitting in the away team area simultaneously burst into cheers and applause. And then, the whole stadium also burst into applause. Even though these were the opponents that defeated them, everyone respected Fang Rui's performance. Any gamer who understood or liked Glory had no reason not to.

The stadium sent their applause to the away team.

To Fang Rui, this was extremely rare. Because of his style, when he did anything remarkable, it was often also infuriating, and during away matches, this meant that the opposing team's fans were furious and

couldn't give him any respect or appreciation. But this time, it was different. Even if there was still sneakiness and dirty play mixed in, he did what everyone thought was impossible.

"Are you alright?" Su Mucheng asked him from the side.

"Why wouldn't I be?" Fang Rui replied, and then waved his arm, acknowledging the applauding crowd. Su Mucheng watched his back, and then looked at Ye Xiu.

Even though Ye Xiu was still smiling, that heaviness from earlier still hadn't faded. When he saw Su Mucheng looking at him, he returned the gaze, answered Su Mucheng's doubts.

The two teams walked toward the center of the stage and began to shake hands. Compared to the pre-match ceremony, this was much more casual, they weren't forced to line up. Fang Rui was the first to walk over, and so he was the first to greet the Samsara players.

"Do you admit defeat?" Fang Rui asked, shaking Zhou Zekai's hand. He and Zhou Zekai were from the same season. And because the All-Star experts from this season all had their own fresh and unique characteristics, they were called the strangest season of players.

The Season 5 rookies ultimately produced three All-Star level players. One developed dirty playing to the peak, dirty until it couldn't be any dirtier – Fang Rui; one was frustratingly silent offstage and yet demonstrated explosive and elegant technique onstage – Zhou Zekai; and the third, Team Void's Wu Yuze, was a fierce and direct... Ghostblade.

Strangeness was the most distinctive trait of their season's players. As same-season rookies, they knew each other quite well, and many were good friends. Some made childish and naïve arrangements with each other during their rookie days.

Fang Rui and Zhou Zekai hadn't done anything like that. After all, Zhou Zekai's personality was right there. But the two of them were indeed familiar with each other.

Zhou Zekai's tendency was to go with the flow, his words as rare as gold. When Samsara heard Fang Rui's chatter about admitting defeat, they really were afraid that Zhou Zekai would just say "Yes." That would just hurt their morale too much.

But Zhou Zekai only smiled a little, and said one word to Fang Rui: "Incredible."

"Hahaha, as long as you know to be scared." Fang Rui was smug! Seeing this, the Samsara players were annoyed. Zhou Zekai clearly hadn't said he'd admit defeat, he said "incredible," he'd avoided the question. But Fang Rui was shamelessly twisting this casual remark. It was clearly an avoidant, polite statement of praise, but this guy actually just interpreted it as Zhou Zekai saying "yes."

"Looking forward to seeing this kind of exciting performance next match." Because Zhou Zekai didn't like speaking, Samsara usually had vice-captain Jiang Botao speaking to the other party on behalf of everyone. The meaning behind his words now was clear: Samsara didn't fear another godlike performance from Fang Rui. Next match, they were confident that they would defeat Fang Rui.

"Hehe, looking forward to seeing this kind of exciting result next match." Fang Rui repeated the sentence structure. Trash talk was his strength as well! How could the Master of Dirty Playing be weak at trash talk.

“Ha ha!” Jiang Botao just laughed and didn’t answer. He knew that with Fang Rui’s personality, continuing to talk would only make him more smug.

Pushing this guy aside, Jiang Botao went to talk with the rest of Happy. And then Fang Rui saw Lu Boyuan, Fang Minghua, and Du Ming, gathered together and glaring at him.

“Hahaha! You guys really suffered this match!” Fang Rui immediately went to greet them with great enthusiasm. The three of them wanted to ignore him, but they also didn’t want to be impolite. These past two years, Samsara had won more often than not, and they were all sorts of daring and energetic. After victory, they wouldn’t be high and arrogant when interacting with the losers, but after a loss, they wouldn’t be petty and small-minded when interacting with the victors. Team Samsara’s popularity had been rising these few years, not just because they were champions, but because this team did many things well. They always acted carefully and appropriately.

Seeing that Fang Rui had clearly just come over to mock them, these three from Samsara didn’t react much. They just gave him plain congratulations.

“Good luck next match!” Fang Rui continued to speak in a mocking tone.

The three of them had been mocked quite intensely, and were now covering their injuries. As though they couldn’t hear the mockery in Fang Rui’s voice, they responded quite seriously with phrases like “let’s all work hard” and whatnot.

As a team that rarely met defeat, after losing such an important match, Samsara’s players were still very calm. Although the stadium fans had felt depressed after this loss, they were gradually moved by this attitude that Samsara demonstrated. Slowly, applause rose up once again in the stadium, and this time, it was no longer respect given toward the victors, but support given toward their own team.

This kind of attitude, this kind of calm after defeat, this caused everyone’s faith in Samsara to be renewed for the third match of the finals. Their Team Samsara would not fall so easily.

Chapter 1635: Class Change, Return to Godhood

Amidst applause, the curtain closed on the match. In the post-match press conference, Samsara continued to display the attitude they’d had when exchanging greetings with Happy right after the match. They had lost, but they were calm. They didn’t lose control of themselves, and demonstrated the appropriate bearing of a championship team. Although they were regretful that their home game win streak had been broken, they expressed that this allowed them to set down some pressure.

And then the victorious Happy came up. The reporters had an armful of questions they wished to ask, but surprisingly, Fang Rui, the player that had attracted the most attention during the match, didn’t appear in the press conference at all.

This was quite unreasonable.

Players who did poorly were often protected after a match and not sent out to the press conference. This, the reporters could understand. But for players that did well, stepping into the spotlight again

during the press conference was something that both the reporters and the team would want to see. And Fang Rui was no rookie, there was no need for this kind of protection.

When they thought about Happy's unusual actions onstage after the match, the reporters suddenly realized something. After congratulating and praising Happy's victory, someone immediately asked, in a half-joking tone, why Fang Rui was hiding away.

And then, they heard an answer that they had already guessed in their hearts: Fang Rui had expended a lot of energy during the match, and was feeling a bit worn out.

However, the one who gave this answer was Ye Xiu, so the reporters had to think it over.

Before, no one had any experience interacting with Ye Xiu, but after this season, the reporters for all of the major media outlets complained about him incessantly. They knew all too well that this person wasn't easy to deal with. His answer right now, was it true or false? Was it a smoke bomb for the last round of the finals?

When they thought about this, the reporters decided, they didn't need to worry about whether it was true or not. The plot to deceive the enemy had already been deployed. Whether or not Fang Rui would make it onstage in the finals, Samsara could go and guess!

Since there were such sinister motives, they definitely wouldn't be able to get anything about Fang Rui's condition. After experimentally throwing out another few questions and receiving answers that were clearly ambiguous on purpose, the reporters were clear and they didn't tangle with the issue any longer. From Happy, Fang Rui's performance was the most eye-catching, but the performances of the other players were all very attention-grabbing as well. There was still much to ask...

Fang Rui hadn't accepted any post-match interviews, but he was still the protagonist of all the news articles released the next day. Esports Weekly had even used "Fang Rui! Class Change! Return to Godhood!" as their headline, acknowledging Fang Rui's godliness right at the top.

Because he'd changed classes, because his performance had fluctuated, because of his unique dirty Qi Master style, Fang Rui hadn't been chosen as an All-Star this season, even though he used the number one Qi Master, Boundless Sea. From that day, there was endless discussion over whether or not this class change would be his end. When he performed well, people would come out to praise him; when he performed average or poorly, people would proclaim his decline.

Esports Home was the authority in the circle, so there were of course articles about his class change. But with Esports Home's level of professionalism, they were very attentive to detail in their analysis, they didn't rely on simple surface-level discussion. But today, relying on his performance in this one match, Esports Home concisely acknowledged and approved Fang Rui's class change.

Fang Rui! Class change! Return to godhood!

As she ate breakfast, Chen Guo held this week's report. Whenever their team or their players made the headlines, it would always put her in high spirits. She had even saved and organized all of the newspapers from this season that featured Happy in the headlines. But seeing this bold headline today, Chen Guo couldn't be as excited as she was before.

Because Fang Rui's condition right now really wasn't very good. That day, he'd energetically greeted the crowd and mocked Samsara right after coming out of the competitor booth, and he'd gleefully boasted to his teammates as well. But after returning to the prep room, Fang Rui had all but collapsed. It was as though all of his energy had suddenly run out, and everyone could see how exhausted he was.

Fang Rui was exhausted, so he hadn't attended the press conference. Ye Xiu had spoken the truth, even though the reporters didn't believe him and thought it was a smokescreen. But this time, this smokescreen had affected even Happy themselves. No one could say for sure how well Fang Rui would recover for the final match in two days. Even though Fang Rui stubbornly insisted that he would be fine, everyone was already quietly preparing for the scenario where Fang Rui was unable to play.

Losing Fang Rui would be a massive blow to their strength. No one could imagine that this kind of thing would happen at such a critical moment. Compared to the physical competition of normal athletics, it was fairly rare in Glory competition for a player to be unable to appear because of illness or injury.

Chen Guo stared at the paper's headline without flipping the pages to read the content. Holding a cup of milk, she sat in the dining room in a daze.

The final match was in two days. Because Samsara had ranked higher than Happy in the regular season, the third match would be held in Samsara's home stadium. In order to demonstrate determination, Chen Guo had booked hotel rooms here for Team Happy all the way until the end of the third match. Now, as they hoped, the third match awaited them. But because of Fang Rui, another shadow weighed upon everyone's hearts. Last night, Chen Guo hadn't slept well, and now that she looked at this paper, the shadow floated back.

"So early?" As she was spacing out, she suddenly heard someone talk. She lifted her head to see Ye Xiu holding breakfast as he sat down across from her.

"Mm..." Chen Guo nodded.

Ye Xiu's gaze landed upon the Esports Weekly report in front of her.

"Fang Rui! Class Change! Return to Godhood!" Ye Xiu read the title, and after clicking his tongue in marvel, he made no comment.

"How is he?" asked Chen Guo.

"Probably still sleeping," said Ye Xiu.

"I meant, for the match in two days, will he be alright?" Chen Guo said.

"We'll see when the time comes!" Ye Xiu said.

Uncertainty.

The final battle was imminent, but Happy had this uncertainty. But Chen Guo understood that this wasn't the time to be deeply worried. There needed to be determination.

"Then we should let everyone prepare," said Chen Guo.

“That’s straightforward enough.” Ye Xiu smiled. “Fortunately, the maps for this last match are random, and the roster usually isn’t decided until after the map is chosen. Everyone will be fully prepared.”

“But... No matter what the map is, have you thought about not letting Fang Rui go onstage?” Chen Guo said.

Ye Xiu fell silent.

Chen Guo was often rendered speechless by Ye Xiu, and she had often hoped for the chance to do the same to him one day. But now, faced with a Ye Xiu that truly had nothing to say, she didn’t feel happy at all.

Chen Guo knew that she had hit the nail on the head.

No matter which map was chosen, Happy couldn’t go as far as to bench Fang Rui. Even though he wasn’t the absolute core of Happy, he was still a part of the central axis. And with Fang Rui’s style and resourcefulness, there really weren’t any maps that would impede his performance.

Silence.

Chen Guo didn’t ask any more questions. She quietly drank her milk, and quietly watched Ye Xiu as he rapidly finished his breakfast.

“Does it matter if he goes on or not?” Ye Xiu said, after wiping his mouth with a napkin. “Either way, we’ll win.”

Chen Guo laughed.

This wasn’t logical at all! But after hearing Ye Xiu say this, she suddenly felt very relaxed and very calm. Because in her mind, Ye Xiu had never said anything that he couldn’t do. Not a single time.

“So that’s to say, we’re the champions?” Chen Guo said.

“If not, then why are we here?” Ye Xiu looked at Chen Guo, astonished, as though he were looking at an alien.

“I’ll go see if that Fang Rui’s awake yet,” Chen Guo said, standing up.

“Give the newspaper to him, it’ll lift his spirits,” said Ye Xiu, gesturing toward the paper on the table.

“What about you?” asked Chen Guo as she took the paper.

“I’m not full yet.” Ye Xiu held his plate, looking around.

Chen Guo left first, returning upstairs to Fang Rui’s room. It was the finals, so to make things convenient for everyone, they were all in separate rooms. But when she arrived at Fang Rui’s room, the door was already open, and when she looked inside, there were many people. Everyone from Happy was here...

What was this?

As Chen Guo was about to enter, she already heard Fang Rui chattering away. “Did you guys think I was dying or something?”

Chapter 1636: Review

“You seem pretty energetic!” Chen Guo said, walking in. Hearing Fang Rui making all this noise, she suddenly felt much better.

“All you guys crowding around me, and no one brought me breakfast?” Fang Rui said indignantly.

“Brought you a newspaper.” Chen Guo held up the paper in her hand so that Fang Rui could see the headline.

The title was very eye-catching, so Fang Rui saw it immediately. His eyes lit up, but right after, he pretended as though it were nothing. With an expression of “this brother has seen the big stage” he dismissively said, “Tsk, that’s nothing.”

Fang Rui wasn’t lying on the bed. After all, esports competitions were carried out while sitting in front of a computer. Even though they could still be exhausting, they weren’t so exhausting that a player would be unable to get out of bed. Chen Guo casually tossed the newspaper toward the bed, and then carefully studied Fang Rui. He didn’t seem any different from normal.

Before she’d come here, the others had already spoken with Fang Rui. It was a bit of a tight squeeze, so many people in this one room, so after a greeting, they began to disperse.

“Do you need me to call breakfast for you?” Chen Guo asked Fang Rui.

“No, it’s fine, I’m gonna take a walk in a bit, I’ll get something to eat then,” said Fang Rui.

“Alright, then I won’t bother you any longer.” Chen Guo didn’t ask Fang Rui anything like “how are you, can you make it.” She followed everyone else out of the room.

Fang Rui stood by the window. The newspaper lay face-up on the desk next to the table, and the rays of light streaming through the window shone down upon it, illuminating the words, dazzlingly bright. Fang Rui lowered his head and looked at it, but he didn’t pick it up. He only laughed a little, then turned to look outside the window. Today’s weather really was quite good.

Happy didn’t have any plans in the morning. After such an intense battle, they wanted to rest up as much as they could. They scheduled a strategic meeting for the afternoon. It wasn’t any high-intensity practice, it was just a review of the match that they just played. This was something that pro teams would do after every match. And in the playoffs, where the matches were at a higher level and teams would play the same opponent multiple times, review became a highly effective method of adjustment. Summarize the successes and failures of the previous match, take the chance to plan strategy and tactics for the next match, it was a very focused method. Compared to the regular season, these reviews held greater significance during the playoffs.

And so, at 1:30 in the afternoon, Happy’s members gathered in the conference room they booked at the hotel. Ye Xiu had of course organized the match recordings beforehand, and when everyone arrived, he didn’t waste any time with unnecessary words, and began playing the recording.

“Let’s watch the team competition first!” Ye Xiu said, as the screen displayed this match’s team competition.

“In this team competition, to put it briefly, I believe that Samsara lost largely to surprise. Too many unexpected situations happened, messing up their plans. This meant that their strategies did not completely come into play,” said Ye Xiu.

“Take the beginning, for example, with Samsara’s advance.” Ye Xiu pointed out Samsara’s initial formation, with Zhou Zekai, Jiang Botao, and Sun Xiang advancing first, while Lu Boyuan stayed behind to protect Fang Minghua. “Clearly, this formation was to take advantage of the map’s high points.”

“The changes afterward were really quite simple. As for the surprise that happened during this point, I don’t think I need to go into detail,” said Ye Xiu.

The surprise here referred to Ye Xiu holding off Zhou Zekai, Jiang Botao, and Sun Xiang all by himself. This was Ye Xiu’s accomplishment, but during the review session, his tone was neither humble nor bragging. He simply told things as they were.

“In this part of the match, we can take another look at the cooperation between these three Samsara attackers. This is something that we have studied many times before,” said Ye Xiu.

Of course it had been many times. It wasn’t just Happy, any team in the Alliance that was aiming for the championship would definitely treat this as a crucial topic of study. Regarding this content, they couldn’t say that they had a thorough understanding, but they at least analyzed it to the best of their ability.

Ye Xiu said that they were looking at the attack coordination between these three, but in reality, they focused more on how Ye Xiu countered the attacks that the trio set up. As Ye Xiu was the player in question, he of course knew everything the most clearly. But right now, he was sharing the thought process with everyone. Because everyone played different characters with different class skills, they would all use different methods to deal with the same situation. Only by understanding the fundamental thought process could they learn from this 1v3 situation and apply it to their own class and character.

Ye Xiu would talk about what happened, someone would raise a question, someone would express an opinion, discussion, debate...

Chen Guo quietly stood to the side.

She always attended Happy’s strategy meetings. In the very beginning she would happily talk, ask some questions, express her point of view. But gradually, she began to just quietly stand to the side and listen, just like she was doing now.

Compared to the beginning, Chen Guo’s experience had increased dramatically, and if she gave her opinions now, she would probably be correct more often than not. But Chen Guo didn’t talk anymore, because no one had ever left out a point she wanted to make.

Look at Tang Rou. Two years ago, she was a complete noob, but now, Chen Guo sometimes couldn’t even keep up with her reasoning.

She would be lying if she said she wasn’t saddened at all. In her heart, Chen Guo still wished that she could be a pro player as well, that she could fight onstage alongside all of these partners.

But unfortunately, that was reality. All she could do was make their lives offstage a little better.

It was a bit disappointing, but it was nothing to hang her head about. Because Chen Guo understood very clearly that she was a member of this team as well. While they fought toward their goal, they had never left her behind, they were still tied together...

The final match was in two days. Everyone, good luck!

Chen Guo stood to the side and silently cheered everyone on. Right now, she wasn't thinking at all about whether or not Fang Rui would be able to play. Because, just like Ye Xiu had said to her that morning, whether or not he could play, their goal wouldn't change. Victory. Champions.

The review continued.

Chen Guo just stood to the side silently, all the way until the end.

"Tonight, does everyone have their own plans, or do you want to get dinner together or something?" Chen Guo asked.

"This... I feel like if we had a celebratory feast right now, that wouldn't be too good. If the media found out, what would they say about us?" Wei Chen said.

Chen Guo glared at this old man. Even though he was saying nonsense, he did express his meaning, that he would prefer free time.

"Everyone, you're free to do whatever! If you want to obey our boss's plans, then just follow her," said Ye Xiu.

Chen Guo gave him a glare as well. What kind of statement was that! Free, obey, weren't those antonyms? How come he just put them together?

Mo Fan left first. He was always very uninterested in these sort of group gatherings.

Luo Ji was discussing something with Qiao Yifan, and An Wenyi joined them as well. The three of them, still in discussion, left together. Steamed Bun was prepared to join them too, but then he was caught by Wei Chen, who said something to him. Steamed Bun was instantly cheerful, and went along with Wei Chen.

"Boss, you know... Last match was very tiring for me, I'm heading back early to rest." Appearing to be very meek and obedient, Fang Rui came over to let Chen Guo know.

Chen Guo couldn't say anything except "go." In the end, it was just her, Tang Rou, Su Mucheng, and Ye Xiu – three girls and one guy. Ye Xiu was organizing data, and clearly had no intention of "obeying" her plans. Chen Guo had long given up on the hope of a big get-together, and after saying goodbye to the others, she and Tang Rou left together.

Just two of them were left. Su Mucheng stood behind Ye Xiu, watching him reclassify the recordings, articles, images, etc. from before and save them.

"How do you feel?" Su Mucheng suddenly asked.

"How do I feel? You mean about Fang Rui?" Ye Xiu said, without turning his head.

"No, I'm talking about you... how are you?" Su Mucheng asked.

Ye Xiu, in the middle of busily organizing the files, visibly stopped.

"I'm... alright," he said.

Chapter 1637: If Life Were Long

"Alright in what way?" Su Mucheng asked, very seriously. She walked forward, until she could see Ye Xiu's expression.

"That's not the important point." Ye Xiu lifted his head. He didn't try to hide – he looked at Su Mucheng with a smile.

They'd been together for many years, and their mutual understanding ran perhaps even deeper than they thought. Often, just one look was enough to understand the other's intention. Ye Xiu knew what Su Mucheng was worried about, and he didn't explain, nor did he try to cover it up. If he'd given that response to Chen Guo, she probably would have instantly filled with rage and yell at him about what was the important point. But Su Mucheng only nodded, and said nothing more.

That's not the important point.

Now that they were here, only one thing was important: victory, champions!

For the sake of this, he could pay anything. He could give up anything.

And so Su Mucheng said nothing more. She would, while Ye Xiu was putting in all his effort, simply do all that she could to help him, to make that sole important point into reality. That was Ye Xiu's important point, and it was her important point as well, it was the important point that no pro player would ignore.

Ye Xiu continued to organize the data. For every file, he had the habit of opening it to double check what it was, then saving it in the correct location. But when he opened the next recording, he didn't immediately close and move it like he had with the others. The video continued to play, and Ye Xiu watched it blankly.

Since it was a review of Samsara's match, most of these files were of course material on Samsara. This video was as well, and onscreen, this season's Best Partners Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf were fighting side-by-side.

Shocking talent, outstanding technique, these two characters charged forward and knocked all others out of their way, entering into an empty space. And this was an official match from the regular season. Just like that, the opponent fell into chaos from these two characters, and Samsara easily took the victory.

Zhou Zekai, Sun Xiang.

This duo had only become partners this season. Countless people had placed high hopes on them, believing that they would be the rulers of this next era of Glory. In his heart, Ye Xiu didn't disagree.

But right now, that wasn't what he was thinking about. Su Mucheng watched him, and she too knew that he wasn't thinking about that.

"It's a strange feeling, isn't it?" Ye Xiu said.

Su Mucheng knew what he was referring to, but she shook her head. "I don't feel it... I actually never played Glory seriously with my brother."

"That's right..." Ye Xiu nodded. At the time, he and Su Muqiu spent all day in front of the computer, playing games, but Su Muqiu had sent Su Mucheng to school. He didn't want to raise his little sister into a pro gamer or pro player or anything like that. But this wasn't because he felt that it was difficult or embarrassing. It was the opposite, in fact. Su Muqiu sincerely loved what he did. He loved gaming, he loved Glory, and he was proud of what he did.

Regarding Su Mucheng, he simply took a neutral stance, neither supporting nor opposing.

"For something like this, she has to choose herself!" That was what Su Muqiu said. At the time, he was still just a kid in his teens, but he talked like a life coach, carefully thinking about his little sister's future.

"She's grown up watching us play games and Glory, I feel like she must have some interest, like when she named our characters..." Ye Xiu eyed the mistake in the name "One Autumn Leaf" onscreen.* To be honest, it had always bothered him.

"Tsk, what do you know? Little kids often have a rebellious spirit. Maybe after seeing us play all day, she really hates it?" Su Muqiu said.

"You can't say that like it's a given. Not every kid has a rebellious spirit," said Ye Xiu.

"Says the one who ran away from home?" Su Muqiu was unimpressed.

"I raised a little brother, so I have experience," Ye Xiu said.

"Oh? How old is he?" Su Muqiu quickly asked.

"Just a little younger than me, we're twins," said Ye Xiu.

"Fuck off!" Su Muqiu replied with two words.

"One Autumn Leaf! Autumn Tree**! Where'd you two run off to!!" At this moment, a number of messages from the group leader suddenly flashed in the chat.

"Oh no, we're going the wrong way," Su Muqiu suddenly realized.

"Damn, could you not get too distracted while chatting!" said Ye Xiu.

"Where is this?" Su Muqiu quickly pulled up the map.

"We can't go back, that bridge back there breaks when the story's triggered," Ye Xiu said.

"We'll have to fight our way through here." Helpless, Su Muqiu adjusted his camera and looked forward.

"That's our only way..." Ye Xiu felt similarly helpless.

And so the two of them continued forward. After half an hour, the system issued an announcement: One Autumn Leaf has killed Leader Sake, dungeon complete.

“What the hell! What are those two bastards doing!!” All sorts of scolding instantly flooded the group. They had only made it halfway through the dungeon when the final Boss was already killed.

“My bad, I took the last hit,” Ye Xiu said.

“So rude!” As Su Muqiu spoke, he pulled out a notebook and quietly made a note. The year, month, day, hour, minute, dungeon, Boss, final kill: One Autumn Leaf, 474th time.

And himself? Su Muqiu flipped to a previous page. 318 times, what a gap!

“How many times was that?” Ye Xiu leaned over.

“Only 400, just a little ahead of me.” Su Muqiu closed his notebook with a snap.

“Hehe, do you think you’ll ever have the chance to surpass me in your lifetime?” Ye Xiu laughed.

“Kid, don’t be too reckless. The road of life is very long,” Su Muqiu scoffed.

The road of life is very long...

If the road of life really were so long, Ye Xiu thought, watching the video in silence, then what would be the two names recorded here now?

Shaking his head, Ye Xiu closed the video.

“Let’s go!” he called to Su Mucheng.

“Yeah,” Su Mucheng nodded, “let’s go.”

“Do you find Glory fun?” As they walked out the door, Ye Xiu suddenly asked this question.

“And what kind of important point is this?” Su Mucheng laughed.

“Because we were actually never really sure,” said Ye Xiu.

“It’s very fun, I’m very sure,” said Su Mucheng.

“Then that’s good.” Ye Xiu let out a breath.

“Why?”

“Winning the championship will be even more fun,” Ye Xiu said.

“Of course,” said Su Mucheng.

“So...”

“So what?”

“What do you want for dinner?”

“I don’t care.”

“Let’s just wander around and find somewhere?”

“Okay.”

Chapter 1638: The Championship is Ours

Culture Square, one of City S’s famous shopping areas. The giant open-air screen hanging on the outside of the north building was far more spectacular than any screen hanging inside a Glory stadium.

And right now, this screen that had become a symbol of the city was currently playing the highlights from last night’s match between Samsara and Happy.

Ten years ago, this would have been unimaginable. At that time, even though esports had already developed to a certain extent, it still didn’t attract much attention, and it was still far from mainstream. But today, clips from the finals would be played in a public city square. It seemed like Samsara had become the pride of city S. Because of Samsara, so many people in this city were now concerned about the Glory finals.

Of the people passing through this square, perhaps some would stop in their tracks and watch for a while, perhaps some would just spare a glance before continuing to walk. Some were paying close attention to these matches, some didn’t know much, but if someone were to say that they didn’t even know what this was, then they would certainly earn some disdainful looks.

Glory was no longer just the glory of the players, the teams, or the fans. It was now the glory of an entire city. And the weight of the hopes carried by the players and teams was greater than ever before.

“What a shame, if we won yesterday, we would have had three straight championships!”

Tang Rou heard the man standing ahead of her speaking regretfully.

“Yeah, too bad!” The person standing next to him was sighing as well.

Tang Rou had been standing here for a while. She knew that these two hadn’t known each other beforehand, but because they had both paused to watch and happened to be standing next to each other, they began a discussion.

Tang Rou could tell that these two weren’t Glory players. Their dialogue was full of that half-understanding, hearsay, exaggerated public opinions.

But from start to finish, the word they used was: we.

These two people weren’t Glory players at all, but they were still paying attention to this match, they still felt a strong connection to their city’s team, they still held high hopes for the championship. This was the best evidence of Glory’s ever-expanding presence and influence.

Tang Rou smiled.

Even though these people supported the opposing side, she deeply appreciated this attitude. She herself had started as an indifferent passerby, gradually investing more in all of this. Even in the beginning, she

hadn't even felt that Glory was all that interesting. All she wanted to do was become a bit stronger, and then defeat that guy who'd forced her to lose over a dozen games in a row.

But now?

It'd been a while since she'd cared about that. Now, she aimed for a larger goal than defeating Ye Xiu.

Like all of the other pro players, she yearned for victory. She hoped to win the championship.

Was this because she always strove to outdo others?

Maybe a little! But if she only cared about that, then perhaps her vision would have remained fixed on Ye Xiu. But now, when she looked at Ye Xiu, she thought about how to better cooperate with him, and then achieve victory together.

This was no longer simply a desire to outdo others. There was another feeling quietly growing in her heart. She no longer fought just for her individual interest. She now had things she was carrying upon her back. Her teammates, the fans, and those like the two people in front of her now, who didn't understand the game, but still drew pride from it.

It was a bit unfortunate that she hadn't gone onstage yesterday. But the team had won, and that was more important than anything. Right now, this was Tang Rou's truest feeling.

"The championship is ours!" Tang Rou suddenly shouted. Without waiting for everyone's eyes to land upon her, she spun around and left.

Everyone paused. The match displayed on this massive screen was quite exciting, but for them, for this city, it felt a bit oppressive.

Because in yesterday's match, victory did not belong to them. Victory had gone to Team Happy. Right now, everyone was gathered here and watching this match, but their minds had already gone to the next match. They were looking forward to victory in the next round, and then, they would have the championship.

This sentence truly expressed the sentiment in everyone's hearts. Even though it came out so suddenly, catching everyone off-guard, soon they were set aflame by the passion in this simple statement.

"Yes, the championship is ours!" Someone echoed the shout, and then, more and more, more and more. In this square, whether or not they understood Glory, as long as they knew this competition, they hoped for the championship, and they joined in this shouting.

Only those senior players who were very familiar with the Glory competition found the short-haired silhouette leaving the crowd. They were stunned.

"That girl... Wasn't that Happy's Tang Rou?" someone said.

"You're saying, this year's rookie king, Tang Rou?"

"The Tang Rou who promised to retire after failing a 1v3, but backed out?"

"That really pretty Tang Rou?"

More and more sets of eyes looked in that direction. Tang Rou walked farther and farther away, but everyone believed more and more, this was indeed Tang Rou.

“So, what she shouted just now...” someone suddenly realized.

“So that ‘ours’ was referring to Happy?” They were instantly dumbfounded.

And right now, the good citizens of City S in the square were currently shouting “the championship is ours” in a surge of public feeling. Thinking about how this “ours” was actually referring to Happy made them all sorts of uncomfortable.

But how could they explain it now? And even if they could, so what? Were they not allowed to use the word “ours”?

Tang Rou shouted “ours,” we’ll shout “ours,” and the “ours” that we’re shouting refers to Samsara. Everyone understood this clearly.

After getting this point clear, these loyal Samsara fans had nothing more to worry about. They would simply accept this mistake and make the best of it, shouting along with everyone: the championship is ours!

The shouts grew louder and louder, but Tang Rou didn’t look back. She strolled along the road, all the way back to the hotel.

Heading upstairs, she saw Ye Xiu hanging around in the hallway, smoking. When he saw her, he waved.

“Where’d you go?” he asked casually.

“I just took a walk,” said Tang Rou.

“Oh. Good luck tomorrow!” No moving, sensational encouragement. Ye Xiu simply said this offhand sentence to Tang Rou.

“Tomorrow?” Yet Tang Rou still found a fault in his words.

“More good luck for the day after,” said Ye Xiu calmly.

“Haha,” Tang Rou laughed, without saying anything. But then, she noticed that the room Ye Xiu was headed toward didn’t seem to be his own room.

“Where are you going?” she asked, curious.

“Some kids wanted some data, I’m bringing it to them,” said Ye Xiu.

In Happy, aside from Wei Chen, Ye Xiu would casually call everyone “kids.” Tang Rou didn’t know who he was referring to, but she saw him walk into Luo Ji’s room.

Now that her curiosity had been piqued, Tang Rou followed. In Luo Ji’s room, he, Qiao Yifan, and An Wenyi were all circled around one computer.

“Here.” Ye Xiu held out a USB.

Luo Ji accepted it and inserted it into the computer. He soon found what he was looking for and pulled it up onscreen alongside his own document. He also had his notebook open, covered in writing, and he began theorycrafting with An Wenyi and Qiao Yifan.

Ye Xiu stood to the side, arms folded, smoking, listening very attentively.

Tang Rou hid a smile.

She suspected that, regarding what Luo Ji was explaining right now, even she understood more than Ye Xiu. This kid was once again using his numbers to analyze some probabilities.

But he was speaking too in-depth. A formula here, a derivation there, An Wenyi and Qiao Yifan looked as confused as Steamed Bun.

Finally, Ye Xiu could take it no longer. He finally moved, and pointed to a spot on Luo Ji's screen. "Take a look here."

Tang Rou was shocked. The part of the document that he pointed out was the calculation of the characteristic function through a Fourier transform of the probability density function. Ye Xiu was able to understand something that complex? Even she only knew what the words were but, nothing of the details.

After pointing it out, Ye Xiu was already turning around to leave, and he was met with Tang Rou's shocked expression.

"Another lesson for you," Ye Xiu said, walking by Tang Rou. "Not just your opponents, you can't underestimate your teammates either!"

He had already walked past, and Tang Rou could only continue to stare wide-eyed at his retreating back. But then, from behind her, she heard Luo Ji ask: "What's wrong here?"

"There's a bit of dirt there," said Ye Xiu, walking out of the room.

"Oh oh!" Luo Ji hurriedly pulled out his glasses cloth and rubbed at that spot on his screen.

Chapter 1639: The Final Battle

The first rest day after the match passed just like that. Aside from the review in the afternoon, Happy's players didn't gather together. Instead, each did their own thing.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng just ate and chatted, treating it like any other day.

Tang Rou took a walk by herself, to keep her mind off things.

Fang Rui and Mo Fan closed themselves in their rooms and didn't show their faces again.

And Qiao Yifan, An Wenyi, and Luo Ji, these three youths seemed to make the most of their time. Even now, they were still diligently investigating something.

The ones who ended up giving Chen Guo the most worry were Wei Chen and Steamed Bun. After the afternoon review, they left, and she didn't see them at all after that. She'd said that everyone was free

to do their own thing, so of course she felt it would be rude to ask. But as it grew later and later, these two still hadn't returned, and Chen Guo gripped the phone in her hand, debating whether or not she should call and ask. At the same time, she listened hard for any sound of their return in the hallway.

She would wait ten more minutes. If they still weren't back in ten minutes, she would ask where they were.

Chen Guo carried this determination, but ten minutes became twenty, and then an hour. By this time, it was already 11:00 at night.

Finally, Chen Guo couldn't hold back any longer. She picked up her phone, and dialed Wei Chen's number.

An unfamiliar ringtone sounded, right from the hallway!

They're back?

Chen Guo didn't hang up, instead directly rushing out of the room to look.

As expected.

In the hallway, Chen Guo saw Wei Chen and Steamed Bun beaming as they walked along. Because his phone was ringing, Wei Chen was currently feeling around in his pocket. When they saw Chen Guo rush out, the two of them casually greeted her, and then Wei Chen pulled out his phone, and saw who was calling him.

"Looking for me?" Wei Chen asked Chen Guo.

"Oh, I saw that you two still weren't back, so I wanted to ask," Chen Guo said, as naturally as she could. She didn't want them to think of her as a worrisome old woman, even though she did feel much calmer seeing their return.

"Oh, we were just at that Internet café at the corner!" Wei Chen said.

"Why did you two go to an Internet café?" Chen Guo was confused.

"Running a black inn," said Wei Chen.

"It's really fun, Boss you should come with us next time!" Steamed Bun enthusiastically invited her.

Chen Guo was speechless. "Running a black inn" was a gaming term for something commonly seen in Internet cafés. To put it simply, a few players would sit together, so that they could see each other's screens and easily communicate offline. With this advantage, they would be able to reach extremely good coordination, and they would bully their opponents, strangers that had been randomly grouped together.

This kind of behavior wasn't worthy of being condoned, of course. As a devoted Glory fan, Chen Guo always gave dirty looks to the raucous guests running black inns in her Internet café. She couldn't drive them out just for doing that, but whenever the Internet café held events, like discount cards, she definitely wouldn't give these people preferential treatment.

But now, Team Happy, a professional team that had made it to the finals, two of their pro players had actually gone to an Internet café to run a black inn.

Right now, Chen Guo had only one thing to say to them.

“Do you really have to be like this?”

“Ah, if only you could do this during a match, that would be great.” Steamed Bun actually said this, with deep feeling.

Chen Guo glared furiously at Wei Chen. This was definitely all his idea.

“It’s getting late, go to sleep! If we ever have some free time later we can go again.” Wei Chen, completely ignoring her, said goodbye to Steamed Bun.

“Okay okay.” Steamed Bun cheerfully returned to his own room. But Wei Chen looked at Chen Guo, chuckled and said, “You think we’re very low for doing this, don’t you?”

“Very much so.” Chen Guo nodded.

“Actually, this is a type of religious practice,” Wei Chen said.

“What do you mean?” Chen Guo asked.

“Next time, you can come along,” Wei Chen said.

“Oh, okay!” Chen Guo automatically agreed.

Wei Chen smiled, said goodnight, and also returned to his room.

Chen Guo stood there dumbly for another half a minute, and felt like crying.

Morals! Where had her morals gone! What religious practice, this guy was making it up, right? He was just completely and utterly shameless!

Just like that, the first rest day passed by. The second day was also free time for everyone. Because there was no strategy meeting like the review, Chen Guo didn’t even see everyone.

Chen Guo really was very curious as to what everyone was doing, and she really wanted to send a “what’s everyone doing” message to the group chat.

But, restraint!

Chen Guo didn’t want to bother everyone. In her heart, she truly trusted everyone. Even though these Happy players all had different personalities, and some were all sorts of strange, Chen Guo felt that this was a very reliable team. Taking Wei Chen and Steamed Bun running a black inn, for example, Chen Guo believed that it was a sort of religious practice for them, a way for them to relax.

As for staying out so late at night, she’d said she was worried, but it might have been more curiosity.

So Chen Guo restrained herself. She didn’t want her curiosity to ruin everyone’s personal rhythms. If there was anything she wanted to know or ask, she could wait until the day the match ended!

The second day swung past. On the night of the third day would be the final, championship match of this season. And on this day, the team would have a team practice, for the sake of warmup.

And so, in the training room, Chen Guo saw everyone gathered together for the first time since that review meeting.

Nervous!

As the final match approached, Chen Guo couldn't help but grow more and more nervous. She was scared, she was scared that after everyone had worked so hard for a year, they would miss this final step. That disappointment, that frustration, Chen Guo truly had no idea how to face it.

The team practice lasted for around two hours, but they didn't interact much. The atmosphere was a bit oppressive, but under this atmosphere, Happy's players were fully focused. No one said anything to try and relieve this atmosphere. They reached a sort of harmony with the pressure.

Ye Xiu seemed to be very satisfied with this way of handling the situation. After the two-hour team practice ended, he was smiling as he began speaking.

"Is everyone ready?" Ye Xiu asked.

Some nodded, some spoke, it was all in agreement.

"Then, let's win this!" Ye Xiu said.

Once again, they nodded.

And then, head out! Toward Samsara's home stadium, toward the final match of this season, Happy stepped onto their final journey.

The stadium was packed starting very early. Even the pro players had entered the stadium very early, and were now waiting patiently for the match's start.

For the final match, the victory poll had been opened once again, and this time, what caught people's attention was no longer just the comparison in percentage. This time, the number of people casting votes was incredibly few, far fewer than those of any previous playoffs matches.

This was the final, championship-deciding match. How could people not pay attention?

But to pay attention, and abstain from casting a vote, there was naturally only one explanation: many people didn't know to whom their vote should go. Aside from those who were firmly biased toward one side, those who were neutral or those relying on logic to analyze the question had no way to predict this match's outcome.

In the first game, Samsara defeated Happy at Happy's home stadium. Such a strong performance had instantly destroyed the powerhouse Happy image that had been built up after Happy versus Tyranny. Thus, in the second game's vote, Samsara completely suppressed Happy.

But then, in the second game, Ye Xiu led Happy by defeating Zhou Zekai in 1v1, and then in the team competition, all sorts of godly performances shook the stage. People found that they had been very wrong in their assessments that Samsara would win for sure.

Happy won in Samsara's demonic home stadium, breaking Samsara's perfect home record. Samsara defeated Happy at Happy's home, and they retaliated by defeating Samsara in their home.

On paper, Samsara's strength was greater than Happy's, anyone would admit this. But if Happy once again had this kind of godlike performance?

Happy's unpredictability caused everyone who wanted to rely on logic to become lost. Right now, everyone wanted to use the phrase that commentator Li Yibo often fell back upon when he couldn't clearly determine the situation: let's wait and see.

Wait and see, Glory Pro League Season 10, the championship-deciding final match! Amidst blinding lights and deafening cheers, it began.

The two teams' players lined up onstage. The curtain was about to close on this season's journey.

Who would be the champion?

Samsara!!

With the home stadium advantage, Samsara's fans took the lead in making noise.

Chapter 1640: Inevitable Confrontation

No matter how much support they received on the Internet.

No matter how many neutral Glory fans were beginning to favor Happy.

But in this stadium, the support for Samsara would always be unrivaled. This was their home stadium. Here were their most diehard fans. No matter what, they would never give up on supporting their team.

"Samsara is the champion!" The stadium was filled with such shouts. Perhaps influenced by what had happened yesterday at Culture Square, the Samsara fans in the stadium today very carefully used "Samsara" as the subject of their cheers.

Even though Happy's fans were unwilling to show weakness, it was indeed difficult to take the upper hand when the other side had this kind of momentum. After going through the trials of this season, Happy's fan group now had experience of challenging the opponent's home stadium. As the away team, because of the vast numbers disparity, there was no way to knock over the opponent through sheer sound. In this situation, they had to rely more on chants and banners, creating visual momentum. These, at least, could not be covered no matter what. But there was a big pitfall to this strategy, which was... holding up a large sign would block the view of the row or rows sitting right behind.

This pitfall largely limited the usage of posters and banners. But today, Happy's fans went ahead with it regardless. In the away team audience section, row after row of signs declared victory, so dense that the section looked like a mountain forest. The section seemed to be entirely banners, no people. Aside from the audience members sitting in the very front, there was practically no row whose line of sight could escape.

Even though the match still hadn't officially begun, for the Happy fans to prepare their banners to create such a magnificent sight, it could be seen how conscious the fans were of this match. Their sound couldn't resound in this stadium, but this continuous expanse of banners became the focus of attention in this stadium, and the television broadcast gave them extra screen time.

If they hadn't prepared beforehand, this kind of thing could never happen spontaneously, no matter how many fans Samsara had. They had no other choice, they could only bring forth even more volume, to fight against Happy's visual momentum.

Beneath the clashing swords, the two teams completed the pre-match exchange very calmly. After simple handshakes, however, the new height of pre-match excitement arrived.

Because this match would determine to whom the championship belonged, the Alliance arranged for the championship trophy, the symbol of supreme glory, to be revealed before the match. The stadium's lights extinguished all at once, and before the audience even had time to utter shouts, the spotlights all converged on the podium. At some point, the trophy had already been placed there, but under the absolute concentration of light, in this instant, it seemed like the sun hanging in the sky, flashing with infinite radiance. The players, the audience, everyone's gazes were captured by this sight.

The spotlights dispersed, the stadium's normal lighting came back on, and instantly everything was back to normal. But everyone's gazes continued to linger on that championship trophy, gazes filled with desire and anticipation.

"Fuck, what a cheap gimmick." Someone among the pro players complained, sounding extremely scornful, but no one answered. In that instant where the championship trophy had been lit up, whether or not they had won the championship before, every single one of them had felt their hearts stir.

This was a gimmick, but it was an extremely effective gimmick. Even for the one who had complained, there'd been some longing in his tone, a refusal to resign. This match, this sort of gimmick, it really provoked a certain sadness in their hearts.

The match was about to begin, but the two teams didn't immediately return to their player areas. They gathered in front of their respective competitor booths, and everyone looked up toward the giant display screen, waiting for the group arena's random map selection.

With a sound, the selection began. Images flashed by onscreen for around five seconds, before suddenly coming to a halt. A digital voice clearly announced the name of this map: Inevitable Confrontation.

"The name of this map really fits the occasion!"

No information was released beforehand about the random maps used in the playoffs. Even the broadcast commentators were only learning about the map now, and the commentary of course began from the name.

Championship, finals, an encounter on a narrow road – inevitable confrontation. There was no more description more fitting. And now, the map that had been chosen had this name.

The holographic projection and the stadium display screen began a simple overview of this map's layout and characteristics.

A narrow valley, a bit twisting, but not complex. On both sides were steep and towering cliffs. As for whether they could be climbed, aside from a Nightwalker carrying a ninjato, it was hard to say. At this time, people would automatically think of Lord Grim's many changing techniques, but because these cliffs were so high, as soon as they reached the top, they would be too far away to pose any threat at all to those at the bottom. As for whether or not there were any ambush points along the wall, that could not be seen clearly from such a brief introduction.

"It doesn't look like there's anything particularly special about this map?" Pan Lin said, after seeing this simple overview. There were definitely many maps in the original selection that had this kind of simple feature, and this map had been specially made for the playoffs. If they'd only designed this valley with a few extra twists and turns, there was really nothing new about this at all.

Just as everyone was wondering the same question, suddenly, there were screams of murder from the holographic projection. Everyone watched as horses and men appeared at both ends of the canyon, and ambushes also appeared on both mountain walls. Soon, the men and horses met at the center of the canyon and began to fight, killing each other ferociously. On the cliffs, the ambushes activated, and all sorts of boulders and wood tumbled down. In a few moments, both armies were completely wiped out.

Everyone was stunned.

What was this?

It surely wasn't an animation just added to complement the name "inevitable confrontation," right? This was the finals, they needed to introduce the map information in an orderly way. How could such empty showiness be allowed?

So, this wasn't some animation created to enhance the atmosphere. This was something that would actually happen on this map.

It wasn't just about the topography, they were actually introducing interfering events. Regardless of the outcome of this match, this design would inevitably trigger much discussion and controversy afterward. But at the moment, the audience was very curious to see how the players would respond to such a map with events and NPC interference.

Yet right now, there was pitifully little information about this interference. Was the timing of this event completely random, or set for a certain time? Would it only happen once per battle, or multiple? From their attacks, it seemed like the two groups on opposite ends of the canyon and those on the cliff walls formed three separate teams. What would be their attitudes toward the players' characters?

Too much information that was needed to understand this map was not given before the match, and because of the ingenuity of this design, acquiring information about this map would be much more complicated than simply observing the terrain characteristics. The first and even the second players of both teams would have to do a lot of work in this aspect. So, who would the two teams send up?

Everyone was very curious. But on television, commentators Pan Lin and Li Yibo were very evasive. Although they had some ideas in their minds, they didn't dare speak easily. They had truly been face-slapped too many times.

“This time, continuing to send out Ye Xiu first is a very appropriate choice for Happy!” Over in the pro player section, they didn’t have anything holding them back, and after discussion, they all agreed on this prediction. Facing such a complex situation, it would be best to send out Ye Xiu, someone who was experienced and had extremely good awareness. While gaining information, he had a very high chance of winning battles in such unpredictable situations.

“As for Samsara...” From Happy, Ye Xiu was the best choice, everyone recognized this in a glance. Not only did it make sense, it could continue the psychological oppression that his win streak had established. On the other hand, Samsara was definitely aware of Happy’s best choice, so their choice of player would, to a certain extent, have to counter it. Who was most appropriate on Samsara’s side?

While everyone was discussing, Samsara’s Jiang Botao reported their first player to the judge. And at the same time, from their roster, Sun Xiang was already walking toward the competitor booth.