

Avatar 1651

Chapter 1651: Difficult Player Decisions

Ten seconds.

The real battle only lasted ten seconds. Victory was also decided in those ten seconds.

The pace was unbelievably fast. Many spectators were in the process of strapping themselves in for an epic battle when the characters first encountered each other. As it turned out, the battle was over before they even adjusted their seats.

Time to reflect?

Reflect on what?! They didn't even see the match clearly. What could they reflect on?

Everyone sat dumbfounded. The Samsara fans even forgot to give their team victory cheers. Even the big screen in the stadium didn't have highlights ready for a moment.

The fight was only ten seconds long, but to comb out the intense moments and intricacies would take far longer.

The live crew and the broadcast crew were all floundering. They hadn't even settled into their regular working mentality, yet the match had already finished. Even though Ye Xiu's Lord Grim had little health, that 13% was able to bring about some enjoyable content. The two players were able to control their characters to have a fierce duel in these ten seconds.

Ye Xiu walked out of the competitor booth.

Finally, the spectators seemed to come to their senses slightly. The Samsara fans began to applaud; after all, this was their team's victory.

But just as Ye Xiu predicted, by fighting Zhou Zekai head on, he lost the battle but did not lose in spirit. Samsara were being applauded for their victory right now, but Happy's players and fans did not feel any loss of morale.

The highlight reel was finally ready.

In the end, it was only ten seconds' worth of action. Compilations couldn't stretch time out. The numerous screens in the stadium just replayed the ten second battle from different angles. This highlight reel did not use any slow motion, and played at normal speed. Ten seconds, and another ten seconds, and yet another ten seconds. The audience seemed to not mind these ten seconds being repeated. Everyone tilted and turned their heads with interest, and watched repeats of these ten seconds from every angle.

By then, Ye Xiu had returned to Happy's area. He also had to decide on the next person Happy was to send up.

But this was not an easy decision.

Even though Ye Xiu did not lose in spirit to Zhou Zekai, not even he could suppress the opponent's confidence. Zhou Zekai would continue his fight-to-the-death attitude and launch an aggressive offensive. Happy needed to send up someone with lots of experience and ability to quickly adapt to changes to tango with Zhou Zekai.

Fang Rui!

He was the most suitable choice. When Ye Xiu thought this, his gaze wandered in Fang Rui's direction. But just as he did so, his heart sank a little.

Fang Rui was also looking back at him, but his gaze gave off an abnormal sense of calm.

Ye Xiu understood Fang Rui. Even though he was the epitome of playing dirty, he was definitely not the kind to bully the weak and avoid the strong. Fang Rui must also understand how crucial this coming match was. In these moments, judging by Fang Rui's usual personality, he probably would have already volunteered to play next without being asked.

But now, not only Fang Rui did not speak up, but he still stayed silent when he caught Ye Xiu's eyes.

Ye Xiu immediately knew that Fang Rui wasn't at his best. The burden from last match probably hadn't been completely erased by the two days' worth of rest. Fang Rui staying silent was his way of not hurting Happy's morale. But at this moment, he decided to stay silent after he exchanged looks with Ye Xiu. This was because he knew Ye Xiu would understand him right away.

If Fang Rui couldn't go next, then who could?

While Ye Xiu was still hesitating, Su Mucheng had stood up voluntarily.

"Let me go," Su Mucheng solved the conundrum almost nonchalantly. After she smiled faintly at Ye Xiu, she headed towards the stage without waiting for his confirmation.

"Be careful." Ye Xiu didn't end up saying much either, because he knew that Su Mucheng was fully aware of the current situation, and also that this was why she was able to so casually answer the conundrum. He didn't need to give any extra instruction, because she knew clearly what she needed to do in the situation she was about to face. A "be careful" was already not necessary for the match, but was more of a personal remark instead.

"I will." Su Mucheng smiled again and went on stage.

Ye Xiu turned back around and stole another look at Fang Rui. Knowing that Fang Rui was painstakingly trying to hide his current condition, Ye Xiu certainly wouldn't press to interrogate him on the spot.

The third match of the group arena quickly began: Happy's Su Mucheng versus Samsara's Zhou Zekai. After the map loaded and the characters spawned, Zhou Zekai did not let anyone's expectations down, especially his Samsara teammates. Cloud Piercer resolutely charged forward, without pause or hesitation.

What about on Happy's side?

Su Mucheng did not lose in intensity. Dancing Rain also charged out. It could be seen that she had no intention whatsoever of slowing the tempo of this match.

Surely they wouldn't have another rapid battle with a quick conclusion again?

Everyone, including the audience, stadium workers, broadcast crew and such, were caught unprepared by the last ten-second match. Now, they quickly gathered up twelve minutes' worth of attention in a second.

"Alright!" Pan Lin's spirits were also roused. "We can see that Zhou Zekai is charging out with Cloud Piercer just like last game. But on the other side, Su Mucheng also isn't hesitating and is also directly charging out. This is probably going to turn out to be another exciting duel! What a rare sight on the grand final stage!"

"Too true! Usually in this kind of match, both sides would err on the side of caution, and fight for an advantageous position while minimizing mistakes. But today, this is not true just looking at Samsara's player arrangement. To start with Sun Xiang and to have Zhou Zekai follow... many people would already consider this a mistake. However, Samsara took this "mistake" of an arrangement to give themselves fighting spirit. On the competition stage, there is no absolute right or wrong. If Samsara lost, then it would be a problem; but what if Samsara won? The momentum would have a decisive influence. Samsara focused on this, because they came to win! They would not think about what would happen after they lose!" Li Yibo continued on from Pan Lin.

"I know what you mean. Samsara's player arrangement displays a type of determination. They only have victory in their eyes. A determination that they will definitely win!" Pan Lin said.

"Correct," Li Yibo said. "After Sun Xiang lost to Ye Xiu, Samsara's player arrangements became much riskier. Even so, Zhou Zekai still went up because Samsara was determined and tenacious. They wouldn't think about the consequences of losing."

"You're too right. I think you have a lot of thoughts on this matter! You must have had the same feeling back when you won the championship with Tyranny, right Coach Li?" Pan Lin took the chance to butter Li Yibo up again.

"Haha," Li Yibo laughed. Of course he remembered the victory clearly. However, if it wasn't for Cold Seasons' miraculous Life-Risking Strike one-shotting Ye Xiu, who knew what would have happened.

Chapter 1652: No Retreat

As Pan Lin and Li Yibo discussed the match, Su Mucheng and Zhou Zekai were finally about to come across each other. Zhou Zekai didn't slow down, but Su Mucheng didn't either. Dancing Rain was a long-ranged Launcher, yet it looked like she was charging in like a close-ranged character.

Just before the two characters were about to meet, Dancing Rain suddenly stopped.

This is?

The audience was puzzled, but the pro players reacted much faster! With the help from their spectator view, they immediately deduced Su Mucheng's goals.

The canyon wasn't a perfectly straight line. There were twists and turns. If Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain continued to charge ahead like in the previous round, the outcome would be the same as before. The

two opposing sides would see each other outside of their attack range. Even if Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had a longer range than Lord Grim and Cloud Piercer, the outcome would not change.

This time, Su Mucheng had Dancing Rain stop ahead of time. She was going to guard a tree stump, waiting for a rabbit. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer would need to pass through a turn. By the time he came into Dancing Rain's sights, the two sides would be at a much closer distance.

The pro players quickly saw what this distance would be. It was a distance that would allow long-ranged attackers to better display their capabilities. Su Mucheng had given up on steady, drawn-out fight. When she and Zhou Zekai fought, it would be an explosive battle.

No!

It wasn't just that!

Having seen Su Mucheng's impressive "Firing Line" multiple times recently, the pro players had started looking into it more carefully. At this moment, seeing this distance, they quickly realized that it wasn't just a distance that would allow the two long-ranged attackers to fully utilize their firepower. This distance was a firing line distance that Su Mucheng had complete control over. In other words, this distance wouldn't just let her fully utilize her range, it would also elevate her firepower to its peak!

Mounted Gun!

Su Mucheng calculated how much time Cloud Piercer would need to reach here, and had Dancing Rain set up her Mounted Gun. In the very next second, Cloud Piercer arrived.

Boom boom boom boom!!

Dancing Rain's artillery fire instantly unfolded. It was almost impossible to tell what her sequence of skills were. The moment Cloud Piercer appeared, the battlefield erupted in explosions and smoke. The explosiveness was even more intense than what everyone had expected. Dancing Rain's DPS instantly reached a peak.

Cloud Piercer's situation obviously wasn't great. No one would have an easy time facing Su Mucheng's firing line.

However, if he really wanted to get away from Dancing Rain's firing line, it was truthfully very simple. All he needed to do was back away a bit.

Cloud Piercer had been in the midst of making a turn in the canyon, when he appeared in Dancing Rain's sights and was bombarded with artillery shells. All he needed to do was retreat a bit, and he would disappear from Dancing Rain's sights. No matter how strong her firing line may be, if she didn't have a target she could hit, then it was useless.

But all of the pro players knew that while backing away was easy and effective, Zhou Zekai wouldn't choose to do it.

Because what he pursued wasn't the outcome, but the circumstances. If he backed away, avoiding Su Mucheng's momentum, his own momentum would decrease, and Samsara's momentum would decrease even further.

It was like a high-speed race in auto racing. Even if they saw an obstacle up ahead, instead of slowing down and going around it, it would be more satisfying crashing through it. Braking and slowing down would kill the excitement. Cloud Piercer taking a step back was equivalent to completely stopping the racecar, going in reverse, and then going back forward. It would be extremely disappointing!

Zhou Zekai wouldn't retreat, even if it was the safer choice. What he pursued, what Samsara pursued was to push forward, sweeping away everything in their path. Zhou Zekai was the team's captain, the core of the team. He needed to be strong. He needed to carry out their goals. At this crucial moment, he would never drop the ball because he was someone who used actions, not words. He used his actions to give voice to himself and his teammates.

Charge!

Cloud Piercer charged forward. Facing the explosive Launcher firing line, he fired back. This choice wasn't wise. If this were the game, anyone who made this sort of bad decision would be seen as a noob, who would be looked down upon disdainfully and then lectured by the veterans.

But now, Glory's number one had made this choice in the deciding match of the finals. On the stage, there was no such thing as absolutely right or wrong.

An act so noobish that anyone would laugh at the person doing it, but what if the person who did it was Zhou Zekai? Who dared to laugh at him? Seeing Zhou Zekai's decision, the normal players let out an expression of fear. In their eyes, this was what it meant to make the impossible possible. No wonder he was Glory's number one! No wonder he was a top player!

The crowd went wild.

Just like the pro players predicted, although this decision was unwise, it was absolutely breathtaking. Everyone loved to see the impossible become possible!

Boom boom boom boom!

Bang bang...

With the buffs from Mounted Gun, Dancing Rain's artillery fire was extraordinary. Cloud Piercer was firing back, but his gunshots seemed so weak and frail.

But Zhou Zekai didn't cower.

As soon as the match started, the word "retreat" wasn't in his dictionary. No matter the circumstances, no matter how unwise it might be, even ten million foes would not bend his will. That was the sort of mentality he came into the match with.

He was clearly a Sharpshooter, a class that didn't have the ability to charge straight into a trap, but he went for it nevertheless. The people watching couldn't help but recall that before Sun Xiang's addition to the team, Samsara had lacked a direct attacker.

Yet even without one, Samsara had still been able to win two championships in a row.

In the finals two years ago, Samsara had eliminated Blue Rain, the team filled with unique yet synergistic players. In the previous finals, they had eliminated Tyranny, the experienced veterans who had put in their all to win.

At that time, who had been their team's attacker?

Zhou Zekai!

Besides healing, there was nothing he couldn't do.

These words weren't just empty words or an exaggerated description. Zhou Zekai had the ability to do what was impossible.

Advance!

The current him was like a brave warrior facing an archer. He had no choice but to press forward.

Cloud Piercer charged ahead.

One step, two steps, three steps. Burns could be seen all over him from the countless explosions. No one could break through a Launcher's firing line unscathed. A close-ranged class would do everything they could to break past a Launcher's wall. Most of the time, they would choose to circle around and do something unexpected to get closer to the Launcher. But in this map, it wasn't possible to circle around. The only path was forward. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer did what even close-ranged characters would try to avoid, getting closer and closer to Dancing Rain.

He was approaching and attacking.

This was the difference between himself and an actual close-ranged class. He didn't need to fully close in to attack. As he gradually escaped from the firing line, Cloud Piercer's attacks became more and more dense, more and more threatening.

But Su Mucheng didn't cower either. Every time Cloud Piercer took a step forward, Dancing Rain's firing line would move back as well. She had the ability to create a perfect firing line for quite a range.

But this sort of explosiveness couldn't last forever. Even a normal player understood this logic.

Because this peak explosiveness required chaining together as many skills as possible in the shortest amount of time. To achieve this firepower, she couldn't think about cycling her skills or about the aftermath.

Su Mucheng's explosiveness had been at its peak ever since the first shot. But even this sort of burst wasn't able to completely suppress Zhou Zekai, how could she hold back?

Su Mucheng didn't think too much.

She had predicted that Zhou Zekai would push forward in today's match. That was why she chose this strategy despite it having such an obvious flaw. It was to make things difficult for Zhou Zekai.

Even so, she still wasn't able to shut down Zhou Zekai. Victory wasn't so easy to obtain. And although Zhou Zekai had chosen to push forward, he wasn't charging at her blindly, tanking everything. He was also taking a look at the situation, observing Dancing Rain's firing line. He knew that this sort of

explosiveness couldn't last forever. Su Mucheng would have to slow down at some point, unless she was confident that she could kill him during this time.

But seeing the situation, it looked to be impossible. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer was holding on under the barrage of artillery shells. His health was dropping chunk by chunk, but he wouldn't fall so easily. And because Dancing Rain was using Mounted Gun, when he counterattacked, he didn't need to worry about her dodging his attacks. Even though the damage he dealt couldn't compare to Su Mucheng's firing line, he knew that the turning point was about to come.

Boom boom boom boom.

The explosions continued, but even the normal players could see that Dancing Rain's firing line was going downhill. The broadcast and the stadium screens displayed Dancing Rain's skill tree to let everyone see all the skills that were on cooldown.

The crowd erupted into cheers. Samsara's fans knew that their opportunity had arrived.

"What a pity..." The pro players lamented.

Knowing what her opponent would do, Su Mucheng had created an enormous obstacle for him, an obstacle that couldn't be avoided. Was there a better set-up? No. Everyone racked their brains, trying to think of a better method. Her strategy fully utilized the strengths of her own class and her opponent's situation.

If it had to be said that she did something wrong, then it would perhaps be that she had pushed her limits too far. Failure meant death.

She hadn't left herself any path for retreat either.

Chapter 1653: Terrifying Victory

The Firing Line was broken through!

Some of the normal players might still have hope. After all, they had seen Su Mucheng's incredible control over her Firing Line. They had seen how she was able to produce an explosiveness at the level of a Firing Line at a seemingly impossible distance.

However, the pro players understood that it wasn't a question of distance right now, but rather that Dancing Rain had used up too many skills. It wasn't possible for her to continue any further. It wasn't something that could be resolved no matter how skilled you were.

This battle could be described by the phrase "the river flows twenty years to the east, twenty years to the west." Right now, Su Mucheng's twenty years to the east was over. Next was Zhou Zekai's twenty years to the west.

Could she make a comeback?

The people supporting Happy prayed for the possibility of a comeback, but to the pro players, very few of them looked at Su Mucheng's situation optimistically.

“She used up too many skills,” The pro players shook their heads and sighed.

“But I feel like she shouldn’t have needed to use so many!” A voice called out. Everyone looked to see who it was: Team Miracle’s Guo Shao.

Team Miracle had joined the Alliance this year along with Team Happy and ended the season at 13th. For a new team, it was a very good achievement. After all, most new teams seemed to just be taking a tour of the season. They came in haste and left in haste.

Unfortunately for Miracle, a devil called Happy came with them. They had come as a new team and made it all the way to the finals, taking the defending champions, Samsara, to their third game. Under Happy’s glory, Miracle’s originally impressive achievement was overlooked.

However, Miracle’s rookie, Guo Shao, had received quite a bit of attention. He had been one of the contenders for Best Rookie. There were rumors that many top teams had taken an interest in him.

His sudden outburst confused the former Excellent Era seniors beside him. There were countless experts and Gods present. Who needed a rookie like you to say your opinion?

But Guo Shao’s words had piqued the curiosity of quite a few Gods. They looked at Guo Shao and soon had the same doubts.

The Gods sitting closer to each other quickly started discussing the issue. The other players saw the Gods and looked again at the screen, watching the replay carefully.

“Zhou Zekai...” Someone suddenly pointed to a player.

“Under the suppression of the Firing Line, he intentionally slowed down the pace,” someone added.

What?

Everyone’s heart jumped. They looked towards Tiny Herb’s God, Wang Jiexi, who had spoken. Then, they watched the replay and noticed the numerous clues.

He’s right!

Everyone agreed with Wang Jiexi’s viewpoint. This was the main reason why Guo Shao brought up the point that Su Mucheng shouldn’t have needed to expend so much. At the time, he hadn’t been able to find the reason, but he felt like something was off. He had quite the keen intuition.

Right now, no one was paying attention to Guo Shao’s keen senses. After confirming the reason, they felt their scalps go numb. A chill went down their spine.

How terrifying!

Under the barrage from Su Mucheng’s Firing Line, instead of getting out of it as fast as he could, he intentionally slowed down the tempo, prolonging Su Mucheng’s offense and forcing her to send out more attacks.

This was the final deciding match! Everyone knew very well what burden Zhou Zekai carried. Yet despite these circumstances, he still dared to take the risk. Before, he had displayed an unrelenting determination and momentum, and during this process, he had quietly laid down the winning hand.

Everyone was silent, just like how Zhou Zekai usually was.

Everyone knew he was someone who spoke with his actions, but he had been almost too thorough, a thoroughness that exceeded their imagination.

Even though they hadn't looked at Su Mucheng optimistically, they at least had a thread of hope for her. However, once they noticed his winning hand, this last thread of hope disappeared.

Zhou Zekai won!

The rest of the fight went as expected. After Cloud Piercer broke through the Firing Line, he began his counterattack. Against his three to five step fluctuating Gun Fu, even if Dancing Rain had all of her skills available, at this distance, it was hard to contend against a Sharpshooter, let alone a Sharpshooter like Zhou Zekai who was playing like a close-ranged class.

Thunderous applause!

His fight with Ye Xiu had been too even, and wasn't able to boost the fans' morale. On the other hand, this fight had an extraordinary effect.

In the first half, Cloud Piercer had been shut down by Dancing Rain's artillery fire, Zhou Zekai had displayed a fierce tenacity during this stage. Then, once he broke through the Firing Line, he directly went for the win. The entire process had been too satisfying to watch.

Oh oh oh!

Samsara's fans cheered and screamed. When Su Mucheng walked out from the player booth, she was welcomed with a storm of noise.

Had she played poorly?

No one thought so. No one thought they could have done a better job than her. But in the end, she had lost. The brilliance that she left on stage would naturally be much duller. To many people, it felt like Su Mucheng had been killed in one combo.

The fight had been a short one, taking 1 minute and 7 seconds. There had been numerous back and forths, but from an overall perspective, it felt like each player had made just one move.

One move to win, and the one to win was Zhou Zekai.

Su Mucheng returned to her seat. She didn't seem to be dispirited by the loss. Not waiting for anyone to console her, she let a smile, telling everyone that she was fine.

Samsara had made a comeback, taking the lead against Happy. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer still had 45% health left.

It was a significant lead, but what was more terrifying was Samsara's morale. The Samsara fans were nearly out of control from excitement. The players on Team Samsara had expressions of joy, including Sun Xiang, who had lost in the first match.

Happy needed to kill Samsara's momentum. Then, the players on Happy saw Mo Fan stand up.

He didn't say anything. His intentions were clear. Everyone then looked at Ye Xiu. In the end, who went next was Ye Xiu's call.

Ye Xiu was quite straightforward. He nodded his head. Mo Fan didn't say a word and walked towards the stage.

Ye Xiu hadn't said anything when Su Mucheng went on stage because he knew that Su Mucheng knew. But Ye Xiu didn't say anything for Mo Fan either.

Ye Xiu wasn't actually sure if Mo Fan knew the urgency of their situation, but if he was willing to volunteer to go, then he must think he could win. Ye Xiu didn't want to disturb Mo Fan's mentality. He could only hope that all of Mo Fan's focus would be on the match, on his opponent, on the win.

Mo Fan's playstyle was quite suitable for putting Samsara's momentum to stop. Even if hadn't volunteered, Ye Xiu had considered sending him up.

Two players who didn't like to talk were now facing each other. These two players preferred to use their actions to speak for themselves.

The match soon began.

This was a crucial match, and Happy had sent up a rookie. Any other team would have certainly been put under much scrutiny. It made more sense for Happy though. In this new team, apart from Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Fang Rui, the rest were rookies. Although Wei Chen was an old general, no one really considered him as a major fighting force.

But Happy had Fang Rui, who had yet to go. Given their situation, it didn't feel like it was the time to hold back.

"Wouldn't it be better for Happy to put in Fang Rui?" Pan Lin believed.

"Usually, that would be the case. It isn't the time to put in a rookie. However, Happy's only remaining experienced player is Fang Rui. Putting in Fang Rui right now isn't ideal. There would be no chance for a large comeback. Putting Mo Fan might actually be better. He can act as a buffer, making it much easier for Fang Rui next," Li Yibo analyzed.

"That makes sense. Then, let's all watch the match!" Pan Lin said.

The battle began. The map hadn't changed. The area at the center of the map still had traces left over from Ye Xiu's fight against Sun Xiang. Most of these traces were left by NPCs.

Next were the two fights won by Zhou Zekai. Both battles had been fast paced. The plot of the map hadn't been touched, when the battles ended.

What about this round?

Zhou Zekai had charged forward fiercely the previous two rounds, what about this time? Would he slow down for a steadier pace?

No!

As soon as the match started, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer rushed out decisively just like in the last two rounds. He was going with the same pace and the same energy to beat his opponent.

No one felt tired by the same strategy. In fact, they felt even more excited. The crowd started chanting Zhou Zekai's name, chanting for a 1v3.

Yes! If Zhou Zekai won, it would be a 1v3. Even if his first opponent, Ye Xiu, had been nearly dead when they played, the data would show that Zhou Zekai would beat three players. Cloud Piercer would have killed three.

A 1v3 was shocking enough. Of course, three full-health enemies would have been the cherry on top, but even so, there was no need to bicker about it not being the case.

1v3!

1v3!

1v3!

The Samsara fans hollered. They weren't satisfied with just winning. They were looking for more. On this final stage, a 1v3 couldn't be more perfect!

Chapter 1654: Even Luck Isn't Here

"Zhou Zekai is really driven today!" Like many others, Pan Lin could feel the unwavering determination and energy from Zhou Zekai.

"But I have to commend Mo Fan. It really isn't easy for a rookie," Li Yibo said.

It was a very important round, yet Happy had sent Mo Fan against Zhou Zekai. The pressure he was under wasn't light. After the round began, although Deception's movements weren't fast or hurried, he wasn't slow either. He was moving forward at a very ordinary pace.

His steady pace let everyone know that Mo Fan was calm right now. He wasn't impatient, and he wasn't afraid. As a rookie, on this grand stage, in this crucial match, it truly wasn't easy. That was why Li Yibo commended him.

As the two characters gradually approached, Mo Fan's Deception finally stopped. He moved closer to the canyon wall, and then used his ninjato to begin scaling the canyon. Soon, he found himself a foothold. Deception landed on it, and then curled up into a ball.

The broadcast and stadium screens quickly switched to a different camera angle, one that looked up from down below on the canyon floor.

Deception could faintly be seen from this angle. He wasn't completely hidden. Moreover, this distance was within a Sharpshooter's attack range. Cloud Piercer could easily reach him.

Deception looked around, checking his surroundings. Then, he suddenly stood up.

Mo Fan had been studying his position, but in the end, he wasn't satisfied with it. After checking his left and right, Deception continued to climb.

This fight clearly wouldn't be as direct as the previous fight. Mo Fan went with his usual strategy, searching for an ambush spot on this map. During the previous group arena rounds, he had noticed a few spots through his spectator view, but he wasn't experienced enough to judge each spot thoroughly at just a glance. He needed to examine them further personally during the match. As it turned out, the first spot that he noticed was unsuitable.

Deception soon found a new foothold. This spot was lower than the previous one. This time, Mo Fan's Deception didn't even look down. He looked ahead, and then immediately left.

That spot was too low.

Next.

Deception continued to scale the walls. Even though he was moving nimbly, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer was getting closer and closer. If Cloud Piercer arrived before Deception could find a suitable hiding place, then Mo Fan's plans would be completely wasted.

Happy's fans were anxious, hoping that Mo Fan could hurry up and find a good spot.

Samsara's fans were anxious too, hoping that Zhou Zekai could hurry up and get there.

Through the direction Deception was moving in, the broadcast team was able to figure out which foothold Mo Fan would look for next.

The next foothold was rather high up. Ambushing from there would actually be a bit far. However, the height and the area of the protrusion made it appear as if it would be able to completely hide a character, unless the other side also climbed up there.

It would be inconvenient to attack from there, but at the same time, Mo Fan would be out of Zhou Zekai's sights, and he could set up an ambush.

Who was faster?

One was moving forward, while the other was moving up.

Cloud Piercer appeared, but Deception was nowhere to be seen!

He made it in time...

The camera switched to Cloud Piercer's perspective. The moment Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer reached the area, he immediately checked the walls surrounding him. But just like before, when he looked around, he didn't find anyone.

Samsara's fans were worried. They hoped that Zhou Zekai would instinctively sense that something was wrong. Happy's fans were also scared and on edge. They hoped that Cloud Piercer would continue dashing forward, leaving his back open to Deception.

Suddenly, at this moment, a chance occurred.

The hidden NPC troops cropped up from on top of the canyon. Zhou Zekai immediately noticed them. In the next second, the NPCs fired all sorts of long-ranged attacks, straight towards a certain spot on the wall.

Deception!

The NPC hidden troops had attacked where Deception had been hiding. The spells and explosions obliterated that protruding rock. Deception quickly jumped away to dodge the assault.

Zhou Zekai had been completely prepared. He immediately looked all around him, looking for incoming attacks. But to his surprise, there was nothing.

The hidden troops on the two sides of the canyon had unexpectedly only aimed for Deception. They seemed to have completely ignored Cloud Piercer down below.

The situation was clear enough. The spot that Mo Fan had chosen had triggered the NPC troops hiding on top of the canyon.

This definitely came as a surprise. After all, this was a random map. No one except the developers knew the characteristics of this map. However, it could also be said that Mo Fan hadn't thought about his plan carefully enough. He hadn't considered that he would trigger attacks from the hidden troops.

It was a bit of an unfair criticism though, something an armchair expert might say. After all, the NPCs up above were quite patient from what they had observed up until then. It wasn't until the NPCs started getting entangled did they begin throwing stones at someone who fell down a well. Mo Fan's Deception had been climbing higher and higher, but he was still quite far from them. No one knew what the logic behind the AI was, and it was impossible to reach a conclusion.

In any case, for Mo Fan, for Happy, it couldn't get any worse than this.

In the first round of the group arena, Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf ended up being attacked by the NPCs, while Ye Xiu's Lord Grim rested easy up on the wall. But in order to avoid aggroing the NPCs, he didn't make any attacks. The NPCs weren't enough to stop Sun Xiang, which was why the whole series of events afterwards happened. If Ye Xiu had instead attacked One Autumn Leaf along with the NPCs, Sun Xiang would have been in major trouble.

Mo Fan was in the same sort of crisis. His situation was different than Sun Xiang's. The hidden troops on the two ends of the canyon were only throwing long-ranged attacks at him. They didn't seem to have any intentions of approaching any closer. Right now, if Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer attacked, he wouldn't need to worry about the NPCs unless his marksmanship somehow turned extremely poor.

Zhou Zekai instantly grasped the main points. For him, it was as if an opportunity had fallen right into his lap. Zhou Zekai wasn't polite. He kindly accepted the gift. Gunshots echoed throughout the canyon, bullets shooting towards Deception.

Despite having such an enormous advantage, Zhou Zekai didn't act carelessly. His first attacks were aimed to prevent Deception from continuing to climb up because he noticed that Mo Fan wanted to rush to the top of the canyon.

However, with Zhou Zekai's impediment, Mo Fan didn't succeed. Climbing the mountain wall wasn't as easy as moving on flat ground.

Mo Fan was forced into helplessness. He could only have Deception land back onto the ground.

Did the NPCs stop attacking?

This was what Happy's fans hoped for, but they knew that it was unlikely, very unlikely...

As expected!

The attacks didn't stop. The hidden troops on opposite ends of the canyon continued to attack. Cloud Piercer would sometimes be implicated in the attacks, but he clearly wasn't the main target.

Head shakes and sighs...

The more neutral pro players shook their heads and sighed. It was impossible to predict these sorts of surprises before the match, and it just had to happen in such an important match.

This one point was practically a free gift. Given these circumstances, if Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer lost even a single drop of health, it would be considered his loss.

And he didn't!

Zhou Zekai didn't relax at all even with this enormous advantage. In fact, he became even more vigilant. Cloud Piercer kept an appropriate distance from Deception at all times. Mo Fan tried to close in several times, but failed every time.

Zhou Zekai had been bravely charging forward the entire time. Even when he was facing Su Mucheng's explosive firing line, his Cloud Piercer didn't back down a single step. But now, he was no longer showing the same determination and bravery. He was playing very carefully because he knew that in this situation, in these circumstances, this sort of playstyle would better strangle Happy's morale.

The turning point was lost just like this.

In this critical confrontation, Mo Fan was utterly defeated. He wasn't even able to land a single blow on his opponent.

What could be more cruel, more painful than this sort of defeat?

What was even more frustrating was that everything, whether it was his strategy, his execution, his playing, had come crashing down because of one single bout of bad luck.

1v3. Zhou Zekai had done it. The third round's victory had practically been gifted to him.

But that alone wasn't all because this round told everyone that it wasn't just technique, decision-making, knowledge, intuition, energy, even luck was standing by Zhou Zekai's and Samsara's side.

How could this sort of team be beaten? What weakness did this sort of opponent have?

When Mo Fan walked down from the stage, the away team crowd was dead silent. Samsara's fans weren't too enthusiastic either. They were showing how relaxed they were as if victory was already within their grasp.

Zhou Zekai, Cloud Piercer, 45% health left. Behind him were three Samsara players, while Happy only had two players left.

He was fighting like his life was on the line, relying on his own strength to take down Happy in these dire straits. This was Zhou Zekai, the Zhou Zekai who had led Team Samsara to two back-to-back championship wins.

No weakness could be found on him. Even the illusory Lady Luck was on his side.

This... was this the new King of Glory?

Samsara's fans filled the stadium with cheers for Zhou Zekai. The moment Mo Fan returned to Happy's seats, it was as if the match had been decided.

Tang Rou looked at Ye Xiu. Others might be thinking that Happy had already lost, but her fighting spirit hadn't diminished at all.

Ye Xiu was just about to give her the nod, when someone suddenly stood up, cutting off their line of sight.

Pu!

Fang Rui lifted his Golden Right Hand to his mouth, spat on it, combed his hair, and said: "Looks like you guys are hopeless without me!"

Chapter 1655: The Hindrance of Cannon Fodder

"Happy's Fang Rui is going to play next," Pan Lin saw the scene going on at Happy's player area. He felt a bit regretful.

He felt like Fang Rui should have played last round, but Happy sent Mo Fan out instead. Li Yibo immediately had a discussion about the merits of it, and Mo Fan's calm and unhurried tempo affirmed their opinion that Happy's decision was fine.

But then, a dramatic change happened. If you looked at the outcome, then sending out Mo Fan had been a grave mistake. Not only did he lose an extremely pivotal match, he had been utterly crushed. The loss was a huge blow to Happy's morale. As for Samsara? Their state of mind could be seen through Samsara's fans, who were sitting there pleased, confident that victory was already in their grasp.

Group arena: 4 to 2. Ever since the new competitive format for the playoffs came into play, let alone the finals, no group arena in the playoffs had ever had such a huge disparity. What was worse was that in this 4 to 2 group arena, Zhou Zekai, who had won three rounds in a row, still had nearly half of his health left.

"1v4!!!"

The crowd was already chanting for a 1v4. Before today, no one thought it was possible for a 1v4 to happen in professional play. However, today, Zhou Zekai's condition, as well as Cloud Piercer's health and mana, made everyone feel like a 1v4 was a genuine possibility.

“The difference between Happy and Samsara is really being shown here...” Li Yibo suddenly said.

“Happy only has one Ye Xiu, while Samsara has a Zhou Zekai, and now a Sun Xiang,” Li Yibo said.

Sun Xiang.

He was seen as the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle for Samsara, becoming this season’s Best Partners with Zhou Zekai.

Sun Xiang had blocked off Happy’s biggest threat, Ye Xiu. Afterwards, Zhou Zekai took down what little health remained on Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim. Then, he went on to beat Su Mucheng and Mo Fan. Now, Cloud Piercer was like a tiger looking for his next prey.

As for Fang Rui?

Last round, Pan Lin thought that it would be safer for Happy to send out Fang Rui. However, for this round, Pan Lin didn’t look at Fang Rui as favorably as he had last round.

This was because of Zhou Zekai’s momentum. Even an All-Star player like Fang Rui didn’t seem like he could stop Zhou Zekai’s momentum. It felt like Fang Rui was just cannon fodder.

And this was the feeling they got even not knowing Fang Rui’s actual situation.

“You gonna be okay?” Ye Xiu grinned as he asked Fang Rui.

For the other Happy players who didn’t know that Fang Rui wasn’t himself right now, it didn’t sound like anything was wrong. The team had four senior members. Apart from Su Mucheng, the other three weren’t exactly the most serious people. It was common for them to talk trash about each other.

But Fang Rui knew that these seemingly normal joking words had real meaning today.

“Even if I’m not, I’ve got to go. The team really can’t do without me,” Fang Rui said proudly.

The others on Happy didn’t find anything wrong, but Ye Xiu could hear what Fang Rui was implying: Yes, we don’t have any other choice. No matter how things are, I have to go.

Ye Xiu didn’t say anything more. He wasn’t completely clear how Fang Rui’s condition was, but he knew that Fang Rui was a responsible player. He wasn’t going to play if he didn’t think he could win. It could only mean that he could still fight. He didn’t want to go before probably because he only wanted to fight if it was necessary, and right now was the time.

“Watch me bully him!” Fang Rui clenched his Golden Right Hand and walked towards the stage. But this time, whether it was Ye Xiu or Fang Rui, their easy going attitudes weren’t able to infect the others. Everyone on Happy looked exceptionally solemn. All of them knew how grave their situation was.

Mo Fan, who hadn’t contributed anything last round, looked even more dejected when he returned. The comforting from his teammates were completely ignored.

“Don’t worry,” Ye Xiu looked towards him.

Mo Fan walked right past him. Those words were too light. How could he casually wave off such a devastating defeat?

“Your teammates are still fighting,” Ye Xiu continued.

Mo Fan turned his head. Ye Xiu was no longer looking at him. Mo Fan followed Ye Xiu’s gaze to Fang Rui, who was still holding his clenched right hand up in the air.

“So we haven’t lost,” Ye Xiu turned his head to look at him.

We haven’t lost yet, we...

Mo Fan stared blankly into space as he sat down at the corner that had always belonged to him, at the corner where no one would disturb him.

But at this moment, Mo Fan suddenly felt like he wanted to sit a bit closer. That way, perhaps he’d be able to see the match more clearly?

The fifth round of the group arena began.

It was only the fifth round, and Happy was down three players. Their fourth player went on stage to challenge Samsara’s second player, Zhou Zekai, who still had 45% health.

The shouts for a 1v4 shook the stadium. Happy’s fans were in low spirits. At this moment, they couldn’t find the energy to compete with Samsara’s fans. They could only grit their teeth and watch the next match.

The map loaded, the characters spawned.

Even though it was the fifth round, apart from Ye Xiu vs Sun Xiang, all the other rounds had gone by quickly. None of them had gone over two minutes.

What about this round?

Everyone paid attention to Zhou Zekai and his Cloud Piercer. The broadcast didn’t make an exception. As soon as the round began, they directly focused on Cloud Piercer, ignoring Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea.

Because it was the first time anyone had done a 1v3 in the finals. It was a feat that no other famous God had done before. Just this alone was enough to be written into the annals of Glory history. However, right now, he had the chance to take it one step further. He was making his way towards the even more unbelievable 1v4.

Nothing shined brighter than Zhou Zekai right now. He was the focus of everyone. Fang Rui? Boundless Sea? In their eyes, he was just a hindrance, a hindrance to history. Everyone was just waiting for him to be broken apart!

Fang Rui wasn’t given any attention by the camera, but he was going to make himself known: “How arrogant! It looks like you haven’t gotten your fill of fighting yet!”

Everyone laughed.

What sort of situation are you in? Yet such big words. How hilarious.

Ignore him!

Everyone hollered in their hearts. Sure enough, Zhou Zekai ignored him. Cloud Piercer rushed out.

He rushed out again!

Excited screams filled the stadium.

Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Mo Fan, and Fang Rui. Zhou Zekai was just as determined, decisive, and unwavering as before.

Anyone who didn't support Happy was probably aflame with excitement.

The broadcast finally gave in and gave a bit of focus towards Fang Rui. Zhou Zekai had once again charged forward. What was Fang Rui doing?

The scene shown by the camera suddenly turned still.

The canyon walls on the two sides weren't blurry from movement, and there was no shaking from the character looking around. The camera seemed to be displaying an image. Everything in the image was still. The point of view seemed to be moving, but it was very very slow. Sometimes, he'd be looking left. Sometimes, he'd be looking right. Sometimes, he'd be looking behind, at a wooden sign saying "Military Area, Death to Intruders"

Boundless Sea wasn't moving. After four rounds of the group arena, someone had finally made the decision not to take the initiative to attack, choosing instead to wait for the opponent to come. After checking the surroundings, Boundless Sea began spinning around in place.

What is he planning?

Everyone thought to themselves. People began noticing this hindrance, this person who had been regarded as cannon fodder.

Fang Rui, the master of playing dirty, Fang Rui. What could he do besides playing dirty!

Everyone immediately thought of the wooden sign that they saw from Fang Rui's viewpoint.

Military Area, Death to Intruders!

This bastard. Was he thinking of some sort of scheme to directly send Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer into the area designated "Death to Intruders"!

But how could it be that easy?

For one, Boundless Sea was closer. Plus, Cloud Piercer was a Sharpshooter. He wouldn't let Boundless Sea get close to him easily. In that case, how was Fang Rui going to send him to this forbidden zone?

Everyone felt like it was impossible, but they couldn't help but worry...

Chapter 1656: Intentional or A Mistake

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea simply idled his time away at the spawn point, a bend in the canyon. He was showing that he intended on standing around and waiting there.

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer quickly made his way past the midpoint and then began paying attention to his surroundings. Although Fang Rui's Boundless Sea couldn't climb like a Ninja could, there were quite a few footholds on the walls. Reaching the top of the canyon wasn't a feat that only a Ninja could accomplish. It was just much easier for them.

The canyon walls continued to blur past him. Even though he had begun checking his surroundings, Cloud Piercer hadn't slowed down. He was already carrying his two guns in his hands. Boundless Sea hadn't appeared yet, but his guns were still pointed straight ahead, filled with killing intent.

The viewers watching knew that all of Zhou Zekai's efforts right now were futile because Fang Rui refused to move. There was no need for him to be so vigilant.

When they thought of how unnecessary it was, Cloud Piercer's biting cold killing intent didn't seem as imposing as before.

Closer and closer.

A player of Fang Rui's calibre would know how long it would take Cloud Piercer to reach him. Boundless Sea finally started moving. He moved left until he hit the canyon wall and then backed away. Just before he stepped into the "Death to Intruders" territory, he stopped.

Then, he started curling into a ball. But not completely. In the end, he waited there, maintaining a half-crouching half-standing stance.

What was the meaning of this?

Everyone was puzzled.

Did he think he could hide himself like this? Seeing Boundless Sea's rather funny stance, everyone wanted to laugh.

To explore this point, the broadcast and the stadium screens got involved, showing a viewpoint looking towards this spawn point.

Boundless Sea could be seen as plain as day. Not a single part of him was hidden.

There were people in the crowd who were already laughing out loud. What was Fang Rui smoking?

At this moment, the camera began to pull back, gradually pulling away. At a certain distance away, everyone suddenly discovered that this half-crouching Boundless Sea disappeared.

It was a matter of angle.

Everyone understood. The canyon wasn't flat and straight. The twists and turns would have an effect on the player's line of sight. No one really knew how exactly the line of sight was affected at this position, but in any case, Boundless Sea couldn't be seen.

But wasn't it too naive to think that you could hide just like that? Even if Boundless Sea was hidden at this distance, if you just took one step forward, Boundless Sea would be visible again.

The broadcast and stadium screens wanted to tell everyone this point. The camera moved forward and backward several times, and Boundless Sea appeared and disappeared several times.

Then, the camera continued to pull back farther and farther. The viewers didn't understand what the point was until it stopped. Soon afterwards, the image showed the distance between its current position and the spawn point.

Those familiar with Cloud Piercer suddenly understood. This distance was Cloud Piercer's attack range. In other words, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer could start attacking from here, but he wouldn't be able to see him from here.

Cloud Piercer needed to continue forward if he wanted to find Boundless Sea. If he moved to the other side of the canyon, he would be able to find Boundless Sea sooner. However, the precondition was that he had this awareness.

Finally, a diagonal line was drawn in the canyon. With one glance, the diagonal line showed where Cloud Piercer would need to cross to see Boundless Sea. Right now, it was a question of whether Cloud Piercer leaned left or leaned right. If he leaned left, he would be able to find Boundless Sea from farther away. If he leaned right, then closer. The problem was that even if he leaned all the way to the right, Cloud Piercer would still be at least ten steps away from Boundless Sea. This wasn't a distance that posed a problem for Sharpshooters. In fact, this distance was a Sharpshooter's optimal distance.

No one could understand what Fang Rui was trying to do. Was he hoping that Cloud Piercer wouldn't step into the area past that diagonal line? After not finding Boundless Sea, maybe Zhou Zekai would think that Boundless Sea had somehow gotten behind him without noticing and then turn back to investigate? Then, Fang Rui would make his move?

This...

It wasn't impossible.

When everyone thought about the view from that corner, it did have a faint feeling like you could already see everything from there. If you believed in that illusion, then it really would feel like there couldn't be anyone there.

What will happen?

Everyone felt uneasy as they waited. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer finally arrived.

After reaching here and not seeing anything in front of him, Zhou Zekai clearly paused and had a moment of confusion.

He looked to his left and right again, and then behind him. He slowed down, and it seemed like he was going to go with the possibility that everyone had been worried about.

Keep going!!

Countless people were anxiously screaming in their hearts. The Samsara fans in the stadium had started shouting "Keep going!"

Everyone was staring intently at that diagonal line provided by the broadcast. Zhou Zekai naturally couldn't see it, but the viewers could clearly see Cloud Piercer move closer step by step.

Keep going!

Keep going!

Keep going!

The crowd's shouts were organized and powerful, but Cloud Piercer's footsteps were moving in opposition to their wishes. With every shout, every step became slower and smaller as if he would turn around at any moment. It made everyone incredibly worried.

Keep going!

Countless people couldn't bear the anxiety. The shouts were starting to sound desperate.

Zhou Zekai seemed to have suddenly confirmed something.

Cloud Piercer didn't turn around. He kept going and sped up.

He's crossed it!

The diagonal line was crossed, and not just by one step, but by two steps, three steps. Cloud Piercer suddenly accelerated, and Boundless Sea appeared in his sights. His two arms were perfectly straight, his dual guns aimed steadily at that corner.

Oh oh oh oh!

The crowd suddenly cheered. Their captain, their ace player wasn't going to let them down.

Slowing down? Was that hesitation?

No, he was still going forward, but he slowed down to mix up his speed to mess up Fang Rui's predictions. This was because Zhou Zekai understood Fang Rui. They had joined the pro scene in the same season. Even if he couldn't see Boundless Sea, he knew that Fang Rui must be waiting to ambush him.

That was why he slowed down and then sped up. If neither side was amply prepared, then the sudden clash would be a contest of their reaction speed.

Open fire!

Bullets flew out.

Boundless Sea scuttled out. Sure enough, Fang Rui had been waiting there for him. Even if Zhou Zekai had messed up the rhythm, Cloud Piercer's sudden appearance didn't catch him off guard.

The bullets instantly set off sparks, but there was no sound of bullets hitting flesh. Boundless Sea had a Qi Wave Shield propped up, blocking the first wave of attacks.

Bang bang bang bang!

The dual guns fired again.

Even though the Qi Wave Shield wasn't shattered yet, the surface area was too small. It wasn't like Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella which covered his entire body. Moreover, after a Qi Wave Shield was formed, it wouldn't move.

Roll!

Fang Rui tried to have Boundless Sea roll to dodge the attacks, but he didn't have much room to maneuver around at the moment. The area behind him was a forbidden zone. In other words, he was quite limited with his movements.

Pu pu pu!

This time, the bullets hit flesh. At this distance, in these confines, Fang Rui wasn't able to completely dodge all of Cloud Piercer's attacks. However, he wasn't knocked back by the bullets. The force of the impact had no effect on him.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

Fang Rui had Boundless Sea activate Reinforced Iron Bones, but he still had Boundless Sea roll forward as a feint. It likely reduced the damage he received, but at the same time, he was also hiding his next move while rolling. This was a very common trick that he used when he played as a Thief.

Qi Bullet!

A blast of qi shot towards Cloud Piercer's head.

But right now, the viewers couldn't focus on their fight because they realized that NPCs had spawned in the forbidden zone. After the NPCs spawned, all sorts of skills were thrown out.

Artillery shells, spells, curses, qi attacks flew out from the forbidden zone.

Knight's Charge, Berserker's Colliding Stab, a tide of NPCs of all different classes had come charging out.

Event refresh?

It wasn't fixed? It was random?

It just happened to occur right now?

The projection technology and the broadcast split off a section, showing that the forbidden zone at Samsara's spawn point was quiet.

This wasn't happening randomly. Something had triggered it. Was it because they were fighting too close to the forbidden zone? There was a setting like that?

The viewers and the pro players were all trying to guess the reason. But the broadcast team and other staff members had other means to investigate the trigger.

And soon, the answer was found.

On the stadium screens and the broadcast small screen, a replay was given of what Boundless Sea was doing when Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer rushed out.

Boundless Sea had formed a Qi Wave Shield and also rushed out, but for his very first step, he crossed over into "Death to Intruders" zone.

Boundless Sea wasn't immediately killed, but the NPCs had been summoned because of this small movement. It was a part of the map setting. It wasn't that complicated. If the entire character ran through the zone, that was trespassing. If a single foot stepped into the zone, that was trespassing.

And so the NPCs spawned and began attacking. Their focus was Boundless Sea, but they wouldn't intentionally avoid Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer either.

The battle instantly turned into chaos. As for the step that triggered it, had it been intentional? Or a mistake?

Chapter 1657: True Thoughts

Boom boom boom!

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer rolled through a chain of explosions.

He could tell that these attacks weren't aimed towards him. However, long-ranged classes such as Launchers and Elementalists often dealt AoE damage. The attacks might miss, but the AoE would still reach him. Zhou Zekai couldn't completely avoid taking damage.

He was dodging. Fang Rui's Boundless Sea was also dodging. Seeing how he was calmly luring the NPCs towards Cloud Piercer, the spectating pro players immediately grasped his plans. It wasn't an accident. Fang Rui had done it on purpose.

"Death to Intruders."

What exactly did the sign mean by "death"? Instant death?

No one had tested this setting before in the previous rounds, but Fang Rui had Boundless Sea cross the line anyways. This move was truly daring and risky. If crossing the line really did mean instant death, then Samsara would have instantly won this fight. Zhou Zekai would have won even more perfectly than his fight against Mo Fan. Cloud Piercer had at least lost some mana that round.

But it wasn't instant death. The NPCs were summoned and began chasing after Boundless Sea. And seeing how Fang Rui was intentionally guiding their attacks, it could be seen that he had been ready long beforehand. In other words, he had been waiting for this moment.

At Happy's seats, Wei Chen laughed smugly.

This was the plan that he and Fang Rui had come up together. When Mo Fan's Deception triggered the ambush from above, Fang Rui had begun preparing for his fight. He had pulled Wei Chen over to the side to discuss how the "Death to Intruders" setting might work.

The system didn't automatically come up with rules. The map designers, in other words, the Glory game designers had engineered the settings of the map.

Guessing the design was equivalent to guessing how the designers thought about the game and the principles that the game had followed for ten years.

Within these ten years, many of the employees had come and gone, but there would always be people who had kept with the game since the beginning. Wei Chen was one of these people. His professional career had only lasted two years, but he had never left the game. He had constantly immersed himself with the design principles of Glory. He was likely more familiar with the game than most of the Glory employees.

Wei Chen deduced that “Death to Intruders” didn’t mean instant death.

His reasoning was very simple. He hadn’t seen any tools or equipment that could kill someone instantly. Glory had always strived to be as logical as possible. If crossing the line meant instant death, then the designers would set up some way for the death to happen. It could be a sudden lightning strike from the sky, but there would definitely be something that would trigger and guide the lightning strike. The lightning strike wouldn’t just appear out of nowhere.

It wasn’t a difficult conclusion to reach, but there were very few people who would be as confident as Wei Chen.

This was the Glory finals. A mistake in judgement would mean that Fang Rui’s Boundless Sea would be instantly killed. All of Happy’s efforts this season would be destroyed in an instant.

The outcome of this mistake was too terrifying. How many people could take responsibility for such a disastrous mistake?

Wei Chen dared to!

He had just made a call. That was it. But the current him was like the captain who once lead Team Blue Rain. He had always been someone brave, someone who had the confidence to carry a huge burden.

“I’m certain,” Wei Chen told Fang Rui confidently.

Thus, when Fang Rui went on stage, he crossed the line for just an instant, entrusting Boundless Sea’s life to Wei Chen’s judgement.

Wei Chen had judged correctly!

It wasn’t an instant death. The NPCs spawned and then went after Boundless Sea.

It was a logical conclusion, and Fang Rui had gone with it.

The NPCs spawned, and while their attacks were aimed at Boundless Sea, Zhou Zekai’s Cloud Piercer was implicated along with him.

Zhou Zekai’s situation was similar to the situation in the first round Ye Xiu and Sun Xiang battle. The difference was that the NPCs had been chasing after Samsara in that round, while this time, it was Happy being chased. Sun Xiang’s One Autumn Leaf had been put at a disadvantage because of the NPCs, but Fang Rui had brought this onto himself on purpose.

What was his goal? Wouldn’t this just be similar to Mo Fan’s fight in the previous round? He would be facing the combined assault from the NPCs and Zhou Zekai, no?

Those who thought this would happen quickly realized the difference.

The difference was that Mo Fan had triggered the ambush from above. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer could attack, and he wouldn't hit the NPCs.

But this time, the NPCs were rushing out on flat ground. If Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer attacked Fang Rui's Boundless Sea, if he missed, the bullets would land on the NPCs, and he would become the new target.

As a result, Zhou Zekai couldn't coordinate his attacks with the NPCs.

So what could he do?

Thinking of this question, everyone couldn't help but think of the first round of the group arena. It had just happened not too long ago, so it was still fresh in everyone's minds.

That round, Ye Xiu didn't want his attacks to aggro the NPCs, so Lord Grim climbed up the wall and watched free of worries. But Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf was able to reach a max-stage Battle Spirit along with a full five Chasers. His battle strength had reached its peak, and then... the rest didn't need to be talked about. Everyone at least knew that the NPCs weren't enough to eliminate a pro player. For example, if Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer just ran away and watched from the side, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea would clean up these NPCs. Even though it wouldn't be enough to kill him, he would certainly lose a lot of health. Zhou Zekai could wait at ease for his exhausted foe.

The other option was to attack. His attacks would definitely aggro the NPCs. The two would fight it out amidst the besiegement from the NPCs.

No matter how you looked at it, the first choice seemed much easier. Qi Masters weren't like Battle Mages, who got stronger the longer they fought.

It seemed like quite an easy choice, but Zhou Zekai, who had been decisive this whole time, seemed to hesitate. It didn't seem like Cloud Piercer had made a decision yet. It seemed as if he were still wavering over which choice to make.

"It looks like Zhou Zekai is having a hard time making a decision. What is he hesitating over?" Pan Lin said what everyone wanted to say.

"Haha," Li Yibo laughed, "Right now, avoiding battle and watching Fang Rui get taken apart by the NPCs is the better choice, but don't forget how Zhou Zekai has been playing this entire time! Forward, forward, and forward. Attack, attack, and attack. If he suddenly stopped and ran away, his momentum would fall."

"That's why Fang Rui is sure that Zhou Zekai won't retreat, and why it will force the two of them into a messy fight?" Pan Lin said.

"That seems to be the case," Li Yibo smiled.

"If that's the case, why does Fang Rui think he'll have the advantage in a chaotic fight?" Pan Lin said.

"Ah?" Li Yibo was visibly stunned by the question.

A chaotic battle is more advantageous for Fang Rui? He really hadn't considered this question, but when he thought about it for a bit, he discovered something: "Yes, a chaotic battle is advantageous for Fang Rui because Zhou Zekai is a Sharpshooter!"

Sharpshooters were long-ranged attackers. Not only did they need a good line of sight on their target, they needed space for their bullets to fly. In this sort of chaotic battle, it was too difficult for a Sharpshooter to focus only on one target. Looking for a good angle, a good shot, there were too many factors to consider. Even Zhou Zekai would be held back in this sort of environment.

No wonder he wanted to end each fight as fast as possible.

No wonder he charged out so decisively every fight.

It wasn't just to boost the team's morale. It was because a drawn-out battle in this map was unfavorable for Sharpshooters. It was because of the chaos that the map would spawn.

At this moment, Li Yibo fully grasped Zhou Zekai's thoughts.

Chaotic battles were disadvantageous for Sharpshooters. This was a very junior view of the situation. But when watching Zhou Zekai, it was hard not to ignore this point because of how skilled he was, skilled to the point that this sort of junior view didn't seem like it could affect a God like him. But Zhou Zekai didn't think so. He was truly skilled, but he wasn't arrogant. He was decisive, fierce, and unrelenting to protect himself against his weakness in this map.

This was why he was wavering right now. Not solely because of momentum, but because Fang Rui's method had exposed his weakness.

Too many people had overlooked this weakness, but not Zhou Zekai. And Fang Rui had also thought of it. He had chosen this risky method to summon the NPCs and create this situation. In Fang Rui's mind, these NPCs focusing him weren't enemies, but allies.

"Don't run! I've given you so many helpers, what are you so afraid of?" Fang Rui wasn't exactly in a great spot with so many NPCs attacking him, but he still had the time to trash talk. Fang Rui wouldn't miss this sort of opportunity and let out a word. He understood Zhou Zekai and their current situation. His words wouldn't be able to affect Zhou Zekai's decision, but he knew that there were lots of people outside who didn't quite understand the current situation. In their eyes, the situation was just like he described. If Zhou Zekai ran away, it would be very unmanly. Fang Rui's words were meant to destroy his image. His trash talk was still quite incisive.

"Can't run." Zhou Zekai actually responded to Fang Rui, perhaps it was because Cloud Piercer was at a completely safe distance right now. He didn't have anything to do.

He watched as the NPCs chased after Fang Rui. Everyone realized that he had come to a decision. The trash talk that Fang Rui had squeezed in hadn't affected him. He understood Fang Rui well though. When Fang Rui's Boundless Sea took a step across the forbidden area, he quickly grasped Fang Rui's goals.

Fang Rui wasn't going to just let him stand on the side and watch. He planned on "leading" these NPCs to surround him. True, he could run and run, but run to where? Ye Xiu's Lord Grim could climb up the walls and hide because he had Ninja skills. He had much more freedom in his movements on the walls compared to other classes. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf was a close-ranged class too. But Zhou Zekai? His Cloud Piercer could only rely on jumping to move around on along the canyon wall. His movements were very limited. His Aerial Gun would be restricted. If his bullets landed on the NPCs, he would pull

their aggro. Fang Rui's Qi Master also had more long-ranged attacks than a Battle Mage. While Ye Xiu's Lord Grim could keep running away safely, it wouldn't be possible for Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer.

In the end, if he kept running, he would eventually reach the forbidden area on the other end of the canyon. Either way, he would need to win over Fang Rui amidst this chaos. And when that time came, how much damage would the NPCs have dealt to Fang Rui?

Zhou Zekai watched for a bit. Fang Rui's Boundless Sea moved around craftily and didn't attack much. He prioritized his survival and his movements. He wanted to bring those NPCs towards Zhou Zekai. Even by the time they reached the other side, he wouldn't have lost much health.

"If you're not going to run, then I'm coming!" Fang Rui shouted.

This time, Zhou Zekai didn't reply, but his Cloud Piercer charged back.

This was the usual him, speaking with his actions.

Chapter 1658: Situational Control

Zhou Zekai didn't back down. He charged ahead as always, but this time, he would truly encounter a challenge. The pro players had analyzed the merits and drawbacks of his decision, and understood that this sort of chaotic battle was unfavorable for him.

However, most of the viewers didn't realize this issue. In the eyes of the loyal fans, their captain was invincible. He had no weaknesses. What applied to others didn't apply to him.

The pro players agreed to a certain extent. A top player like Zhou Zekai couldn't be looked at with common sense. Controlling bullets as fast and accurate as a sword, was that common sense?

Everyone was used to thinking about him differently, but Zhou Zekai himself wouldn't forget common sense. He wouldn't leave his opponents any opportunities. However, Fang Rui was utilizing this map to set up a trap.

Zhou Zekai hesitated for a while, but in the end, he didn't retreat. Cloud Piercer charged forward bravely.

Was he planning on breaking common sense? The pro players thought to themselves. The crowd had already erupted into thunderous applause.

He charged forward, but he didn't attack.

The tip of his gun was aimed at Boundless Sea, getting closer and closer but never firing.

Fang Rui had been ready for a fight with Zhou Zekai under these circumstances. Seeing that Zhou Zekai wasn't retreating, he welcomed him warmly. Boundless Sea immediately rolled, dodging two attacks while also approaching Cloud Piercer.

The instant he rolled, an artillery shell flew out from behind him. A Launcher NPC had fired at him. With this dodge, the artillery shell was now heading towards Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer.

Cloud Piercer rolled to the side, evading the missile. Boundless Sea suddenly shot up and pushed out with his two palms.

Sky Piercing Strike!

Fang Rui had chained together his attack with the Launcher NPC. The Sky Piercing Strike went straight for where Cloud Piercer was rolling towards. He didn't care if he hit the NPCs. After all, the NPCs were already targeting him. He didn't mind taking down Cloud Piercer along with the NPCs.

The AoE from Sky Piercing Strike wasn't small. Cloud Piercer looked as if he would be hit. With the swarm of NPCs surrounding them, his escape options were much more limited. Fang Rui wasn't attacking randomly. Fang Rui had considered many factors from dodging two attacks to baiting the artillery shell from the Launcher behind him to the Sky Piercing Strike to Cloud Piercer leaving an opening...

It was too much. To normal players, everything might seem normal, but to the pro players, all of the little details involved made them feel dizzy.

Can he dodge this attack?

Many of the pro players didn't think so. But common sense didn't apply to someone like Zhou Zekai. Cloud Piercer suddenly jumped up and fired two shots.

It was just a normal jump. It wasn't fast enough, but with the help from recoil, Cloud Piercer sped up. As he jumped, he raised his legs, and just like this, the Sky Piercing Strike whistled past him.

Fire!

Cloud Piercer fired at the NPC crowd. However, these two shots didn't grab any of the NPCs' attention. The ones near him continued to focus on Boundless Sea. None of them turned their head to even take a glance at Cloud Piercer.

He had fired two shots at the NPC crowd, but neither of the shots landed. Zhou Zekai wasn't so quick to compromise. He was still looking for opportunities within the chaos.

Bang bang!

But at this moment, the airborne Cloud Piercer fired another two shots.

The bullets flew out towards Boundless Sea. Besides him, there was no second choice.

The two characters were quite close at this point. The two gunshots had come all of a sudden. Seeing Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer jump and then fire carefully, missing the NPCs, no one thought he would attack so easily in this chaos. To everyone's surprise, he actually had Cloud Piercer fire twice while swaying in the air.

Pu! A hit, and a spurt of blood.

The two shots had been too close and too sudden. Fang Rui didn't have time to completely react. Boundless Sea hastily dodged, avoiding one of the bullets.

It was just a normal shot, so the damage wasn't anything noteworthy. Fang Rui and everyone else was more concerned about where the bullet he dodged would end up at.

Pu! Another hit, but there was no blood. The bullet had hit the ground, whistling by all of the NPCs.

Zhou Zekai wouldn't have Cloud Piercer fire rashly if he didn't think he had a good grasp of the situation. He had Cloud Piercer attack because he was confident.

Cloud Piercer landed gently onto the ground. There just happened to be an NPC rushing over to attack Boundless Sea. He moved aside. He had no intentions of blocking the NPC's path. The Wildfire in his right hand was pointed straight ahead towards Boundless Sea.

With so many NPCs moving around, Boundless Sea would appear and disappear from his sight. He didn't attack, but he didn't change stances. However, his two previous shots let everyone know that it wasn't that he couldn't attack, but that he needed the right opening. Even amidst this chaotic battlefield, he was able to fire at Boundless Sea without hitting any of the NPCs. His skill was just that incredible.

"Amazing."

Not just the normal players, even the pro players were in awe.

"His aim is great, but what's more impressive is his control over the battle." On Team Tiny Herb's side, captain Wang Jiexi commented on the match to his players.

"A chaotic battlefield is unfavorable for Gunners. This is an indisputable fact," Wang Jiexi continued, "But Zhou Zekai's two gunshots were a signal to Fang Rui. Even in this chaos, I can still attack you. This is where it differs from what the average player might think. Even if Zhou Zekai doesn't attack, the threat of his attacks requires Fang Rui's attention. While dealing with the NPCs, he also has to be wary of leaving openings for Zhou Zekai to attack."

"Then what should he do?" A rookie in the team asked.

"Be proactive," Wang Jiexi said.

Fang Rui clearly understood this reasoning. At this moment, he had to be proactive. He couldn't just let Zhou Zekai stand there, waiting for the right opportunity to appear.

Turn, move, roll!

Boundless Sea dodged the attacks from the NPCs, while moving towards Cloud Piercer.

Zhou Zekai saw his movements. Cloud Piercer didn't move up, but he didn't back down either. However, his guns were constantly following Boundless Sea's movements.

Pressure!

Anyone would feel threatened by Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer aiming at them. The only reason he hadn't launched a rain of bullets onto Boundless Sea was because he didn't want to hit the NPCs. From this perspective, these NPCs really did become Fang Rui's protective umbrella.

Boundless Sea continued to tumble about, avoiding the NPCs through Fang Rui's unique way of moving around. His point of view was constantly spinning. The normal players looking at it had no idea what

they were looking at. They couldn't even tell what direction they were going in. They might not be able to tell from Fang Rui's point of view, but Boundless Sea's movements were clear as day from the spectator view.

His movements didn't look complicated, but the spinning made anyone looking through his point of view want to vomit.

It wasn't as simple as just dodging the NPCs' attacks. He had to observe his surroundings. He needed to know how the NPCs were attacking and moving because he needed to know this to win. Just relying on this chaos to make it difficult to shoot him wouldn't be enough to take down Zhou Zekai. If he wanted to win, he needed to take it to the next step. He had known this from the start.

This was very difficult, especially for the current him.

Fang Rui knew what condition he was in. He hadn't wanted to play in the group arena. He had wanted to save his energy and strength for the more important team competition. But the group arena was going so disastrously that he couldn't wait until then.

But dealing with Zhou Zekai would be even more strenuous than the team competition!

His blurred view finally stabilized for a moment, locked onto Cloud Piercer.

Chapter 1659: Wooden Sign

Qi Blade!

Fang Rui launched another attack, borrowing the NPC in front of him as cover. From start to finish, none of Fang Rui's movements could be seen by Zhou Zekai. That NPC seemed to be colluding with Fang Rui. The moment the Qi Blade flew out, the NPC moved aside.

Cloud Piercer immediately appeared in Fang Rui's sights. The two guns were locked onto Boundless Sea. Behind Boundless Sea were three NPCs lined up side by side, charging towards him. Boundless Sea had enemies in front and behind, yet Fang Rui didn't seem worried at all.

He was aware of Boundless Sea's situation. In front was Cloud Piercer. Behind were three NPCs. The distance between them were all within his calculations.

Would Cloud Piercer attack?

Fang Rui wasn't certain. He only knew that at this distance, if Cloud Piercer attacked, he had some confidence in dodging a few of the bullets. As a result, the NPCs behind him would be hit by the bullets, and Cloud Piercer would aggro the NPCs. That wasn't what Zhou Zekai wanted.

So then, attack!

With a Cloud Pushing Palm, Boundless Sea mercilessly pushed away the NPC that had provided him cover, so he could leave himself as open as possible for Cloud Piercer to fire at him.

Bang bang!

Gunshots!

Cloud Piercer fired. Two bullets flew out from the Wildfire in his right hand and the Shattered Frost in his left hand.

Fang Rui had been ready. He immediately crouched.

The two bullets streaked across, brushing past Boundless Sea's shoulders.

Dodged!

Fang Rui was overjoyed at first, but then he didn't hear the sound of a bullet hitting a target that he had expected to hear.

A formidable enemy was in front of him. Fang Rui didn't have the time to turn around to check behind him. However, the spectators could see everything clearly. Although the three NPCs had been lined up side by side, there was a bit of space between them. No matter how close together they were, even if they were shoulder to shoulder, there would be a gap between the heads.

Boundless Sea had dodged the two bullets. Then, the bullets flew through the gap between the NPCs' heads, not hitting any of them.

Samsara's fans applauded wildly. They knew what Fang Rui had planned, but it failed because of Zhou Zekai's precise aim. It was an incredibly exciting sight to see.

But Fang Rui wasn't done yet. The crouching Boundless Sea continued forward displaying Fang Rui's signature dirty style.

Qi Blade!

The sneak attack from Boundless Sea had now reached Cloud Piercer. But Zhou Zekai was clearly aware of it. After firing twice, Cloud Piercer crouched down. The Qi Blade flew past him. Cloud Piercer may be crouching, but his two guns were still aimed firmly towards Boundless Sea.

Bang! Bang!

Another two gunshots, but compared to the previous two, there was a delay between the gunshots. Zhou Zekai wasn't focused solely on Fang Rui's Boundless Sea. He was carefully watching the NPCs behind Boundless Sea. He had delayed his shots so that he wouldn't hit them.

At this distance, it was very difficult to dodge a bullet, but Fang Rui wasn't an ordinary player. With a dirty stance, Boundless Sea went from a crouch to a roll without a second thought.

Cloud Piercer missed again, but Zhou Zekai had taken the three NPCs into consideration. The low altitude bullets went for the gaps in their footsteps.

The applause was never ending. Zhou Zekai was able to prevent his attacks from aggroing the NPCs. His technique was impeccable.

Amazing!

Four bullets in a row, yet none of them hit the NPCs. Fang Rui naturally knew that Zhou Zekai's four gunshots had been aimed at the small gaps between the NPCs. He knew how difficult it was to pull off.

Difficult was difficult. Amazing was amazing. But if you had to say threatening, then the answer was no.

Zhou Zekai was being restricted. In order to not aggro the NPCs, his hands and feet were bound. He couldn't establish a sustainable tempo. These sorts of attacks were nothing threatening.

You think you can scare me with just that?

Fang Rui laughed coldly. Boundless Sea continued to change his route. In front of him, to the left, to the right, behind him, there were NPCs approaching from every direction. All sorts of long-ranged attacks were raining down on him.

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer didn't just stand there. He was moving nimbly amidst the chaos, searching for an angle and an opening to attack.

Gunshots would ring from time to time. He continued to attack. He couldn't establish a set tempo, and his attacks weren't very threatening, but Fang Rui couldn't stop them from coming. Zhou Zekai wasn't playing as aggressive or domineering as before. He was patiently kiting around Fang Rui. He wasn't in a hurry. The one taking more damage was Fang Rui, whether it was the player himself, or the character's health and mana. Facing these NPCs weren't a problem for pro players, but it wouldn't be a walk in the park either.

A subtle change had begun to take place.

Zhou Zekai was being restricted by the NPCs, but Fang Rui wasn't without burden.

Who would be the first to make a mistake? Who would be the first to grasp the first large opening?

Boundless Sea went in circles with the NPCs, while Cloud Piercer was constantly looking for an opening. While Zhou Zekai searched, he was also closely observing the NPCs' movements. He knew that these NPCs weren't only being used as shields by Fang Rui.

After he dodged another sneak attack from Boundless Sea, with a flicker, Boundless Sea suddenly vanished.

Over there!

Zhou Zekai at least had the general direction. Boundless Sea suddenly stopped rushing towards Cloud Piercer. He had unexpectedly dashed into a group of NPCs.

Cloud Piercer immediately moved to the side. Truthfully, every time Boundless Sea did something unexpected, Zhou Zekai would feel a bit nervous. He knew how crafty and dirty this same-generation player was.

Moving to the side allowed him to see from a different angle, but Boundless Sea still couldn't be seen. That mob of NPCs seemed to have taken a hold of Boundless Sea. More and more NPCs and attacks started gathering there.

Hong!

The flat ground suddenly let out a muffled noise. Zhou Zekai's vision began to shake. The ground itself was trembling.

Cloud Piercer only felt a bit of swaying, but many of the NPCs in the mob were directly launched into the air.

Landmine Quake!

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea had undoubtedly used Landmine Quake.

But he had taken the initiative to gather the crowd of NPCs. Now, he was using this skill to disperse them. What was he scheming?

Boundless Sea seemed to be trying to escape with all his might, but Zhou Zekai didn't have Cloud Piercer step forward to stop him. Instead, he backed away two steps.

He was no longer pushing forward relentlessly. He was displaying a patience with no openings. If he didn't fully have a grasp of the situation, he wouldn't rashly interfere.

Hong!

Another muffled sound. A burst of qi exploded in the center of the NPC mob. Countless more NPCs were thrown into the air, or sent tumbling towards the ground towards Cloud Piercer.

Cloud Piercer suddenly made a move. He suddenly rolled forward!

With a lowered view, he was able to see from below. Behind one of the NPCs flying out was a curled up Boundless Sea in the air.

Exposed!

Boundless Sea had tried to hide his movements by mixing in with the NPCs, but Zhou Zekai had caught him. Right now, Fang Rui had no other choice but to brace himself and attack.

A wave of qi descended!

Boundless Sea pushed out with his two palms, sending out a blast of qi.

Cloud Piercer had gotten up from his roll, attacking above from below. Even if he missed, his bullets would be flying up towards the sky. It wasn't possible for him to hit an NPC.

As a result, Cloud Piercer didn't hold back.

Kaka.

While he had been rolling, the dual guns in Cloud Piercer's hands had turned into a long sniper rifle. It was aimed straight at Boundless Sea, bullet loaded. Fire!

Thunder Snipe!

At such a close distance, it wasn't possible to react to the Thunder Snipe. Zhou Zekai had went for the highest DPS possible during this window. His snipe naturally went for Boundless Sea's head.

Pa!

The snipe had been extremely accurate. It hit Boundless Sea's head, dealing double damage. Blood blossomed into the air.

The powerful impact changed Boundless Sea's original trajectory.

But Zhou Zekai wasn't done yet. When there were no openings, he could wait patiently until one came. When an opening came, he would seize it full-force.

Dual Load!

Cloud Piercer refreshed Thunder Snipe. He raised his sniper rifle again and fired another shot towards the head, the head showered in blood.

Bang!

Another gunshot.

Another headshot, double damage.

Blood burst forth again, but this time, amidst this blood, a sharp cry sounded out.

This is...

The sound of a Young Wyvern.

Zhou Zekai stared blankly. He saw a Summoner's Wyvern fall from the air. The Wyvern had been hit by the Thunder Snipe, and was now just a dead corpse.

Immediately afterwards, the NPCs began attacking Cloud Piercer.

Aggro established!

Zhou Zekai laughed bitterly. In the end, he had been tricked by Fang Rui. A Wyvern just happened to be rushing towards Boundless Sea from behind when he attacked. Zhou Zekai didn't think it was a coincidence. He had lured the Wyvern over to take the attack. All the signboards had been a facade. The true signboard had been Boundless Sea.

Since the aggro had been established, there was no need to be cautious anymore.

Random Firing!

Bullets flew from Cloud Piercer's dual guns, creating a protective circle around him. However, a good number of the bullets were still focused on Fang Rui's Boundless Sea.

Pulling aggro only put him in a difficult situation. It didn't mean that he had lost. The winner would be decided by what came next. After Zhou Zekai established aggro from the NPCs, he immediately burst forth. It seemed like he planned on bringing down Boundless Sea in one wave.

Fang Rui had carefully crafted his scheme. Boundless Sea was still soaring through the air. He wasn't able to land due to Cloud Piercer's Random Firing. He was tumbling in midair, once again exposing his back.

Extremely close behind him was an Elementalist NPC who had been standing there silently for who knew how long. But right now, his staff was burning brightly with fire magic. This Elementalist was clearly preparing for a powerful spell. Cloud Piercer wasn't able to react in time and interrupt the cast. The Elementalist pointed with his staff, and a ball of flame burst forth. The fire expanded and formed a majestic fire bird.

Level 75 Elementalist skill, Fire Bird.

Boundless Sea's signboard wasn't as simple as just a Wyvern!

Chapter 1660: Thorough Usage

Fire Bird, Level 75 Elementalist skill. These NPCs only had so-so fighting capabilities. The threat of their attacks were limited. However, the pressure given off Fire Bird wasn't lacking at all.

A ball of fire floated above the staff. The flames spread its wings and flew out, burning everything in its path.

The distance was too close. Fire Bird had a long cast time, but the attack itself was fast. Zhou Zekai's screen instantly turned bright red. In an instant, Cloud Piercer was swallowed by the raging flames.

Cloud Piercer wasn't able to dodge the attack, but that didn't mean Zhou Zekai couldn't do anything. Everyone saw him raise his knees just before the flames struck.

The average viewer just thought that Cloud Piercer was trying to dodge the attack, but was hit by the Fire Bird before he could take a second step. However, when the pro players saw Cloud Piercer stand steady inside the flames, they knew that it wasn't as simple as just taking a step, but rather a Knee Strike.

Knee Strike was a low-level skill limited to close combat. However, even though Sharpshooters tended not to choose to fight at close range, Knee Strike was a very important skill. Launchers, Mechanics, and Spitfires, it was a must-learn skill for the other Gunner classes too.

Because when this skill was used, the user would have a brief moment of Super Armor.

There wasn't a definite number for how long the Super Armor lasted. Many skills in Glory had hidden effects that wouldn't be made public. However, Knee Strike was a skill that had been in the game since the start. Its uses had been uncovered long ago by players and pro players.

In particular, for Gunners, this brief Super Armor was extremely useful.

This was because Glory skills didn't have "shared cooldowns." In theory, if you were fast enough, you could use ten skills all at once.

Of course, this was just in theory. Although Glory didn't have "shared cooldowns," there were other ways the game design limited the available options. For example, character movements could not conflict with each other. Even if there were no "shared cooldowns," there weren't many skills that could be used simultaneously.

Knee Strike was a skill that was extremely compatible with other Gunner skills. Lifting the knees wouldn't conflict with raising the arms to shoot a gun. Knee Strike also had a low cooldown, so it was often used to guarantee that other attacks successfully went off. Many players had blind faith in this technique. They wanted to combine Knee Strike with every attack, and for a while every Gunner was like a one-legged person.

However, this technique wasn't as easy to use as people originally thought. First, in order to use two skills at the same time, the player needed to have a fast enough hand speed. Second, the Super Armor effect from Knee Strike was very short. Making use of the Super Armor required precise timing and judgement. For most players, using the technique depended on luck. Whether they succeeded or not was like a blind cat trying to find a dead rat.

People failed most of the time, and it was always because too many inputs would mess up what would otherwise be a simple movement. In the end, most people stopped trying to blindly test their luck and went toward more useful things.

Zhou Zekai's skill naturally didn't need to be questioned. There was no time for him to dodge, so he used this Knee Strike technique. However, the Super Armor from Knee Strike was very brief, while Fire Bird was a powerful attack. Relying on this brief Super Armor to resist the Fire Bird's momentum was impossible. Zhou Zekai used it when it would be most effective, the moment the Fire Bird struck.

Flames swept past. Cloud Piercer didn't move when he raised his knee, but the Super Armor quickly disappeared, while the remaining impact followed through. However, the impact was reduced enough for Cloud Piercer to eliminate by stepping back appropriately.

Most people thought that the NPC's Fire Bird wasn't strong enough to send Cloud Piercer flying away, overlooking Zhou Zekai's perfectly timed Knee Strike.

Really troublesome!

Fang Rui saw everything clearly. He couldn't help but curse. He had been setting things up for this moment for a long time. Cloud Piercer had established the NPCs' aggro and was hit by Fire Bird, but Cloud Piercer was still much farther away than Fang Rui had been hoping for. He had hoped that the Fire Bird would directly send Cloud Piercer over to him. The NPCs who were now targeting Cloud Piercer would attack, while he helped from the sidelines. That way, he would be able to take out Cloud Piercer in one go.

But there was still a bit of distance from the perfect scenario that he had envisioned.

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer wasn't sent flying. He stumbled back a few steps before steadying himself. His two guns were aimed straight towards Boundless Sea just like before. He wanted to continue his offense.

Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow!

But Boundless Sea moved faster.

This situation wasn't as perfect as Fang Rui had envisioned, but he had to recognize that this was much more realistic. Zhou Zekai wasn't so easy to beat. Killing him in one go was just a dream.

Flames still lingered on Cloud Piercer. The flames didn't deal any damage, but they were like a marker. The Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow soared over.

Dodge!

Cloud Piercer didn't stop to take a breath after making it past the Fire Bird. From the start, Zhou Zekai was focused on movement. As he dodged the Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow, he began his counterattack.

Bang bang bang!

Gunshots. The counterattack didn't come any slower than Boundless Sea's Spirit Reaches to the Rainbow.

Boundless Sea used Slap, sending the Elementalist next to him spinning. The Elementalist became a meat shield to block Cloud Piercer's attacks.

This wasn't Zhou Zekai's target. Cloud Piercer continued to move to the side to get to a different angle. Boundless Sea dodged to the other side.

Dragon Wave!

Qi gathered and formed into a fierce dragon. The qi moved slower than the bullets, and relying on this difference, the qi dragon made its way to Cloud Piercer.

Cloud Piercer immediately dodged to the side. However, Dragon Wave could be controlled. It wasn't so easy to escape from. Interrupting the skill was crucial.

Cloud Piercer aimed his gun at Boundless Sea, but an NPC suddenly came out from nowhere, putting itself in between Cloud Piercer and Boundless Sea.

Zhou Zekai could only have Cloud Piercer take a few more steps. But the Dragon Wave didn't chase after Cloud Piercer. Instead, the dragon suddenly went backwards, moving in front of Cloud Piercer, blocking Zhou Zekai's sight again.

Qi had no color, but when enough of it gathered, the qi was thick enough to create a masking effect.

When Zhou Zekai saw Fang Rui's movements, he immediately felt that something wasn't right. Fang Rui was putting in an excessive amount of effort into blocking his vision. Fang Rui was probably providing cover for another NPC.

The NPC that had stuck itself between the two of them suddenly popped into Zhou Zekai's mind. He still remembered that the NPC had been moving towards him, but what class?

Battle Mage!

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

The Dragon Wave suddenly moved out of the way, revealing a figure charging forward.

Zhou Zekai reacted fast as lightning, but he was only able to act the moment the Battle Mage attacked. It was because the battlefield was too chaotic. The two couldn't only pay attention to each other. They

needed to also avoid interference from the NPCs. There were all sorts of things moving around all at once from the left, behind, to the right, to the left. Even so, Zhou Zekai shouldn't have been so distracted as to miss something as conspicuous as a Battle Mage charging straight for him.

Not only had Battle Mage blocking his line of sight, the Battle Mage had borrowed Fang Rui's Dragon Wave as cover to suddenly appear in front of him.

Zhou Zekai reacted almost instinctively. Cloud Piercer just barely dodged the Dragon Breaks the Ranks. But a Berserker NPC just happened to be there. The Berserker swung its sword. Behind the Berserker was a Warlock casting a curse. Zhou Zekai had been aware of it. But more importantly, there was Fang Rui. The Dragon Wave was on its way back, blocking his last possible path of retreat.