

Avatar 1661

Chapter 1661: Too Smooth Isn't Good Either

This was already Zhou Zekai's fourth match in the group arena. But even when Cloud Piercer had been trapped by Dancing Rain's powerful firing line, he had never been in such a passive state before.

He himself had chosen to have Cloud Piercer enter Dancing Rain's firing line.

He himself had chosen to charge through Su Mucheng's barrage.

He himself had chosen to put himself in a predicament, demanding that he broke through it.

But not this time!

In this chaotic battlefield, Fang Rui crafted meticulously calculated plans. As soon as he saw an opening, he would utilize every resource that he had to seize it. There was also his dirty playstyle that was impossible to grasp. All those added together finally put a stop to Zhou Zekai. It was the first time in this group arena that Zhou Zekai was completely out of options. He had no way to escape from this predicament. Cloud Piercer was trapped.

From Boundless Sea's Dragon Wave.

From a Berserker NPC's Destruction Slash.

From a Warlock NPC's Grasping Ghosts.

A Spitfire NPC's unknown grenade.

A Witch NPC's Acid Rain.

The Battle Mage NPC that had missed the Dragon Breaks the Ranks was turning back around. Countless close-ranged classes were charging over aggressively.

There were no openings. There was no way out. Besides taking this wave of attacks, nothing else could be done. The flames from the Fire Bird had yet to recede. Sparks of fire still floated in the air.

In an instant, the sparks were swallowed into nothingness by the incoming attacks. And although Cloud Piercer could no longer be seen with all the explosions and light everywhere, everyone could see that he still existed from his rapidly falling health.

The NPCs weren't very strong, but there were a lot of them. With so many attacks gathered together in one area, how could the damage not be terrifying? Whether it had been the match between Ye Xiu and Sun Xiang, or the match where Mo Fan triggered the NPC ambush from above, none of them had taken so many attacks all at once.

Fang Rui had fully taken advantage of the chaos. With one move, he threw Cloud Piercer into the abyss.

But Fang Rui didn't relax yet.

Many of the NPCs were still throwing attacks at Boundless Sea. As he ran around, he paid close attention to any movements from Zhou Zekai.

This wave of attacks would inflict heavy damage onto Cloud Piercer, but it wouldn't be enough to kill him. And the NPC attacks wouldn't be as focused and calculated as a player's. There would certainly be an opening after the wave was over. Zhou Zekai would definitely want to escape through this opening. Fang Rui needed to find a way to patch up this gap.

Papapapa...

Gunfire.

Sure enough, after the wave of attacks, Zhou Zekai made his move. With a Roundhouse Kick, he swept away the four NPCs closest to him. Several gunshots followed one after the other. Zhou Zekai didn't hold back, activating "Rapid Firing" to fire off as many shots as possible.

At the same time, Firearm Martial Arts!

With buffs from Rapid Firing and Firearm Martial Arts, Cloud Piercer's movements became incomparably quick. Then, he went for the hole that he had opened up, and saw Fang Rui's Boundless Sea.

As expected...

Zhou Zekai wasn't surprised. He had pretty much grasped Fang Rui's plans. He knew that his biggest obstacle in escaping this predicament was Fang Rui. It was similar to the previous match against Mo Fan. Deception had drawn the aggro from the NPCs, but the one who made it the most difficult for Mo Fan was Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer.

Spiral Qi Rush!

Boundless Sea took a step forward and pushed with his palms, sending out a wave of qi. The opening that Cloud Piercer had created for himself was instantly patched up with spinning qi.

Cloud Piercer couldn't continue forward. However, there were no ways out from the rear, left, or right either. The NPCs had them blocked. Where could he run to?

Zhou Zekai was once again helpless this fast?

Many people had this thought, but not Zhou Zekai.

It looked like there was nowhere to run, but Cloud Piercer retreated a third of a step backwards.

Cloud Piercer raised his guns and fired!

Bang!

The gunshot was unusually loud, and the bullet looked to be quite big. Anyone who had a sense of how fast a bullet typically moved would know that this bullet was moving very slowly.

Stun Bullet!

It was a Spitfire low-level skill. However the Stun effect was too useful. It was similar to a Freeze. The Stun would interrupt and lock up the target's movements and skills.

This was why the skill was loud and slow. It had been intentionally designed to make the attack difficult to land.

Zhou Zekai had only moved back a third of a step to get off this shot. It could be seen that the distance between Cloud Piercer and Boundless Sea was extremely close. No matter how slow the Stun Bullet moved, it would cross that distance in just an instant.

Zhou Zekai had once again pulled off what everyone had thought was impossible. It was almost infuriating to watch.

And because of how easy it was to recognize Stun Bullet, Fang Rui knew how troublesome this attack would be.

If he continued with the Spiral Qi Rush, the Stun Bullet would interrupt it. The interrupt wasn't so bad, but the stun... Being stunned when facing the attacks of so many NPCs would be a death sentence.

He had to dodge it!

Boundless Sea quickly twisted to the side and lowered himself. Fang Rui did everything he could to dodge the bullet.

But it was useless.

The distance was too close. Zhou Zekai's aim was too poisonous. Boundless Sea had moved before he was hit, but he wasn't able to dodge it. The bullet simply didn't land exactly where he wanted it to land, that's all.

The skill effect didn't care about that though. Boundless Sea went rigid. He wouldn't be able to dodge the NPC skills coming after him.

Zhou Zekai obviously wasn't going to show him any sympathy. Seizing this opportunity, Cloud Piercer rushed out, but to his surprise, a scythe came swinging at him from where Boundless Sea had turned away from.

Zhou Zekai was startled. He wanted to dodge, but the area covered by the scythe was too large. There was only a third of a step between them. With the NPCs so close, there was no room to run.

Hit! A talisman glowing with the symbol “定” flew out and attached to Cloud Piercer. If a scythe with a talisman effect landed, it could not be dodged.

The “定” symbol... Immobilizing Talisman...

Cloud Piercer was unable to move. At least, compared to Boundless Sea, he could still attack. But for a Gunner, relying on just attacks to push off an incoming enemy was impossible.

Fang Rui wasn't able to avoid Zhou Zekai's terrifying precision, but Zhou Zekai wasn't able to avoid Fang Rui's follow-up. The stadium screens focused on the two players. Both were smiling bitterly.

The storm of attacks instantly swallowed the two characters. Boundless Sea was stunned, unable to move in any way. Cloud Piercer was only immobilized. He could still attack, and was trying his hardest to fend off against the enemies so he could survive longer.

Crowd control effects wouldn't last too long, but these short few seconds felt endless to the two of them.

Who would recover first? This became a crucial question.

Zhou Zekai knew that his Stun Bullet should last 4 seconds. Accounting for the stats on Boundless Sea, the stun would be reduced to at least 2-3 seconds.

As for the NPC's Immobilization Talisman, the effects couldn't be too strong. In the end, Cloud Piercer should be immobilized for around 3.5 seconds.

Boundless Sea should recover before Cloud Piercer did, but Cloud Piercer wasn't stunned and could still attack. This would help him defend against Boundless Sea. Zhou Zekai could only hope that there would be no interference from the NPCs during that time. He wasn't able to move, and he was helpless against many of the incoming attacks. He could only bet on luck.

1 second, 2 seconds...

Zhou Zekai paid close attention to Boundless Sea.

2.5 seconds...

Boundless Sea recovered!

Fang Rui also knew that this was a key moment. He could already see Cloud Piercer aiming at him.

Fang Rui hastily had Boundless Sea curl up. He thanked the NPCs around him. They were being good partners right now, providing him with exceptional cover.

He flipped over his palms and gathered qi. Boundless Sea wanted to strike Cloud Piercer along with the NPCs. Cloud Piercer didn't have much health left. If he was able to land this sort of attack, it would be his win.

But Fang Rui didn't realize that there was actually a small opening in the cover provided by the NPCs.

The opening was very small, perhaps enough for a single bullet to go through. But it was an opening that Cloud Piercer could use.

Bang!

A gunshot.

Zhou Zekai saw this small opening. There was no time to hesitate. He immediately aimed and fired.

The bullet pierced through the crowd.

If he was just slightly off, the bullet would hit an NPC, and he wouldn't be able to interrupt Boundless Sea's attack.

But his aim was on point.

Pu!

Blood spurt out. A bullet pierced through this tiny opening, interrupting Boundless Sea's attack. At the same time, it made it so that Boundless Sea wasn't able to dodge an incoming NPC attack.

Perfect.

Cloud Piercer finally recovered from the Immobilization Talisman. But at this moment, light glowed from underneath his feet. A pillar of light shot towards the sky. Zhou Zekai hastily tried to get away, but he wasn't able to.

Hexagram Prison!

A Warlock NPC's attack.

If Zhou Zekai hadn't been paying attention to Fang Rui, if he hadn't needed to focus all his attention to attack through that small opening, perhaps he wouldn't have overlooked such a powerful CC attack and would have instead had Cloud Piercer interrupt the Warlock's cast.

Sure enough, things going too smoothly against Fang Rui wasn't a good sign.

As Zhou Zekai thought about this, Cloud Piercer was swallowed by another wave of NPC attacks and was killed.

Group arena, fifth round, Fang Rui won!

Chapter 1662: Fighting to Go First

In the end, Zhou Zekai lost.

Zhou Zekai had been Samsara's second player in the group arena. His first match was against Happy's first player, Ye Xiu, before finally falling to Happy's fourth player, Fang Rui. Even so, the fans on Samsara didn't feel satisfied. They felt that it was somewhat of a pity. They really thought that Zhou Zekai was playing well enough to pull off a 1v4. Unfortunately, he ended up losing to Fang Rui.

"He got caught in the trap!"

The Samsara fans all had the same thought. Fang Rui was truly too cunning. Just take a look at the post-fight numbers!

Cloud Piercer had started the fight with 45% of his health, and how much damage did Boundless Sea deal? 13%.

What did this mean? It meant that Cloud Piercer had lost 32% of his health to NPCs.

An unfair advantage!

The Samsara fans were furious, choosing to forget about Zhou Zekai's fight with Mo Fan.

In that fight, the post-fight statistics showed that Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer only dealt a total of 23% of Deception's health. The other 77% had been lost to NPCs.

Under similar circumstances, players would always take advantage of what they could. It was just that in the Zhou Zekai vs Mo Fan match, the situation allowed for Zhou Zekai to more easily suppress his opponent.

In the Fang Rui versus Zhou Zekai match, what Fang Rui needed to do was far more complicated. As a result, even though the outcome was the same, it seemed much more difficult for Fang Rui to achieve. It was hard not to have a different impression of the fight. Fans would always be in defense of their idols. For Samsara's fans, it was almost to the point of shedding tears for his grievances.

But after seeing Zhou Zekai walk out from the player booth, everyone immediately stood up and applauded crazily.

Even though it was too bad that it wasn't a 1v4, it was still a 1v3. It was still an unprecedented achievement in the finals. Another brushstroke was added to Zhou Zekai's name in the history books.

Zhou Zekai didn't look to talk, but he wasn't like Mo Fan, who would completely ignore everyone else. As the fans cheered his name, he waved his hands towards them as he walked down from the stage.

The players on Samsara also stood up and applauded to welcome their captain back. They were tired of praising him at this point and actually started complaining.

"You're so fierce, what's there left for us to do?"

"So you can take care of the team competition by yourself, right?"

"Haha." Zhou Zekai just laughed, but he didn't say anything. Everyone stopped joking around and quickly began discussing who to send for the next fight.

"My turn!" Lu Boyuan volunteered to go up. In the previous team competition, he and Du Ming had tried to pincer Fang Rui in an alleyway, but Du Ming ended up being the one trapped there. At that time, he could only watch helplessly as his friend was killed. He had already been holding it in by then. Later on in the team competition, he and Fang Minghua had been stalled by Fang Rui alone for an unbelievable amount of time.

Fang Minghua was a healer, who needed to be protected by him. But let alone push away Fang Rui, he hadn't even been able to get Fang Minghua's Laughing Song to escape.

He had lost badly to Su Mucheng in the previous group arena too. Lu Boyuan knew that he had been a huge reason for Samsara's defeat last game.

During these two days, Lu Boyuan would often think about his time in Season 8. That season's final had been the pinnacle of his professional career. Through his incredible plays, he helped Samsara take down Blue Rain to win the team their first championship trophy. After that final, Lu Boyuan's spot as a top player and an All-Star had been established.

But now?

His Chaotic Cloudy Mountains had even better stats than before. At that time, when speaking of Glory's number one Grappler, it wasn't him, but Tiny Herb's Flying Drops. Later on, in order to help strengthen his Chaotic Cloudy Mountains, the team purchased the famous Flying Drops and dismantled him for his equipment...

Lu Boyuan's character had gotten stronger, more famous, but why was he playing worse?

Why?

Was it because his desire for victory wasn't as great as before?

Was it because he had gotten complacent after winning two championships?

No, definitely not!

He wanted more championship victories, more Glory. How could just two be enough?

Lu Boyuan burned with fighting spirit. Seeing Fang Rui on stage, his thirst for battle was stronger than ever.

He wasn't the only one who wanted to go up.

Du Ming had been playing spectacularly last game, but he ended up losing to Fang Rui in the group arena. The team competition had been even more frustrating. Seeing Fang Rui on stage, he wanted revenge. Plus, after beating Fang Rui, Happy's next player should be that person, no?

Thinking of this, Du Ming started getting impatient. Lu Boyuan had just said that he wanted to go, when Du Ming interrupted: "My turn, my turn."

"My turn!" Lu Boyuan glared at Du Ming.

"Me me me!" Du Ming ignored him. Who played next wouldn't be decided by just the two of them. He wasn't going to bicker with Lu Boyuan. Du Ming looked eagerly towards his captain, vice-captain, and even Fang Minghua. The people with the most authority on the team was their captain and vice-captain, of course, but number three wasn't the talented Sun Xiang nor their other All-Star, Lu Boyuan, but Fang Minghua. Although he was the least famous among Samsara's main roster, he was the most senior member in Samsara.

He had started in Season 4, a part of the Golden Generation.

That season had too many astonishingly talented rookies, overshadowing many other excellent rookies.

Fang Minghua had been one of the "nobodies" of Season 4. He had joined Samsara and became a part of the main roster. In the blink of an eye, seven years had passed. The radiance of the geniuses of the Golden Generation shined brighter than ever, Huang Shaotian, Yu Wenzhou, Zhang Xinjie, Chu Yunxiu, Su Mucheng, Li Xuan.... who hadn't heard of them? Yet for all their fame, who among those in that generation had the most championships wins, the greatest glory of them all?

Within these seven years, the Season 4 players who had won the most championships as main roster players weren't Huang Shaotian, or Zhang Xinjie, or Chu Yunxiu.

It was Li Yihui. It was Fang Minghua.

Li Yihui had been considered a member of the Golden Generation, an All-Star player, winning two championships together with Tiny Herb. But he ended up being the first among the Golden Generation to fall. After transferring to Team 301, he completely lost his luster. Within two seasons, he quickly became one of the forgotten.

But Fang Minghua wasn't a member of the Golden Generation. He had been a "mediocre rookie" in Season 4, but he was the one who got the last laugh. As the healer, he won two consecutive championships in Season 8 and Season 9. He was on his way towards the team's and his third championship win.

He wasn't as famous as those in the Golden Generation, but as Samsara's healer for seven years, his seniority in the team wasn't low. Because apart from just being there for seven years, his contributions towards Samsara were well-received.

He had been the one to strongly recommend Zhou Zekai to Team Samsara. He had believed that Zhou Zekai was a player who could not be let go no matter the cost. At that time, Samsara's Sharpshooter was their captain, Zhang Yiwei, and he wasn't nearly as confident in Zhou Zekai's potential. It was under Fang Minghua's relentless insistence that Samsara made the decision to take Zhou Zekai. There were even rumors that his firm stance made Samsara's captain Zhang Yiwei extremely displeased with him. However, Zhou Zekai soon proved that Fang Minghua's opinion hadn't been an overstatement.

In Season 6, when Fang Minghua recommended Jiang Botao, the team highly valued his opinion. That winter transfer season, they decisively purchased Jiang Botao. And once again, Fang Minghua had found another incredible player for Samsara.

This "mediocre rookie" of Season 4 had helped the team wholeheartedly. He had seniority. He had contributed much to the team through great efforts, but he never showed off. He wasn't the captain. He wasn't the vice-captain. But no one on Samsara would ever disregard his opinions.

And he had always done his utmost from beginning to end. He hadn't changed these seven years. Even if he offended the captain and the core player, he would never give up on his viewpoint. If he had a recommendation, he would never hide it.

"I think Lu Boyuan should go!" Fang Minghua said.

Chapter 1663: 3, Three Percent

Fang Rui sat in the player booth, quietly waiting for his next opponent.

I won!

And it was against Zhou Zekai. He had ended Zhou Zekai's win streak. To many, Fang Rui had already done something worthy of pride.

But Fang Rui wasn't satisfied.

Zhou Zekai? So what? Did beating him mean that they had won the finals? No. Not only did it not guarantee them the championship trophy, it didn't even guarantee them the group arena.

To Fang Rui, Zhou Zekai was just Samsara's second player in the group arena. Yes, he was formidable and difficult to defeat, but more importantly, after him was Samsara's third player. If he beat him, it would only be another small step towards victory. There were even more obstacles that needed to be passed!

What was there to be happy about? He was still far from being happy or proud!

Next!

His goal was to beat the next one. After that, it would be the next next one, and then the next next next one.

His thirst for victory would never falter. It was only by constantly beating the next person would he be able to stand on the final podium.

So who's next! Come!

The next one came.

Samsara's third player was Lu Boyuan.

In the end, Samsara went with Fang Minghua's recommendation. All of Team Samsara trusted him deeply. This didn't mean that he held the most authority on the team, or that he was taking advantage of his contributions to the team. It was the exact opposite. Everyone respected that he never made a display of these two points. He was someone who always judged the matter as it stood, using reasoning to persuade others.

Lu Boyuan had his wish fulfilled. He had been overjoyed at having the opportunity to go on stage, but he quickly calmed himself down. By the time he made it to the player booth and loaded into the game, he had let reason take over him.

The match officially began.

One side was a Qi Master, the other side was a Grappler. This was a battle between two Fighters.

Lu Boyuan's Grappler, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, came in full of energy. As for Fang Rui's Qi Master, Boundless Sea? Even though he had won against Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer, he had lost 47% of his health left. He still had 53% left.

After all, Boundless Sea had been under pressure from the NPCs the entire time. It was impossible for him not to have lost any health in the process, yet he had won under these conditions. It was true that it was intentional, but it still made everyone look at him with a whole new level of respect. If they had been the ones playing, would they have been able to do it?

However, for this match, it didn't look like Fang Rui planned on doing the same thing. After the match began, his Boundless Sea charged out.

Beat his opponent, and then move onto the next one!

Fang Rui only had this one thought. He knew clearly that he wouldn't be able to do much more in today's decisive game.

Even though he had only been against someone with 45% of his health left in the previous fight, it had exhausted him.

The strategy that he had chosen had increased the weight of the burden on him. Whether it was his character's health or his own energy, the chaotic battle that he had placed himself in was much more exhausting than a normal one. His condition hadn't been great to begin with either.

He felt the fatigue. He could feel his focus slipping, but he persisted. He had beaten Zhou Zekai, and now, he was going to beat his next opponent.

Because he knew that this would be his last fight this season. How far he could go would be how far he went. Today, he probably wouldn't be able to fully recover. He probably wouldn't be able to help the team in the more important team competition coming up.

Fang Rui was unsatisfied, extremely unsatisfied.

He was Happy's highest paid player with Happy's strongest character. He would never forget that. But when the team needed him the most, in their most crucial game of the season, he couldn't help?

Fang Rui hated this feeling. He truly, truly loathed it.

But he couldn't be rash.

He didn't think about trying to persevere for the team competition.

Because from the start, he had known exactly how much he would be able to contribute in today's match. He had originally planned on saving his energy in the group arena, and coming out in the more important team competition. But right now, he could no longer play at 100% for the team competition. He was afraid that he would instead become the team's burden.

As a result, all that remained was the present, the group arena. How much he would be able to contribute would be how much he contributed. This here would be his everything.

The two characters met in the middle of the canyon.

Lu Boyuan was eager to battle. Fang Rui didn't delay because he knew that his condition wouldn't get any better with just a few seconds of rest. He wanted to do everything he could while he still had the ability to.

Forward!

Boundless Sea continued forward, but Chaotic Cloudy Mountain didn't cower either.

The two sides grew nearer and nearer. As a Qi Master, he could have started attacking a while ago, but he didn't.

He wasn't planning on engaging in close combat, was he?

Of the four Fighter classes, Qi Masters were the weakest at close combat. On the other hand, Strikers and Grapplers held the top ranks among all the classes in Glory.

Fang Rui couldn't possibly think about fighting up close. What was he scheming?

Everyone was thinking the same thing, including Lu Boyuan. A player like Fang Rui didn't feel trustworthy. What you saw on the surface was always fake.

Lu Boyuan didn't even dare to blink. He stared intently at the approaching enemy.

Roll!

Boundless Sea suddenly rolled.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountains hadn't attacked. He wasn't close enough, yet Boundless Sea looked as if he were dodging frantically.

The scheme is coming!

Everyone thought, including Lu Boyuan.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain immediately made a move. He jumped to the side. Who cared what Boundless Sea was scheming? Moving unpredictably would always be safe.

But Boundless Sea didn't do anything. The roll just seemed to be a normal roll.

Lu Boyuan kept up his guard. Wasn't it normal to see Fang Rui do something puzzling? He couldn't be careless for even a second.

But he still had to try to take the initiative.

Lu Boyuan kept his guard up, while Chaotic Cloudy Mountain approached. Grapplers had to get up close to attack.

Boundless Sea rolled again. This time, it wasn't forward, or to the left, or to the right, but backwards.

The broadcast and the stadium screens immediately zoomed in on Boundless Sea. Everyone thought that Fang Rui was definitely scheming something just like the last roll.

There hadn't been anything last time.

But this time, Fang Rui didn't let them down.

During his roll, Boundless Sea sneakily rubbed his palms together. Lu Boyuan couldn't see it, but the spectators watching carefully could.

Everyone suddenly felt a moment of "I know what's going to happen next".

But even if they knew, it wouldn't be of any use.

A Qi Blade flew out. Boundless Sea kept rolling, changing directions slightly.

How devious!

The spectators who noticed Boundless Sea's sneaky Qi Blade immediately knew what Boundless Sea's goal was.

His Qi Blade hadn't been aimed towards Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, but with Boundless Sea changing direction, if Lu Boyuan followed along and chased after him, the Qi Blade would be perfect.

The Qi Blade and Boundless Sea's change of direction had been linked together closely. The angle was even more dirty. If Lu Boyuan was watching his movements carefully, if Lu Boyuan kept up with his tempo and adjusted accordingly, the Qi Blade would be very very very easy to overlook.

So.

Was focusing too hard, reacting too fast, a mistake against Fang Rui?

Unfortunately for Lu Boyuan, he committed this "mistake."

He had been eager to fight but he maintained his calm. He also made sure to be attentive and to react fast. He was playing incredibly well.

But that resulted in him getting hit.

Qi Blade!

He only noticed it when the attack landed. A mark from the Qi Blade appeared on Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's body.

Everyone felt sorry for Lu Boyuan. Qi Blade had a knockback. Lu Boyuan's rhythm was interrupted, and the reason was because he was playing too well...

But everyone soon realized that Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's rhythm hadn't been disrupted by the attack. The step he had been taking was the step he took.

Oh...

Everyone realized what it was.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

Lu Boyuan had already activated Reinforced Iron Bones. When the replay from his perspective was shown, it turned out that he indeed hadn't seen that Qi Blade. Lu Boyuan had reacted too fast and adjusted too quickly. However, he had activated Reinforced Iron Bones earlier. He seemed to have predicted that he would definitely fall for Fang Rui's dirty trick and get hit.

Hit me all you want, but don't think that'll stop my advance.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain marched forward resolutely. The Samsara crowd erupted with wild applause.

"3"

At this moment, the number "3" popped up in the public chat. The sender was Boundless Sea, Fang Rui.

3? What did that mean?

Everyone stared blankly at the number.

Was he intentionally making things mysterious again?

Ignore it! Kill him!!!

The crowd once again erupted into shouts.

It was 3%...

In the stadium, at a remote and inconspicuous corner, which wasn't even considered a seat, there was a person standing there, watching the match. He saw through what the "3" meant. If someone looked back to see who he was, they would probably recognize him instantly. It was Lin Jingyan, who had announced his retirement after the semifinals.

Team Wind Howl's Lin Jingyan, Team Tyranny's Lin Jingyan, it didn't matter what team he was on, or if he was retired, he was the person who understood Fang Rui the best.

3.

It was 3%. The damage that the Qi Blade had dealt was 3%.

Fang Rui was keeping track of his damage dealt. He was using this method to record how much he contributed to today's match.

Chapter 1664: It Ends Here

Roll, jump, crawl...

Fang Rui was like a fish in the water, moving around freely no matter how shameful it looked. Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain stepped forward with Reinforced Iron Bones active, but in the end, Fang Rui was able to escape. And after seeing that Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had activated Reinforced Iron Bones, he took advantage of it to throw out two skills without any concealment.

Reinforced Iron Bones was valuable for its Super Armor buff, and Super Armor was valuable for allowing the user to ignore incoming enemy attacks. If you dodged and hid yourself while using Reinforced Iron Bones, then you were wasting the Super Armor.

5.

6.

More numbers appeared in the public chat from Fang Rui.

No one had thought anything of the previous "3", but after seeing this "5" and "6", people were finally beginning to catch on.

"Is he counting how much damage he's dealing?"

"How dirty!"

Everyone sighed. This time, even the pro players thought that Fang Rui was using his dirtiness to engage in a psychological battle: listing out every damage he dealt to increase the mental pressure on his opponent.

It obviously wasn't wrong to think this, and it was indeed something Fang Rui would do. But today, it wasn't actually his intention. He was simply using it as a way to remind himself, to keep himself focused.

Soon afterwards, two more attacks landed on Chaotic Cloudy Mountain. The number jumped to 9. His attacks weren't anything special. He was taking advantage of the fact that Lu Boyuan wouldn't give up on trying to take the initiative with Reinforced Iron Bones activated.

If you want to give up, I'll help you give up. But if you don't, then sorry, I won't keep you company.

Five attacks had dealt 9%. But Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had closed the distance considerably. Fang Rui wasn't greedy. He immediately stopped attacking and focused on running away.

Suddenly, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain flickered, closing the distance at an extraordinary speed.

Cloud Body!

Many of the viewers immediately thought of this movement skill. It was the Striker's movement skill, Cloud Body, and the skill that Lu Boyuan had placed on his weapon.

The skill placed on a pro player's weapon wasn't easy to predict. Since there was no way to guard against it, its first usage in a match would always be extremely effective.

Relying on this surprise move, the bit of distance between them was instantly closed. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's two hands reached out to grab Boundless Sea.

In the previous moment, Boundless Sea had been focused on escaping. In the next moment, he suddenly turned around and threw out a palm.

The attack was too fast, too close. It couldn't be dodged, but Lu Boyuan didn't care too much. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain still had Reinforced Iron Bones active. That sort of instinctive attack wouldn't be able to stop him.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's two hands went for the grab, when his body suddenly lifted into the air.

Qigong Blast!

It had just seemed to be an instinctive counterattack, but it turned out to be the Qi Master's Level 70 skill, Qigong Blast. The qi surged through Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's body and wreaked havoc inside. The leather armor on him seemed like it was about to split apart from the outward pressure.

A Level 70 skill couldn't be used so easily. Fang Rui had planned this ahead of time. He had pretended to run away, but in actuality, he had been waiting for Chaotic Cloudy Mountain to come. He didn't care if Chaotic Cloudy Mountain used a movement skill like Cloud Body. No matter what happened, Lu Boyuan would want to get close to him as fast as possible. This point would never be wrong.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was hit.

However, even Qigong Blast couldn't break through Super Armor. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was able to get a hold of Boundless Sea in the end.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain lifted Boundless Sea up and tossed him into the air, the low-level skill Fling. The grabs had begun. However, at the same time, his Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's health slid down by a large chunk. Reinforced Iron Bones only increased the user's physical defense. However, Qi Master attacks dealt magic damage. The defense buff from Reinforced Iron Bones was useless.

18.

Boundless Sea had been tossed into the air, but Fang Rui was still counting. The damage from this Level 70 skill dealt more damage than the previous five attacks combined.

However, the one with the initiative was Lu Boyuan.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain threw Boundless Sea around like a doll. At the same time, he also reported his damage numbers in the public chat.

3, 6, 11, 15.

Four skills, four numbers. Grappler skills were powerful. These four skills dealt nearly as much damage as a Qi Master's five attacks plus a Level 70 skill. He wasn't done yet either.

Spiralling Whirlwind!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain ended his Grappler combi with a Level 70 skill. Due to the high grab priority, Fang Rui had no way to escape it. Boundless Sea spun in the air as he crashed to the ground with a boom that echoed through the canyon.

25!!

Lu Boyuan reported another number. This was the total damage dealt from a single combo, far more than the 18% that Boundless Sea had bitterly built up.

This was a Grappler.

Due to the high priority of grabs, if a Grappler could get a single attack to land, the opponent would find it nearly impossible to escape. Grapplers never had long combos, but each attack was extremely powerful. No other class had this sort of consistency in their combos.

After the final hit, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain jumped away.

Fang Rui had seen through Lu Boyuan's intentions and racked up damage, even getting in a Level 70 attack. But so what?

In the end, he hadn't been able to control the situation. After the fierce Grappler combo, Lu Boyuan was the one who had the advantage. Lu Boyuan had hit back, taking out 25% of Boundless Sea's health. If Fang Rui had been trying to put pressure on his opponent by reporting the damage that he dealt, then it had the opposite effect. With such a powerful counterattack from Lu Boyuan, the one feeling the pressure would be Fang Rui.

The dirty method backfired. For the Samsara fans, it was a joyous scene. Pan Lin and Li Yibo also praised Lu Boyuan's counterattack. The spectating pro players all felt that compared to the 25% health lost, the pressure from this counterattack was even more terrifying.

Boundless Sea started rolling around on the ground again. He didn't stand up. He just continued to roll.

Fang Rui had started his annoying and unsightly movements again.

Qi Bullet!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain easily dodged it.

Cloud Pushing Palm...

Cloud Splitting Palm...

Skills poured out. Fang Rui was practically playing the cooldown game, using all sorts of weak, low-level skills. These skills had low cooldowns and fast start-ups. With so many attacks being thrown out, it indeed wasn't easy to defend against.

But so what if it was hard to defend against?

A Qi Bullet hit Chaotic Cloudy Mountain. The qi exploded, but his momentum wasn't impacted at all. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain continued to search for an opportunity to get close to Boundless Sea.

19.

Another number in the public chat.

After a long struggle, Fang Rui was able to get in a single Qi Bullet, but it had practically zero effect on the battle, dealing only 1%.

But Fang Rui recorded it anyways.

Even with this 1%, he had only dealt a total of 19%, still not enough to catch up to Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's 25%. However, Fang Rui didn't seem to have noticed the 25% he took. He was still carefully keeping track of his damage.

21.

After some more back and forth, he finally got another two percent.

He didn't feel any pressure from Lu Boyuan's counterattack. The only thing on his mind was his own numbers. Even when Lu Boyuan had typed out 3, 6, 11, 15, 25 during the Grappler combo, Fang Rui was only looking at the 18. The number that Lu Boyuan had surpassed in one combo.

19, 21...

Fang Rui carefully and patiently increased this number. There was nothing else on his mind.

24, 28...

25 had been passed, but the thought never crossed Fang Rui's mind because he hadn't even seen the 25.

31...

Another successful hit.

The stadium was silent.

In everyone's eyes, the attacks from Fang Rui couldn't be considered as an offensive play. One attack would just be one attack.

This sort of mindless fighting was too amateurish in the eyes of the pro players. But this amateurish fighting was actually frustrating Lu Boyuan. For Lu Boyuan, he couldn't read Fang Rui. Lu Boyuan's intuition and experience couldn't be used against this sort of strategy.

Fang Rui's playing was pure and simple.

Tactics? Schemes? Psychological warfare? All of these things had been tossed out by him because he didn't have the energy to think about any of it.

After 31, 32.

Another 1% damage. Fang Rui counted it.

It was a strategy with no thought to it, and it felt deeply oppressive. Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain chased after Boundless Sea fiercely, but he just couldn't grab him. All of a sudden, Boundless Sea would nick him with a tiny poke.

Everyone was staring intently at Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's two hands, waiting for them to grab Boundless Sea, but that moment never happened. Finally, the NPCs on the two ends spawned and began charging towards each other!

None of the two characters were the focus of the NPCs, but it was hard not to be implicated in their battle.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain and Boundless Sea were dodging the NPC attacks, but as they dodged, they would constantly be looking for openings to attack.

35!

Amidst the chaos, Fang Rui was able to land an attack.

The chaos also increased the number of variables being changed. In the end, Lu Boyuan was able to find an opening.

"29!!!"

He typed out the total damage dealt after this blow, but this time, because of interference from the NPCs, he wasn't able to continue the combo.

Boundless Sea was thrown to the ground, not crashing into any NPCs. Lu Boyuan had done this on purpose. The two had been entangled in the battle between the NPCs for a while. Each of them had gotten in a blow on the other, but neither of them had aggroed the NPCs.

From this perspective, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had the advantage. Grappler attacks had to be done at point blank range. It was practically impossible for him to accidentally hit an NPC. Boundless Sea was different, though. Qi Masters had quite a few mid-ranged attacks. His situation was very similar to Zhou Zekai's situation last round. Fang Rui wanted to attack Lu Boyuan, but he also didn't want to hit an NPC. Fighting from a distance was harder than fighting up close, and compared to Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, Boundless Sea was fighting from a distance.

Even so, Fang Rui was still proactive. Boundless Sea weaved in and out through the NPC crowd, searching for an opportunity. Lu Boyuan thought that he had the upper hand. He had even been afraid that Fang Rui would run away, although that never happened. Fang Rui's Boundless Sea was firmly locked onto him.

39!

Lu Boyuan made a careless mistake, and was hit by another attack from Boundless Sea. A new number appeared.

Does he want to count up to 100?

It was still far from 100, but Lu Boyuan was certain. How could he know that 100 wasn't Fang Rui's goal? Fang Rui didn't have a fixed goal. The more the better.

41.

45.

47.

50.

50! Half his health!

Not a single attack made anyone feel like Fang Rui had the upper hand, but even so, he had already taken out half of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's health. As for Lu Boyuan? After his powerful 25% counterattack, he was only able to get in one more 4% attack.

I'm being toyed with by Fang Rui again?

Lu Boyuan couldn't keep himself calm. In the end, he was a rather emotional player. When he was playing well, he could make explosive plays one after the other. But when he tilted, his playing would likely falter.

In today's match, he had strengthened his resolve. When he came on stage, he carefully sorted out this resolve, so he wouldn't be impulsive.

He had suppressed his emotions. He needed to be rational, calm. But Fang Rui's annoying strategy had truly made him lose his temper.

His emotions were in an awful state. He just wanted to vent, to explode with anger.

And when Fang Rui counted to 50, his base line was finally shattered.

Unable to endure it any longer, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain suddenly made a move.

Spiralling Whirlwind!

The Level 70 skill made its appearance again, but this time, Boundless Sea wasn't in his grasp. His hands grabbed nothing but air. The centripetal force generated from this attack would suck in nearby enemies, but Boundless Sea was a bit too far. With a roll, Boundless Sea escaped.

Lu Boyuan didn't stop, launching a group of NPCs into the air.

Boom.

Like a meteor, he crashed to the ground, spinning like a tornado. All the nearby NPCs were dragged into the whirlwind, falling down like raindrops.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had provoked the NPCs on both sides. Suddenly, all sorts of attacks were thrown towards him.

The attacks were aimed at Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, but they wouldn't purposefully avoid Boundless Sea.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain dashed towards Boundless Sea.

Previously, he had to be careful to avoid the NPCs. This time, he wasn't going to avoid them anymore. Lu Boyuan was going to sweep aside any NPCs in his way.

Pa!

A Qi Bullet exploded.

51.

Fang Rui counted again.

Lu Boyuan threw all caution to the wind. As Chaotic Cloudy Mountain charged forward, he tossed every nearby NPC towards Boundless Sea. Fling, Spinning Throw, Back Throw... for a moment, he had turned into a long-ranged attacker. The NPCs nearby were his ammunition.

Boundless Sea ran. The incoming NPCs were blocked by other NPCs. Lu Boyuan had made things even more chaotic.

54.

Fang Rui was still calm, using every opportunity he saw to get in a hit.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain didn't waver.

Reinforced Iron Bones. He had activated it again. This time, he was really planning on just barging through everything in his path.

A nearby NPC swung his sword at Chaotic Cloudy Mountain.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain didn't dodge. He leapt into the air.

Aerial Twist!

His two legs latched onto the NPC's neck. With a twist, the NPC was thrown into the air. Before the NPC landed, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain let go, and then latched onto another NPC's neck.

Circle Sweep Kick!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain held onto the NPC with one leg, and then twisted.

Boundless Sea suddenly appeared in front of him. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had used two NPCs as bridges to close the gap between himself and Boundless Sea.

Pa!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's head was whacked. Qi burst forth, Flash Burst!

But it couldn't break apart Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's Super Armor.

His health dropped, but Chaotic Cloudy Mountain had grabbed onto Boundless Sea.

Super Armor. He had Super Armor, and Boundless Sea still had 22% health. Amidst this chaos, Boundless Sea wasn't able to completely avoid any injuries.

22%!

No matter what, I have to take down that last 22%!

The qi burst out from Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's head as Boundless Sea was flung into the air.

He quickly looked around him.

The NPCs were attacking him non-stop, but with Reinforced Iron Bones active, he only feared CC skills that could break Super Armor.

There were none!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain jumped, his health dropping rapidly.

There was NPC damage mixed in with that Flash Burst. But he didn't dodge any of the attacks. He reached out and grabbed the airborne Boundless Sea.

Fatal Air Drop!

Boundless Sea crashed to the ground.

But just two attacks wasn't enough to take out 22%.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain dropped down as Boundless Sea was thrown ruthlessly to the ground. After touching the ground, Boundless Sea bounced back into the air from the powerful impact.

At this moment, his character was no longer in a grabbed state, so Fang Rui quickly acted.

He couldn't move while in the air. All he could do was have Boundless Sea attack his opponent.

How much health does he have left?

Because Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was still taking damage from the NPC attacks, Fang Rui wasn't certain.

Spiral Qi Kill!

As Boundless Sea bounced into the air, he frantically sent out an attack.

A whirlwind of qi twisted towards the falling Chaotic Cloudy Mountain.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain didn't dodge. He couldn't dodge because he was also in the air.

He reached out with his hands and grabbed Boundless Sea.

Overhead Toss!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain twisted his arms and threw Boundless Sea back to the ground.

He fell, and Boundless Sea fell. But when he stood up, Boundless Sea was flat on the ground.

It wasn't over yet. Boundless Sea still had 2% of his health left. After his first grab onto Boundless Sea, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain remained close.

Overhead Toss into Ground Toss...

Boundless Sea was lifted into the air and then thrown to the ground.

Boundless Sea's health dropped to zero. Fang Rui was still staring at Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's health bar.

The moment Boundless Sea's health fell to zero, victory was decided, and Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's health was locked into place.

Fang Rui could finally see it clearly.

84.

84%.

Keep going!

Fang Rui was still tapping his keyboard and moving his mouse, but he discovered that Boundless Sea could no longer be controlled. His screen was strange – it had turned gray.

Fang Rui stared blankly.

84%. So it ends here?

Chapter 1665: For Victory

Won?

Lost?

The two players onstage were somewhat dazed.

Lu Boyuan had been extremely smug when he came up to battle, but the battle had unfolded vastly different from his expectations. He never thought that he would experience this kind of battle before. He won. He had finally cleaned out Boundless Sea's 22% health. But his instincts still half-expected Boundless Sea to flip up in the next instant and scurry into the mass of NPCs, landing a skill upon Chaotic Cloudy Mountain in the next second out of nowhere.

He was still completely on alert. It wasn't until GLORY flashed on his screen, until his camera view was changing, displaying his Chaotic Cloudy Mountain going through the various victory poses.

This was a moment that would normally inspire pride in any player. But right now, Lu Boyuan wasn't feeling any of that. Even he couldn't describe his current mood. He only stared at the screen, watching his Chaotic Cloudy Mountain finish the victory poses. The screen then exited the battle, and the wait for the next player began.

He won.

Next player.

Only now did Lu Boyuan suddenly have this kind of feeling. Only now did he suddenly feel like this victory was real.

Next player!

Lu Boyuan knew that he should already be paying attention to the transition to the next match, but his brain couldn't stop. His mind was still flashing with the scenes from the match that had just ended. Fang Rui's Boundless Sea seemed to be rolling once again...

Of course, Boundless Sea could no longer perform any rolls. Fang Rui stared at that grayed out world displayed after his character died for several seconds before finally standing up.

He walked out of the competitor booth. The stadium seemed very quiet. He looked at the large display screen: Lu Boyuan won, Fang Rui lost.

In the end, he'd still lost.

Fang Rui lowered his head and quietly walked offstage.

The stadium was quiet, and he was very quiet as well. This was unlike his usual self. Normally, he would be inflated with pride after victory, and after a loss he would adopt a "wise person reflecting a thousand times can still make a mistake" attitude.

What's more, his performance today couldn't be considered a loss at all. He had fallen to Lu Boyuan in the end, but before this, he had defeated Zhou Zekai, fiercely killed Samsara's unstoppable momentum. The significance of this one victory was already extraordinary, and then afterwards, he had used 53% of Boundless Sea's health to wipe away 84% of Lu Boyuan's.

Even though there wasn't much worth analyzing in this process, everyone saw one thing clearly: perseverance, perseverance toward victory.

Fang Rui, this dirty player, chased victory without ever looking back. This match he played might not have been pretty, it might not have been nice to look at, but this perseverance and pursuit reached people's hearts.

Unfortunately, his perseverance was stopped by Lu Boyuan's sudden explosiveness. Everyone felt the same as Lu Boyuan in his competitor booth, they still hadn't recovered, their heads were still filled with the images of Boundless Sea rolling and weaving through the crowd of NPCs. It wasn't pretty, but it left a deep impression.

In this silence, Fang Rui walked back to Happy's player area. Everyone swarmed up to him, and he bravely forced out a smile. He in fact wanted to show off and act cool like he normally did, but after walking all the way back here, he suddenly felt like he didn't even have the spirit to be dirty anymore.

Fang Rui sat back down in his seat, stretched his legs, stretched his arms. Chen Guo handed him a towel, and he leaned against the back of his chair and placed it over his face.

It was over...

It really felt like his competitive state had left him.

He had already done everything that he could. So why did he still feel so unsatisfied?

What "work hard and you'll have no regrets"? Words like that were just to fool people, weren't they? He still wanted to keep working hard. The team round hadn't even been played yet!

The towel was cold, but Fang Rui felt like his covered eyes were burning hot.

Ding ding ding...

Suddenly he heard the alert of a text message. Fang Rui could tell that it was his phone. He truly was in no mood to check, but his teammates were right there, and ultimately, he didn't want everyone to realize that he was acting strange. He wasn't going to be able to play the team competition, but being unable to play, and not being sent to play, the difference between these things was still quite great.

As Fang Rui wiped the towel over his face, his other hand picked up his phone.

"The match isn't over yet, and neither are you."

Lin Jingyan.

This guy...

Fang Rui was stunned. He didn't immediately look for Lin Jingyan, because he knew that even though this guy had already retired, he wouldn't let Glory leave his line of sight so easily. No matter in what corner of the world he was now, he would be watching this match for sure.

But, that was all.

Because he had truly said goodbye to this all. Because for him, all of this was truly over.

Fang Rui had no reason to talk about anything being "over"!

Because the match was still ongoing, and his own professional career was still ongoing.

Fang Rui turned his head and watched Tang Rou walk onstage. This was already Happy's final player, and Samsara, including the still-alive Lu Boyuan, still had three players left.

"Looks like we have to 1v3," Fang Rui muttered.

"Yes, that's the only way," Ye Xiu said gravely, his arms folded.

1v3. Logically, a pro player could never expect a 1v3. They couldn't set a 1v3 as a requirement for victory.

But right now, Happy's players held this conviction. They didn't hide their expectation in front of Tang Rou, because they knew that this woman would never be held back by pressure. Of Happy's remaining players, if they had to choose one person who they thought could complete a 1v3, it would be her.

As she stepped onto the stage, Tang Rou breathed deeply.

1v3?

The reason she had been criticized harshly this entire season was related to this.

She was a bit embarrassed of how rash she had been initially, but no matter what, the greater the difficulty, the more she wanted to conquer it. This was the core of her character. 1v3 was a challenge that she always wanted to complete, but the team's victory always came first. And right now, the team's victory and whether or not she could complete a 1v3 were intrinsically tied together. This overlap lifted Tang Rou's battle spirit even more.

Seventh round of the group arena. Happy's fifth player Tang Rou against Samsara's third player Lu Boyuan.

The match began.

Tang Rou's Soft Mist immediately charged forward.

This had always been her style, and Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was only at 16% health right now, so there was even less reason for her to hesitate or stall.

By now, Lu Boyuan had finally walked out of previous battle.

Tang Rou, Soft Mist.

He saw the player he was about to face. This wasn't a meeting that deserved surprise. After the four previous players, leaving Tang Rou to anchor was an arrangement within expectations.

And Tang Rou's style was very clear. She came onstage not just to knock down the opponent before her, but the one after, and the one after, her goal would forever be to kill all.

1v3. This was the crazy promise she had once made, and because she had failed it, her name was dragged through the mud.

And now, she was faced with a situation where victory required her to complete a 1v3.

She must be very excited!

Lu Boyuan could think of this point.

Because he and the rest of the pro players could tell, this girl aimed for a 1v3 not to prove how strong she was, but because she simply enjoyed this kind of challenge. That was only the regular season, and there were only three players in the group arena, so a 1v3 was the most that could be done. If the regular season group arena had five players, no one would find it strange if this girl shouted a 1v5.

Many people thought there was something wrong in her head, yet many others felt that this was an honest courage.

1v3, 1v5, these were viewed as difficult, nigh impossible. But every pro player had dreamed or imagine of completing such a thing.

But they would only think about it, they wouldn't hold any serious hopes toward it. Yet Tang Rou treated this as a challenge, and worked hard to try and fulfill it.

However, right now, she was fighting for her team's victory, a higher and more responsible goal. It wasn't like before, where she had been fighting for a careless promise.

1v3!

In this moment, Tang Rou didn't think at all about that previous promise. All she thought of was victory!

For victory, Soft Mist charged forward.

Chapter 1666: Don't Cry, Lu Boyuan

16%.

Lu Boyuan looked at the health remaining on Chaotic Cloudy Mountain.

There wasn't much health left, but he couldn't retreat. He knew what target Tang Rou was charging toward, and he was determined to strike at her head-on.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain rushed forth. At the center of the canyon, the two characters met. Tang Rou's style was always to charge without hesitation, and her common starting move was the powerful attack Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

Lu Boyuan had memorized all of this, and as soon as Soft Mist appeared in his view, he was already bracing himself. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain no longer traveled in a straight line, and instead began to advance in an unpredictable roundabout way, to prevent Soft Mist from breaking through with a single Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

It seemed like Tang Rou didn't care about that much. Soft Mist's movement was as straight as ever, but her camera view was tracking Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's nonstop movement, keeping him in the center of her field of view.

He had chosen this kind of roundabout movement for two reasons. One was to prevent Tang Rou from using her normal method of Dragon Breaks the Ranks, and the other was that this was a common method of closing in on the opponent.

Compared to Gunners and other Mages, Battle Mages and Grapplers were both close-range attackers. But comparing a Battle Mage and a Grappler, there was still a difference in their attack ranges.

The attack range of a Grappler was basically the length of a character's arms, within two units of distance. As for Battle Mages? Their attack range included not only the length of their arms but the length of their weapon. With that, their attack range could reach a max of five or even six units. So to Grapplers, Battle Mages were also long-range attackers. Breaking through that six-unit range to get to two units, completing the close-in, was a difficult problem to solve.

Grappler's skills tended to focus on pure damage. Not including the skills of the other Fighter classes, there was basically no way to restrict, control, or distract the opponent. Movement was the most realistic way.

Today, Lu Boyuan had chosen to put the skill Cloud Body on Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's weapon. It strengthened his movement ability.

The two characters moved closer and closer, gradually nearing a distance of ten units.

Tang Rou had held back on Dragon Breaks the Ranks. Right now, with just a few more steps, she could directly initiate attack.

Lu Boyuan suddenly changed the rhythm of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's movement. Originally, he had been moving around 70% vertically and 30% horizontally. But with a sharp turn, his horizontal movement suddenly changed to 80%, and his vertical advance was only at 20%.

Instantly, the speed at which the two characters were approaching slowed down. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain, using a large horizontal movement, was swiftly moving to flank Soft Mist.

Ordinary gamers might not have been able to detect much, but in the eyes of the pros, this was an extremely old and clever way of using a rhythm change to create a time disparity.

Once Tang Rou had gotten accustomed to the approach speed of the opponent, if the opponent suddenly changed speed and direction, her reaction would be slowed by a half a beat or a beat.

When close-range classes fought, they needed to take the initiative. One beat or half a beat, that was enough to separate who was faster and who was slower.

Lu Boyuan seized the initiative!

The angle of attack chosen after changing the rhythm was also chosen very well. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain cut into Soft Mist's attack range, but Tang Rou's field of view couldn't keep up. She hastily spun, but she was too slow, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was right next to her, but she couldn't catch him in her sights. She was only off by that half-beat.

Take the lead first!

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was already reaching a hand toward Soft Mist.

But a streak of red light suddenly swept across his waist!

Tyrant's Destruction!

Soft Mist's sight hadn't arrived, but her attack had.

Just when Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was about to grab Soft Mist, he was sent flying by this Tyrant's Destruction.

Slow by half a beat?

Yes, she was slow.

But this half-beat slow wasn't because Tang Rou's reaction was slow. It wasn't because she had fallen into the trap laid by Lu Boyuan's sudden change in rhythm.

She was slow by half a beat because she hadn't used her vision to chase Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's movement. She had instead opted to directly control Soft Mist to use an attack.

The control and launch of a Tyrant's Destruction would always be a bit slower than turning one's camera.

This was where the delay had come from.

But in the end, Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was sent flying.

Falling Flower Palm!

Soft Mist slid and forced a palm out, toward the flying Chaotic Cloudy Mountain. With a boom, the palm hit, sending Chaotic Cloudy Mountain flying out even faster, toward the canyon wall behind him. After the Falling Flower Palm hit, the Fire Chaser it generated shot toward him and exploded against him, swallowing him in a burst of red fire.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain took even more damage. Soft Mist's arms were already wreathed in the strength buff granted by the Fire Chaser, and Soft Mist charged forward, Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Dancing Fire Flowing Flame was instantly in front of Chaotic Cloudy Mountain. Soft Mist didn't reduce her momentum. Forward, continue forward.

Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's back finally slammed against the canyon wall, sending a boom echoing through the canyon. It was clear how forceful the blow had been. But his path didn't stop there – his body actually continued to sink into the mountain wall, leaving a hole into the stone.

Dancing Fire Flowing Flame had already completely penetrated Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's body. Right now, she was extremely close to the other character, at a distance of only one unit. For a Grappler, this was the optimal attack distance.

But Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's arms were stuck on both sides of his body, he had no way of lifting them. No matter how fast Lu Boyuan's hand speed was, no matter how high his technique, no matter how strong his willpower, no matter how great his determination, he couldn't.

His health reached zero. Chaotic Cloudy Mountain died.

Tyrant's Destruction, Falling Flower Palm, Fire Chaser, Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

Four attacks surpassed the 16% damage needed to end the life of Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain.

Victory was decided. The winner, Happy's Tang Rou.

The stadium hadn't even reacted yet. In the broadcast, Pan Lin and Li Yibo's analysis of Lu Boyuan's clever rhythm change came to an abrupt stop.

What more was there to analyze? Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountain was already dead. Victory was already announced.

No one had really expected Lu Boyuan to win with Chaotic Cloudy Mountain's remaining 16% health, but this loss was a bit too quick and neat, wasn't it?

The stadium was quiet for a while, until finally, the cheers and applause of Happy's fans rose up from a corner of the stadium.

Samsara's fans seemed to be at a loss. They didn't know how they should respond to the cheers of the opposing fans. Tang Rou's clean victory had left them speechless.

Happy's cheers resounded in Samsara's stadium for quite a while before finally being suppressed by the random noisemakers of Samsara's fans. They could only take advantage of their numbers, because right now, they didn't have any unified slogan to shout. They couldn't stand up together and yell "don't cry Lu Boyuan," right?

Chapter 1667: Who's Better

Lu Boyuan came down from the stage.

His performance today couldn't be considered terrible, but it wasn't great either. All he did was beat Fang Rui, who only had 53% of his health left. His match against Tang Rou was no different than getting instant killed.

Samsara still had the lead, though. The Samsara fans weren't angry at him. There was still applause, encouragement for his efforts.

This couldn't cover up the fact that Lu Boyuan's condition wasn't at its peak.

He had played poorly in the previous game. In today's game, he had been brimming with resolve, but his performance was much worse than he had expected.

What's going on?

Lu Boyuan felt like he had lost direction. He couldn't seem to get into the right mentality.

He walked back to his seat quietly. Facing the comforting from his teammates, he could only squeeze out a smile.

The match continued. Du Ming was all ready to go. Before he went onto the stage, he couldn't help but glance at the players on Happy's side. Of course, he didn't see the person he was looking for.

Because she was on stage!

Du Ming was getting excited. He had been waiting for this opportunity for a long time, and today, it had finally come.

Du Ming hadn't forgotten his previous exchange with Tang Rou. It had been a very short one, though, so there wasn't much to recall.

In that exchange, he had been distracted, thinking about other things. On the other hand, Tang Rou had been completely focused on the match, demolishing him.

Du Ming felt extremely ashamed.

He had let down the team, and let down such a rare opportunity.

That was why he had been hoping for a second chance. He had to have another try. He had to focus on the match, and complete a brilliant conversation by winning.

Du Ming walked onto the stage and into the player booth.

The eighth round of the group arena began. Samsara's Du Ming versus Happy's Tang Rou.

The map loaded. The characters loaded.

Charge!

Soft Mist, Moon Luring Frost.

The two players didn't hesitate and immediately rushed forward. Soon, the two would meet at the center of the canyon.

Neither of them paused to take a rest. The two were both charging towards each other.

Sword raised, spear out, clash!

The sound of their weapons colliding echoed through the canyon. The two started their attack at practically the same time. Then, both of them adjusted their attacks. In the end, when their weapons collided, it became one of them attacking, while the other parrying.

The second, third, and fourth attacks followed!

Both players were playing fast. It was an intense confrontation as soon as the fighting began.

"He's playing well."

On Samsara's side, everyone was paying attention to Du Ming's performance. They were very pleased with his playing.

"His dream's come true. How could he not be playing well?" Fang Minghua laughed.

Everyone nodded their heads. Du Ming was playing exceptionally well this finals. It was clearly related to their opponents being Team Happy.

This time, Du Ming wasn't as distracted as last time. He had turned these distractions into motivation. As a result, he was always able to perform at his best. That was why Samsara was at ease sending him out onto the stage.

And now, he was fighting Tang Rou on stage once again. He didn't think about their encounter the last time, or the time before that, or the first time.

In his eyes, there was only the match in front of him. In his heart, there was only victory.

He became extremely focused. It was perhaps the most focused he'd ever been in his entire professional career.

Openings that he usually wouldn't be able to see were clear as day to Du Ming right now.

He saw the tiniest of openings and took it.

Downwind Sword Slash!

The sharp sword wind came out of the blue. A split suddenly appeared in the tight battle. Tang Rou could only have Soft Mist hastily raise her spear to parry with a normal attack, but it couldn't resist the powerful force from Downwind Sword Slash. Her spear, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, was knocked aside. Soft Mist was already retreating, but she couldn't escape from the sword slash!

Blood flew into the air, splashing onto the sword light.

Tang Rou did the best she could to defend against the attack and reduce the damage she took.

But the previous equilibrium had been broken. Sword light flashed, Triple Slash!

Moon Luring Frost suddenly appeared by Soft Mist's side. This was only the second slash from Triple Slash.

"Amazing!" The expert Blade Master, Huang Shaotian, couldn't help but give a shout of praise. The attack, distance, angle, and timing, all of it had been perfect. It was impossible to dodge this attack. It didn't matter how fast Tang Rou reacted, it couldn't be done.

Another injury was added. Du Ming had the initiative. Sword light flashed, mercilessly flying towards Soft Mist.

The Samsara fans were excited. The previous gloom had been swept away. Du Ming looked as unstoppable as Zhou Zekai!

They began waving their arms and shouting, cheering for Du Ming.

"One wave kill!!!"

They shouted. It would be the greatest response to Lu Boyuan getting dismantled last round.

But...

"One wave..."

By the second word of the second shout, they had to stop.

Soft Mist pointed her spear towards the sky. With a Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart, she stopped Moon Luring Frost's advance.

Even the pro players were dumbstruck. They discovered that they could no longer predict who would win this match. No one knew what the two on stage could do. They were both playing well beyond themselves. Du Ming was playing incredibly well, but Tang Rou was playing even better. She had been suppressed by Du Ming's offense, yet just when everyone was wondering how she would be able to get out, she used one attack to turn things around, and start her counterattack.

This wasn't normal.

This wasn't something that could be explained through logic.

The stadium screens showed a replay of the Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart, but even the pro players furrowed their brows in thought. How was she able to pull off the attack? How was she able to achieve the outcome she got?

The match wouldn't stop because they were thinking. Now, it was Tang Rou's turn to be on the offensive, and Du Ming's turn to defend. Du Ming had the upper hand before, but in an instant, Tang Rou took it from him.

Du Ming didn't panic. He calmly observed the situation.

His offensive had been cut off. No worries! Just get it back!

Du Ming's thoughts were simple but determined. At this moment, he wasn't thinking of anything else. Even though he was playing well because of Tang Rou, he wasn't distracted by her. All of his attention was on how to win this battle.

Facing the fiery assault from Soft Mist's Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, Moon Luring Frost fought back with his Lingering Ice, a clash between fire and ice.

He was only defending, but he would always strike at the most critical time, like a fireman staving off a fire.

He was waiting for an opening.

He didn't know when the opening would come, but he knew that it would come eventually.

Formless Phantom Blade!

His sword, Lingering Ice, suddenly split apart. Du Ming's patience was finally about to be rewarded. He seized an opening, and used the Level 70 Formless Phantom Blade.

Sword light weaved into a net, enshrouding Soft Mist.

Her offense was suddenly put to an abrupt stop.

But Soft Mist didn't retreat!

If her offense had been broken, then just start another one.

Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike!

Soft Mist also used a high-level skill. Her spear blurred into countless afterimages. Tang Rou focused the attacks towards a single direction to clash with Moon Luring Frost's Formless Phantom Blade.

The sounds of collisions rang endlessly.

Under the inconceivable microing by the two players, neither side was able to gain the upper hand.

But the experts had noticed that this balance wouldn't last forever.

Because there would be a final hit!

Formless Phantom Blade had a final strike. It was the skill's most powerful strike, dealing high damage and having high priority, knocking the target flying back. On the other hand, Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike didn't have such a tyrannical effect.

Because of this final strike, Formless Phantom Blade's attack priority would reach a height that Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike couldn't contest with. Moreover, Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike would end before Formless Phantom Blade dealt its final blow.

Who won this clash depended on how the two sides managed this final strike, and this moment was about to arrive!

Chapter 1668: All Set-Up

Red and blue light clashed again and again. Just watching the flashing colors gave the viewers goosebumps. For a moment, the normal gamers didn't know where to look. They simply watched in awe with their jaws wide open.

It's here!

The experts knew where the key lay. Just when the collision between skills was about to end, all of them grew nervous and put their full attention toward the battle.

5, 4, 3, 2...

They had started counting down. The last collision between weapons was about to occur. Next would be the final strike. It had been a stalemate the entire time, but this next strike would end it.

She missed her parry?

But no one had thought that before the decisive strike, Tang Rou would slip up. Her Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike had failed to parry the Formless Phantom Blade's sword slash. Blue light invaded her territory, and blood blossomed into the air.

Hit!

The second to last Formless Phantom Blade hit Soft Mist. Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike was interrupted. The red light glowing from Dancing Fire Flowing Flames dimmed.

The final slash, the strongest hit!

The sword light gave off its most resplendent light, flying towards Soft Mist's head...

No blood. No knockback. The sword light was still as brilliant as ever. The sword light was still flying. Shock filled the faces of the ones who noticed what had happened.

The final slash, the strongest hit had missed?

Yes, the sword light missed. Soft Mist had retreated during this short window. She had actually ran away. She had always been fierce and domineering, but suddenly, it was as if someone else were playing. This sort of play had Fang Rui's signature written all over it.

But in the next instant.

In the next moment, the next second, Soft Mist straightened back up and charged forward!

Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost was stuck in the end lag from Formless Phantom Blade. There was no way for him to resist...

How did things turn out like this?

The experts were no longer thinking about the ongoing battle. They couldn't understand what had just happened. If you could escape one of Formless Phantom Blade's strikes by taking the previous one, then the skill would be too flawed.

However, Tang Rou's Soft Mist had done it, and by taking the second to last hit, she dodged the final one. Then, the ending lag from the Formless Phantom Blade left the opponent with a huge opening.

The stadium screen immediately began showing a replay, starting from when the two skills clashed.

Once, twice...

The pro players could start to see the reason.

"Watch Soft Mist's movements."

"Her parries weren't just to defend, but to guide..."

"Pay attention to the last one"

"The parry that she missed left an opening exactly where Tang Rou wanted him to attack."

"Yes, taking the hit helped her get to the right position for the next one..."

"She had been setting it up bit by bit, and Du Ming didn't notice it at all."

"Not just Du Ming, did any of us catch it?"

Silence. From rookies to Gods, the ones who caught on the fastest were only able to catch it on the replay.

"Finally, she used the sort of micro-control that Fang Rui specializes in to dodge the final strike..."

"After that, counterattack..."

Yes, counterattack.

While the pro players were analyzing this play, Tang Rou had already started swinging her spear. Fang Rui's dirty style had only appeared for an instant, then, it was back to her usual fierceness.

Due to being in a stunned state from the skill, Moon Luring Frost was in an even harder-to-break combo.

Du Ming didn't understand why his Formless Phantom Blade's final strike didn't land. He didn't have the time or resources to carefully analyze a replay like the pro players had done.

He needed to worry about the present. How could he get Moon Luring Frost out of Soft Mist's combo, or find an opportunity to counterattack?

But Tang Rou wouldn't give him any opportunities. She quickly reached the end of her combo. The combo had been so short that it felt rather wasteful.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky!

Battle magic transformed into a dragon and flew into the air. Moon Luring Frost was still under Soft Mist's control, and couldn't dodge this attack.

However, Du Ming let out a sigh of relief.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky was similar to Formless Phantom Blade. It had a long ending animation, so it couldn't be comboed into anything. As for false combos, that depended on the situation. Moon Luring Frost was sent flying as one would expect. Du Ming didn't see her setting-up any follow-ups.

Boom!

The Rising Dragon Soars the Sky ended, and the battle magic exploded. The glimmering light enshrouded Moon Luring Frost.

Soft Mist was stuck in the skill's ending animation, but after Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost was hit by the attack, he wouldn't be able to move immediately. The explosive battle magic still rippled with power.

Tang Rou's Soft Mist finished retracting her spear and immediately attacked again.

Raise spear, charge!

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

That's it?

Du Ming was somewhat surprised. Moon Luring Frost had already recovered. Because of the distance, dodging this Dragon Breaks the Ranks wouldn't be difficult. Tang Rou's impulsive usage of the skill would give him an opportunity to counterattack. Although Dragon Breaks the Ranks didn't have a notable ending lag, if she missed, it was still quite a big opening.

There was no time to think. Du Ming had Moon Luring Frost dodge the attack. Although it wouldn't be difficult, that was only from a pro player's perspective. For a normal player, Tang Rou's sudden Dragon Breaks the Ranks wouldn't be so easy to react to.

Opportunity only came once.

Move to the side, counterattack!

Du Ming's intentions were clear. After figuring out the timing, he made his move.

Move to the side, unsheath sword, and swing, all in one breath.

He turned and unsheathed his sword, but he unexpectedly wasn't able to move to the side.

He looked to the side. In front of his eyes was a giant wall. A wall that was very very close to him. As a result, he wasn't able to fully swing his sword. The sword light was blocked by the wall.

Du Ming stared blankly.

He had missed the timing. Soft Mist had arrived.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Her spear, Dancing Fire Flowing Flame, struck Moon Luring Frost. Du Ming felt himself getting pushed on both sides. His viewpoint began getting smaller and smaller.

A scene suddenly floated into Du Ming's mind.

In the previous round, Lu Boyuan's Chaotic Cloudy Mountains had been pinned to the wall by the Dragon Breaks the Ranks and was killed.

A hole the size of a person had remained in the wall. In the group arena, damage to the map would remain.

Rising Dragon Soars the Sky had sent him into this hole. The exploding battle magic interfered with his sight, and pushed him even deeper.

At this moment, Dragon Breaks the Ranks...

Moon Luring Frost was sent even deeper. He was trapped inside the hole.

Left, right, retreat, jump?

He couldn't.

There was only one direction: forward.

And forward was Soft Mist...

Chapter 1669: The Boos of the Home Stadium

After the Rising Dragon Soars the Sky sent Moon Luring Frost flying, the audience could already see where he would be blasted. Du Ming, who was in the middle of the battle, was perhaps the last person to realize the situation. However, even though ordinary gamers could see it, they didn't react so quickly. The pros were different – as soon as they saw the direction in which Moon Luring Frost was flying, they were caught off-guard for only a moment before quickly realizing that this was intentional.

What came next confirmed their hypotheses.

A pit that initially didn't seem that deep. Alone, that wasn't enough to limit a character's movements. If Du Ming had detected it from the very beginning, if he had chosen to move in a more diagonal direction, he would have had enough time to get out of the pit and dodge the Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

But unfortunately, he hadn't paid attention to this detail. He took the opportunity to counterattack by moving horizontally, but then he was impeded by that shallow indentation in the mountain wall.

With that one obstacle, the opportunity was lost. It was too late to make any other response.

The Dragon Breaks the Ranks into Rising Dragon Soars the Sky pushed Moon Luring Frost even further into the wall. Now, it was no longer an obstacle of one moment. Now, Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost was stuck in the pit for good.

Move, there was only one direction.

Attack, there was also only one direction.

And this one direction wasn't even available to every attack. For example, Downwind Sword Slash, even though it was a straight-line forward attack, Moon Luring Frost was stuck firmly into the pit, and didn't have the space to perform the starting motions for this skill. Naturally, the skill couldn't be used.

"Du Ming lost."

In this moment, everyone was confident in making such a judgment.

No freedom to move, no freedom to use skills, he couldn't even jump. Soft Mist blocked the entrance, and Dancing Fire Flowing Flame was already stabbing inward. Skills? Were they even needed? Even if Tang Rou controlled Soft Mist to only use ordinary attacks, Du Ming had no way of controlling Moon Luring Frost to dodge. In a situation where he couldn't move, parrying the attacks became imagination. Soft Mist's attacks landed with 100% accuracy, which only made Du Ming even more at a loss as to what to do. In this situation where attacks were landing upon him nonstop, even if he had hundreds or thousands of skills that could instantly allow him to move outside of the hole, he wouldn't be able to use them.

Just like that, he fell...

Du Ming lost even more helplessly than Mo Fan had in the fourth battle, where he'd been unable to land a single hit on Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer.

Mo Fan, at least, had had space to move. He could at least demonstrate attempts, even if they hadn't succeeded in the end.

But Du Ming?

Even his right to attempt was stolen away. He was stuck in this hole, stabbed by Soft Mist again and again, all the way until he died. It was pathetic to the extreme.

Winner, Happy's Tang Rou!

The system dutifully announced the result. The Happy fans were thrilled, jumping and shouting in the stadium. The Samsara fans were dumbstruck. When Zhou Zekai had completed his 1v3, they'd thought that victory was already theirs, that Happy was done for. But now, Happy had actually catching back up to them. Tang Rou's Soft Mist still had 73% health left to face Samsara's final player. Under these conditions, the final outcome of this group arena couldn't be predicted.

How did this happen?

The Samsara fans were still stuck in a daze.

When Zhou Zekai, with a Cloud Piercer that was almost at half health, accomplished a 1v3 to reach Happy's second-to-last character and player, everyone felt that this was a gap that couldn't be closed.

And then, had it ever felt like Happy was catching up? There hadn't been that feeling, it seemed like. Everyone was waiting for the result to be finalized. But then, the situation had suddenly become what it was right now. Suddenly, Samsara's insurmountable lead had shrunk to only this much, 100% against 73%.

The audience couldn't restrain themselves. This was the deciding match of the finals, the time in which the team needed the most support and encouragement, and yet at this moment, Team Samsara heard the sound of booing.

Glory's demonic home stadium.

The place where Team Samsara was invincible. Then, last match, Happy had destroyed Samsara's home game win streak. And this match, Happy caused Team Samsara to hear the sound of booing in their own home stadium.

Not long before this, the stadium had still been filled with the excitement of winning the championship. The mood had swung from one extreme to the other; it was clear how greatly the fans' spirits had fallen.

On the sidelines, Lu Boyuan was sitting on pins and needles. When Du Ming walked out of the competitor booth and felt this atmosphere, he was also somewhat hesitant and frightened.

The performance of their first player Sun Xiang had been fine. Zhou Zekai had played flawlessly, and he was the one who had ignited the excitement of winning the championship. But after him, Lu Boyuan, Du Ming, Samsara's decline from prosperity had occurred on their heads.

Zhou Zekai had been eliminated by Fang Rui, but in that battle, Cloud Piercer had lost less health than Boundless Sea. But then it was Lu Boyuan, and then Du Ming. Now the two of them had both lost, yet the two of them combined had been unable to kill off a single whole life on Happy's side.

The audience was in no mood to reflect upon the process. Just this outcome was intolerable.

In such an important match, the rare scene of the home fans booing the home team actually appeared.

Samsara's fans were upset because they had held too high hopes for their team. But the pro players? Their stance was more neutral, but in comparison, they felt that it was more interesting for the black horse Happy to overthrow the two-time champions Samsara.

Happy had gone from being left far behind in the dust to suddenly catching up like this. Even the more logical watchers among them felt that this was extremely exciting, and they wanted to see if the situation would become even more interesting.

Would this be a 1v3?

At last, it was time for those standing on Happy's side to hold this kind of hope. Zhou Zekai had completed a 1v3 against Happy, and now it was Tang Rou's turn to return that 1v3 to Samsara, a 1v3 that would decide the final outcome of the group arena. Was there anything more wonderful than this?

"1v3!!!"

Happy's fans were already shouting in the stadium. This angered the Samsara fans even more, and their boos became louder. They hoped that the team would quickly wake up. Originally, it was their side's 1v3 that had created such a beautiful lead, and now their opponents were yelling about a 1v3. How humiliating was that!

Amidst the away fans' shouts of a 1v3 and the home fans' dissatisfied boos, Samsara's vice-captain Jiang Botao stood up. Under this pressure from both sides, he walked onstage.

The boos suddenly quieted down, proving how popular Jiang Botao was in the hearts of Samsara fans. He'd been voted into the top ten and even the top five All-Stars for the past two years, which absolutely required a large number of supporters.

Samsara's fans were extremely upset with the situation, but the two players who'd put them in this situation had already lost and left the stage. Right now, it was their vice-captain stepping forward, so many Samsara's fans' hopes were once again lifted, and the booing quieted down.

Even so, the amount of pressure that Jiang Botao felt wouldn't decrease at all. He knew very clearly that even though the booing sounds were quieter, that was because their final hopes were on his shoulders now. If he also could not give a satisfactory result, then the boos that he would suffer when he came offstage would surge even more than they had just earlier.

This battle, he couldn't mess up!

It wasn't just the mood of the fans, but the morale of their team as well. If they experienced this kind of blow, then they would be at a great disadvantage entering the team round. He had to figure out a way to stabilize the overall situation.

Jiang Botao came onstage. His movements were neither too fast nor too slow. He walked over to report to the judge, and then entered his competitor booth. It was all carried out in an unhurried, orderly fashion. He was adjusting his own mood, letting himself be as calm as possible, not letting himself worry.

Character loaded, map loaded. The ninth battle of the group arena, the deciding battle, began. Happy's Tang Rou, character Soft Mist, 73% health; Samsara's Jiang Botao, character Empty Waves, 100% health.

Soft Mist charged forth.

It was just like last battle, like last last battle. Without thought, extremely decisive.

This was Tang Rou's style. She had always been like this.

But now, no one would think of Tang Rou as so simple ever again. In the battle that had just ended, despite being in an extraordinarily brave state, Du Ming had ended up losing in such a pathetic way, not by control, nor by technique, but by calculation.

And these calculations had been done without any change to her normal behavior, so much so that before the situation happened, no one had realized.

Those who would play against Tang Rou now knew to be more prepared. The pro players in the audience gave themselves a word of warning for potential future meetings with this Best Rookie.

Chapter 1670: A Calm and Unhurried Opening

Others were thinking of the future, but Jiang Botao had to face the present.

The match began. Tang Rou's Soft Mist rushed out. As for Jiang Botao? His playing was the same as his walk to the stage, neither slow nor fast. His Spellblade, Empty Waves, marched ahead comfortably.

The center of the map still had numerous holes left behind by Chaotic Cloudy Mountain and Moon Luring Frost. At the start, everyone had been discussing whether Jiang Botao would be thrown into the holes as well. But when they saw Jiang Botao's unhurried pace, the discussion ended. With the difference in speed between Jiang Botao's Empty Waves and Tang Rou's Soft Mist, the two sides wouldn't be meeting in the center.

But then again, Tang Rou could just wait at the center of the map for Jiang Botao to arrive, no?

Not long after these guesses were made, Soft Mist continued right past the center of the map.

As a result, the two met on the half of the map closer to Samsara's spawn point.

Soft Mist didn't stop and continued forward.

This was how Tang Rou always played, but after seeing her performance today, it was hard not to give her playstyle another thought.

As for Jiang Botao?

Would Jiang Botao think differently and play more carefully?

No one knew. All they saw was his Empty Waves lift his sword.

Earth Wave Slash!

Spellblades had mid-ranged attacks, so it was common to see them attack first against close-ranged enemies. Earth Wave Slash was the Spellblade's lowest level Spellblade skill. Even though its damage wasn't high, it was quick and possessed high priority.

Jiang Botao's opening move was nothing out of the ordinary. It was an opening that Spellblades used 80% of the time.

Calm and unhurried!

The battle had begun. Jiang Botao's performance could be described with these three words.

Was this the playstyle he was going to use in today's match?

Playstyle. When this word fell onto Jiang Botao, most people would furrow their brows in uncertainty.

He was an All-Star player, the vice-captain of a championship team. He had a stellar reputation in the pro circle and was very popular amongst the playerbase. However, no one could say what exactly his playstyle was. Even Samsara themselves weren't sure. When they first discovered Jiang Botao's talent in tactics and strategies, they had thought of elevating him to the level of a Master Tactician, but unfortunately, he wasn't able to shine bright enough and the matter was left inconclusive.

Jiang Botao didn't have a distinct playstyle.

But after a long time, people started to gradually realize that this was perhaps his true style.

His ability to adapt was extraordinary. He could use any playstyle he wanted to battle. He was always the team's most sturdy pillar.

This was why he was able to synergize perfectly with Zhou Zekai and Samsara.

The Glue, Jack of All Trades, Timely Rain, Tinker...

Jiang Botao had started in Season 6. It hadn't even been 5 years, and he had countless nicknames. From this, it could be seen how difficult it was to pinpoint his playstyle. But through these numerous nicknames, it was also able to show his strengths.

There was one common aspect with all these nicknames. All of them described Jiang Botao through a team perspective. As for his individual prowess, even today, it seemed to be a difficult question.

Everyone only knew that he was skilled, that he wasn't easy to deal with. Anyone who played against him had to be on guard. He could play aggressive. He could play dirty. He could play a mental battle. He could do what seemed to be illogical choices...

But no matter what, you couldn't relax even a single moment. A single moment of carelessness could result in you losing.

Jiang Botao made this ordinary opening move, making it hard to predict what he would do next because there were simply too many possibilities.

This was precisely his aim. He wanted to create a situation filled with possibilities, so he could calmly observe Tang Rou and find a way to win. Even though Samsara needed him to reestablish their morale, he couldn't act rashly.

Because in his view, different opponents needed to be played against differently, and Tang Rou definitely wasn't someone he could fight against with brute force.

Jiang Botao was waiting for Tang Rou to act. That Earth Wave Slash seemed to be bait for Tang Rou to attack.

His sword had already come out. Next was to wait to see how Tang Rou would react.

Even though he had seen a few peculiarities from Tang Rou's previous fight, he was pretty certain that Tang Rou would meet force with force.

Jiang Botao guessed correctly. Soft Mist moved to the side a bit without wasting any movements, just barely dodging the Earth Wave Slash. Then, she raised her spear, Dancing Fire Flowing Flames, and accelerated!

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Tang Rou went with her usual opening move, charging forward the instant she dodged the Earth Wave Slash.

Her timing was good, but all of it was within Jiang Botao's calculations. He had been ready for all of the possible reactions to his Earth Wave Slash bait. Dragon Breaks the Ranks had been the most likely possibility, and Jiang Botao was on guard against it.

Dodge!

Empty Waves rolled to the side twice.

Because just one roll wouldn't be enough! With Tang Rou's reaction speed, she would have enough time to change the direction of her Dragon Breaks the Ranks to cover a target that only rolled once.

Jiang Botao's deduction was correct once again. As expected, as soon as Tang Rou saw him roll, she immediately adjusted. Soft Mist leaned to the side, altering the direction of the Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

Empty Waves noticed it and did the second roll.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks had missed, and the instant Empty Waves got up from the roll, he swung his shortsword, Divine Chains.

Wave Wheel Slasher!

A grab attack that broke through Super Armor. Even against the powerful Dragon Breaks the Ranks, Wave Wheel Slasher out prioritized it.

The attack, the timing, the angle, all of it had been incomparably cunning.

Would it hit though?

Jiang Botao wondered. From his calculations, there was around a 50% chance he would fail. It depended on Tang Rou's condition this fight.

Tang Rou's condition today was outstanding, but she had already gone through two fights. Perhaps she couldn't keep up her focus, or perhaps she was too excited, or perhaps she was thinking too much about making a comeback.

Countless factors could decide whether she reacted fast enough.

Would it hit?

The sword light flew through the air.

It missed!

Soft Mist had cancelled the Dragon Breaks the Ranks at the last moment, giving her time to leap to the side, dodging the Wave Wheel Slasher.

She dodged it.

Jiang Botao was a bit regretful, but with how well Tang Rou was playing today, this outcome had been more likely.

Jiang Botao wouldn't linger on this for too long because he had already thought that Tang Rou would likely counterattack the moment she dodged.

What would she counterattack with?

Dancing Fire Flowing Flames whistled through the air, two streaks of red flickered.

Oh, it's Double Stab.

Empty Waves calmly raised his sword, Guard!