

Avatar 1701

Chapter 1701: Unspoken Understanding

Steamed Bun Invasion charged forth.

What attack would he execute? Everyone was rather curious and eager to see what he would do, all turning their attention to him. Even Sun Xiang didn't dare let his guard down. Steamed Bun's skill level was very volatile, hard to gauge or comment on, but it wasn't someone anyone should ignore. Currently, One Autumn Leaf was airborne, but being airborne wasn't the same as being stunned. He could still attack and move to an extent.

He was getting closer... and closer...

Steamed Bun Invasion lunged forwards with his fists raised, yet, under the eyes of the watching crowd, he didn't strike.

What was he waiting for?

Everyone wondered to themselves, watching as Steamed Bun Invasion rushed closer and then... Street Riot!

What the fuck!

Everyone cursed in their hearts.

What was he waiting for? He was waiting to close the distance! A powerful skill unleashed just like that, in your face, with no cover or prep. He just ran up to his target and used it.

The pro players were completely speechless. How... low-level, how... noobish! However, this was exactly what the players of Samsara had not been watching out for. They focused on Steamed Bun Invasion, wary of his next move, yet he didn't make a move. He just ran and ran and then when he got close, he used a powerful skill.

A low-level move, yet on this high-end stage, it had become a feint that managed to trick everyone. No one would've guessed that Steamed Bun Invasion's movements were so simple and straightforward, actually just running up and unleashing a powerful skill.

What an embarrassment...

All the pro players held their heads in their hands. It was they who had let such a player appear on this ultimate, final stage! It was their fault for not managing to eliminate him in an earlier round.

"When up against this guy, you can't face him with the same state of mind you would have in a normal match," someone was saying. Steamed Bun had played quite a few matches this season, and there were many of pro players that had the experience of facing him. His unpredictability was something known and tested.

However, not using the usual state of mind you'd have towards matches was an easy thing to say, but if not your usual state, then what state should you use? Steamed Bun's strange thought processes weren't

something you could deal with by finding the right state. If you treated him as a noob, then that would be a mistake you'd definitely regret making. But if you treated him like a pro player... just look now, he managed to get the advantage through a distinctly non-pro action. This guy switched freely between playing like a noob and like a pro. There really wasn't anyone who could keep up with his rhythm.

"Follow your own rhythm, don't focus too much on his actions."

"Isolate him."

"Mark him."

"Pincer."

The pro players were all talking amidst themselves, as though how to deal with Steamed Bun's weirdness were an academic discussion topic.

Steamed Bun wasn't exactly a top-tier player, but he also wasn't someone easy to deal with either. Many had fallen to his unpredictability. Though his instability might negatively affect his team, in a life and death match like this, they couldn't place their bets on an unknown. What if he was hiding a secret weapon or something just for this match? It wasn't like that hadn't happened before.

The pro players had yet to come up with a conclusion from their discussion. Meanwhile, Steamed Bun Invasion's Street Riot was taking the spotlight on the field. All sorts of low to mid level Brawler skills being unleashed in a mindless torrent. From the rate at which he was dishing out attacks, it was clear that his technical skill was nothing to laugh at.

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer could still pull away and avoid it, but Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf wasn't so fortunate. Originally, being airborne wouldn't have been much trouble for One Autumn Leaf. He had kept his focus on what Steamed Bun was going to try when he ran over, yet the other didn't do anything. When One Autumn Leaf finally landed, quick recovering and about to get up and continue fighting, Steamed Bun Invasion's powerful skill was launched.

Bricks, Sand, Inject Poison, Paralysis Needle...

All sorts of skills and items came raining down on One Autumn Leaf, with punches and kicks interweaved between. A level 70 skill wasn't easy to deal with, and Sun Xiang was rapidly beaten back. After One Autumn Leaf's quick recovery, he didn't manage to actually get up, rolling on the ground to try and dodge the assault.

Zhou Zekai, having pulled his Cloud Piercer out of the way, looked back and realized that his evasive maneuvers had been a little too excessive! Steamed Bun had been completely locked on to One Autumn Leaf, and Street Riot's skills were all directed at him. Not a single one came for Cloud Piercer.

However... if Cloud Piercer had been in his original position, then that might've been a different matter.

Zhou Zekai knew to look at things from different sides, and didn't underestimate Steamed Bun's decision. No matter if it was a coincidence or chance, he would treat it as if it were intended.

However, he wasn't able to support Sun Xiang at the moment. As soon as his Cloud Piercer stepped back, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim immediately darted in, cutting him off from One Autumn Leaf. Then Lord Grim closed in, attacked, not giving him an opening to come to Sun Xiang's aid.

By now, Tang Rou's Soft Mist had managed to recover from the impact of that snipe. She threw herself back into the fray without hesitation, charging at One Autumn Leaf.

For a moment, the players of both teams were paired up in one on one fights, without any cooperation happening. It seemed to have no tactical elements. However, from what the players were attempting to do, it was possible to find tactical intent. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain kept trying to edge over to this side. She clearly didn't want to continue dueling Jiang Botao one on one,. She hoped to play on her strengths, using her abilities to support the entire team in combat.

Jiang Botao, responsible for marking her, felt a little helpless. Empty Waves' attacks weren't able to lock Dancing Rain down completely. It wasn't to say that Jiang Botao's mechanics or ability wasn't good enough, it was a limit of the class he played. Spellblades did high single target damage, but it was hard to chain skills. So against him, Dancing Rain still had room to maneuver. All Jiang Botao could do was to try his best to stop Su Mucheng from reuniting with her teammates, but he couldn't lock her down completely so she was still managing to slowing edge over.

The cannon swung around; Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had finally entered the range at which she could provide support. Immediately, she sent a missile over to help Tang Rou and Steamed Bun's offensive, making things even harder for Sun Xiang, who was fighting one against two.

One against three, huh?

Dancing Rain's offensive support cannonfire was a nightmare for Sun Xiang. He wasn't having a good time against his current two opponents. One was fierce and fearless, the other unpredictable and strange. The two had completely different styles, and didn't even attack with the same rhythm. They were basically ignoring each other as they fought. Even so, it wasn't easy for Sun Xiang to deal with. The two weren't consciously attempting to synchronize and act cooperatively, but they seemed to have a kind of unspoken understanding between them. Tang Rou and Steamed Bun had started from zero and gotten here fighting and growing side by side. They had never purposefully tried to develop any sort of tacit understanding and cooperation. It had formed naturally. It was something even they themselves probably couldn't describe or explain: why did they have such habits in combat? It was because they were used to having each other present when fighting. Their understanding and tacit teamwork was all completely subconscious.

If even they didn't realize it, then how would their opponents be able to see it? So it seemed like the two weren't cooperating at all, yet they were just extremely hard to deal with.

"This duo is a rather... strange one..." The pro players started thoughtfully discussing amongst themselves again as if the doors to a new land had opened for them. Tang Rou and Steamed Bun, a duo that seemed to have no method or organization to their teamwork, yet there was a strange, indescribable feeling there. For a moment, none of them knew how to explain it.

"Usually, for a team offensive, you would try to mess up their rhythm, thus reducing their combative ability. However, from the very beginning, they never had a shared rhythm to their actions," Wang Jiexi said, primarily aiming to share his observations to his Tiny Herb teammates.

"That's why Sun Xiang can't find an opening right...?" Yet that when Blue Rain's Huang Shaotian butt in.

“Not at the moment, but who knows what will happen?” Wang Jiexi said. Tang Rou and Steamed Bun’s teamwork was vague, uncertain, so he wasn’t sure if they would be able to keep Sun Xiang suppressed, or if Sun Xiang would soon find an opening. However, currently, it seemed like Sun Xiang no longer needed to find any opening. Samsara’s sixth player, Du Ming’s Moon-Luring Frost had arrived.

Triple Slash!

Moon-Luring Frost charged in, slashing thrice with his blade, once at Soft Mist, once at Steamed Bun Invasion, and with the last, he changed directions.

Moon-Luring Frost left!

The first two slashes of Triple Slash seemed like he was just harassing them as he passed by while the last one had Soft Mist, who had turned to attack him, striking air.

Dancing Rain!

Moon-Luring Frost ended up charging in her direction, standing in the way of her cannonfire.

Su Mucheng rapidly regained her supportive maneuvers, but Samsara wasn’t willing to let her do as she wished. Though Jiang Botao’s marking was effective to some degree, it was still limited and full of openings due to his class. If they wanted to properly lock Su Mucheng down, then they would have to do as they were doing before and have a melee class close in and keep her occupied.

This was the reason why Du Ming only spent a moment helping Sun Xiang. However, he did pull off a successful feint. The two attacks from Triple Slash had everyone thinking he was about to fight at Sun Xiang’s side. However, no one had expected him to dart away as Tang Rou went to deal with him.

He’s coming at me!

Du Ming’s true intentions were exposed and Su Mucheng immediately prepared herself. However, while Happy only just found out about Du Ming’s intentions, Samsara had already discussed it. Jiang Botao had already made preparations. The skills that Empty Waves was saving were suddenly unleashed in a torrent.

Why did Spellblades have a hard time chaining their attacks? On one hand, their skills weren’t as fast to activate as close-ranged classes’ skills were. Another point was that their skills had relatively longer cooldowns. It wasn’t impossible to unleash a rapid barrage of skills, but after you were done, all the skills would be on cooldown, and how would they defend against their enemy’s counterattack then?

However, Jiang Botao didn’t care about that at this moment. He used this wave of skills to try and lock down Dancing Rain’s movements, giving Moon-Luring Frost a chance to close in.

Under each team’s tactical efforts, the two sides finally launched into a much more tactically minded face off. Lord Grim and Cloud Piercer’s battle was also slowly inching closer to the center of the action, preparing to welcome even more complex variation into the battle.

However, in another area of the map, the ongoings seemed to have no relation to this area.

Wu Qi, Qiao Yifan.

These two were currently locked in a one on one fight, but it had been a long time since the broadcast had paid them any attention.

Chapter 1702: Changing the Standard Method

“Jiang Botao’s Empty Waves suddenly exploded, firing a series of attacks toward Dancing Rain! Du Ming seized this chance, Cruel Silence is currently flying toward Dancing Rain... Ah... Ye Xiu’s Lord Grim is moving in this direction, but he probably can’t block this. Steamed Bun Invasion ambushed... uh, it counts as an ambush, probably? But it was dodged!”

Charged with surging passion, commentator Pan Lin described these complex battles that were just about to intertwine together. As for the other area of this battlefield, it wasn’t that the broadcasters didn’t notice it, but compared to this area, the scene that those two players brought wasn’t thrilling enough.

Sun Xiang’s One Autumn Leaf turned to help Zhou Zekai, but before this, he had already cooperated with Wu Qi to establish the route over there. It was like how when the battle first began, the two of them had pincer Su Mucheng’s Dancing Rain. This time, the two of them used basically the same method to deal with Qiao Yifan’s One Inch Ash.

But because Zhou Zekai’s situation was more dire, this time, the two of them didn’t manage to carry out their plan to the fullest. Sun Xiang had One Autumn Leaf turn away sooner, leaving Qiao Yifan to Wu Qi alone. At this time, Wu Qi’s Cruel Silence still hadn’t completely closed in on One Inch Ash, but he was at least sticking to him very tightly.

By now, One Inch Ash basically had no way to demonstrate his Phantom Ghostblade abilities. Cruel Silence was too close – One Inch Ash had no way of stopping to cast a ghost boundary. Qiao Yifan could only run away, run nonstop. He needed distance. Dark Boundary, Ice Boundary... these ghost boundaries were all already off cooldown, but he had no space to cast them.

But Qiao Yifan didn’t panic. He carefully observed everything in front of him now. He knew that in a simple footrace, he definitely wouldn’t be able to escape Cruel Silence. He had to use the map somehow.

Fortunately, Phantom Demons did have a few close-range tricks. Qiao Yifan controlled One Inch Ash to fight as he moved, and at the same time he studied his surroundings in all directions, carefully memorizing everything he saw. Gradually, a plan began to form in his mind.

This’ll do!

Even though Qiao Yifan wasn’t sure if his idea would work, he could only give it a try. Close-range fighting wasn’t a Phantom Demon’s strong suit. Walking and fighting like this, he had already lost quite some health to Wu Qi’s Cruel Silence.

Moonlight Slash!

One Inch Ash suddenly attacked. It seemed sudden, but he was a Phantom Demon, which only had a few slashing skills. Thankfully, they were all low level and had short cooldowns, otherwise he’d have run out

of moves long ago. Moonlight Slash, this was a skill that One Inch Ash had used who knew how many times already, so no matter how sudden it was, there wasn't any feeling of newness to Wu Qi. Without even thinking, he was already swiftly responding.

Turn, move!

Cruel Silence's steps were quite large, because Moonlight Slash would become Full Moonlight Slash. This was a fairly standard method. And Full Moonlight Slash would follow the user's controls, usually deflecting toward the direction in which the opponent dodge. So, when dodging Moonlight Slash, one also had to consider the forthcoming Full Moonlight Slash as well, and leave some extra space when dodging. If one tried to use something like Overlapping Sidesteps here, they would definitely be punished.

No, Wu Qi had seen through Qiao Yifan's method, but he didn't have any way to break it. This was the worth of the standard method. In order for it to be called standard, it had been refined hundreds and thousands of times, it was a highly-used technique. These sorts of techniques had gone through enough testing, such that no matter how good or bad their damage was, they at least put the user in a good position. When up against this kind of technique, no tricks could be pulled. Methods to counter it were simply those that had been determined to be the most effective after many tests. For Assassins, this was the large step that Cruel Silence had taken.

But this time, after the sword carved out this Moonlight Slash, the light immediately faded.

No Full Moonlight Slash!

But this couldn't be considered surprising.

This was a standard method, so of course, all of its variations had been studied as well. Moonlight Slash and Full Moonlight Slash were often used consecutively, but that didn't mean that they had to be. However, because of this "often," Moonlight Slash always had to be dodged as though it were two attacks. There was nothing to discuss about that. Even if the opponent didn't plan to chain the attacks, if you really treated the Moonlight Slash as just one attack, then it would be very easy for the opponent to make a last-second adjustment and add on a Full Moonlight Slash.

So, there was no way around it.

Even if you knew that this method could be changed in this way, you could only act after the change appeared.

Earlier, Qiao Yifan had controlled One Inch Ash to use Moonlight Slash three times, all of which had been followed by a Full Moonlight Slash. Very fast, very steady. The solid foundational strikes meant that Wu Qi didn't dare get overconfident, so his performance was also very steady. So this time, the fourth time, Cruel Silence took a large step again, still dodging the Moonlight Slash as though it were two attacks. But this time, there was only Moonlight, no Full.

What kind of change would this cause?

This was hard to say. After this, there were many options that could be taken. But one point was worth noting. Why was it so common to go from Moonlight Slash to Full Moonlight Slash in the first place? It was because connecting these two skills revealed no openings. It was the best guarantee of safety. But

when Moonlight Slash was used on its own, this skill seemed a bit frail. Without a Full Moonlight Slash, if the opponent reacted quickly enough, if he seized the opening to attack, then the Phantom Demon would be in a bad spot.

Wu Qi's reaction was very fast. As soon as he saw the blade stop, he knew that Qiao Yifan was changing things this time. Even though he had experienced the standard method three times just earlier, Wu Qi was not stuck in his ways of thinking.

Shining Cut!

As though he had been prepared for this long before, Cruel Silence rushed forward.

With such an instantaneous reaction, there was no need to worry about whether Qiao Yifan had purposely controlled One Inch Ash to delay his attack. With such a fast reaction, even if Qiao Yifan had added this delay in his chained slashes on purpose, this delay had already become an opening.

Ding!

The sound of the collision rang out.

One Inch Ash's tachi Snow Stripe successfully blocked Cruel Silence's Shining Cut that had carried both man and dagger.

Guard!

Qiao Yifan controlled One Inch Ash to use a sudden Guard, blocking the Shining Cut that swiftly came at him. Clearly, he had been prepared for this.

Not good!

This feeling suddenly floated up in Wu Qi's mind. The standard method of Moonlight Slash to Full Moonlight Slash, he had been prepared for; changing it so that Moonlight Slash was no longer followed by Full, he instantly changed as well, as fast as he could. But the opponent had been prepared for his immediate offensive. Clearly, Qiao Yifan had predicted this, he knew that Wu Qi would launch a fast attack in response to his change.

Guard.

Their weapons clashed, but the sound rang for only a moment. In this moment, the two characters had gotten extremely close. On the screen, Wu Qi could see their crossed weapons, and the somewhat gloomy face of his opponent One Inch Ash.

But very soon, that face pulled away from him. The Guard blocked his attack, so Cruel Silence came to a stop, but his One Inch Ash used the Guard to slide backward.

This was the priority that the system dealt, Wu Qi had no way to interfere with that. But this moment was very short. In the next moment, he was already moving to his next attack.

As the Shadow Follows!

Raise speed, forcibly follow the target.

After recovering, Cruel Silence immediately activated this skill. Behind him stretched a chain of shadows, but in front of him, two lines of crossed swordlight flashed out, as though solidified, waiting for Cruel Silence to crash into them.

Gore Cross!

As the Shadow Follows could not go through an attack. Changing direction and circling around was possible, but this Gore Cross was too close, it had come too quickly, it was too late for him to change direction.

He could only cancel the skill!

In the end, Cruel Silence forcibly came to a halt, stopping himself in front of the Gore Cross. Having to change direction again, start up again, give chase again, who knew how much this had slowed him down. But Qiao Yifan evidently wasn't done. As One Inch Ash seized the chance to slip away, he also sent an Earthquake Sword toward him.

All of this, the televised broadcast hadn't shown. But the live audience had the projection, and countless screens above were showing all part of the battle. If the audience wanted to see something, there was no delay at all. Among Samsara's audience, there would of course be Wu Qi fans, and right now, they watched as Qiao Yifan used all of these techniques to trap Cruel Silence in place. Even they felt aggrieved.

In just these few moments of effort, One Inch Ash had slipped away behind an unidentifiable structure that was half-sunk into the ground.

Now, Wu Qi didn't dare let Cruel Silence chase right after him. One Inch Ash had left his line of sight. The next moves would depend entirely on position. Distance was no longer the one indicator of advantage in this situation.

Jump up?

Circle to the front?

Two choices dangled in front of Wu Qi.

Chapter 1703: Return of the Phantom Demon

When he had other options available, he would always choose one of the other options, instead of directly chasing after an easier ambush.

Jump!

Time didn't permit Wu Qi to think too much. He quickly made his decision. Even though circling around to the front was the most dependable way to ambush the enemy side, if the enemies left his sights for too long, he would have to guess when to attack. While he circled around to the front, it wasn't like the enemies couldn't change their minds and retreat.

Air Jump!

Air Jump was an Assassin-only skill, allowing the character to make a second jump in the air. Jumping over the wall and onto the roof wasn't a problem, but when Cruel Silence leapt into the air and looked down from above, Wu Qi was stunned.

This building didn't have a roof.

Wu Qi hastily swung Cruel Silence's dagger. This sort of movement would affect his character's trajectory in the air, but it wouldn't have as large of an effect compared to say, the recoil from a gunshot. Cruel Silence struggled in the air, but in the end, he wasn't able to land onto that tiny foothold at the top of the wall, and instead jumped right over it.

Of course, he wouldn't take any fall damage. However, since he had gone up, he had to come down, which meant a bit of extra time.

With this bit of delay, perhaps the other side would now have a ghost boundary waiting for him.

Wu Qi sighed. He didn't stop moving though. As soon as Cruel Silence landed, he jumped up again.

Cruel Silence was now inside the building. He could see where all the footholds were located now. Air Jump was a passive skill. It didn't have a cooldown, so Cruel Silence jumped again onto a foothold above.

Again!

He didn't rush out or continue forward. He simply jumped in place.

His previous mistake had been because of his lack of understanding with this random map, but it could also be said that Wu Qi hadn't thought his actions through. After Wu Qi made the mistake, he immediately became more cautious. He didn't have Cruel Silence directly jump down. He didn't have Cruel Silence approach the edge either. He was afraid that if took one too many steps, he would step right into One Inch Ash's ghost boundary.

Now that he was up above, Wu Qi could see One Inch Ash below him.

Sure enough, One Inch Ash was casting a spell. Right when he jumped and looked down, One Inch Ash finished his cast. The ghost god's power emanated from One Inch Ash's Snow Stripe and flowed down...

Wu Qi was glad that he hadn't taken that step. However, when he saw the ghost boundary forming, Wu Qi felt that it was a bit strange.

If the ghost boundary had been set up to ambush him, wasn't the placement of the ghost boundary a bit too off?

Yes, too off.

The spectating pro players had noticed it as well.

"Because his goal isn't to attack," Li Xuan said.

With this in mind, the players who thought that it was "off" immediately understood.

Yes, the goal wasn't to attack.

This ghost boundary wasn't to ambush Cruel Silence. This ghost boundary was defensive.

Qiao Yifan also noticed Cruel Silence, looking down from above. But he had finished casting his ghost boundary. It couldn't be interrupted anymore. He let out a sigh of relief. After setting down this ghost boundary, he ignored Cruel Silence, and had One Inch Ash leave.

Wu Qi obviously wanted to give chase, but just when he was about to go do so, he suddenly realized how disgusting One Inch Ash's placement of the ghost boundary was.

One Inch Ash wasn't far from Cruel Silence, but with this ghost boundary, it suddenly felt like he was looking at him from far away. If he wanted to chase after him, he would need to circle around the ghost boundary. Compared to this, the crumbling rooftop was cute.

Even so, Wu Qi didn't hesitate. Cruel Silence continued to chase after One Inch Ash. He circled around the ghost boundary, and could only watch as One Inch Ash widened the distance between them. However, he didn't stop.

Then, One Inch Ash began casting another ghost boundary.

The spectating pro players realized what Qiao Yifan was planning.

He was very calm. He didn't forget himself because his previous play had given him a bit of an advantage. Even though he had a good opportunity to counterattack Wu Qi, he had chosen not to because his goal was clear.

He wanted to get back to the rest of his team.

Phantom Demons were most effective in group fights. Control the opponents, buff allies. Team battles were where Phantom Demons best put their abilities to use. His value to the team was worth much more than his individual battle strength.

That was why even though he had the opportunity, he had no intentions of fighting with Wu Qi. He was using this opportunity to hurry and reconvene with his team.

That was why the ghost boundary that he placed down wasn't to attack, but to defend, to protect.

Of course, if Wu Qi had ignored the ghost boundary and had Cruel Silence step right into it, Qiao Yifan would obviously give him a quick beating before leaving. Evidently, Wu Qi wasn't that stupid.

Wu Qi's Cruel Silence circled around the ghost boundary. Samsara's fans were hoping for him to perform some sort of miracle act and break apart the ghost boundary set down by Qiao Yifan. But he didn't. Wu Qi seemed to be cooperating with Qiao Yifan's goals. From start to finish, he wasn't able to close the distance.

Utilizing the terrain and his ghost boundaries, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash was able to smoothly reconvene with his team.

The pro players applauded.

Qiao Yifan's utilization of the terrain and his class abilities were certainly worthy of praise, but the pro players were more appreciative of his clear-headed recognition of his role in the team. He was able to

keep his calm, and remember what value he brought to the team as a whole. He had done everything in order to return and play his role as a support to the entire team.

For a young player like him, this was truly a rare trait.

As the pro players clapped, they couldn't help but turn their heads to look at the expressions of Tiny Herb's players.

Everyone on Tiny Herb looked a bit uncomfortable. Qiao Yifan's eye-catching performance made them feel as if they were pandas trapped in a zoo. Right now, they could only look towards their captain because their captain was always calm and composed.

But this time, they discovered that Wang Jiexi's expression wasn't very calm and composed. In fact, he looked rather serious.

Even their captain was beginning to regret letting Qiao Yifan go? The Tiny Herb members looked at one another, especially at Zhou Yebai, their team's Ghostblade player. He had originally been the person who cared most about this issue, but Wang Jiexi had dispelled those doubts earlier. But when he saw Wang Jiexi's expression now, his heart sank.

"Captain," Xu Bin whispered to Wang Jiexi. He had joined Tiny Herb after Qiao Yifan left, so he didn't have the same thoughts as the others on Tiny Herb. However, he could tell that Qiao Yifan's outstanding performance was making the team uncomfortable. Before, Wang Jiexi was unaffected, so these negative emotions didn't have as much of an impact on the team. But now, even Wang Jiexi looked to be disturbed. Who knew how much of an impact this would have on the team, especially on Zhou Yebai. The pressure on him must be enormous.

"Pay attention to the match," Wang Jiexi said.

The match?

Everyone on Tiny Herb was stunned.

It turned out that their captain hadn't been concerned with Qiao Yifan, but rather something in the match?

The situation had become somewhat chaotic.

Jiang Botao's Empty Waves had sent out wave slash after wave slash earlier, intending to create an opportunity for Du Ming to close in on Dancing Rain.

Samsara was providing cover for their ally, but it wasn't like Happy didn't have anyone helping Su Mucheng.

Ye Xiu's Lord Grim turned fire in an attempt to intercept Du Ming. Even though Du Ming was able to avoid Lord Grim's attacks, Steamed Bun Invasion suddenly threw a Brick at him for some inexplicable reason.

Yes, for some inexplicable reason!

Anyone could see that Steamed Bun Invasion had been completely focused on attacking One Autumn Leaf. If he had planned on turning away and providing help to that side, why would he do it from so far away? If he had done so earlier, he could have coordinated with Ye Xiu, and the two of them would have likely been able to stop Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost.

But he hadn't.

Just when everyone thought that nothing was going to happen, a Brick suddenly flew his way.

Du Ming really hadn't been paying attention.

Fortunately, he wasn't alone. Someone else on Samsara noticed the Brick and warned him.

Warning, react, move.

In the end, Du Ming was able to avoid the Brick. Seeing how much time Du Ming had to react to Steamed Bun's attack, it could be seen just how little of a threat that Brick had been.

But the entirety of Samsara had been given a fright.

Pretend you were taking a higher-level math exam. All of the problems you encountered so far had been extremely difficult. Suddenly, an addition and subtraction problem was thrown at you to solve.

According to common sense, this sort of problem shouldn't be appearing in the exam, and no one would have prepared for this sort of problem either.

No one was going to be stumped by such a simple problem, but it was enough to make everyone jump in surprise.

After the initial surprise, all you had to do was answer the question. But this was a competitive match. If you didn't deal with the surprise properly, a Brick might just hit you in the head.

Du Ming hadn't thought that Steamed Bun would suddenly throw this sort of problem at him because there had been no need! An attack from Steamed Bun Invasion's position was no threat to him. For you to throw a Brick from there, was it you being a noob? Or did you think I was a noob?

Who knew what Steamed Bun was thinking. In any case, the Brick had been thrown. If it weren't for Zhou Zekai's timely warning, who knew what would have happened. The battlefield was quite chaotic at the moment. All sorts of attacks and sounds could be heard. Du Ming may have likely missed the sound of the wind behind him.

This brief fluster was enough to delay him. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim hadn't been able to catch up at first, but with this delay, he had suddenly closed the distance.

Du Ming had no time to close in on Dancing Rain, or take revenge on Steamed Bun. He had to fight off Lord Grim.

Du Ming was now entangled with Ye Xiu, and it suddenly put Jiang Botao in a bad position. He was throwing out wave slash after wave slash, but then it turned out that Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost wasn't able to do anything with it. Didn't that mean he was open right now? Dancing Rain aimed her cannon at him. Luckily, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer helped out just in time to protect Empty Waves.

At this moment, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash finally returned. A new variable had come into play.

Qiao Yifan's Phantom Demon, with his powerful crowd control and AoE buffs, was definitely good news for Happy!

Happy's supporters immediately brightened at this sight.

The spectating pro players thought the same. They knew from experience how valuable a Phantom Demon was in a group battle. Moreover, Qiao Yifan had outstanding map and team awareness. With his addition, Happy was like a tiger with wings.

"Whether Samsara will be able to keep Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash in check will be the deciding factor of this match," Li Xuan concluded. Of course, this might be his bias towards Phantom Demons. At the very least, when he made this remark, quite a few people took exception to it.

"Whether Happy is able to protect One Inch Ash is also crucial," someone said.

"Isn't that the same as what I just said!" Li Xuan pointed out. If Samsara needed to keep Qiao Yifan in check, then Happy would want to stop them from achieving that. Wasn't that obvious?

The two sides reacted extremely quickly. This time, Steamed Bun Invasion did something logical. He suddenly rushed towards Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim seemed to have taken the baton, and retreated towards One Inch Ash.

Cloud Piercer fired his dual guns, one gun to protect Empty Waves, the other to attack One Inch Ash.

Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened. Qiao Yifan had acted as if he knew that someone would protect him. By the time the bullet was fired, he had already been casting a spell.

Not waiting for Samsara to find a new angle of attack to interrupt him, he placed down the ghost boundary.

Sword Boundary! Buff the team's Strength and Intelligence.

Happy's combat power immediately soared to new heights, and this was just the beginning. Because of Qiao Yifan's return, Samsara was already beginning to lose their footing. They needed to keep One Inch Ash in check no matter what.

Chapter 1704: Assassin

If one side was attacking, then the other side would naturally be defending. At the moment, it was too early to say who held the initiative. However, if Samsara adopted the mindset of "if it's too hard to deal with, then just avoid it," they would definitely be the ones on the backfoot. The competitive stage was ruthless. If you gave an inch, the enemies would take a mile. A chain of ghost boundaries coordinated with other attacks might just be enough for Happy to win with a single play.

Team Samsara didn't plan on running away.

With Sword Boundary in effect, Happy's overall combat strength soared, but no matter how powerful the buff was, it wouldn't be enough to overwhelm Samsara. Strength and Intelligence mainly affected

their DPS. It had no effect on the tempo. In fact, Samsara had no need to make any adjustments to their original plans.

Continue!

Samsara didn't cower. The team stepped into the Sword Boundary to battle against Happy.

This decision was quite wise. In the end, the Sword Boundary wasn't able to win Happy an opening. Samsara had started actively pursuing One Inch Ash. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves suddenly threw aside Dancing Rain, cutting straight towards One Inch Ash.

Waltzing Wave Slash!

A wave slash flew towards One Inch Ash. After Qiao Yifan placed down the Sword Boundary, he didn't immediately start casting the next. He reckoned that Samsara wouldn't give him an opportunity to. Sure enough, a Waltzing Wave Slash came flying at him. He couldn't completely depend on Lord Grim to protect him. Although the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella covered a wide area, it didn't cover every part of him. Jiang Botao had specifically chosen Waltzing Wave Slash so that his attack could curve around the umbrella shield. If Lord Grim went to block it, an opening would appear for Cloud Piercer.

He couldn't always rely on his teammates. Oftentimes, he needed to find opportunities to place down ghost boundaries on his own. If he could just stand still, setting up ghost boundary after ghost boundaries, the battle would be too easy.

Roll!

One Inch Ash dodged the Waltzing Wave Slash, while taking a look at his surroundings. Qiao Yifan was observing his opponents, his teammates, and the terrain. Where could he find an opening?

One Inch Ash rushed out.

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer was the most troublesome opponent for him. Finding cover wouldn't be a bad idea.

Zhou Zekai immediately saw through Qiao Yifan's intentions. He fired both his guns at One Inch Ash to stop him.

Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain immediately turned on Cloud Piercer. This time, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim didn't chase after One Inch Ash to provide cover for him. He used a Charge, straight towards Cloud Piercer.

If Happy focused solely on defense, then Happy would be the ones on the backfoot, not Samsara. Ye Xiu understood what he needed to do. He had protected One Inch Ash when he was placing down a Sword Boundary. Now, he had to attack Cloud Piercer, and rid Qiao Yifan of his biggest obstacle.

Zhou Zekai couldn't let Lord Grim get close to Cloud Piercer. Perhaps his only choice was to back away. Seizing this opportunity to get close to One Inch Ash would undoubtedly be the best case scenario. Unfortunately, Ye Xiu had guessed his thoughts. When Lord Grim rushed over, Zhou Zekai had no choice but to give up on the idea.

He moved laterally with Aerial Gun. Zhou Zekai was trying to get to a different angle so that he could get past Lord Grim. But Ye Xiu was cunning and experienced. He immediately saw through his intentions. Lord Grim stopped and changed directions.

Attack while defending. Defend while attacking.

Ye Xiu had mastered this intricate art. He had once again become teaching material for the seniors of the various teams. Zhou Zekai had to face against this both offensive and defensive rush. For a moment, he had no way to break past him. He couldn't focus his attention on One Inch Ash either. Qiao Yifan was able to immediately find an opening.

One Inch Ash had found cover. Cloud Piercer's long range couldn't be counted on anymore. Jiang Botao reacted quickly. Empty Waves suddenly sent an Earth Wave Slash towards Steamed Bun Invasion.

The distance was a bit far, so the chances that it would hit were rather low. But even so, Steamed Bun had to go out of the way to dodge it.

With this, an opening appeared for Du Ming. He quickly acted. Moon Luring Frost activated Shadow Steps and used Triple Slash to instantly close the distance on Tang Rou's Soft Mist.

A team battle turning into a bunch of 1v1s? Unless it was intentional such as what Team Wind Howl often did, it would never happen. A sudden switch between players due to a change in circumstances was what should happen.

Samsara had made numerous switches in this short period of time. Du Ming finally had his 1v1 against Tang Rou. Du Ming was excited to face his crush, but he wasn't going to show any mercy. Which of the five shadows from Shadow Steps was the real one? This sudden switch in opponents caught Tang Rou off guard. She indeed couldn't figure out which one was real.

If she couldn't find the real one, then she could only face them all. Running away was the easiest way to handle this situation, but Tang Rou had to be mindful of the overall situation. She understood that Samsara had switched targets continuously all in order to get to Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash. If she chose to run away, she would leave an opening for Samsara to take advantage of. Whether it was Sun Xiang or Du Ming, one of them would break past and reach One Inch Ash.

I can't back down!

Tang Rou had always been unyielding, and now, she even had a perfectly good reason to be that way.

Cloud Whirling Windstorm!

Soft Mist took a step back as if she were planning on running. But then, with a twist of her wrist, she flicked out a high-level skill. The wind produced from the spinning Dancing Fire Flowing Flames let out a faint red glow. Dancing Fire Flowing Flames was a Fire element spear. If an elemental skill wasn't used, the attack would automatically be a Fire attack. An enormous cloud of fire suddenly formed and extended outwards.

One Autumn Leaf? The five Moon Luring Frosts? Don't even think about charging through.

It didn't matter if Sun Xiang and Du Ming was able to create an opening to break through. With this delay, Samsara's offense had been severed. This delay gave Qiao Yifan enough time to complete another ghost boundary.

Snow Stripe rose into the air, the ghost god's power condensing around it. Sure enough, Qiao Yifan seized this opportunity to have One Inch Ash start casting another ghost boundary. He didn't think it was possible to actually find a completely safe area. Everyone was fighting for an opportunity, and an opportunity had come!

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer was busy fighting against Ye Xiu's Lord Grim.

Jiang Botao's Empty Waves was rather far away. To interrupt him, he would need to get past multiple layers of defense. Being able to guide this relay between targets for Samsara was already impressive.

But in the end, Du Ming and Sun Xiang had been delayed by Tang Rou. Was Samsara really unable to stop another ghost boundary from forming?

No...

While gazing towards the ghost god's power being summoned, Qiao Yifan suddenly realized that there was still one other player on Samsara.

Where was he?

"Behind!"

Warnings popped up from Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng simultaneously. One Inch Ash was enveloped by a shadow. Wu Qi's Cruel Silence had jumped right over the barrier protecting One Inch Ash. In the next moment, blood poured out from One Inch Ash's slit throat.

Wu Qi's Cruel Silence had been chasing after him the entire time, but in the end, he had been forced to back off. He could only take the long way and circle around the ghost boundaries.

His pursuit wasn't able to form any sort of threat. Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash was able to smoothly reconvene with his team and place down a Sword Boundary. Then, Samsara rushed at him, but under the protection from his teammates, he was able to find another opening.

During this time, what had Wu Qi been doing? What had Cruel Silence been doing?

Qiao Yifan had been paying attention to the overall situation, and he had an impression of Cruel Silence. However, his impression of him was very faint. At that time, Cruel Silence just seemed to be moving, searching for an opportunity to attack, but without any clear plans in mind. Qiao Yifan didn't see him as a threat, and dismissed him.

But in the blink of an eye.

While everyone else on Samsara was unable to act, Wu Qi's Cruel Silence suddenly appeared beside One Inch Ash.

What was this feeling?

Qiao Yifan couldn't describe it. Suddenly, he thought of something. It was when he had been promoted from Tiny Herb's training camp to the main team, the words that Wang Jiexi had spoken to him when he was handed the Assassin account card.

"Assassins hide in the shadows. The most terrifying Assassins are the ones that look ordinary because of how easy it is to drop your guard against them. Appearing ordinary to the point of being invisible is a truly rare talent."

Chapter 1705: Pull One Hair and the Whole Body Moves

The crowd erupted into fervent applause. How could the Samsara fans not be excited seeing Wu Qi suddenly find a killing opportunity? They didn't look into the details too clearly. Just the outcome alone made them extremely pleased.

The pro players let out expressions of astonishment.

They had spectator views, allowing them to see everything that was happening in the match. Had Wu Qi's Cruel Silence done anything exceptional?

No.

No one thought so.

They knew that he had been moving around on the battlefield, but their attention had been on Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer, then Jiang Botao's Empty Waves, then Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost.

Similar to how Qiao Yifan had dismissed him, the spectating pro players had as well.

Wu Qi wasn't a threat?

The answer to that question was no. The present situation was the best proof. Cruel Silence had gotten behind One Inch Ash, delivering back attack after back attack. He was in the perfect position to deal damage. If he wasn't a threat, then what was a threat?

Yet no one had noticed the threat.

An unremarkable Assassin was the perfect Assassin.

Was Wu Qi an unremarkable player? No one really thought so. A main roster player in a two-time championship team could never be disregarded. However, compared to the other stars in the roster, Zhou Zekai, Jiang Botao, Sun Xiang, Lu Boyuan, four All-Stars, Wu Qi paled in comparison even if his popularity wasn't bad.

He wasn't an unremarkable player, but when he was put into Samsara's roster, he became unremarkable.

It wasn't that he hadn't been a threat before, but rather that the pressure put on by the others on Samsara covered his threat.

He wasn't as proactive as the others, but he never went out of his way to hide his tracks. He found the perfect balance, making his Cruel Silence appear invisible in this intense battle.

Then, he made his move!

From the start, Happy's healer hadn't really undertaken any actual healer work. Whatever health was lost on Happy's side was lost forever. Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had been focused by Zhou Zekai for a lengthy period of time. As a result, he had lost quite a bit of health. Now that Wu Qi had successfully closed in, mercilessly stabbing him in the back, his health instantly dropped below 50%.

Qiao Yifan recalled Wang Jiexi's words. Wu Qi seemed to possess the rare talent his former senior had sought. He was certain that he hadn't ignored Wu Qi. He really had taken note of his Cruel Silence, but... he hadn't noticed Cruel Silence's threat. Or perhaps the threat hadn't caught his attention. He had felt like the others on Samsara had been a higher priority.

Was this the sort of Assassin player that Tiny Herb had hoped he would become?

Qiao Yifan didn't know the answer, but he didn't feel too regretful over it. He had fully transitioned into a Phantom Demon, and the class suited him perfectly. For him, Assassins were of the past. He hadn't given up on the things that he had learned as an Assassin, but that didn't mean he had any intentions of going back.

Perhaps he really had missed an opportunity at Tiny Herb, but he didn't feel upset over the past. It only made him treasure the present even more.

It hadn't been easy getting to where he was now, and he was very happy with what he had. He needed to do everything he could to protect all of this.

One Inch Ash rolled and jumped.

Turn, stop, sprint...

Qiao Yifan did everything he could to escape, but Wu Qi was like a maggot feeding on a corpse, refusing to let him go.

Tang Rou was closest to Qiao Yifan.

She had just forced away Sun Xiang and Du Ming to create an opening for Qiao Yifan, but in the blink of an eye, the situation flipped. She was now being suppressed by the two on Samsara. She wanted to help One Inch Ash, but for now, she wouldn't be able to.

Switch!

Du Ming and Sun Xiang switched positions. Sun Xiang wanted Du Ming to deal with Tang Rou, while his One Autumn Leaf turned to pincer One Inch Ash so that they could kill him sooner.

Tang Rou was already gloomy being suppressed by the two on Samsara, how could she let them do as they pleased so easily?

Downwind Sword Slash, ignore!

Her Dancing Fire Flowing Flame swung towards One Autumn Leaf. Soft Mist took Moon Luring Frost's blow, but she wasn't going to let One Autumn Leaf get past her.

One Autumn Leaf was forced back. However, Soft Mist stumbled and fell from the Downwind Sword Slash. Du Ming clearly hadn't expected Tang Rou to ignore his attack, so his follow-up came a bit slow.

Tang Rou let the follow-up hit her, allowing the attack to push her towards One Inch Ash.

I don't think so!

For Samsara, letting Wu Qi fight against Qiao Yifan 1v1 was fine. Wu Qi had the upper hand. Going over to help him wasn't necessary. Stopping Happy from rescuing Qiao Yifan was a much higher priority.

Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike!

One Autumn Leaf dashed forward. His Evil Annihilation moved like a blur, the angle of attack cutting off Soft Mist's path.

Boom boom boom!

Cannonfire sounded. The long-ranged support from Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had arrived. However, there were simply too many places that needed her help. Qiao Yifan was in a dire situation, and because Tang Rou was in a hurry to rescue Qiao Yifan, their formation was thrown into disarray.

This was what the phrase "pull one hair and the whole body moves" meant. In the team competition, a single player falling into a passive position could cause the whole team to fall into a passive position. Keeping the balance steady during these situations required experience. Tang Rou was clearly lacking in this area. Her reaction to the change in situation had been poor. She panicked and tried to force her way through, immediately putting herself into a bad position.

Su Mucheng's support clearly showed her richer experience.

She didn't focus on the center of the issue, on One Inch Ash's side. Instead, she focused on helping Tang Rou.

If she could help Tang Rou find an opening, Tang Rou would naturally be able to rescue Qiao Yifan. Moreover, while Sun Xiang and Du Ming blocked Tang Rou, they formed a clear defensive line. Not just Tang Rou, but if Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun wanted to rescue Qiao Yifan, they would need to break past this defensive line. Su Mucheng had chosen to focus this area because it would be valuable to everyone on the team.

She hadn't completely ignored Qiao Yifan's predicament either. While she focused supporting Soft Mist, she snuck in attacks at Cruel Silence to try disrupt Wu Qi's rhythm and create an opening for Qiao Yifan.

Explosions erupted continuously, but even though Launcher attacks were fierce, their crowd control was lacking. Tough and unyielding weren't traits unique to Tang Rou. Samsara's Du Ming showed that he could be unyielding as well.

Formless Phantom Blade!

Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost released the Level 70 Blade Master skill. Intersecting sword light intercepted the roaring artillery fire.

Chapter 1706: Matter of Life and Death

Parrying against a long-ranged Gunner class character?

For normal players, this was unimaginable. Even if it happened, it was mostly due to luck rather than skill. But at the pro level, there were a decent number of players who could achieve it. Still, this happened only on occasion, and it was usually just parrying one or two shots.

Du Ming wanted to use a high-level skill to directly face the heavy artillery fire of a Launcher?

Astounded. Everyone was astounded. Today's match was a rollercoaster everywhere you looked. And now, it was finally Du Ming's turn to show his magic...

It was impossible to parry a Sharpshooter's hurricane-like flurry of shots regardless of skill. You were limited by your attack speed.

However, a Launcher's attacks wouldn't be as dense as a Sharpshooter's, thus making it possible for Du Ming to try this. However, even though Launchers were slower, every one of their attacks carried more power and AoE.

The explosions instantly enveloped Moon Luring Frost. But the explosions stopped there.

These explosions were meant to be centered around Soft Mist. But now, Moon Luring Frost became the center.

Moon Luring Frost's health was dropping, but the explosions weren't able to get past him.

The attacks were intercepted!

No matter how surprising this was, it was reality. In exchange for his health, Moon Luring Frost did not fall, or get sent flying. Du Ming was extremely precise at judging the trajectory of the incoming attacks.

Du Ming was sacrificing his health, but by doing so, he maintained the advantage that Samsara currently held. He was trading his health for One Inch Ash's health. Compared to One Inch Ash, the health loss from parrying Dancing Rain's attacks was far lower than the health loss from repeatedly getting stabbed in the back by Cruel Silence.

Readjust. Change the approach, or change the attacks?

Everyone who put themselves in Su Mucheng's shoes asked themselves this question. Pan Lin and Li Yibo of the broadcast team were currently rambling away at a list of Launcher attacks that couldn't be parried.

Like Laser Rifle, or Satellite Beam...

These two commentators were incomparably confident when talking hypotheticals. They spouted these skills like they had them written on the back of their hands.

But Su Mucheng did not make any adjustments. Dancing Rain continued to push forward, increasing her offense and keeping up the pressure on Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost.

Du Ming can be unyielding, but she could also be unyielding!

Many people were speechless. Today, both teams seemed extremely stubborn. They were like a bickering couple!

It could be called stubbornness, but to say they were bickering was a bit shallow.

The pace of this match had already been set. It didn't matter if it was Samsara, the team fighting for their third championship win, or Happy, the astonishing new team, both teams refused to give in. They even traded off their healers first, the roles typically viewed as the core of a team.

Both teams were fighting tooth and nail, fighting for the initiative. At times like these, success depended on the side that was more adamant in carrying out their plans.

Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain forcefully attacked, while Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost forcefully defended. Su Mucheng had the initiative while Du Ming had to be reactive.

But if she changed her tactics due to Du Ming's defense, she would be the reactive one.

Being flexible isn't a bad thing. Oftentimes, it's necessary to adapt in a match. But this depended on the situation. Su Mucheng had no choice but to stick to her original plan, because Samsara was applying too much pressure. With the tempo that Samsara had established with their fierce counterattack, Su Mucheng had no space to be flexible; no time to be indecisive and try a new approach.

She must remain firm. She would remain firm.

Du Ming, you dare to get in my way? Then I'll send you on your way to death!

How long could he keep up parrying? There was a reason people usually didn't parry against Gunners. It was too risky and too difficult. Du Ming attempted it only because the situation called for it; if he was in a 1v1 against a Launcher, he definitely wouldn't charge in headfirst, and try to slice apart the missiles coming his way.

Seeing that Su Mucheng wasn't letting up, those who were pondering Su Mucheng's situation had now turned their heads to scrutinize Du Ming's situation.

Du Ming was also in a difficult position.

He was being stubborn to try and scare Su Mucheng off by creating a troublesome situation for her. He wanted her to reassess and change her approach. However, Su Mucheng stood her ground and welcomed the troublesome situation. This put Du Ming on the spot: should he retreat or not?

Everyone was closely linked to each other. If he retreated, the cannonfire would reach Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf, which would then allow Tang Rou's Soft Mist an opportunity to break free. In turn, she would be able to attack Cruel Silence, allowing Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash an opportunity to escape.

The final ring of the chain was as such: a matter of life and death for One Inch Ash. And this chain currently involved every character on the battlefield. Thus, a question was posed to Du Ming, and his answer would cause a whole chain of events to unfold.

Retreat?

Du Ming eliminated this answer.

No one had chosen to retreat in this match. Even An Wenyi, that mediocre healer, dared to harass Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer. Du Ming needed to let Happy know that Samsara also had this kind of determination and courage.

Stand strong!

Flames and smoke from the explosions continued to unfurl. Du Ming had cancelled the Formless Phantom Blade early because he didn't want the long ending lag from the last strike. Even without the high-level skill, his sword still shone brightly. Every missile fired by Dancing Rain was sliced apart by Moon Luring Frost's blade.

"Keep it up!!!"

Right now, shouts came from the Samsara fans. Right now, many had already forgotten why Du Ming needed to parry Dancing Rain's attacks head-on; forgotten what the consequences of his actions were. They were only moved by his actions. Happy had shown this resolution, this stubborn persistence. Now, so would their Samsara!

Keep it up! Just keep it up.

In this moment, even Du Ming had forgotten why he had to do this. He had no time to think about anything else, as he felt the pressure increase under the continuous attacks and growing list of exhausted skills.

Boom!

This sound was heard countless times, and everyone was becoming desensitized to it. But this time, everyone's hearts jumped. Because this time, Moon Luring Frost was sent flying.

Sure enough, he wasn't able to keep it up?

Even though they know Du Ming had already performed sufficiently, that he did all he could, that what he had achieved was nothing short of incredible. But this result would inevitably still sadden some.

Couldn't keep it up?

No!

Not yet.

Moon Luring Frost was blasted away, but sword light flashed out once again.

Sword Draw!

Sword light slashed out and two more explosions were heard. Even though his character was flying away, he still managed to block the following attacks. When he landed, he quickly rolled and used Triple Slash.

Moon Luring Frost's body was still bent when he shot out.

Boom boom boom, another three explosions. Moon Luring Frost once again dove headfirst into the artillery fire. Once again, he parried Dancing Rain's attacks.

Applause. Unending applause. Samsara's fans wanted another way to express their emotions right now, but they could think of any. They could only yell themselves hoarse, clap their hands raw.

No one paid attention to how much health Du Ming sacrificed to keep up this defense. All they knew was that Du Ming had given a very satisfying answer to the conundrum that he had been faced with. He was doing the impossible, and his teammates had to live up to their own expectations too. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf had a vice grip on Tang Rou's Soft Mist; Jiang Botao's Empty Waves also held Steam Bun Invasion back. Ye Xiu was aware of what was happening, but any character being pursued by Cloud Piercer would have a very hard time attempting to do anything else at all.

At the core of the problem, Qiao Yifan had already used everything at his disposal, including the tactics that he learned when he trained as an Assassin player. Everything he tried was of no use. He was facing a real Assassin, one who was more proficient than him. With the rest of Samsara creating the necessary space for him, and with how close he was to his target, he would lose his job if he let One Inch Ash get away.

And Wu Qi did not let him get away. Cruel Silence's attacks chained together seamlessly, cutting away One Inch Ash's life.

Chapter 1707: Testing testing don't use spirit stones.

The situation was laid bare for Samsara to see. How would they respond?

They had to chase after One Inch Ash. Just because he only had 6% of his health left didn't mean that he was no threat. If they let him go free and he placed down a few ghost boundaries, the situation would take a turn for the worse.

But if they gave chase, how many people did they need to send after him?

One? Two? If they sent too many, what would happen to Moon Luring Frost? They couldn't let Happy complete this trade. A character with 6% health for a character with more than 50%? That trade was too lopsided.

They had no time to carefully analyze the situation. During the small window when One Autumn Leaf and Cloud Piercer shifted their focus to One Inch Ash, Soft Mist and Lord Grim were about to reach Moon Luring Frost.

No matter how fierce Du Ming may be, this time, he didn't dare face them directly. But Happy had made ample preparations for this play. Tang Rou and Ye Xiu sent attacks to help One Inch Ash and to pressure Moon Luring Frost.

The turn onto Moon Luring Frost looked as smooth as butter. In an instant, the two formed a pincer, trapping the retreating Moon Luring Frost.

Mounted Gun!

Satellite Beam!

Su Mucheng was as decisive as always. As soon as she saw Ye Xiu and Tang Rou surround Moon Luring Frost, she immediately used her high-level skills, sending out her most powerful attacks. With Ye Xiu and Tang Rou blocking him, where was Du Ming going to escape to? Moon Luring Frost was engulfed by the Satellite Beam.

Against this sort of encirclement, no matter how amazing Du Ming might be playing, there was no way he could escape on his own. He needed help.

The closest to him was Jiang Botao's Empty Waves.

When Cruel Silence had been Taunted away, when Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang tried to interrupt One Inch Ash, Jiang Botao remained calm and collected. He didn't think that Samsara needed to pursue an almost dead enemy with full force. He stayed at his position and continued what he was doing. And now, Moon Luring Frost was closest to him. Helping him was quite convenient. His wave slashes would easily reach that side of the battle.

But what about the enemy he was facing?

Jiang Botao had been enduring Steamed Bun's harassment for this entire time.

Yes, endure.

To Jiang Botao, this was the word that best described his situation.

In the deciding match of the finals, you needed to be cautious and steady. But Steamed Bun didn't seem to know what these two words meant. He was the same as ever, erratic and impossible to predict. Neither thinking too deeply nor acting too shallowly was appropriate. Samsara had already suffered from making these mistakes.

Steamed Bun was reckless. To Jiang Botao, it was a form of extreme provocation. A few times, Jiang Botao had to restrain himself from fiercely retaliating.

But...

Cautious! Steady!

For the sake of the big picture, he didn't dare be hasty, especially against Steamed Bun. Being careful against him would never be wrong. Keeping him suppressed and preventing him from disturbing the other parts of the battle was Jiang Botao's mission. Otherwise, once this guy went wild, who knew if he would harm them or harm his own team. For this deciding match, Happy put their double-edged sword out on display. Perhaps their intentions were to win by banking on his randomness.

Jiang Botao saw the change in situation. He didn't need to worry too much about how Qiao Yifan's side would be handled. It shouldn't affect him in any way. But he took on the main burden of rescuing Du

Ming. How should he deal with Steamed Bun? That guy was too erratic. Even when he fully focused on him, there were holes. At present, Jiang Botao was suppressing him, but if he had to split his attention to help Du Ming, who knew what that guy would do? Steamed Bun's unpredictability was particularly grievous in these kinds of situations.

How should he handle this?

Jiang Botao thought carefully. A shadow suddenly flashed by him.

He was thinking, but Steamed Bun didn't think!

Ye Xiu, Tang Rou, and Su Mucheng. All three of them were focusing Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost. Steamed Bun Invasion wasn't far from Moon Luring Frost, and he immediately joined in with the crowd.

Fuck!

Jiang Botao didn't think that during this moment of distraction, Steamed Bun would slip away. He had yet to figure out how to handle Steamed Bun, when Steamed Bun made the first move.

Opening!

Jiang Botao saw numerous openings on Steamed Bun Invasion. This simplified matters. Follow after Steamed Bun Invasion!

Ice Wave Slash!

Steamed Bun Invasion stopped fighting with Empty Waves, giving Jiang Botao all the freedom he wanted. Ice crystals swept forward in pursuit of Steamed Bun Invasion, while also spreading towards Lord Grim and Soft Mist.

Powerful Knee Strike!

Steamed Bun also used a skill. Steamed Bun Invasion launched towards Moon Luring Frost with a Powerful Knee Strike.

There was still some distance between the two characters. If this were a 1v1, Du Ming could have easily dodged it. However, right now, he was under attack in three directions from Lord Grim, Soft Mist, and Dancing Rain. There was no room for him to dodge. The knee strike struck the side of Moon Luring Frost's face. Blood splattered across the ground. It was quite gruesome to look at.

Moon Luring Frost stumbled to the side. Ye Xiu and Tang Rou didn't stop him. The two attacked, keeping pace with his stumble. With this displacement, all of them just happened to dodge Empty Waves' Ice Wave Slash.

A coincidence! This had to be a coincidence!

Ye Xiu and Tang Rou moving along with Moon Luring Frost while also dodging made sense, but Steamed Bun using Powerful Knee Strike to neutralize his Ice Wave Slash? Did that guy even have the brain for such a smart play?

Even though Steamed Bun was unpredictable, from what people saw, most of his unexpected plays leaned on the stupider side. Jiang Botao didn't think that he had thought of so many things with his Powerful Knee Strike.

But whether he had done it on blind luck or not, the Ice Wave Slash missed. Steamed Bun Invasion landed on the ground and followed with a Strangle. His movements were smooth and practiced. In the beginning, when he first started clearing dungeons, Ye Xiu had explained to him that using this skill would increase the entire team's DPS. This concept was rooted deeply in his mind. Even in the finals, as soon as he saw that the team was focusing on a single target, Steamed Bun's first thought was to use this skill to help them.

With the attack buff from Sword Boundary and the defense debuff from Strangle, Moon Luring Frost's health instantly fell by 17% from their combined attacks.

This efficiency made Jiang Botao start to panic a bit. Steamed Bun had a high amount of synergy with the others on Happy. His addition brought a frightening increase in their DPS. With just this single move, who would dare say that he would bring trouble to his own team? He was Happy's DPS insurance.

I have to hurry and bring him away!

Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Tang Rou... all three were important targets. But right now, Jiang Botao's attention was entirely on Steamed Bun. He noticed how much Happy's DPS increased with his addition.

Fire Wave Slash!

Empty Waves stepped forward and swung his sword.

Spellblades were mediocre in terms of crowd control. Fire Wave Slash had astonishing knockback though. If it hit a target up close, the knockback would send the target flying away. Even if it didn't, it would at least break Steamed Bun Invasion's Strangle. Fire Wave Slash had a fairly large hit box too. This attack could also hit Lord Grim and Soft Mist.

Boom!

Flames burst forth in the blink of an eye, enveloping Steamed Bun Invasion.

But Steamed Bun Invasion didn't budge.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

Steamed Bun had unexpectedly activated a Super Armor skill, making it impossible for Steamed Bun Invasion's Strangle to be interrupted by ordinary attacks. As for Lord Grim and Soft Mist, Ye Xiu and Tang Rou easily evaded the Fire Wave Slash. All it did was delay them a bit.

Both attacks had failed to be of any use. Samsara's response towards One Inch Ash had also been revealed.

Samsara had given Qiao Yifan quite the focus. Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang, the Alliance's new Best Partners, were working together to finish off One Inch Ash.

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf closed in, while Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer sealed away One Inch Ash's escape routes. The two wanted to eliminate Qiao Yifan as fast as possible.

Qiao Yifan knew that he wouldn't be able to escape, but he also knew that his current attempt at escaping was a chain, holding back Samsara. If he could last even a second longer, it would be a huge help to his team.

His efforts weren't being wasted at all. Qiao Yifan was glad. Previously, when he had been chased by Cruel Silence, he hadn't given up. He had tried everything he could to survive, carefully observing everything around him, seeing which terrain he could take advantage of.

However, Cruel Silence had stuck to him tightly. Nothing he tried worked. He wasn't able to make anything out of the terrain that he noticed.

But right now, he was being pursued by different enemies for a different purpose. The combined forces of Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang were much greater than Wu Qi alone. However, One Autumn Leaf was still closing on him. He hadn't reached him yet. Cloud Piercer was long-ranged. Even though their offense was extremely fast, Qiao Yifan's response was even faster than theirs.

Because he hadn't given up when Wu Qi had been chasing him. Because he had always been searching for an opportunity to escape. He hadn't been able to break free from Wu Qi, but what he observed gave him the information he needed to instantly come up with a plan against Samsara's new pursuit.

He used the terrain, turned, rolled...

Against the Best Partners on Samsara, the 6% health One Inch Ash was able to survive for 6 seconds.

6 seconds sounded like nothing, but it was the reward for Qiao Yifan's previous efforts. Six seconds, One Inch Ash had fallen. Six seconds, Moon Luring Frost was on the brink of death.

Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf turned fire.

Jiang Botao had been trying his hardest the entire time. Wu Qi's Cruel Silence had rushed over as well.

But Steamed Bun Invasion and Lord Grim had activated Reinforced Iron Bones. The six seconds that Qiao Yifan had gained for his team was put to good use.

Moon Luring Frost fell.

Chapter 1708: The Ultimate Support

30%, 22%, 17%, 11%...

One Inch Ash's health continued to drop, falling until near death.

Even though he looked helpless, even though Samsara was blocking the others on Happy perfectly, even though according to common sense, it was over for One Inch Ash, Qiao Yifan didn't give up. Pan Lin and Li Yibo didn't dare declare him dead.

Because Team Happy couldn't be judged according to common sense. They had pulled off too too many surprising feats.

And this time?

One Inch Ash was at red health.

Qiao Yifan wasn't ready to give up, but there was only so much he could do. On the competitive stage, going from heaven to hell only took the blink of an eye. Less than a minute ago, he had beautifully escaped from Wu Qi's Cruel Silence and returned to the team, becoming the key factor in forcing Samsara into a passive position. But now, One Inch Ash was on the verge of death.

Without a healer, there was no room for error. Ye Xiu's Lord Grim could heal, but Qiao Yifan knew that Lord Grim's healing could only be used to let a character survive for one more breath. During a crucial moment of life and death, his healing could potentially be a deciding factor. However, his current situation was different. The enemy side was chasing closely after him. He was losing health but he couldn't retaliate. Surviving for one more breath was pointless. The enemies were right beside him. One more breath was just one more stab. How could that be difficult for Wu Qi to do?

Unless he was able to break free from Cruel Silence, there was no chance. Even if he could, with how little health One Inch Ash had left, he wouldn't live for much longer. Without a healer, Samsara could easily find a way to eliminate a nearly dead character, and Happy wouldn't be able to stop them.

But if he really could break free, it would be an opening for him. Perhaps he could make one last move, using the last of his life to give one final contribution to the team.

Qiao Yifan didn't lose hope. The little remaining health left ignited his little hope. He didn't know if there would be an opening, but if an opening came, he would be ready.

6%...

There was only a sliver of hope left. But when everyone saw Cruel Silence's attack, they fell into despair.

Level 75 skill: Rend!

Wu Qi erased that final sliver of hope. Rend was only a single skill, but everyone knew that Assassins had five Level 75 skills: Rend, Kill, Dodge, Flash, Exterminate. When these five skills were used in sequence, they would deal an enormous amount of additional damage.

One Inch Ash only had 6% of his health left. Was that additional damage necessary? Just two of the five skills would be enough to erase One Inch Ash.

Nevertheless, Wu Qi still began with the first move in the set, Rend. He didn't relax his guard even in these final moments. He was going to extinguish One Inch Ash's life along with what little hope remained.

Rend!

Cruel Silent twisted his body, and a cold light flew from his dagger. Wu Qi checked his surroundings, making sure that there was no danger around him. He also made plans for what he should do after One Inch Ash was dead.

He saw Ye Xiu's Lord Grim trying somewhat desperately to rush back under Cloud Piercer's pursuit.

It's too late for him.

Wu Qi thought to himself. Even a long-ranged attack wouldn't be able to stop him from killing One Inch Ash. Rend, Kill, Dodge, Flash, Exterminate. Only two of the five needed to hit.

But Lord Grim didn't attack Cruel Silence. Lord Grim extended his left hand, making a beckoning gesture with his index finger.

Wu Qi was stunned...

There was a lot of freedom in Glory, but it wasn't to the point where you could move your fingers however you liked. This type of movement was a skill, a Knight skill.

Provoke! The target would be Taunted for three seconds.

"Fuck!" Wu Qi cursed out loud.

Ye Xiu unexpectedly used Provoke at this critical moment.

And so, "Rend" took an abrupt turn in midair. This sort of sudden change couldn't be accomplished through inputs from the user. The system needed to force it to happen. Of course, with the distance between the two characters, it wasn't like the dagger would suddenly start flying towards Lord Grim's face, even if Wu Qi really wished that was how it worked.

The "Rend" ended up hitting nothing but air, air in Lord Grim's direction. It was obvious what would happen next.

Then, Cruel Silence began to involuntarily move towards Lord Grim.

Assassination interrupted.

A three second opening. Health remaining, 6%.

Everyone was dumbfounded. When all hope seemed to be lost, a turning point appeared?

Right when Cruel Silence turned his body, One Inch Ash also turned in the same direction. Sword light flashed. A Ghost Slash flew towards Cruel Silence.

Then, cast!

He didn't run. He didn't hide.

6% health was just too little health. Without a healer, a nearly dead character would actually make it harder for the team because of the need to protect him.

Qiao Yifan didn't plan on having One Inch Ash survive for any longer. He was going to use his final moment to provide one last bit of support for his team. He instantly figured out how he could help Happy for what was to come after his death.

The ghost god's power gathered around his sword at an extremely fast speed. This didn't seem to be a high-level ghost boundary. For his final act, he was going to place down a... Sword Boundary?

Increased Strength and Intelligence for all allies inside the ghost boundary. It was a skill that had no crowd control effects.

Had Qiao Yifan been afraid that there wouldn't be enough time for One Inch Ash to cast a longer spell? Was that why he used his fastest ghost boundary, Sword Boundary?

That was what many people thought, even quite a few of the pro players. After all, the logic was quite sound. After Samsara's Cruel Silence was Taunted away, the others immediately turned on One Inch Ash. They didn't want this Phantom Demon to run amok and give them any more trouble.

One Autumn Leaf charged over.

Cloud Piercer's bullets flew towards One Inch Ash.

Not only did they want to finish off One Inch Ash, they wanted to stop him from casting any ghost boundaries.

But One Inch Ash casted a Sword Boundary, which only took a single breath to complete. The two weren't able to stop him in time.

As a result, it looked like Qiao Yifan had chosen Sword Boundary instead of any other ghost boundary because he was afraid of getting interrupted.

But those at a higher skill level saw things from a different perspective.

One Autumn Leaf and Cloud Piercer were able to react so quickly and smoothly because Happy let them.

As soon as the the two turned towards One Inch Ash, what did Soft Mist and Lord Grim do?

Soft Mist and Lord Grim also turned!

Their target was Moon Luring Frost, and the Sword Boundary was placed right on top of Moon Luring Frost.

A trade!

That was what many people realized.

Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost had been holding off Dancing Rain's heavy artillery fire. His performance was shocking, but he had taken a considerable amount of damage as a result.

Qiao Yifan's One Autumn Leaf was already on the verge of death. Without a healer, Happy didn't try and protect him too excessively. An opening appeared, and One Inch Ash seized it. Samsara shifted their focus towards One Inch Ash, while Happy shifted their focus towards Moon Luring Frost.

One Inch Ash only had 6% of his health remaining. Even though they didn't know how much health Moon Luring Frost had, he should at least have over half his health.

Could Happy complete this trade? Many people were doubtful.

But soon, everyone took notice of Happy's formation.

Had their intent to trade One Inch Ash for Moon Luring Frost a plan devised in the spur of the moment?

No!

Soft Mist and Lord Grim rushed towards him. The two formed a perfect pincer. This play had clearly been premeditated.

Dancing Rain had been attacking Moon Luring Frost relentlessly in preparation for this play. If she could get past him, then she could help rescue One Inch Ash. Moon Luring Frost refusing to let up was somewhat surprising, but because of this, Happy was able to come up with the plan to switch focus to Moon Luring Frost.

Qiao Yifan was clear about his team's intentions. As a result, his final act was to provide the most brilliant support he could bring.

The DPS buff from Sword Boundary was only one portion.

He had placed down a ghost boundary that wouldn't be interrupted by the enemy side so that he could buy himself some time. Then, he had One Inch Ash run away.

With only 6% of his health left, he would feel like a burden if his own team tried to protect him. But if his own team left him to die, then his existence became a burden for the enemy team.

Samsara couldn't send out their full support for Du Ming because they needed to split their forces to finish off One Inch Ash...

Chapter 1709: Initiative

Trade, another trade.

Before, it was a trade between healers. The fight had been fierce and shocking to watch. This time, the trade was more ordinary. However, what everyone saw was a trade that shouldn't have happened when Samsara should have had the advantage.

Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had barely 6% of his health left, while Du Ming's Moon Luring Frost had over 50%. At that time, who would have thought a trade was even possible?

When Wu Qi used a high-level skill as his finishing move, everyone thought that Samsara would be up a player.

But a reversal happened during the next six seconds.

Cruel Silence was Taunted away. One Inch Ash placed down a Sword Boundary and then ran for his life. Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf turned on One Inch Ash, while Lord Grim and Soft Mist turned on Moon Luring Frost.

Happy's plan to trade players was laid bare, but how many people actually thought that Happy would succeed?

Yet Happy succeeded.

Wasn't this somewhat similar to that healer trade? An Wenyi's task had been to stop Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer. Little Cold Hands' health had plummeted like a faucet turned on. As for Samsara's Fang Minghua and his Laughing Song? Happy put in an enormous amount of effort, successfully executing a highly difficult coordinated play, to evade Samsara's rescue attempts and complete the trade. At that time, everyone thought that the chances of Laughing Song getting rescued and Little Cold Hands getting killed was much higher.

Little Cold Hands was the first to be killed, and Samsara had a good chance of rescuing Laughing Song.

But they were only off by a bit.

If that place wasn't a support zone, if Happy's Steamed Bun Invasion had been just a bit slower, if Steamed Bun's crazy Sand Toss hadn't happened...

If not for those, Laughing Song might not have been killed. However, it had all happened. Laughing Song died, and both sides lost their healer.

Last time, Samsara had been off by just a bit, and this time? The same story!

If Ye Xiu's Provoke hadn't been so timely, if Steamed Bun hadn't turned on Moon Luring Frost so quickly, if there had an opening in Lord Grim's and Soft Mist's encirclement, if Qiao Yifan hadn't stalled for that extra second...

It felt as if Samsara was taking large strides ahead, while Happy was making quick little steps from behind and teetering on the verge of collapse. However, in the end, they were able to follow close behind.

Samsara had the upper hand.

Four of them had been caught in a trap and blinded at the very start, but they were able to make it through that predicament. Samsara had two huge opportunities to take the lead.

Yet everyone felt like Happy was winning.

Because Samsara failed to grasp these two huge opportunities. Despite the challenges, Happy had caught up through quick little steps and successfully clawed their way back.

It was even again, a 4v4.

From the health on both sides, Happy was still a bit behind. They had narrowly escaped two crises. It wasn't possible to not have paid a price. However, everyone still felt like Happy had the advantage.

Group arena.

Happy had won the group arena with a one point lead. The battle looked even, but in reality, Happy was leading. If they kept trading and trading until both sides perished, the winner would be Happy.

Was this Happy's strategy? Was this Happy's plan?

That was what many of the viewers thought because Happy had been extremely decisive with both trades. The sacrificed players were aware of their role, and the other players didn't hesitate to abandon them.

Then, who would Happy go for next?

Cruel Silence?

Cruel Silence was the closest to the three on Happy that had killed Moon Luring Frost. He was the most convenient target.

Sure enough!

As soon as Moon Luring Frost fell, before his corpse even stopped moving, Happy immediately turned. The three moved to surround Cruel Silence. Attacks flew his way.

Cruel Silence was ripped into shreds.

Shadow Clone Technique!

The one to get attacked was Cruel Silence's shadow clone. Wu Qi didn't lack vigilance. As soon as he saw that Moon Luring Frost's death was certain, he immediately realized who Happy's next target would be. He had seen Happy's offensive prowess for himself. Cruel Silence was a feeble Assassin. Wu Qi didn't dare to fight them. He immediately used Shadow Clone Technique to escape.

How close...

Seeing the Shadow Clone Technique get destroyed in an instant, Wu Qi felt glad. If he had been slightly less careful, if he had tried to run away normally without Shadow Clone Technique, he wouldn't have been able to escape unharmed.

"Behind"

A warning came from the team chat. Wu Qi saw it, and saw Soft Mist suddenly vanish. Traces of magic were left behind. Lord Grim was broken apart by Cloud Piercer's bullets.

Teleport!

Shadow Clone Technique!

The two on Happy reacted extraordinarily fast. In the blink of an eye, they chased after Wu Qi.

Behind!

Wu Qi had received the warning. There was no time for him to look back. Cruel Silence immediately jumped forward and rolled! Who knew what was coming at him from behind. However, in front of him, there was Steamed Bun Invasion, holding a Brick in one hand and making a fist with the other. Who knew what he would do. Sure, he could see the Brick in his hand, and he was clearly about to throw it. But what if he suddenly cancelled the Brick and threw a handful of sand at him with the other hand?

Shattering the Lands!

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf finally arrived. He saw that Cruel Silence was surrounded, and no matter which side he attacked, he wouldn't be able to completely lift the siege. In that case, he might as well just use a high-level skill. It didn't matter who he hit. The important part was that Happy had to dodge

the AoE from Shattering the Lands. The AoE effect was similar to how enemies would circle around a ghost boundary.

Wu Qi understood tacitly. He immediately adjusted Cruel Silence's movements to draw close to Shattering the Land's AoE.

Magic swept the ruins. Sure enough, the three on Happy had to dodge. If they wanted to surround Samsara again, then they wouldn't only be facing Cruel Silence, but One Autumn Leaf as well.

A single high-level skill broke apart Happy's encirclement. Samsara took this opportunity to begin their counterattack.

"Bun!" A message in Samsara's chat.

Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain was quite far away. Ye Xiu and Tang Rou were together. Although Steamed Bun's Steamed Bun Invasion could quickly receive help from either side, he was clearly the easier target. As a result, he became Samsara's breakthrough point. Jiang Botao confirmed it with everyone to avoid any miscommunication.

But as soon as he sent the message, he saw Steamed Bun Invasion charge towards his Empty Waves.

This guy's acting reckless again!

Jiang Botao thought to himself. He had Empty Waves take a step forward, but then, he discovered that it wasn't just Steamed Bun Invasion charging towards him, but Lord Grim and Soft Mist as well.

Happy had set their sights on his Empty Waves as the next target.

Jiang Botao didn't panic. The situation on both sides was fairly even. Neither side had a clear advantage, so they were both looking for opportunities to take the initiative. He calmly paid attention to their attack routes, while also keeping wary of Dancing Rain's distance from him. He retracted his step and jumped back, while swinging his sword.

Waltzing Wave Slash!

Wind Wave Slash!

Light Wave Slash!

Three consecutive wave slashes. Light and Wind were the fastest of the wave slashes. The two slashes intertwined together, and instantly caught up to the Waltzing Wave Slash. The two slashes gave off a shining light that covered the radiance from Waltzing Wave Slash. Amidst these two fast attacks was a venomous fang. Jiang Botao's three wave slashes had been carefully set up. He also knew who this Waltzing Wave Slash would end up flying towards. He already had a follow-up in his mind. Suddenly, a shadow drew near. A triple wave slash play? Too slow!

Lord Grim.

Too decisive, too fast.

Jiang Botao's careful calculations and precise timing were smashed with brute force, making it all seem superfluous.

He turned simple into complex, while Ye Xiu turned complex into simple. He had set up layers of calculations, while Ye Xiu used just a single word “fast” to pierce through them all.

This time, Jiang Botao panicked. He had thrown out three wave slashes, but he hadn't expected the other side to act before he did. It suddenly felt like he had no tools left to use. The follow-up he had ready was still on cooldown!

Earthquake Slash!

Helpless, he could only retreat, while immediately using a low-level skill to try and stop Ye Xiu. But Lord Grim simply leaned to the side, moving even faster than his Earth Wave Slash. The Earth Wave Slash missed, and Lord Grim was getting even closer.

Sword Draw!

Jiang Botao wanted to act again, but Lord Grim instantly drew his sword. The sword light collided against Empty Waves' Divine Chains, interrupting Jiang Botao's next wave slash.

Collapsing Mountain!

Lord Grim leapt into the air. His Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was like an axe as it descended.

Too hasty!

Jiang Botao was delighted. Lord Grim's offense was too excessive, giving him an opportunity to react. Empty Waves dodged to the side and raised his Divine Chains into the air again.

Wave Wheel Slasher!

This skill could even break Super Armor. Neutralizing a Collapsing Mountain wouldn't be a problem. However, the instant the wave wheel formed, Lord Grim suddenly retracted his heroic Collapsing Mountain.

Falling Light Blade! Lord Grim suddenly turned in the air.

A trap!

Jiang Botao immediately realized. The Collapsing Mountain had been bait. Wave Wheel Slasher had extremely high priority, posing a huge wall to an opponent's offense. Ye Xiu intentionally acted a bit hasty to bait Jiang Botao into using Wave Wheel Slasher. Then, he would avoid it and close in without worry.

Moreover, powerful skills like Wave Wheel Slasher had longer ending lag. For an attacker, this was a huge opening!

Chapter 1710: Because He Was Close

If there were no opportunities, then create one yourself.

Jiang Botao had realized it, but he was too late. It couldn't be said that he had been careless. Ye Xiu's offense looked to be hasty to him, but it had been very subtle. Jiang Botao had noticed the flaw because

of his sharp senses. A normal player or even many pro players might not have sensed anything awry with the Collapsing Mountain.

This was one of Jiang Botao's strengths, but this time, it became his bane. He had noticed this hastiness, but he had been too sensitive.

Jiang Botao didn't think the Collapsing Mountain into Falling Light Blade was a difficult sequence to execute. Anyone who was familiar with the technique could do it. However, Jiang Botao hadn't been ready for the subtlety in Lord Grim's movements, nor did he think his wave slashes could be dodged.

This was a bait specifically targeting him. The bait didn't target his flaws, but rather his strengths.

If his skill level wasn't high enough, he would have likely just dodged the Collapsing Mountain like others would. But because he was so skilled, he saw a small flaw in the Collapsing Mountain, and used Wave Wheel Slasher to take advantage of this opening. Unfortunately, it was all a trap that left him open.

Cancel Wave Wheel Slasher!

When Jiang Botao realized that he had fallen for a trap, he immediately cancelled the skill. However, it didn't matter how fast he was. The ending lag from Wave Wheel Slasher was an opening, and cancelling the skill was an opening too. Lord Grim had already dodged the Wave Wheel Slasher. Whether or not the skill was cancelled was no longer a concern to Ye Xiu because he was fast enough. Lord Grim's attack was fast enough!

Falling Light Blade fell.

No one knew if Jiang Botao was able to finish cancelling the skill. The shockwave from Falling Light Blade swept by Empty Waves' feet, launching him into the air.

Sky Strike!

Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed into a spear. With a flick, it struck Empty Waves, and sent him even higher into the air.

Slash!

Empty Waves swung his sword. This was how a pro player should react: defend against the enemy's attacks.

Unfortunately, Lord Grim wasn't the only one attacking him. Furthermore, Lord Grim wasn't someone that could be put to a stop with a swing of a sword. Lord Grim dodged the sword slash. At the same time, his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed into its gun form. Three Anti-Tank Missiles fired out, keeping Empty Waves tumbling in the air. Steamed Bun Invasion threw out a few mid-ranged attacks as well: Poison Needle, Brick, Molotov Cocktail.

It wasn't easy to control an airborne character. With the Anti-Tank Missiles keeping him tumbling, Jiang Botao wasn't able to dodge even a single one of Steamed Bun Invasion's projectiles.

Falling Light Blade!

In the end, Jiang Botao wasn't someone easily shaken. After waiting out this wave of attacks, he immediately tried to escape. Empty Waves crashed towards the ground. Suddenly, a wave of sword light flashed by his eyes. A familiar sight.

Wave Wheel Slasher!

The skill, which he had just used and been forced to cancel, was put to use by Ye Xiu's Lord Grim. There was no time for Jiang Botao to react. He was hit!

Empty Waves was held in the air by the rotating waves. At this moment, his teammates, One Autumn Leaf, Cruel Silence, and Cloud Piercer finally arrived.

Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike!

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf took a stance. The magic bursting forth from his spear, Evil Annihilation, blossomed like a shooting star. The three players on Happy, who were close to Empty Waves, were engulfed by the countless meteor strikes. At the same time, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer activated Rapid Firing. His bullets rained down, complementing the Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike.

The crowd went wild.

While the connoisseur enjoys the artistry, the layman enjoys the show.

Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang, the newly crowned Best Partners, had worked together multiple times over the course of this match, yet they had never reached this level of "hype." And this time, the two had put out a beautiful display of teamwork. Everyone could immediately feel the exquisiteness of their coordination. Cheers echoed throughout the stadium. It was as if this play would wipe out the entirety of Team Happy.

Their combined attack was indeed powerful.

There was no flaw in their attack. The three on Happy were forced to retreat.

However, Happy didn't only have three people. Samsara had given Su Mucheng complete freedom, though it would perhaps more accurate to note that it wasn't out of choice. Dancing Rain raised her handcannon. An enormous amount of energy began to condense around it.

Hurricane Cannon!

A Level 75 skill, guaranteeing the might of the attack. If the attack dealt little damage, then it would certainly have a powerful effect.

Hurricane Cannon had both. Because of its power, its start-up time was rather troublesome. The energy had to be charged up, similar to how a spell needed to be casted.

But there was no one marking Su Mucheng. If she wanted to charge up energy, then she could do so without any worry!

Bang!

The speed of the whirlwind was terrifying. As soon as it fired from the cannon, the surrounding air was swept aside. In the blink of an eye, the Hurricane Cannon arrived at the net formed by Sun Xiang and Zhou Zekai.

Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike?

Rapid Firing?

Neither of the two could stop the Hurricane Cannon. Anything in its path was twisted into oblivion. Only a few remnants of the Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike was left.

One Autumn Leaf had to retreat. The Hurricane Cannon had been aimed at him. The Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike was unable to stop its advance. If he didn't retreat, he would be blasted away by the Hurricane Cannon.

The enemy retreats, I advance!

Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike!

Happy really seemed to have their hearts set on taking revenge. Jiang Botao had used Wave Wheel Slasher to fend off Ye Xiu, who then dodged it and retaliated with his own Wave Wheel Slasher. The three on Happy were forced back by Sun Xiang's Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike. Right after the attack was neutralized, Happy returned with their own Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike.

But everyone had to admit that using Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike as a counterattack was indeed an appropriate move choice. Wu Qi's Cruel Silence had been protected by One Autumn Leaf's and Cloud Piercer's net. That guy was indeed an expert at hiding himself by putting on an unassuming presence. While Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang attacked, he seemed to be doing nothing. But in reality, he had been waiting quietly for the right moment to burst out.

But this time, the opportunity wasn't ripe yet, when Dancing Rain blasted everything apart with her Hurricane Cannon. Soft Mist's Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike complemented the blast with a barrage of spear strikes towards Cruel Silence and One Autumn Leaf.

Retreat. This time, Samsara retreated. Cloud Piercer, who was positioned farther away, was outside of the attack's range. While Sun Xiang and Wu Qi retreated, Zhou Zekai attacked.

Rapid Firing hadn't ended yet! Bullets quickly converged, focusing on Soft Mist.

Tang Rou had noticed him adjust his firing angle, and immediately had Soft Mist sway to the side to dodge. As she swayed, her control over the Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike became unsteady, and an opening was exposed.

Chance!

Hiding one's killing intent and waiting for an opportunity were Wu Qi's strengths. Even while retreating, he searched for possible openings. The moment he saw one, he immediately grabbed onto it.

Forward!

Shining Cut would be too slow. Wu Qi didn't hold back, making sure that he seized this opportunity.

Teleporting Stab!

An instant three-unit distance teleport. It was far faster than Shining Cut. However, Cruel Silence was more than three units away from Soft Mist. No matter how fast the skill was, it wouldn't move him far enough.

Flickering Stab!

Wu Qi was aware of this issue. After Teleporting Stab came Flickering Stab. The three steps became four steps.

Wasteful!

Using Teleporting Stab solely as a movement skill was truly rather wasteful. However, if not for Teleporting Stab, how could he launch such a lightning-fast offense? The two skills were chained together perfectly. It was practically impossible to see the transition between the two skills. The Teleporting Stab seemed to suddenly transform into Flickering Stab.

Did he cancel the skill?

The pro players were in a discussion. If he hadn't cancelled the skill, the transition couldn't have been so smooth. But if he hadn't cancelled, then Wu Qi's hand speed in that instant must have been astonishing. Who knew how many times he had practiced this dual stab technique.

Such skill, such speed, how could it be dodged? Impossible! There was no time to react!

But right before the strike was completed, Cruel Silence suddenly froze.

Paralysis?

Wu Qi was dumbfounded.

Paralysis Needle?

He saw a swaying Steamed Bun Invasion in his view.

Steamed Bun Invasion had stopped such a fast attack? He had actually noticed it and reacted to it in time?

How?

Wu Qi thought it was impossible. If a reporter interviewed Steamed Bun this question right now, Wu Qi would certainly cough blood at the answer.

Because he was close. Steamed Bun would definitely reply back with this answer.

Yes, because he was close.

This was Steamed Bun's simplistic way of thinking. He had to join the battle. He had to find a target to attack. He had been evaluating who to attack, and wanted to find one which he would pose the biggest threat to.

The closer he was to the target, the bigger of a threat he would be. Although Brawlers had mid-ranged attacks, their main source of damage was from close-ranged attacks.

So the closest target was the easiest for him to attack.

While he had been looking for a target, Wu Qi discovered an opening, and Cruel Silence charged out!

At that moment, Steamed Bun's eyes lit up.

Wasn't Cruel Silence the closest target?

So he immediately attacked.

A Paralysis Needle was thrown.

The thin Paralysis Needle was difficult to notice in the first place. Even if Wu Qi had noticed it, Cruel Silence had been moving extremely fast. It would have been a huge test for Wu Qi's reaction speed.

There was no need to administer the test though. Wu Qi failed to notice the needle.

It was unexpectedly Steamed Bun who interrupted him. This time, he was swift. This time, he had done something intelligent. This time, he had done something that even Ye Xiu hadn't been able to do.

That was what Wu Qi believed.

But in reality, it wasn't a reaction. It was simply because he was the closest.