

Avatar 1721

Chapter 1721: Indistinguishable Shadow Steps

Brick!

Steamed Bun Invasion acted. So brash, so splitting, in this sort of calm equilibrium, this kind of attack was like someone harshly slapping a desk in the middle of a silent classroom.

Samsara's three had been waiting for Steamed Bun Invasion to do something dumb. They had purposely built this situation because they believed that Steamed Bun couldn't keep up with the tempo.

But Steamed Bun's steady performance caught them off-guard. They didn't have the spectator view, so they didn't know how it was happening. Ye Xiu simultaneously controlling his own Lord Grim and giving instructions to Steamed Bun, and Steamed Bun completely understanding and completing them, something like that had to be witnessed to be believed. Even experts like Zhou Zekai, Jiang Botao, and Sun Xiang couldn't think of this possibility.

The Samsara players offstage were all very anxious. These sort of unknown situations would always catch them off-guard. They wiped the sweat from their foreheads for their three teammates onstage. Right now, they were like all of the Samsara fans. After seeing Samsara get the advantage time and again, and then Happy catch up time and again, there was no way they could feel unshakable confidence. They had a deep feeling of danger.

Steamed Bun Invasion finally acted.

This was the change that Samsara's three players had originally anticipated. Although they were surprised that Steamed Bun could keep up with the rhythm at first, when Steamed Bun suddenly broke the rhythm, they weren't in any panic.

The skill and experience of these three pro players were, of course, much higher than those of ordinary people. A single surprise wouldn't throw them into confusion.

The Brick flew out.

They'd seen Steamed Bun Invasion beginning his attack in the forward direction, but this Brick was ultimately thrown horizontally, towards the character to the side of him, One Autumn Leaf.

One Autumn Leaf was going neither forward nor backward, he was just hanging around him. Because of this, Steamed Bun had been annoyed at him for a while now.

This Brick provoked shouts in the crowd.

But although this kind of trick was a bit like bullying, with the reaction speed and technique of a pro player, even if the trick worked, there was still plenty of time to recover and react to it.

One Autumn Leaf twisted slightly, letting the Brick go past him. Sun Xiang was carefully watching Steamed Bun Invasion's movements. The guy was finally starting to act randomly. This was the opening they'd been waiting for.

The Brick missed, but Steamed Bun didn't give up. A Sand Toss came toward One Autumn Leaf.

A needle was hidden in the sand!

Sun Xiang was paying close attention to Steamed Bun Invasion's movements. Of course, he noticed the little trick in this Sand Toss. Steamed Bun had added a skill like Poison Needle or Paralysis Needle within the sand. Because of the nature of Sand Toss as a skill, under most conditions, people would simply control their character to turn their head to avoid being Blinded, while taking the small amount of damage. And so, some Brawlers would take the opportunity to hide another attack in the sand.

But if the trick was spotted, then of course it would lose its effectiveness. One Autumn Leaf dodged the two combined skills.

What next?

To be honest, many people were quite curious as to what kind of offensive Steamed Bun would pull off. Sun Xiang calmly waited for the next change.

Next, Steamed Bun ignored him.

On one hand, Steamed Bun had found him annoying to look at, so when he had the time, he threw some attacks at him. On the other hand, Steamed Bun followed Ye Xiu's instructions very closely. Ye Xiu said to focus Jiang Botao's Empty Waves, so Steamed Bun definitely wouldn't change the main offense just like that.

Powerful Knee Strike!

The next attack didn't go toward One Autumn Leaf again, but instead toward Empty Waves. Steamed Bun suddenly flew in that direction with his attack.

An opening!

Sun Xiang's eyes lit up. Steamed Bun Invasion had hastily used an attack that didn't fit in the battle tempo, instantly messing up the rhythm. Suddenly, there was a distance between him and Lord Grim. The distance wasn't large, but in this delicate balance, this small distance was a huge rift.

One Autumn Leaf finally stopped keeping himself open to two possibilities. In this moment, Sun Xiang focused, and attacked! Having been waiting for an opportunity on the sidelines for so long, most of his skills were off cooldown.

One Autumn Leaf attacked, Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike!

The black Evil Annihilation darted out, leaving countless afterimages. Under One Autumn Leaf's swift charge, it thrust toward that opening that Steamed Bun Invasion had left after his Powerful Knee Strike.

Sun Xiang's goal was clear: to cut the connection between Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun. Samsara's plan was also clear. In this moment, it wasn't just Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf who launched the attack. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer also suddenly adjusted the gunfire he was exchanging with Dancing Rain to point in this direction, coordinating with One Autumn Leaf to disrupt Happy's connections in one go. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves began to attack Steamed Bun Invasion, because the Brawler was the next target they wanted to kill.

It was just this tiny detail, the distance between two characters creating an opening. But in such a high-level confrontation, it became a situation that would decide life or death. Ordinary gamers didn't even know what had led Sun Xiang to act, what had led Samsara to change their tempo. They didn't even know what opportunity Samsara had seized.

Experts knew.

Not only did experts know this, they also knew that this opportunity wasn't necessarily as beautiful as Samsara thought it was.

Because Happy was in control of this opportunity.

Steamed Bun suddenly changing rhythm was an opening for Samsara, but it was one for Happy as well. Since Happy controlled the timing, Happy had a small lead in seizing this opening.

Beat the opponent at their own game...

Those old veterans who had fought against Ye Xiu for many years all exchanged glances, exchanging this one thought.

This was Ye Xiu's speciality.

When the opponent thought that they had control of the situation, in reality, Ye Xiu was always a half-step ahead, or one step, or even more.

Today, this lead was very small. It couldn't even be considered a half-step. But, this was still a valuable lead.

The opportunity that Samsara had been waiting for was what Happy had been waiting for as well.

But Ye Xiu was the one controlling when this opportunity occurred.

The lead came from this point. And this tiny lead, how could Ye Xiu not use it well?

Lord Grim was already moving.

Shadow Steps!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella shifted to the form of a sword in his hand. With a flicker, afterimages fanned out. But before they were even done doing so, the umbrella was already changing forms again, although it was still a type of sword.

Triple Slash.

Another weapon skill appeared.

Lord Grim's afterimages swung their swords and moved, instantly criss-crossing each other, vivid and colorful. The audience felt their sight going blurred.

Real body, fake body?

Let's put this question aside for now!

Everyone suddenly realized that they hadn't even been able to count clearly how many afterimages Lord Grim had created with his Shadow Steps. He'd used Triple Slash while his afterimages were still appearing, but through the high-speed movement of the Triple Slash, the sword light and the afterimages all intersected, and everyone could only tell that there were countless Lord Grims swaying before their eyes.

"Five? Six? Damn!" Even top Blade Master Huang Shaotian was cursing. Even he didn't dare confirm. This was too much of a blow to his pride.

They couldn't even confirm the number, how could they confirm the target? Let alone whether the target was real or fake?

The three Samsara players were also completely unsure, but the arrow was drawn on the bowstring, there was no going back. The situation created by the slight opening was this. There was no more time to consider, and definitely no time to try a different strategy. After one step, after many steps, they could only clench their teeth and continue.

Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike!

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf continued along his original path. His goal was to separate Steamed Bun Invasion and Lord Grim. Right now, there were countless Lord Grims in front of him, and Sun Xiang's eyes were going blurry as well. Real body? Fake body? He didn't have time to worry about that. Who cares how many clones you have, who cares how many are real or fake, I'll attack them all!

The black Evil Annihilation didn't hold back, harshly piercing toward Lord Grim.

But the afterimages of a Blade Master's Shadow Steps and the clones of a Ninja's Shadow Clone Technique were different.

Shadow clones were physical bodies, with health. Hit by One Autumn Leaf's roaring Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike like this, there was a possibility that they would instantly be cleared off the battlefield. But Shadow Steps created illusions that didn't have any health to them. When Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike pierced through, it was as though they were going through empty air.

This was undoubtedly a false body, but right now, Ye Xiu didn't care that the opponent could use this method to distinguish real and fake. Because in just the blink of an eye, the afterimages could cross, and the one that had just been determined to be fake would be swapped to who knows what new position.

Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike pierced countless targets, but Lord Grim was still using Triple Slash.

One slash, two slash, three slash...

With his numerous afterimages from Shadow Steps, Lord Grim actually travelled through the Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike just like that, as though the Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike were also nothing more than an illusion.

It didn't stop him, so it didn't separate him and Steamed Bun.

The opening that Samsara had spotted ultimately went to Happy. It became an opening for Happy to attack.

One Autumn Leaf's Hundred Dragon Meteor Strike missed completely.

Cloud Piercer's fired bullets all hit air.

Jiang Botao's Empty Waves stopped running away, and began to attack Steamed Bun Invasion. Steamed Bun Invasion arrived in front of him, but close behind was Lord Grim. The final slash of Triple Slash arrived right in front of him. The countless images of Lord Grim criss-crossed for the last time, as dazzling and dizzying as ever.

Which was real?

Jiang Botao couldn't distinguish them, and that meant that he had no idea which strike he had to dodge.

Empty Waves was already using a wave slash, but it was aimed toward Steamed Bun Invasion. But in just the blink of an eye, Happy's attacker had become Lord Grim.

Hit!

The final slash of Triple Slash hit, and this hit immediately allowed Jiang Botao to tell which image was real. Empty Waves' Divine Chain spun and slashed toward this real body, but heavy firepower was already blasting down from the sky – Dancing Rain's powerful attack had arrived.

"Steamed Bun, follow!" Ye Xiu shouted in the chat.

Steamed Bun Invasion had been the one attacking initially, but the attack that hit Empty Waves first was Lord Grim's. Steamed Bun Invasion, in order to dodge that wave slash, had rolled to the side, but right now, after Ye Xiu's summon, he was instantly darting back.

3v1 focus fire. Although Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf were already chasing toward the backs of Lord Grim and Steamed Bun, Happy didn't retreat.

Snatch the kill, fight for blood. At a time like this, they were competing in sheer DPS.

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf swiftly charged forward, slamming down a Draconic Crusher.

This skill had high priority and knockdown. Its interruption of rhythm couldn't be ignored, and so the two Happy players hurriedly dodged.

But, in fact, the midair One Autumn Leaf didn't wait for the attack to be executed. Instead, he vanished.

Teleportation?

No matter how unconventional Steamed Bun was, he still had the judgment he was supposed to. He and Ye Xiu immediately moved again as they searched for One Autumn Leaf.

But a flash appeared before Su Mucheng's eyes.

One Autumn Leaf, that silhouette with which she was incomparably familiar, had flashed in front of her Dancing Rain, blazing with murderous intent.

Chapter 1722: It's Up to You, Leave It to Me

A completely unexpected change.

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf charged toward Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion, but it actually turned out to be a feint. In the end, he had teleported to attack Dancing Rain.

The awareness of ordinary gamers was not enough to understand this change.

Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain had always been the character on the field with the most health. Even after exchanging gunfire with Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer just now, her health was still above 70% right now. Aside from her, not a single other character had more than 50% health.

It wasn't that Samsara didn't know how important Su Mucheng was. From the very start, they had enacted a BOX-1 against her. Using such a targeted formation was evidence of how highly they regarded her.

But after that, the battle situation had kept changing. It wasn't that they didn't want to restrain Su Mucheng, it was that they didn't have the chance to. All they could do was rely on the long range of Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer, when he had the time, to make things a little more difficult for Su Mucheng.

But to disrupt only when "he had time," for Su Mucheng that posed no pressure at all.

And now, the battle on the other side of the field was reaching a critical moment. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves was being suppressed by Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion together. But while they were focusing on him, Samsara thought of going to suppress Dancing Rain. Viewers couldn't understand.

They didn't understand, but the pro-level experts all understood.

Why did they suddenly think of suppressing Su Mucheng? Because among Happy's three, Dancing Rain's DPS was the highest. Destroy her firepower and they could greatly suppress Happy's offensive ability. And more importantly, suppressing Dancing Rain was easier than suppressing Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion. They just had to close in on her.

Sun Xiang completed it. Feint, then Teleportation, no one expected that he would actually switch targets to Dancing Rain.

Su Mucheng also grasped the key point immediately, and she hurriedly prepared a skill.

Jump back, Mounted Gun!

Dancing Rain had a lot of health, so she wasn't scared. Mounted Gun increased her attack and defense. Su Mucheng wanted to use this to complete this wave of focus fire.

But, she was too slow.

After all, Sun Xiang had switched targets extremely suddenly, and his reaction and controls weren't slow at all. Dancing Rain's jump backward was already the greatest opening she could achieve with her speed and limits, but it still couldn't compare to how fast One Autumn Leaf's attack came.

Dragon Tooth!

The skill landed. Short and stiff, but it interrupted Dancing Rain's Mounted Gun.

The attack began.

At the beginning of the team battle, the one who had set up a BOX-1 against Su Mucheng had been Sun Xiang. This sort of targeted strategy had to be practiced. Sun Xiang had a year and a half of experience playing with Su Mucheng on the same team, so his understanding of her was extremely comprehensive.

Dancing Rain's firepower was swiftly suppressed. Relying on Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion alone, the DPS dropped drastically. Spellblades were a plate armor class, after all, with high defense.

The situation changed.

With only two people focusing him instead of three, Jiang Botao's situation immediately became much easier. Happy was pincering with two players, and so was Samsara. Even though Happy had managed a first wave of attacks, sending Empty Waves' health down to 24%, Jiang Botao and Zhou Zekai quickly established a counterattack against Happy's vital point.

Cloud Piercer, Empty Waves, targeted Lord Grim!

With Sun Xiang's Draconic Crusher feint, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had no choice but to dodge. Jiang Botao had seized this opportunity, suddenly beginning a fierce counterattack.

Wave Wheel Slasher!

Grab priority, an attack that couldn't be parried by typical skills. Although Ye Xiu's Lord Grim could use similar skills to block it, but he hadn't done so because he and Steamed Bun had been worried about One Autumn Leaf's Teleportation and from where his surprise attack would come.

But as it turned out, One Autumn Leaf teleported to attack Dancing Rain, and the one who launched the surprise attack was actually Jiang Botao's Empty Waves. As Wave Wheel Slasher split toward Lord Grim, Empty Waves was moving and pulling away. His short sword Divine Chain darted forward nonstop, sending wave slash after wave slash.

Storm, Light!

Two of the fastest wave slashes short forward first, further targeting the gap, and then, Fire and Ice combined with the earlier Light Wave Slash to complete a Three Fold Wave, and then, Waltzing Wave Slash, sneakily hidden within.

Jiang Botao was no longer holding anything back, he was bursting forth with everything he got. If Nebula Wave Slash weren't still in cooldown, he would be using that skill as well.

Five consecutive wave slashes formed a net, firmly trapping Lord Grim within.

Ye Xiu wasn't fighting by himself, but at this moment, Steamed Bun next to him wasn't able to give him any assistance. His Steamed Bun Invasion was attacking Empty Waves nonstop, but he wasn't able to effectively disrupt him. As Jiang Botao avoided the attacks that Steamed Bun Invasion threw at him, he completed the surprise attack against Lord Grim.

The change of the battle situation had started from Steamed Bun, but he truly didn't have a very clear awareness. And right now, when the situation changed again, Steamed Bun seemed very out of step. His actions, faced with Jiang Botao's rationality and effectiveness, were completely negated.

Empty Waves' health, 11%!

This was the price Jiang Botao paid in avoiding Steamed Bun Invasion's disruption. Empty Waves was in critical health, but he used his consecutive wave slashes to trap Lord Grim.

It was just a moment. But this one moment was already enough.

Partnered control allowed the other's skills to come off cooldown. Cloud Piercer once again prepared a Thunder Snipe.

A beautiful and flawless partnership. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves set up the net, and Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer carried out the true killing move.

Bang!

The sound of Thunder Snipe's fire was ear-splitting. Cloud Piercer hadn't been standing too far away, so when the shot came out, it arrived in an instant. There was no space at all to dodge, there was no time for any skill. One headshot, double damage. After a struggle of a battle earlier, Lord Grim's health was at 31%, but a Thunder Snipe headshot from Cloud Piercer was enough to wipe that out.

Time seemed to come to a halt.

No one had expected that, in this moment, Samsara would use a killing move, a surekill killing move, directly targeting Happy's most crucial character.

The stadium was filled with shouts.

Shock, excitement, regret, hatred... All sorts of emotions, all sorts of attitudes, they were all expressed in this instant.

Blood sprayed forth. This Thunder Snipe had simply been unavoidable.

But, someone blocked it!

Steamed Bun Invasion.

When the bullets came, the silhouette of Steamed Bun Invasion suddenly flew in front of Lord Grim. He frantically extended his body, desperately stretched his head. The distance was too close, the bullets were too fast, these were the only movements he had time to do.

Blood mist bloomed.

Steamed Bun Invasion's head was already gone.

"Boss, it's up to you!"

It's up to you.

Ye Xiu didn't know how many times he'd said these words to Steamed Bun. Everyone could hear the sort of cajoling tone behind these words. But Steamed Bun had always taken this sentence very seriously. If they said it was up to him, then he would work his hardest to do the best he could.

“Leave it to me!” He would always reply with such confidence, even if this confidence was baffling to everyone, including Ye Xiu.

But this time.

“Boss, it’s up to you!” Steamed Bun said to Ye Xiu.

“Leave it to me!” Ye Xiu answered.

Steamed Bun Invasion fell. Earlier, his health had also been whittled down, and the powerful sniping headshot from Cloud Piercer directly dealt him 34% damage. Just like that, Steamed Bun Invasion left behind this final sentence that Ye Xiu often said to him, and he didn’t get up again.

Ye Xiu’s reply, he saw it.

“Go, Boss!!” Steamed Bun shouted in the channel, but with his character already turned into a corpse, he had no way of sending the message.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Ye Xiu didn’t waste the opening that Steamed Bun had sacrificed himself to obtain. Lord Grim directly pierced through the crack in the wave slashes.

Cut-Throat!

The true Lord Grim flashed behind Empty Waves and sliced forward with his blade, but Jiang Botao’s reaction speed was very fast. The moment he saw Steamed Bun Invasion moving, he was already making his next moves.

Roll!

Ahead of him, there were still ongoing damage-causing areas left behind by the sweeping wave slashes. Jiang Botao trusted that Lord Grim had no way to force his way through there to attack him. While rolling, Empty Waves’s sword stabbed backward.

Earthquake Slash.

The attack was concealed, the distance was close, the rippling energy didn’t even disturb the surface of the dirt. The “earthquake” effect swept Lord Grim.

“Fuck, how dirty!!” On the sidelines, Fang Rui was jumping on his feet and cursing. Normally, Chen Guo definitely would have given him a disdainful look. This kind of technique was exactly like what Fang Rui loved using.

But right now, Chen Guo was in no mood for that. She was so nervous that she couldn’t make a sound.

Even she knew how crucial this attack was.

Steamed Bun Invasion was directly killed, so killing Jiang Botao’s Empty Waves was too crucial. Only by quickly attacking him could they recover from the numbers disadvantage.

But Ye Xiu actually failed. Jiang Botao's reaction speed and awareness was even faster than a rabbit in this moment. He avoided Lord Grim's Cut-Throat, and instead rolled and hit Lord Grim with an attack of his own.

"Happy's going to lose..."

A number of people had already drawn this conclusion. This was an absolutely critical match point, and Happy had missed it.

Jiang Botao's Empty Waves rolled and climbed and leapt along the ground. Cloud Piercer's cover followed him, the gunfire preventing Lord Grim from advancing further.

Right now, there was no way to force his way further. After getting hit by Earthquake Slash, Lord Grim had only 29% health remaining. Facing Cloud Piercer, who still had 32% health, in addition to the 35% health One Autumn Leaf, Ye Xiu could no longer let Lord Grim loose without a care.

Helpless, Ye Xiu could only use the cover of the map features, dodging Cloud Piercer's attacks and steadily approaching Dancing Rain's position. Samsara hadn't been in a hurry, so they'd chosen to deal with Ye Xiu's Lord Grim first. Now, Jiang Botao's Empty Waves didn't have much health remaining, but he was still rushing toward Dancing Rain. Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer, after seeing that Lord Grim posed no more deadly threat to Empty Waves, also turned the majority of his firepower towards Dancing Rain.

Su Mucheng's situation was getting more and more difficult. A Launcher who was closed in on by a close-range attacker was automatically on the defensive, and could even be said to have already lost half the battle. And right now, she was about to face a three-person focus fire from Samsara.

Seeing this kind of situation, countless people had already written off Su Mucheng as dead. Even if Dancing Rain currently had the most health out of all the characters, this would quickly become a fact of the past.

Was it over?

No!

Seeing how Ye Xiu was still resolutely searching for ways to rescue her, how could Su Mucheng think of giving up?

Chapter 1723: Forward, Step by Step

In the outside world's discussions of Glory, whenever Su Mucheng was mentioned, Ye Xiu would always be brought up as well. In the eyes of countless people, he was the sole reason for Su Mucheng's accomplishments.

However, in Season 8, after Ye Xiu's departure from Excellent Era, Su Mucheng's performance put her in a new light. Everyone began reexamining her, evaluating whether their past opinions of her had been unfair.

Su Mucheng had changed the way people viewed her, but she never cared about any of it. All of her efforts to improve were because she believed that Ye Xiu would definitely return, and when he did, she needed to be ready. She needed to become an even better support for him.

Although she hoped to win the championships as well, she wanted to win it together with Ye Xiu. Otherwise, the victory would feel hollow.

She would never give up!

She was determined. Even if Ye Xiu gave up first, she would remain here and stand guard. But Ye Xiu never gave her this chance. Even when he was kicked from Excellent Era and had to start from zero, he cut his way through thistles and thorns to stand on top of this grand stage.

For victory.

For the championship.

These phrases always felt flat when describing Ye Xiu, because he did not lack victory. He had the most championship titles in all of Glory. Even so, he still blazed with unsurpassed passion.

Everyone felt like there must be some reason behind his drive.

Such as, to prove to Excellent Era that he could still play?

But if that was his reason, then he had already proved it. He had left Excellent Era, and then eliminated them in the Challenger League.

Yet even after all that, he didn't change.

His actions, his performance, everything he did showed that the only thing he strove for was victory, pure victory. Whether it was Excellent Era or anything else, he didn't seem to particularly care. In his eyes, there were only opponents. Opponents that he needed to defeat in order to win. Since that was the case, he just needed to defeat them. It was that simple.

There was no other reason that could explain Ye Xiu's passion for Glory.

He had three championship titles and countless other individual honors, yet his goals remained the same: victory, championship.

There was no reason to give up. There was no excuse to give up. The championship was right in front of him.

However, in this regard, everyone believed that Samsara was closer to the championship than Happy.

Victory or defeat would be decided here!

Everyone watched the match attentively, Whether it was Samsara's fans or Happy's fans, all of them had their fists clenched tightly.

Looking back on this match, starting from when the two sides first made contact, there hadn't been any cushions. The fighting and killing had begun beneath this golden pyramid, and it looked as if it was going

to end there too. This was supposed to be a map filled with features; not far from there was a river, and next to the river was a forest...

However, after the two sides began fighting, they never strayed far, because there hadn't been any opportunities to. From the start, both sides held onto each other tightly, not giving the other even the slightest room to breathe.

Now, the deciding moment had come.

The players seemed to have felt lit. Jiang Botao had the lowest amount of health on the field, but he was as lively as ever. After escaping from Lord Grim's attacks, he began searching for Dancing Rain.

Earthquake Slash!

He had sent out multiple consecutive wave slashes at Lord Grim to trap him. As a result, he didn't have many wave slashes left to use. Earthquake Slash was the lowest level wave slash and had the shortest cooldown. As soon as it came off cooldown, he immediately used it again.

Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer covered him from behind so that he wouldn't be at risk of an ambush from Ye Xiu's Lord Grim. At the same time, this cover separated the connection between Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng.

The situation was looking good for Samsara, but none of them relaxed. Sun Xiang became increasingly focused. He paid attention to each and every movement from Dancing Rain, especially her cannon. In this situation, Su Mucheng definitely wanted to attack Empty Waves, who only had 11% of his health left. She wouldn't even need a powerful high-level skill to kill him. Just a few normal attacks would be able to blast him off the stage.

But there were no opportunities for her to do so.

Sun Xiang clung tightly onto her. Not only was she unable to escape, even when she found an opportunity to attack, Sun Xiang would always knock her cannon askew at the last moment.

An Earthquake Slash swept by.

Dodge.

Every pro player, every player would have this thought as soon as they saw the attack. But Su Mucheng didn't plan on dodging. She wanted to do more, not just wait for Ye Xiu to break open the situation.

Not only did Dancing Rain not dodge, she ran straight into the Earthquake Slash.

Sun Xiang was surprised for a brief moment, but he immediately realized that Su Mucheng wanted to use the knockback from Earthquake Slash to widen the distance between them.

Sun Xiang didn't stop her. One Autumn Leaf immediately moved to the side, predicting which direction Dancing Rain would move towards.

But with this slight change in positioning, Dancing Rain raised her gun.

You want to attack?

Even though Sun Xiang was guarding her retreat path, this didn't mean that he would neglect the possibility of Su Mucheng attacking.

Evil Annihilation flew towards her.

The instant the cannon flashed with light, the cannon was knocked askew.

One Autumn Leaf's defense towards her was extremely tight. Why else was Su Mucheng unable to provide any support to Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun?

Previously, Sun Xiang had been completely focused on suppressing Dancing Rain's attacks. Now, he was also thinking about killing her.

The Earthquake Slash struck Dancing Rain. However, One Autumn Leaf had already cut off her retreat path.

Falling Flower Palm!

One Autumn Leaf threw out a palm. The knockback from Falling Flower Palm was much stronger than that of Earthquake Slash. Not only did the palm stop Dancing Rain's momentum, it even sent her flying in the other direction.

Su Mucheng didn't care about all of this. She once again aimed at Empty Waves.

But Empty Waves was already charging towards her.

Jiang Botao didn't let Empty Waves' low health hold him back. He knew that victory could be decided here. Even though Empty Waves had almost no health left, he was Samsara's biggest advantage. As long as they could suppress Dancing Rain and block Lord Grim, victory would be theirs. How could he cower at such a moment? Just having an extra player on the field wasn't an advantage. The advantage depended on how the extra player performed.

The target was a Launcher. The closer he was, the safer he would be. Spellblades required a bit of space to use their skills, but since his opponent was a Launcher, he wasn't afraid of fighting up close.

Colliding Stab.

Jiang Botao's Spellblade could use this low-level Berserker skill as a movement skill as well. Empty Waves tread along the path created by Earthquake Slash. In the blink of an eye, he arrived in front of Dancing Rain.

Bang!

Dancing Rain's cannon was knocked away by the Colliding Stab. Dancing Rain was once again unable to shoot in time. After getting sent flying by Falling Flower Palm, she was reflected back by the Colliding Stab. One Autumn Leaf was already waiting.

Dragon Tooth, Double Stab, Sky Strike...

Skills chained together, Chasers flew in succession. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf performed a full combo. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves wandered to the left and right, slashing at Dancing Rain with what close combat skills he knew.

Launchers were poor at close combat. Facing this pincer from two sides, she became even more helpless.

It looks like it's up to Ye Xiu!

Everyone's gazes shifted towards Lord Grim. Everything depended on how fast Ye Xiu broke out from Cloud Piercer's imprisonment. Hoping for a Launcher to escape from two enemies in close combat would be too difficult.

Ye Xiu's Lord Grim didn't stop moving.

At the start of the match, Team Happy had gotten a bird's eye view of the map from on top of the pyramid. As a result, they had a slight advantage in the beginning. Qiao Yifan had utilized this advantage to escape from Wu Qi's pursuit.

However, the battle had gone on for a long time now, with all of it revolving around this one area. Samsara's players wouldn't neglect the terrain. At this point, they had a good understanding of the terrain as well.

Particularly so for Zhou Zekai. His Sharpshooter required vision to attack, so he naturally need to pay attention to this aspect. Which areas were favorable for cover? Which of these areas allowed for movement? How could he get around these covers? He had to know the answers to these questions.

Lord Grim moved about, but his movements were limited. Zhou Zekai's blockade was too tight. Zhou Zekai had originally been focusing Dancing Rain, but now, most of his attention had returned to Ye Xiu. It had to be said that Samsara was truly quite fearful of Ye Xiu. Despite it being a 3v2, they didn't dare fight head on.

"That's not the only reason." Li Yibo heard Pan Lin's analysis of the situation and added in his own opinion. "Don't forget that Happy has a one point lead because of the group arena. If Samsara wins the team competition with only one player remaining, the match will have to go overtime to break the tie. If Samsara wants to directly win, they need to win with at least two players alive."

"Oh, overtime... if they go into overtime, which team do you favor?" Pan Lin asked.

"Samsara, of course," Li Yibo replied without thinking, "Have you not noticed that Ye Xiu's playing has been getting worse and worse?"

"Oh, really?" Pan Lin was stunned.

"The pace of the team competition has been too fast. As soon as the two teams met, they began fighting. They didn't move to a different area, or slow down the pace. Both sides have been attacking fiercely non-stop. For an older player like Ye Xiu, the burden is too much."

"Is that so. But I really couldn't tell! That Shadow Steps combined with Triple Slash from before was incredible!"

"The burden on him has only increased because of how incredible it was! He had to perfectly link together two skills while switching weapon forms. That must have been extremely difficult to execute. After making the play, he wasn't given any moment to breathe. He had to keep it going. Just thinking about it is making my hands cramp..." Li Yibo said.

“Ah...” Pan Lin looked at the screen, at Lord Grim, who was constantly looking for an opening under the pressure from Cloud Piercer’s gunfire. He didn’t know what to say.

“Overtime is unfavorable for Happy. They definitely cannot let this go into overtime,”

Li Yibo said.

“In that case, wouldn’t it be a good idea for Samsara to drag out the match into overtime?” Pan Lin said.

“No, you can’t think about it like that. Samsara has an opportunity to end the match right here. Why would they give up their advantage to play in an uncertain overtime game? Ye Xiu’s condition might be declining, but who knows what will happen in a match. Taking advantage of a lead that you already have is also extremely important,” Li Yibo said.

“That’s true. Then, right now...”

“If this situation doesn’t change, Samsara will certainly win,” Li Yibo said confidently, “The key lies in Ye Xiu and whether he can break through. It doesn’t look like an opening will just appear. He’ll have to force his way through.”

“Forcing his way through... That’s not really a good idea either, is it?” Pan Lin said.

“But what other choice does he have?” Li Yibo said.

Yes, no other choice.

Lord Grim didn’t have much health left. He would certainly lose quite a bit of health if he forced his way through Cloud Piercer’s attacks. Let alone whether he could successfully rescue Dancing Rain afterwards, even if he did, both of them would nearly be dead. The situation wouldn’t be much better than before.

But if he didn’t, it was extremely unlikely that Su Mucheng would be able to escape from Sun Xiang and Jiang Botao on her own.

Su Mucheng was trying her hardest. Even though she wasn’t able to fully break free, Dancing Rain was slowly inching towards Lord Grim.

One step, two steps, three steps...

But wasn’t it pointless?

Sure, she was slowly making her way there, but she wasn’t able to get away and make contact with Lord Grim. It was as if she knew that she couldn’t place in a running competition, but she persevered so that she would at least be able to complete the course.

Countless Su Mucheng fans closed their eyes, unable to continue watching. Among these fans was Chen Guo. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to cheer for Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng. It was just too difficult to watch. The sort of struggle, this sort of effort, but for what? What would the outcome be?

The pro players were also quiet.

Ever since the start of the match, they had never once stopped their discussion. But at this moment, even though the situation was clear as day, no one said anything. They couldn't bear to. They were also pro players. While the players on stage were trying their hardest, they had no right to talk ill of them, even if those efforts looked stupid, even if those efforts seemed pointless.

"What are you waiting for? GO!!!" Someone was unable to bear it any longer and stood up. It was Team Blue Rain's Huang Shaotian. Everyone knew who he was referring to. The only person who could change things was Ye Xiu.

Force his way through!

He had no other choice.

Would Ye Xiu be able to create a miracle with only 23% of his health left?

Forward!

Ye Xiu made his move. Lord Grim hadn't been able to find any openings the entire time, when suddenly, he rushed out.

As expected!

Zhou Zekai had anticipated this would happen. This was the enemy side's last chance. How could Ye Xiu give up so easily? But it wasn't going to be easy for him to grasp it.

Shining Cut!

Lord Grim rushed out. Although it was his last chance, he didn't panic. He at least waited for all of his necessary movement skills to come back up.

Shining Cut! The first step that he took was done with a movement skill.

Left? Right?

Zhou Zekai didn't need to guess. His Sharpshooter had two guns. He could cover both options. Ye Xiu was aiming for speed. He would be testing the enemy side's reaction speed.

A cold light flashed, and Lord Grim rushed outward. Ye Xiu could hear bullets whistling by. Did it hit or not? He couldn't concern himself with the answer. From the moment he stepped out, the only things he sought were speed and mix-ups.

Speed alone wasn't enough. Zhou Zekai was precise with his aim and exceptional at predicting the opponent's next moves. Ye Xiu needed to constantly mix things up so that Zhou Zekai wouldn't be able to figure out his pathing. Even though Zhou Zekai could cover two directions with his two guns, it wasn't possible for him to cover every angle, even with Gun Shake.

After taking two steps with Shining Cut, Lord Grim changed directions.

Charge!

Another movement skill. These movement skills were all fast, but there were differences in the actual numbers. Switching between movement skills was a mix-up.

After three steps, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim could feel the bullets hitting him. Zhou Zekai was using Gun Shake. He wouldn't look down on Ye Xiu, thinking that he could he fully predict his movements. He chose to use Gun Shake to spread his bullets around and increase his coverage.

Lord Grim had been hit.

However, since Lord Grim was using Charge, normal attacks wouldn't be able to stop him.

Charge, three steps.

Ye Xiu could see Dancing Rain getting closer, but he didn't grow impatient. After Charge, he didn't immediately follow with another skill. He took a normal step.

To break through Zhou Zekai's blockade, mix-ups were more important than raw speed. Slowing down was also a mix-up. When the bullets started focusing on Lord Grim, he suddenly sped up.

Colliding Stab!

Another skill. Lord Grim sped up.

Cloud Piercer's bullets seemed to be coordinating with Lord Grim, keeping up with Lord Grim's sudden acceleration and spreading out.

The bullets chased after Lord Grim, but they weren't able to completely stop him. Lord Grim might be able to force his way through, but he would definitely lose health doing so. This was the outcome that everyone was expecting. But afterwards, could a nearly dead Lord Grim be able to rescue Dancing Rain? After breaking through Cloud Piercer's blockade, would he be able to break apart One Autumn Leaf's offense?

No one was thinking about the future. What everyone saw was two players refusing to give up. The former Best Partners had been separated, and at this moment, they were trying their hardest to regroup. Whether they won or lost in the end was a matter for the future.

Three consecutive movement skills. Even though he wasn't moving in a straight line, Lord Grim had closed the distance by quite a bit. However, Ye Xiu knew that the farther he went, the more difficult it would be. By quickly rotating through his skills, fewer and fewer options became available for him, meaning fewer and fewer mix-ups. Zhou Zekai definitely knew this as well.

Slide Kick!

Next up was a Sharpshooter skill. In terms of speed, this movement skill couldn't compare with the others. However, since it changed the user's posture, from standing to sliding, it would be able to dodge a few attacks. Ye Xiu suddenly used this skill to slide forward in a straight line. As he slid along the ground, he could see the bullets whistling past him.

Zhou Zekai reacted immediately and readjusted his aim. Once Slide Kick was done, Lord Grim would have to stand back up. Zhou Zekai was waiting for this moment.

But as soon as he readjusted his aim downwards, an explosion suddenly engulfed Lord Grim.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Zhou Zekai quickly thought of this skill. He had been on guard against this skill the entire time. Ye Xiu had created an explosion to cover him. It was only for an instant, but this instant gave Ye Xiu more than enough time to complete a Shadow Clone Technique.

Cloud Piercer didn't stop shooting, but as he fired, he also rapidly retreated. Zhou Zekai wasn't sure if he would be able to interrupt the Shadow Clone Technique. He retreated back to widen the distance between them so that he could obstruct Lord Grim for longer.

Ye Xiu had been carefully setting up for this Shadow Clone Technique, and his preparations paid off.

The explosion only lasted an instant before vanishing. The shadow clone inside of it poofed into smoke. Lord Grim had closed the distance considerably. Fortunately, Zhou Zekai had predicted this would happen. Cloud Piercer had retreated fast enough, keeping Lord Grim within his sights.

Triple Slash!

This skill was finally off cooldown.

Speed and variation combined in one skill. This skill was nothing more than three movement skills in one. Ye Xiu had left it for last, using it as soon as it came off cooldown.

Sword light flashed, three arcs in quick succession.

Almost there!

Countless people were excited. Even though they knew that getting close to Dancing Rain and rescuing her were two entirely different matters, when they saw that the two would finally be able to meet after going through so many hardships, they felt that it was already worth it.

As for what came after, no one was optimistic.

Lord Grim only had 18% of his health left. Losing only 5% of his health forcing his way through Cloud Piercer's blockade was already amazing.

As for Dancing Rain, she was helpless under the pincer from One Autumn Leaf and Empty Waves. Her health lead was already a matter of the past. She only had 21% of her health left.

Even so, Samsara didn't relax. They readjusted their tactics. They weren't going to let these two reconvene so easily. Cloud Piercer continued to retreat, pinning down Dancing Rain from behind. Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf began paying attention to Lord Grim, and prepared to fight him. Jiang Botao's Empty Waves began adjusting his distance. He had too little health left. If Samsara wanted to keep their numbers advantage, he couldn't let him get killed so easily.

Zhou Zekai had been focusing on Ye Xiu the entire time. Sun Xiang and Jiang Botao were now paying attention to Ye Xiu too. They were making adjustments because of Lord Grim's approach. However, they didn't stop attacking Dancing Rain because of this. Only the tempo had changed a bit. In many people's eyes, this sort of change was negligible. However, Su Mucheng had been waiting for this moment for too long. Dancing Rain acted. Under this pincer, under Samsara's notice, they heard the boom of a missile descending from the sky.

Heat-Seeking Missile!

A killing move suddenly appeared, catching everyone off guard. The three on Samsara didn't have time to think, and hastily began to dodge. However, while they dodged, they didn't forget to attack, including Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer. He also aimed his gun at Dancing Rain and fired.

As for the spectators, they were completely stunned up until the mushroom cloud dissipated completely. Only then did the pro players faintly realize something.

Dancing Rain had been in a difficult position? Yes, an extremely difficult position. Every step she took required a tremendous amount of effort. However, she hadn't been moving towards Lord Grim, but Cloud Piercer.

Lord Grim forcing his way through had been difficult? Yes, extremely difficult. He wouldn't have forced his way through if he had any other choice. However, his goal hadn't been to rescue Dancing Rain, but to force Cloud Piercer back.

The two on Happy were grouping the three on Samsara together.

Finally, Su Mucheng was the main attacker, and this time, Ye Xiu was the support.

Chapter 1724: Legendary Finishing Blow

This had been planned from the very start.

Upon realizing Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's intention, the pro players instantly grasped the implications.

Su Mucheng had repeatedly positioned herself to attack Jiang Botao in order to lure him forward. When facing a Launcher, the closer you went, the safer it was. Any pro player who had close-range battle ability would have made such a choice at that time.

And Ye Xiu?

From the very beginning, when Lord Grim had been searching for openings and moving all around, he had already been starting to lead Zhou Zekai's movements. Zhou Zekai knew where he should stand in order to have clear lines of sight around the obstacles in the way, so Ye Xiu also knew which obstacles he should use for cover if he wanted to lure Cloud Piercer to stand where he needed him to.

And then, charge, advance, approach.

In order to give Lord Grim more pressure, Zhou Zekai would naturally control Cloud Piercer to move back and maintain the distance between them.

No one could say that Samsara's actions were wrong. Any player in their places, facing the same conditions, would probably react in the same way. No one had suspected that Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were actually planning such an attack.

The instant the mushroom cloud rose up, the entire stadium was shocked.

No one had noticed the guiding crosshair when Dancing Rain initiated her attack. By the time everyone noticed, the Heat-Seeking Missile was already howling down from the sky.

Dodge?

That was only one type of instinctive reaction when faced with an attack. In order to avoid Heat-Seeking Missile, the key was to notice the guiding crosshair when the missile was initially launched. By the time that was finished, the speed with which Heat-Seeking Missile fell from the sky was far faster than the speed of any character.

You could do your best to dodge it, but you would only be able to avoid the center of the blast, reducing only some of the damage that you took.

In this moment, what Samsara's three players cared more about was: attack.

Their control of Dancing Rain would definitely be broken after this attack, and they would definitely suffer a heavy loss. So, right now, what they had to do above all else was to kill Dancing Rain.

Their formation, which from the start had been meant to suppress Dancing Rain, was still useful. Dancing Rain had no extra space to dodge the attacks that the three launched against her.

The audience couldn't see what was going on in the mushroom cloud. All they could see was flickering silhouettes and the flashes of skills being used. Samsara's three players couldn't worry about controlling the situation right now. They each used their most powerful attacks. And then, the audience watched as the four players' health bars plummeted.

Whose health would reach the bottom first? Whose health would remain above zero?

Everyone's hearts were in their throats as they stared at those four health bars. Whether the broadcast or the live displays, all screens were currently showing a close-up of their health bars.

Zero!

Of the four health bars, one reached zero first.

Jiang Botao's Empty Waves?

This was everyone's instinctive answer. After all, he had the least health out of them all, only 11%. He shouldn't be able to tank a Heat-Seeking Missile.

But, no!

The name written above the health bar was Dancing Rain. Samsara's focus fire as the missile had exploded had actually killed off Dancing Rain first.

The health bars of Cloud Piercer and One Autumn Leaf were still falling. Originally, they'd had around 30% remaining, so the damage of the Heat-Seeking Missile wouldn't be enough to directly kill them. What about Jiang Botao's Empty Waves?

Empty Waves' health had actually been the first to stop falling. 0.7%, 0.7% remaining!

Empty Waves was still alive. In other words, this situation right now, Ye Xiu was facing a 1v3?

Happy lost.

Countless people were already thinking this. Even though Ye Xiu had faced a 1v3 in last round's team battle, what he had done back then was simply self-preservation. Ye Xiu had only been able to control Samsara's three players there because they had believed "3v1 is no problem for us, we can definitely take care of this very quickly." He hadn't truly restricted all three of them, let alone defeated the three of them.

And now, he needed to defeat three people in an upfront battle. How was that possible? This was what everyone was thinking. The audience couldn't help but feel regret, seeing how Happy had worked so hard to get all the way here, only to face such a hopeless and helpless conclusion.

And for Samsara, this was truly fortunate.

Such an unforeseen wave of attack had actually ended with them having the upper hand.

The Best Partners had been disintegrated. Happy had only Ye Xiu remaining, while Samsara had their three strongest remaining.

We won!

At this moment, they could have this thought, right?

Jiang Botao, whose character had only 0.7% remaining, felt this fortune most clearly. He had just barely managed to escape the clutches of death. Empty Waves was still alive thanks to the small adjustments he'd made as Lord Grim had approached. At that time, he had felt an instinct of self-preservation. There was no fear in closing in on Dancing Rain, but when Lord Grim arrived, he of course felt that it was more appropriate to retreat, put some distance between them. Moreover, the Heat-Seeking Missile that Su Mucheng fired of course wouldn't center upon Empty Waves, who was already at low health. Thus, in the end, Empty Waves was the Samsara character closest to the edge of the blast radius. Added to his high defense from plate armor and his subconscious evasive maneuvers when the missile came down, Empty Waves had taken the least amount of damage.

How wonderful it is to live! Victory is best enjoyed when alive!

These were Jiang Botao's honest thoughts at this moment. But, they were only thoughts. He didn't even have the chance to feel any emotions before Empty Waves' health suddenly dropped again.

Zero!

Empty Waves died.

Jiang Botao was stunned. He was completely sure that the damage from the Heat-Seeking Missile had already stopped. This was damage that a new skill had instantly created, not prolonged damage from an old attack.

What was this?

His camera view floated upward. Upon the grayed-out screen, Jiang Botao saw a shuriken piercing the chest of Empty Waves' fallen form.

Finishing blow...

The Heat-Seeking Missile didn't kill him, but Ye Xiu's follow-up attack did.

This attack had come so fast that there'd been less than one second's difference between it and the damage of Heat-Seeking Missile. Never mind the fact that Jiang Botao hadn't noticed it – even if he had, he had no way of dodging such a fast and accurate finishing blow.

They hadn't won yet.

They hadn't finished yet.

Heat-Seeking Missile was only the beginning. From the very start, Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng had realized that in that kind of situation, even if Dancing Rain let loose that strike, there was no way she could escape that encirclement. She would definitely be focused by Samsara and killed.

But Ye Xiu had already prepared the finishing blow.

0.7%, Empty Waves avoided death by only 0.7%. Such a small difference meant that even Jiang Botao didn't dare confirm in that moment that Empty Waves would live. But Ye Xiu accurately predicted, and his final hit had come so accurately, so flawlessly.

Be careful!

It's not over yet!

Now was the time for Ye Xiu to deal the finishing blow!

Jiang Botao desperately wanted to send this information to his two remaining teammates. He knew that because Heat-Seeking Missile dealt immense damage, and because they'd been focused on nothing but killing Dancing Rain, the Samsara players had had no chance to do anything besides a few subconscious evasive maneuvers. Right now, they were still suffering the aftershocks of the explosion. And Ye Xiu was planning to use this moment to instantaneously kill all three of them.

1v3 was an impossible task, but under these special conditions, Jiang Botao felt danger. Because he sensed that deep trust between Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng, as well as all sorts of confidence. Ye Xiu trusted that Su Mucheng could absolutely pull off a map explosion, and Su Mucheng firmly believed that, after Dancing Rain fell, Ye Xiu would be able to execute the finishing blows alone.

Glory isn't a single-player game. This was the view that Ye Xiu had always maintained. Even now, when he was the only one left on the battlefield, the plan that he carried out still embodied this belief. In this final scene that everyone had worked so hard to set up, he brought everyone's hard work to the ultimate conclusion.

"Watch out!!" But Jiang Botao could not make his voice heard. The light from the explosion had yet to fade, but with his camera view floating upward, he saw a silhouette darting forward like a bolt of lightning, overlapping with another silhouette.

Even under the cover of the light and smoke, Jiang Botao could recognize that second silhouette. It was one with which he was incomparably familiar, Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer.

Powerful Knee Strike!

Aerial Twist!

Two skills in a row, both from the weapon of a Fighter class.

When the Powerful Knee Strike came close, Zhou Zekai detected it. He swiftly adjusted the position of Cloud Piercer's body, which had been thrown into the air from the force of the blast, in order to fire at the approaching Lord Grim. But by the time the gunfire sounded, Lord Grim's two legs were already locked around his neck.

Twist!

Lord Grim twisted his body in midair, and the bullets fired by Cloud Piercer slammed against the ground. Ye Xiu didn't wait for this skill to land before cancelling it. While still spinning, he was already unsheathing his sword – Collapsing Mountain.

Without anything to push off against in midair, the Collapsing Mountain naturally didn't have any leaping effect. It was simply an attack that swept straight downward, cleaving Cloud Piercer.

The two silhouettes crashed downward, but then Lord Grim's skill changed again, the blade that swung down suddenly swept upward again, Upwards Slash!

Cloud Piercer was going up and down as though he were riding a roller coaster. Because of how rapidly and relentlessly Lord Grim was switching skills and attack directions, Zhou Zekai's figure was never moving in the same direction, not even for a moment. Under this kind of rhythm, even Zhou Zekai had absolutely no way to adjust.

How fast did he have to be?

In the eyes of ordinary gamers, this was simply unimaginable, this was breaking the game's design. In their eyes, in this short amount of time, a skill couldn't even be completed, right?

But the pro players knew, Ye Xiu was able to execute these skills so quickly because, over the course of this process, he was forcibly canceling skills nonstop. Every skill used the shortest and most direct path to hit the opponent, and then, without even waiting for the skill to finish dealing all of its damage, he was immediately canceling it, and then using the next skill, repeating the process. Used in this way, these skills weren't dealing all of the damage that they could, but the changes were fast to the extreme. And such fast changes meant that Zhou Zekai had no way to counter.

This was the theory behind this. But how accurate of a judgment was needed for this? How fast of a hand speed?

Use a skill, cancel it, and on top of all this, Lord Grim still had to worry about changing weapon forms as well.

What kind of hand speed?

The pro players were stunned. They had all experienced the unspecialized blitz, but this was their first time witnessing it this fast, this densely packed. Calling this God-level was frankly an insult. This was beyond God-level!

Falling Flower Palm, Anti-Tank Missile, Gatling Gun.

In the blink of an eye, three more skills. Just as closely packed, just as fast. The moment that Falling Flower Palm came out, those who weren't pro players practically didn't see it at all. And then, Cloud Piercer was already being swallowed in the explosion of the Anti-Tank Missiles, and by then, the high-speed bullets of Gatling Gun were already sinking into his flesh. Along with the blowback from Falling Flower Palm, they sent Cloud Piercer flying.

Zero!

Cloud Piercer's health hit zero!

Zhou Zekai had had no chance at all to adjust. Because the skills were packed together so densely, Cloud Piercer was rapidly spinning and flying in every which direction. He had absolutely no way to adjust.

Died!

Cloud Piercer died.

3.5 seconds ago, Ye Xiu faced a 1v3.

3 seconds ago, Ye Xiu faced a 1v2.

And now, 1v1.

Jiang Botao, Zhou Zekai.

The captain and vice captain who had led Samsara to two championships, Ye Xiu had killed both of them in the span of 3.5 seconds. Even if the two characters had already been at critical health, even if the two of them had suffered a huge impact from the Heat-Seeking Missile – killing them in 3.5 seconds, this was enough to be called a miracle.

There were no words to describe it. The stadium was filled with clamoring shouts. Because the changes were too fast, everyone had seen different things at every moment. While one person was still shouting because of something he'd caught, another person had noticed something something else.

But no matter what, Empty Waves, Cloud Piercer, these two characters had truly fallen, fallen without a single chance to fight back. And then, One Autumn Leaf, this character that Ye Xiu had built by his own hand, was the final target that he had to kill.

Chapter 1725: They Are the Champions

3.5 seconds.

Sun Xiang had experienced countless 3.5 seconds over the course of his professional career. But in the future, even many years after his retirement, these 3.5 seconds of the Glory Professional Alliance Season 10 finals would be forever engraved in his memory.

Amidst the explosion of the Heat-Seeking Missile, the three Samsara players had killed Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain. Even Jiang Botao's Empty Waves, who'd only had 11% health at the time, had fortunately managed to survive.

3v1.

Champions!

What a logical train of thought. Sun Xiang didn't feel that it was wrong for him to have this kind of thought at this moment. He didn't feel that he had relaxed his guard or anything. His controls remained as attentive as ever as he adjusted One Autumn Leaf, stabilizing him after the blast of the explosion.

And then, he watched as Empty Waves' sliver of health was suddenly wiped clean.

And then, he watched as Lord Grim rushed toward Cloud Piercer, fighting so rapidly that Cloud Piercer was rendered helpless.

3.5 seconds.

At the time, Sun Xiang didn't have an accurate sense of the time that had elapsed. Everything that happened had caught him completely off-guard. His awareness couldn't keep up with Lord Grim's attack movements at all. He was hurriedly stabilizing One Autumn Leaf, but as he prepared to rush through the dissipating smoke and fire to help his teammate, Cloud Piercer was already sent crashing toward him.

Corpse.

Glory's number one player Zhou Zekai, the Great Gunner Cloud Piercer. In 3.5 seconds, he'd become a corpse flying in his direction.

In interviews many years later, Sun Xiang would be utterly unable to use words to describe his emotions in that moment. But he knew very clearly: those 3.5 seconds were not, in fact, the most frightening moment of his professional career.

What frightened him the most, what made him feel true fear, were not those 3.5 seconds, but the 3 seconds that came after.

One Autumn Leaf dodged Cloud Piercer's corpse. Sun Xiang hadn't even completely awoken from his shock when Lord Grim, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim, had already rushed up to him.

Awareness?

Sun Xiang clearly remembered, in that moment, he had no awareness. All of his controls were conditioned reflexes, subconscious reactions.

These kind of reactions and controls, done without thought, should be the fastest. But Sun Xiang would also remember clearly, in that moment, he was slow, too slow. Compared to Ye Xiu's controls, compared to Lord Grim's movements, everything that he did was far too slow.

Overlapping Sidesteps?

Probably! Sun Xiang had no way of confirming. All he saw were afterimages. While his brain was still trying to analyze Lord Grim's movements, Lord Grim was already beginning his next skill.

Dragon Tooth?

He was Bleeding? This was an effect that could only come from a Double Stab. Had there been a Double Stab after the Dragon Tooth?

Moonlight Slash?

Two injuries? Had it already become Full Moonlight Slash?

The attacks just came so fast, the skills just changed so fast, he couldn't keep up with the rhythm, there was no time to react. Sun Xiang never would have expected, in this kind of confrontation of pure skill and technique, that he could be so helpless, that he could be so thoroughly overwhelmed.

3 seconds.

He seemed to have made many controls himself, but not a single one had been effective. He could only watch as One Autumn Leaf's health slid downward. The blast of the Heat-Seeking Missile had already taken most of his health from him, and in an instant, it reached the end.

3 seconds.

Sun Xiang only understood one thing.

He now knew how Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer had been killed...

Starfall!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella fell like a meteor. This Exorcist skill was the final attack that Lord Grim used, the attack that ended it all. Without wavering, without hesitation, the meteor-like Myriad Manifestations Umbrella pierced One Autumn Leaf's chest. This character that Ye Xiu had built himself, this character that had been honored as the Battle God, fell.

GLORY!

The word flashed on the screen.

The exact same word and font as the in-game Arena. But at this moment, this word was a symbol of the very highest glory.

Championship.

Glory Season 10, Glory's champions, Team Happy!

It was over. Everything had come to an end.

In the broadcast, commentator Pan Lin was shouting this result with all his might, and Li Yibo, who had experienced another face-slapping for his analysis, was also feeling his heart swell with emotion.

Restraint, he needed restraint! Li Yibo reminded himself over and over, he had to maintain his image of calm rationality. But Pan Lin, who was roaring next to him as though he were a diehard Happy fan, was about to grab him in a hug. Faced with this devotion, this passion, Li Yibo finally could hold himself back no longer. He suddenly remembered Glory Season 4, the scene when their Tyranny had defeated Excellent Era. At the time, hadn't they been just like Happy today, challenging and defeating the all-powerful kings?

“Damn, fucking incredible!” Li Yibo was finally shouting as well. Bearing? Rationality? How could any of that compare to the thrill of victory?

A 6.5 second victory. 6.5 seconds decided the championship. This was absolutely unprecedented in Glory history.

We won!

We won!!!

The moment the word flashed onscreen, everyone in Happy’s player area leapt to their feet. Chen Guo instantly started crying, her tears flying onto those next to her.

No one mocked her for it. How could Chen Guo be the only one who felt like crying right now?

Wei Chen looked like he didn’t know what to do with his hands and feet. It seemed as though he wanted to ignore the ban on smoking in the stadium to light a cigarette, but the match he lit ended up almost burning his own hair. They did it, they’d actually done it. After so many years, returning to the Pro Alliance as the oldest player, he’d actually managed to get a championship?

“This guy!!” The cigarette that had never even been lit in the first place was fiercely ground out by Wei Chen.

“Fuck!” Fang Rui cursed, because Wei Chen had ground that cigarette on his thigh. But aside from this curse, he couldn’t care about it any more. In fact, whether this shout was cursing Wei Chen or expressing his emotions, even Fang Rui didn’t know. Championship, he had won the championship! Transferring as an All-Star to the grassroots Team Happy, class changing from the number one Thief to a Qi Master, Fang Rui had done so many things that most people wouldn’t even dare thinking about. But, he had succeeded. He had won the championship that every pro player dreamed of.

“Beautifully done!” Fang Rui praised fiercely. It was praise for himself, as well as praise for his teammates. And at the same time, he remembered his former partner, who had bid farewell to the professional stage after the second round of the playoffs, Lin Jingyan.

Do you see this, Old Lin? Me, the champion!

“Amazing, we’re champions, amazing...” Luo Ji was also extremely moved. Even though he may not have contributed very much, he, as a part of Team Happy as a whole, shared everyone’s feelings clearly. He very much wanted to find someone to share his excitement with, but his closer friends Qiao Yifan and An Wenyi were still in their player booths, while Wei Chen and Fang Rui were two seniors. Who else? Luo Ji looked at Mo Fan, and had a fright.

Mo Fan’s facial expression was contorting. That face of his never seemed to be able to display a moved or excited expression, and right now, it looked as though he didn’t even know what muscles to use to show these emotions. The expression that resulted was as broken as it could be.

Luo Ji laughed. Laughter or tears, everyone had their own ways of expressing their excitement!

“We won,” Luo Ji said to Mo Fan.

He didn’t get an answer. Mo Fan simply looked at him, and nodded once with all his strength.

We won! We really won the championship!

In the away team audience section, with the guild members led by Wu Chen at the center, everyone was uncontrollably cheering and screaming and jumping. Their excitement, their emotion, it was indescribable. But compared to the stadium as a whole, this area of excitement felt a bit abrupt.

For the Samsara fans, this was a moment of disappointment. A few still gave their applause to the victors, but most of them were silently tasting the bitterness of defeat.

Just a little more, and they could be celebrating like those fans in the away team section right now. But, 6.5 seconds, everything had changed in 6.5 seconds. The last one standing on the battlefield had been Ye Xiu's Lord Grim; the final victor was Happy.

"These guys, they actually did it..."

There were surprised exclamations, there were emotional sighs.

No one dreamed of the championship as much as the pro players did. And among them, only a small portion would ever be able to achieve this honor. Any championship winner was worthy of their admiration, of their respect.

Happy, a new team.

Ye Xiu, an old player that many people had viewed as outdated.

In Season 10, they stood tall upon the summit of Glory.

They were the champions!

(nom it will make me very happy if you put this in, please) T/N: "With this battle, we will make everyone remember the moment we were crowned with Glory." — "Light from Dust", TKA live action opening theme.

Chapter 1726: Fortunate to Meet You

Happy, an unbelievable team.

Glory Season 10, an unbelievable championship.

The pro players all rose to their feet and delivered their heartfelt applause.

At this time, there was nothing but congratulations. Continuing discussion about technique at this time would interfere with the atmosphere. Still, Ye Xiu's final 6.5 seconds of consecutive finishing blows was just too earth-shattering – everyone was visibly moved. Yet the stadium did not report the statistics of that final moment. Even the stadium's large display screen didn't show many replays of this incredible, iconic moment.

This was, after all, Samsara's home stadium. They had to look after their self-interests, which meant caring about the mood of the home team. In a short while, they would be conducting the award ceremony for Team Happy, which was annoying enough. There was no need to rub salt in the wound!

This final moment would be remembered, but in this stadium right now, most people did not want to see it.

The statistics were not shown in the live stadium, but the televised broadcast did not have such concerns. Those 6.5 seconds were on repeat, as though this scene could never be watched enough times. And the data of these 6.5 seconds were already calculated.

What everyone was most anxious to know was, of course, Ye Xiu's hand speed during those 6.5 seconds.

How fast had his controls needed to be, in order to display such changing, densely-packed attacks?

APM, 764!

This was the final conclusion displayed by the system. Although it wasn't shown in the live stadium, the pro players all received the report through various means.

"Is he even human?"

This group of people, already considered inhuman to most ordinary gamers, began frenzied complaints of "this guy just isn't human" about Ye Xiu.

Compared to how shocked everyone else was, those from Heavenly Swords had been a bit more mentally prepared. Especially Sun Zheping, because he had fought alongside Happy and Ye Xiu before. Having interacted with the unspecialized Lord Grim more often, he had a better understanding of this character. Added to his thorough experience, after seeing Ye Xiu's moves during those 6.5 seconds, he already had a rough estimate as to what Ye Xiu's hand speed must have been. The final statistic confirmed his judgment.

Even so, that didn't mean he wasn't shocked. More than that, though, he felt admiration.

764 APM, this was a first even in Ye Xiu's professional career. Even if no class beside the unspecialized allowed room for performing this many inputs in a row, everyone knew that Ye Xiu had truly surpassed the limit. This was an explosion that could not be replicated. An old player who was already at the end of his professional career, what kind of determination and willpower had he needed to manifest this transcendence?

Ye Xiu...

He was the unquestionable star of this moment. The stadium was already making preparations for the award ceremony. Everyone was staring at Ye Xiu's competitor booth, waiting to see him emerge and walk onto the award stage.

The uproar in the stadium was sealed off by the soundproof walls of the competitor booth. After he took off his headphones, the entire world was quiet.

Victory. At last, victory.

After many years, he finally tasted the championship once again. He felt relaxed, he felt joyful, and most importantly, he felt satisfied.

Yes. Nothing satisfied Ye Xiu more than victory, more than the championship.

Right now, he sat upon his chair, and he savored this complete peace, savored this greatest satisfaction.

He subconsciously reached for a cigarette, but after feeling his pocket, he remembered where he was.

Things were no longer as they once were. How could he smoke in today's competitor booths? The automatic fire extinguishers would put it out immediately.

It'd been too long since he'd won the championship. He couldn't keep up with the times!

Ye Xiu laughed at himself. Seven years, after seven years. The Glory Alliance of seven years ago lagged far behind what it was today, and the rules were still being perfected step by step. Back then, as the saying went, one cigarette after a match, become a living immortal. Especially that cigarette after winning a championship. That was truly the most perfect way of winding down.

But now...

Oh well. Head out first!

Ye Xiu stood up, and finally walked out of the competitor booth.

Lights!

Countless spotlights had been waiting for this moment. The moment that Ye Xiu appeared outside of his competitor booth, they all focused upon him, shining upon his body. The stadium was filled with cheers, shouts, applause, for although this was their away game, Happy's fans carried enough passion and enthusiasm. When Ye Xiu walked out of the booth, all of this reached a peak. The stadium shone its lights, Happy's fans cheered for him, Samsara's fans delivered their applause as well.

"Boss!" Steamed Bun sprinted over. Happy's other players had already walked out of their competitor booths, and those who had been sitting in the player area were already onstage as well.

Championship. A feeling that he hadn't experienced in a long time.

But this scene was something that Ye Xiu had never experienced before. He had unparalleled competition experience; he'd won the greatest number of championships in the entire Alliance. But never before had he celebrated alongside his teammates directly after a match, never before had he directly accepted the award. In Excellent Era's time, he had stay mysterious and lie low. He had always quietly arrived, quietly competed, and quietly left.

Ten years, his fourth championship. Yet this was the first time Ye Xiu stood directly under the eyes of millions of people and accepted all of the glory and blessings.

Happy's members high-fived and hugged each other. Some were crying, some laughing, but at this moment, no matter how much someone might lose their composure, they would be forgiven. Nothing was too embarrassing.

To the side, Samsara's players quietly finished lining up. Happy's joy was their pain. But they still stood there, neither leaving the stage nor interrupting Happy's celebration. They had lost this match, lost this entire season, lost the Samsara dynasty that they had almost established, but they did not lose their bearing.

“Congratulations.” In the end, as the losers, they shook hands with Happy, gave them their well-wishes, and then left. They were the hosts of this place, but they were not the stars of this moment.

After Samsara left, the preparations for the award ceremony were complete, with an award stage set up right in the center of the stadium floor. One by one, Happy’s players walked onto the stage.

The chairman of the Alliance, Feng Xianjun, was led onstage, his face shining with joy.

“Incredible, truly incredible.” Feng Xianjun gave all of the Happy players such praise as he presented a championship ring, the symbol of the championship, to each person.

“What weak vocab!” Ye Xiu mercilessly pointed this out when it was his turn.

Feng Xianjun gave Ye Xiu a strong pat on the back. He may not have used any fancy vocabulary, but the word came from his genuine feelings. Feng Xianjun felt that this word was the best summary of Team Happy and each of its players.

“You are the most incredible!” he said to Ye Xiu, and he gave him the championship ring that belonged to him, his fourth one.

Ten players, ten championship rings.

And then, the championship trophy was finally delivered onstage as well. It represented the whole, belonging to the whole team, and just now, under the engraving of “Season 10,” the team name “Happy” had been added.

Offstage, the tears that Chen Guo had only just managed to stop began to flow again.

She wasn’t a player, so of course she wouldn’t stand upon the award stage. But she didn’t feel any regret because of this. She already felt that she was a winner in life, from head to toe.

Right now, she wasn’t thinking about blueprints for the future of their now-championship team. All of her thoughts were of the past, the past that belonged to Happy.

That snowy night, the ordinary guy who walked into Happy Internet Café.

That guy who had used her Chasing Haze to defeat, in 40 seconds, the opponent who had beaten her for 52 rounds straight, and then lamented that he had been slow because his hands were cold.

That guy who had seemed a bit serious as he told her, “Actually, I’m Ye Qiu.”

That guy.

From a new server in the Glory game, using a completely new character, he restarted his Glory journey.

Snatching dungeon records, dealing with all of the major guilds trying to kill them, building Guild Happy, pioneering, spying, stealing Wild Bosses, competing in events; and then applying for the Challenger League, overcoming all of the difficulties along the way, defeating Excellent Era in the finals to enter the Alliance, arriving at the pro battles, fighting from the regular season to the playoffs, never meeting defeat in an individual battle, and finally, in 6.5 seconds, killing Samsara’s most powerful trio, leading Happy to stand upon the summit of Glory.

These two-plus years, growing from nothing, drop by drop. Although Chen Guo hadn't personally experienced much of it, it was still vivid before her eyes. She knew better than anyone the hard work that Ye Xiu had put in; she understood better than anyone the sacrifices Ye Xiu had made.

And now, everything that he had done had paid off.

Championship. This was the best reward, one that he fully deserved.

As for Chen Guo, she felt that she was very fortunate.

Fortunate that, on that snowy night, Ye Xiu had walked into her Internet café.

Fortunate that, on that snowy night, she had taken in Ye Xiu.

Happy's everything had begun on that day.

On that day, I was fortunate to meet you, the most incredible you.

Chapter 1727: The Strongest Opponent, The Greatest Friend

"The Season 10 Championship goes to... Team Happy!!"

Amidst thunderous applause, the championship trophy, representing the whole, belonging to their team, engraved with "Season 10, Team Happy," was awarded to Team Happy by Alliance Chairman Feng Xianjun. The person to represent Happy and take it from the chairman's hands was naturally their captain, Ye Xiu!

This was his fourth championship trophy, yet this was the first time he had ever personally received the trophy directly from the Alliance. Everyone's gazes were fixed upon this scene, bearing witness to this fourth, and also first, champion's crowning.

The trophy.

The gleaming golden trophy, symbolizing the greatest Glory, was finally given to Happy.

Ye Xiu accepted it with both hands. But immediately afterwards, the trophy slipped between his fingers.

"Ah!!"

As the crowd cried out in surprise, to Ye Xiu's left and right, Su Mucheng and Fang Rui swiftly reached out to support the trophy. Then, hand after hand reached over, holding the trophy steady. Happy was no longer standing in a line on the stage, but gathered around Ye Xiu in a circle.

"Hey, even if you already have plenty of these, don't throw this one away! I haven't had one yet!" Fang Rui informed him in a serious tone.

"Exactly!" The others all agreed.

Ye Xiu smiled.

Obviously, he wasn't trying to throw the trophy away. But his hands were exhausted, and he just didn't have the strength to hold up the trophy.

Luckily, he had so many reliable teammates standing beside him.

They might've noticed this early on, which was why they all reached out their hands. Together, they helped Ye Xiu raise the trophy above their heads.

We are the champions!

In this moment, even though they weren't the home team of this stadium, they received plenty of applause. After the official award ceremony was over, Chen Guo also walked onto the stage, gathering with the rest of Happy, either crying or laughing; it wasn't important.

This moment belonged to Happy, but since it wasn't their home stadium, they had to limit their celebrations. After the award ceremony, Happy soon retreated backstage.

Even if it was the deciding match of the grand finals, the post-match press conference still had to go on.

Samsara soon arrived for their interview. There were simply too many spectacular moments to this battle, but from Zhou Zekai's opening 1v3 in the group arena to Tang Rou's counter 1v3 to the amazing performance from each and every player in the team competition, none of it could outshine the radiance of Ye Xiu's 6.5 second triple kill.

That was an extremely difficult finishing blow, the deciding finishing blow. Naturally, when discussing their thoughts on the match, Samsara's players couldn't avoid being asked about their thoughts on Ye Xiu's performance.

"He's an extraordinary player." This was what Samsara's Captain Zhou Zekai said. Words were not his strong point, but he crowned Ye Xiu with an adjective like "extraordinary," to which the other members of Samsara all expressed their agreement. They had lost, but they accepted it. Ye Xiu, and Team Happy as a whole, had achieved too many miraculous things. Their efforts and their accomplishments were all worthy of respect.

"We look forward to the next time we face them!" This hope of Samsara's could be considered the highest level of acknowledgement to an opponent.

After Samsara, the stars of the night took the floor. The reporters had all prepared their questions. But as it turned out, Happy's lineup for this press conference did not include Ye Xiu.

Everyone was stunned, and after congratulating Happy on their win, everyone's first question became: "Why isn't Ye Xiu here to attend the press conference?"

"He's exhausted. He needs rest." This was Su Mucheng's reply to the reporters' question. It didn't matter if everyone believed it or not, because either way, they couldn't do anything about it. But a Team Happy press conference without Ye Xiu was one missing its protagonist, missing its skeleton; it had suddenly become uninteresting.

In the later press releases regarding Happy's championships, there was a distinct lack of interviews with Ye Xiu. There wasn't even a single sentence from the man. Even Chang Xian, the Esports Home reporter that had always been close with Happy, had his requests for an interview rejected by Team Happy.

The star of the championship, refusing all interviews? The new reporters to the Glory circle all felt that this was unbelievable. However, the veteran reporters who had ten years of experience interviewing the Glory circle all felt a sense of nostalgia.

No reports on the star of the championship, wasn't this the very scene of that three year Excellent Era dynasty? Never mind an interview, the Ye Xiu of that era didn't even reveal his face once.

Was this guy returning to the past?

For a while, everyone was coming up with theories, and none of them gave up on getting that interview from Ye Xiu. However, no one had expected that the image of him raising the Glory Season 10 championship trophy with his Happy teammates would be the final impression that Ye Xiu left upon Glory.

On the fourth day after the finals had ended, Team Happy held a press conference. Originally, everyone had thought that Ye Xiu was finally here to take interviews, but to everyone's surprise, only Team Happy's boss Chen Guo and Su Mucheng attended. And then, during the press conference, they announced Ye Xiu's retirement.

Retirement?

Ye Xiu was retiring?

True, it had already happened once, and Ye Xiu's age was clear to see. But the undefeated streak he had left in the individual match record, and the 6.5 second triple kill that overwhelmed Samsara's three top players, had caused everyone to forget these facts. Everyone believed, with Ye Xiu's current state, Ye Xiu's current skill level, he could fight on for another ten years, no problem!

But, retirement?

Such a sudden and resolute decision, and he hadn't even personally come out to notify everyone. He was leaving just like that?

Why?

Everyone wanted to know the reason, but Happy's boss Chen Guo didn't seem willing to discuss it. Her smile seemed rather forced as well. Clearly, she was the most reluctant to see Ye Xiu leave. She would love nothing more than for Ye Xiu to stay.

However....

"It's time to go home." That was the reason Ye Xiu had given them, when he made the decision. He didn't hide his reluctance to leave Glory, or set down his passion for the championship. He just let everyone know that he had another duty.

"You'll always be welcome if you decide to return." Chen Guo didn't want Ye Xiu to leave, but she couldn't stop him from leaving. She just hoped, anticipated, that perhaps Ye Xiu might get approval from his family, that perhaps he might not have to ever make such sacrifices again, but be able to uphold both at the same time.

She hoped so.

Chen Guo silently looked forward to such a moment. She never stopped hoping.

“He’s going home,” was what she told the reporters. This was the reason for Ye Xiu’s retirement, as well as his direction after his departure. This answer had the reporters confused, but Chen Guo didn’t explain further.

“As for Team Happy, Su Mucheng will take up the position of captain.” Chen Guo accepted Ye Xiu’s decision. She didn’t fall because of his choice, and she wouldn’t let Happy fall, either. As for Su Mucheng, after Ye Xiu made his decision, she didn’t act in a way that made people worry. She knew this was Ye Xiu’s personal decision, a mature decision. She wouldn’t let herself become a reason for Ye Xiu to worry. She would only continue to support Ye Xiu to the best of her ability, and sweep away the worries that he couldn’t let go of.

Thus, she would no longer only play that small role. She was going to take on all that Ye Xiu had done and become Team Happy’s core in the days to come, just like Ye Xiu, all the way until she retired.

“Keep in touch, I’ll wait for you to retire.” This was the promise she and Ye Xiu made when they parted.

News of Ye Xiu’s retirement spread like wildfire, sending waves through the entire Glory scene. Like last time, he left without a single word, and then everyone found out about his retirement through the news.

Disappointment, sadness, well-wishes, confusion...

All sorts of emotions and responses. Two and a half years ago, everyone had already experienced this once. However, this time, their emotions were much more complicated, because in these two and a half years, from the game servers to the Challenger League to the Pro League, this guy had made his existence very well known, sweeping through like a tornado, turning the world upside down.

But in the end, once again silently and suddenly, he left just like that?

Was he planning on hiding in a corner and then suddenly stabbing everyone when they weren’t looking?

Some people’s joking theories immediately earned widespread acknowledgement. Yet after tossing around a discussion of Ye Xiu’s shamelessness, everyone fell into silence again.

In the end, the only thing everyone offered up were well-wishes.

To their strongest opponent.

To their greatest friend..

Chapter 1728: After All, I’m a Pro Player

Retirement.

Every summer, this was an unavoidable topic.

Lin Jingyan had announced his retirement after Tyranny was eliminated from the playoffs; Ye Xiu had quietly departed after winning the championships.

Several older players in the Alliance also chose to say their farewells. It was just that compared to Lin Jingyan and Ye Xiu, they weren't as famous, so their farewells appeared more ordinary.

Wei Chen was among these retired players. However, there wasn't anything sentimental about his departure. It was more like he had scooted over to the corner to count the five million in cash he had just picked up. He didn't say goodbye to Happy, either. He went to Happy's guild department to wreak havoc in the game.

"Old Wu! Hurry up and bring a team to help. Hurry!!!" Angry bellows could be heard everyday from the guild area.

Conflict in the game was eternal. Guild Happy had pulled quite a bit of aggro from all sides ever since Ye Xiu had founded it. At that time, Ye Xiu had led an alliance of medium and small guilds to fight against the large guilds, and the guild had been able to hold their own. But the current Happy was the newly crowned champion. This time, they were everyone's target, and the guild's situation in the game immediately became more strenuous.

When Wei Chen returned to the game, he was immediately swamped with work. Every day, he battled in high spirits. The guild leader was still Wu Chen, but he was yelled at every day too. Still, no one in the guild felt that it was inappropriate. With Wei Chen's status and position, who dared to question Boss Wei's authority? Guild leader Wu Chen was no exception.

When the old left, the new would take their place. Many of the pro teams had their own training camps, and every year, they would take out fresh blood to serve the team. But Happy was too new, and hadn't established a training camp yet. Ye Xiu and Wei Chen had retired. Two important players had suddenly left, and the team could only look for transfers.

The task was given to Su Mucheng and Fang Rui. The two were now Happy's captain and vice-captain, respectively, and had quite the authority in this area. Happy currently didn't have a dedicated operational manager.

Chen Guo could feel that their simple and crude grassroots structure wasn't enough. For Team Happy, money wasn't a big issue anymore. After winning the championships, sponsors came in left and right to partner with the team. Even the city, City H, had put in plans to support Happy.

The influence of Glory esports was constantly expanding. City H had become famous because they had been home to the three-time champions, Team Excellent Era. Unfortunately, Excellent Era ultimately collapsed, and was starting over from scratch. As for the team that toppled Excellent Era, Happy had brought the Glory championship trophy back to City H after seven long years. The city naturally gave their new champions attention. As for the new Team Excellent Era, they had won the Challenger League. Next season, they would be fighting in the Alliance along with Happy.

City H didn't care which team won more fame. All they cared about was the boost to the economy that the Glory esports would bring to the city. Happy was the reigning champion, so the support given to them was obviously much larger. All sorts of talks needed to be discussed with them. In addition, with so many sponsors knocking on their door for partnerships, Chen Guo was feeling completely overwhelmed with work.

On one hand, she was working to expand the organization, establishing departments and recruiting new staff. On the other hand, for now, she would have to personally take care of everything big or small. Tang Rou was helping her quite a bit during this time. Luo Ji and An Wenyi were absorbed into the R&D department, helping Guan Rongfei improve the team's equipment. Steamed Bun and Qiao Yifan were helping Wei Chen with in-game work. As for Mo Fan, he was single mindedly devoting himself to practicing and improving.

During this break, no one on Happy relaxed and went to take a vacation. They were doing what they had been doing ever since they had gathered together. Everyone was doing their best to contribute to the team in any way they could, pushing Happy forward.

That summer, Ye Xiu left.

But when Chen Guo saw how busy everyone was, she felt like it was almost as if Ye Xiu hadn't left. Traces of him could be seen everywhere. The spirit that he had left behind still remained. Chen Guo truly hoped that these vestiges would never disappear.

Happy continued to move forward, even after Ye Xiu's departure.

But, if only he had left a bit later in the summer, that would be even better.

Chen Guo looked out the window. It had been two days since an enormous billboard had been erected. The gold Glory logo glittered in the sunlight. During these two days, the news had already spread far and wide. Everyone in the Glory community was talking fervently about it.

The Glory Worlds Invitational.

The International Esports Association partnered with together with the Glory game company, inviting sixteen teams from sixteen countries for the first international Glory tournament. The announcement had been made. Everyone was calling it the Glory World Cup, and winning it would undoubtedly be the greatest glory of all.

The competition was scheduled to take place from July 17 to August 6. It would be hosted in Zurich, Switzerland. The sixteen countries invited were China, South Korea, Japan, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, France, Russia, Canada, America, and Australia. At present, all sixteen countries had confirmed their participation in the tournament. Each country was currently inviting players to join the national team.

Happy's Su Mucheng and Fang Rui had received invitations, and had hurried over to City B to practice together with the rest of the national team. The full roster of the national team had yet to be announced. Even Su Mucheng and Fang Rui, who had been picked, didn't know.

"Who else could have been chosen?" The forums exploded with fervent discussion and voting for who would be on the roster. Fang Rui didn't really care, though. This team would undoubtedly consist of the very top players of the Alliance. Even if it hadn't been announced yet, the majority of the roster was already set in stone. For example, take the healer. Even though every team had outstanding healers, Zhang Xinjie was indisputably number one.

Coincidentally, when Su Mucheng and Fang Rui arrived at the elevator to the training center conference room, they happened to bump into Zhang Xinjie.

“It looks like we won’t be late,” Su Mucheng joked to Fang Rui.

Zhang Xinjie obviously knew what she meant, and just smiled. Then, he congratulated Happy on their championship victory.

“You’re alone?” Fang Rui felt doubtful. He and Su Mucheng were on the same team and had received the invitations at the same time, so they obviously came together. But they only saw Zhang Xinjie alone. Could it be that Tyranny...

“Zhang Jiale went ahead,” Zhang Xinjie said.

“Oh, how lucky for him, avoiding anything related to the championships,” Fang Rui nodded his head. The insult seemed to flow just right out of his mouth. It could be considered an embodiment of his professionalism. In just one sentence, he linked together two crucial phrases “lucky” and “championships,” two stabs at Zhang Jiale.

“Just you and Zhang Jiale?” Su Mucheng saw the other meaning behind Zhang Xinjie’s words.

“Captain Han declined the invitation,” Zhang Xinjie said calmly.

“Why?” Fang Rui asked.

“He said that his energy was limited, and he wanted to focus on Tyranny,” Zhang Xinjie said.

Trash talk came naturally to Fang Rui, but this time, he didn’t utter a word. The inside of the elevator instantly fell silent. The phrase “persevere for ten years as if it were one day” was truly an appropriate description of Han Wenqing’s dedication to Tyranny. Ye Xiu had quietly left, but Han Wenqing was still working hard for Tyranny, even giving up the opportunity to stand on a higher stage. This choice was worthy of admiration.

“Incredible,” Fang Rui said solemnly. Zhang Xinjie nodded his head. The three didn’t say anything else for the rest of the elevator ride. When they arrived at their destination, they walked out of the elevator into the conference room.

“Like I said! How could Zhang Xinjie be late?”

The three arrived at the conference room just on time. As soon they walked through the door, they heard Huang Shaotian slapping the table and shouting loudly. He quickly noticed Su Mucheng and Fang Rui.

“Yo, the champions also came. Congratulations, you guys!” Huang Shaotian continued to chatter, but there were very few people who were actually paying attention to him. Su Mucheng and Fang Rui looked around the conference room. They had arrived with Zhang Xinjie just on time. By now, everyone had gathered.

Team Blue Rain’s Yu Wenzhou and Huang Shaotian.

Team Samsara’s Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang.

Team Tiny Herb’s Wang Jiexi.

Team Thunderclap’s Xiao Shiqin.

Team Void's Li Xuan, Team Misty Rain's Chu Yunxiu, Team Wind Howl's Tang Hao, Team Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie and Zhang Jiale, Team Happy's Su Mucheng and Fang Rui.

Thirteen people, the required number of people for a team in this tournament. The people here made up the national team.

"It's really quite surprising that Han Wenqing didn't come."

Su Mucheng sat down. Chu Yunxiu had switched seats to sit next to her. The two girls immediately started chatting.

"Mm..." Su Mucheng nodded her head. Seeing the people here, Han Wenqing was indeed the biggest surprise. Apart from that, even though Jiang Botao, Xu Bin, Yang Cong, Tian Sen, and so on were all outstanding players, the number of spots on the team was limited. The spots might not have necessarily been picked based on pure skill alone. Who knew what other criteria was looked at? It wouldn't have been hard to argue for swapping them in with someone else. Han Wenqing declining the invitation was the only real surprise.

"Say... if Han Wenqing came, who would have he replaced?" Chu Yunxiu wanted to go deeper. In other words, who had benefited from the good fortune of Han Wenqing declining the invitation? Who had been given this lucky last chance?

"It's hard to say," Su Mucheng replied.

"Ahem," Li Xuan coughed, getting Chu Yunxiu's attention. "Let's not guess, it'd start things off badly!"

"What are you eavesdropping on our conversation for? I'd say it's got to be you, no?" Chu Yunxiu said, displeased.

"It's me, it's me. Sis, could you not gossip so much?" Li Xuan valued the team's atmosphere.

Chu Yunxiu stopped talking, but her eyes continued to shift around. She was clearly still curious about this question. At this moment, Yu Wenzhou stood up. Everyone looked towards him, and he began to speak.

"Because Captain Han declined the invitation, and because Captain Wang declined the position of captain, the organizers wanted to appoint me as captain. Of course, I have to ask for everyone's opinion. Does anyone object?" Yu Wenzhou smiled. For many, this might have been embarrassing to say, but he was quite natural about it. After saying what he needed to say, he calmly waited for everyone's response.

"No objections," Huang Shaotian said loudly, supporting his team's captain. The others either didn't care or didn't object to it. They waved their hands: "Sure, sure."

"Great, thank you everyone for your support," Yu Wenzhou said with a smile, and sat back down.

"Then, will you be leading the meeting? What are we going to talk about?" Xiao Shiqin asked. Everyone had arrived, but no one had officially taken charge of anything. Everyone was just chatting with each other. Of course, because everyone was friendly with each other, it wasn't like there was anything wrong with that.

“No, even though I’m the team captain, I don’t actually have that many responsibilities. The organizers said that they had appointed a team leader. He’ll be given total authority over the team,” Yu Wenzhou said.

“A leader?” Everyone looked at one another. None of them had heard of such a role.

“They’re not planning on sending an amateur to wave his hands around, are they?” This was an international tournament. Everyone here was part of the national team. They would be competing not only for the pride of their Glory Pro League, but for the pride of their country as well. It was quite likely that their government’s General Administration of Sports would send someone who didn’t understand Glory to coach them. If that really were the case, then the person having “total authority” would be quite terrifying.

“I heard he’s an expert,” Yu Wenzhou said.

“An expert? Who in our competitive scene is more of an expert than us? Who could possibly have the qualifications to have “total authority” over us in a Glory competition?” The person who spoke was Tang Hao. He stressed the words “total authority.” These words didn’t lack his usual arrogance, but today, everyone felt quite pleased hearing him speak. Many of them agreed. Yes, of the people sitting at this table, who could possibly have the qualifications to have total authority over them?

Hm?

Hm?

Wait a minute...

Suddenly, half the faces in the room changed. The other half were more calm. When they thought about this question again, they couldn’t help but think of one person’s name.

“No way?” Someone already blurted out. Two thirds of the people there looked toward Su Mucheng.

Su Mucheng just smiled. She didn’t say anything. At this moment, the door to the conference room opened.

“Hello, everyone.”

Someone came in. The person looked like he didn’t want to be here, and his footsteps looked heavy.

“I’m here,” he continued to speak as he walked over to the control panel for the multimedia projection. He listlessly and half-heartedly pressed a few buttons, and a video appeared on the projection screen.

“Let’s skip the greetings. Let’s take a look at our opponents,” he said. The projector was still starting up, and the video couldn’t even be seen clearly yet, but he had already started talking.

Apart from his voice and the sounds from the Glory VOD, the room was dead silent. The silence lasted for a full five minutes before finally...

“Fuck, who are you? What are you doing here?” Zhang Jiale was the first to speak up.

“Didn’t you say you retired?” Zhang Xinjie pushed up his glasses.

“Yeah, and you’re back already? Make up your mind!” Xiao Shiqin said.

“Can’t you be more reliable?” Huang Shaotian said.

Even the always-quiet Zhou Zekai felt the need to say something: “Exactly.”

“Shut up, all of you!” Ye Xiu said with a gloomy face. He didn’t wait for anyone else to interrupt him.

“Did you think I wanted to come? I was forced,” Ye Xiu said.

“Forced? Who? Stand up!” Huang Shaotian looked like he was about to jump onto the table.

“The head of my family,” Ye Xiu said with a dark face.

“What?” The answer surprised everyone. No one could make heads or tails of it. Everyone immediately fell silent.

In the end, Wang Jiexi began analyzing it calmly: “So you retired and went back home. Then, when you got back, your father shooed you away so that you could lead this team?”

“Yes,” Ye Xiu said. “The head of the General Administration of Sports directly called my father, telling him that I needed to go and win honor for my country. The words “win honor for my country” struck my father’s vital point. I hadn’t even set up my bed yet, and I was shooed out of the house.”

Everyone was stunned. What sort of situation was this?

“Okay, enough nonsense! These are all the videos that I’ve gathered in these past few days of the other country’s players. You Gods go and analyze them yourselves. Play well. Don’t lose face. I didn’t bring my account card, so I won’t be substituting in for any of you.”

“You can still play?” Sun Xiang was quite sharp, hearing the implications of Ye Xiu’s words.

“According to tournament rules, each country’s team is limited to thirteen players, but we’re allowed to bring an unofficial player to substitute in if the need arises,” Yu Wenzhou had been appointed captain ahead of time. He had clearly looked over the tournament rules.

“What do you mean by ‘if the need arises?’” everyone asked.

“For example, if a player is incapable of playing because of an accident. The final decision is up to the tournament organizers,” Yu Wenzhou said.

“Should we be hoping for an accident to happen?” Everyone looked at each other. Who dared to question Ye Xiu’s skill?

“It’d be best if an accident didn’t happen,” Ye Xiu said.

“Of course, it won’t! Don’t even think about it!” Everyone shouted loudly as they went over to the operating desk to copy the VOD. Afterwards, the meeting was over, and everyone left. No one lingered around to talk to Ye Xiu, not even Fang Rui. Soon, there was only Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng left.

“Isn’t this infuriating?” Ye Xiu said helplessly to Su Mucheng.

“Really?” Su Mucheng chuckled.

Ye Xiu didn't say anything.

Many years ago, he had given up everything, leaving his home for Glory.

Now, he had decided to let go of Glory to make up for his earlier childishness. But this time, his family shooed him away and told him to keep playing Glory.

He didn't know whether to laugh or cry at this turn of events. However, he was certain that this time, his old man was sincere. Because winning honor for your country was one hundred percent a reason that could convince him. Glory esports had developed to this stage, to the point that even his old man would approve...

The video was still playing on the projection screen. In front of him was the skill and technique of foreign experts that he had never encountered before. However, the sound effects of those attacks, the visual effects of those skills, they were still incomparably familiar.

Just like that, Ye Xiu watched quietly. This was the thing in which he had immersed himself for over ten years, the thing for which he had never stopped pursuing.

Glory!

The word flashed, practically jumping out from the screen.

"Are you going to continue?" Su Mucheng asked softly.

"Of course." Ye Xiu stood up, and smiled. "After all, I'm a pro player. What do you think?"