

Avatar 911

Chapter 911: Very Bold

Now I can be at ease...

After hearing these words, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had to admit, these two were much more bold than they had originally thought. They hadn't run off, and instead risked losing their eight stockings in order to hunt down and wipe out two people without stockings. This wasn't something that normal players would do.

To be blunt, normal players wouldn't have this type of confidence in their abilities, and their mistake was viewing these two as normal players. Would people who came in a pair to a team competition lack confidence?

The two were sent to the revival point as they thought about this and the second second countdown for revival began ticking.

"As I expected, you came."

Yet before the two had the time to do anything, a voice rang out. They turned their views, and immediately saw a person they had seen not too long ago: Footsteps in the Wind.

They had been killed in around the same area, so it wasn't unusual that they would be sent to the same revival point. However, it had been over a minute since Footsteps in the Wind had been killed, but this guy was still waiting here. If it wasn't that he had died many times and accumulated a longer revival time, then he had to have been waiting here just for them, and his words pointed to the latter.

"No way," Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were immediately disdainful.

Waiting at the revival point meant that he wasn't after stockings anymore. Did this guy seem to actually be waiting here just to take revenge for killing him just now? He was a god of Glory in the pro circle, yet still acted so pettily?

"I'm waiting here just to confirm something," Sun Xiang said in delight.

"It seems like you two and the other two really aren't working together, as expected," Sun Xiang continued.

"You don't say." Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack rolled their eyes. Some things that others needed to think about were simple and obvious to them, so they weren't at all impressed by Sun Xiang's triumphant attitude.

"That's not a very good attitude to have," Sun Xiang seemed to not have anything better to do. "Because I might just decide to have you two stay here for another 40 seconds."

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were really depressed. Their personalities wouldn't allow them to take this lying down. So what if it prevented them from getting stockings? It was just an event

reward, not something they absolutely needed to have. Yet for the two of them, this was something very important, something they had to compete for.

That's because they were using this event as a staircase to fame. Their records yesterday were very impressive, but if they slipped up a lot on the second day, they would be something good that didn't last*.

Having been pushed to a double zero by Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion in the last round, they were already fated to be incapable of achieving the same glory they had achieved yesterday. In the current round, they unluckily met a strong opponent again. If they ended up with a nil again, then they would only be able to get a third of yesterday's score today. This would definitely affect the impression that powerhouses had of them and that was something they didn't want.

When it came to this, the two were very rational. They didn't want another blank for this round.

"What do you want?" Lower Your Head asked, while keeping an eye on the time. If their negotiation went badly, they wanted to be able to grab an advantage in taking the initiative. Footsteps in the Wind definitely didn't have the countdown, so he could only count it down himself. It wasn't possible for him to get it exactly, so they could grab the upperhand using this detail.

"Good, that sort of tone is much better, hahahaha," Sun Xiang said, having Footsteps in the Wind turn and leave. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were both stunned. This idiot was superficial enough just to waste time here because of their tone of voice?

By the time the 20 second countdown was over, Footsteps in the Wind was long gone. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack ran in the same direction as Footsteps in the Wind, still disdainful towards the god.

They wouldn't be so bold this time, because it was a fight between three sides. If they struck first, then it would give the third party an opening to take down both them and the second party. However, among these three sides, there was a side that held an absolute advantage over the others. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack's duo had fought Sun Xiang to a standstill. If the entirety of Excellent Era gathered together, the two would have to admit that they couldn't take on such a powerhouse, no matter how confident they were in their abilities.

Being direct wasn't going to yield any results. They had known this from the start and that was why they had stayed silent and hidden for so long, waiting until Sun Xiang's Footsteps in the Wind was alone to strike. Now, they needed another similar chance. The best chance they had was to strike at the other pair was right after they had managed to make a narrow escape from Excellent Era.

Don't die too quickly...

The two rushed forth as they kept an eye out for system announcements, afraid that a string of announcements of stockings being claimed would jump out.

"We haven't found them here."

"They aren't here."

"They aren't here, either."

In Excellent Era's group, Xiao Shiqin received a string of reports from the others. Their entire team had split up, including the Cleric, to find the two person group as soon as possible. They weren't afraid of other normal players. Currently, they were only running around, not battling. Even if they were alone, they would still be fine.

"They're not anywhere there..." Including Xiao Shiqin himself, there were four people searching and spreading out in a spiral. This was the most they could manage with four people. Yet, they still hadn't found anything. Was it that their targets were just that lucky, or... that they were prepared for a search like this?

It had now been a full minute since Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had revived. That meant that it had been over a minute since the two had finished their battle and began to run for their lives. The two's movements should be within the current manageable range of their search. However, if another minute passed, the four of them wouldn't be able to keep up with the range of movement they had...

Sun Xiang's Footsteps in the Wind didn't wait at the revival point just out of idiocy like Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had thought. The reason he waited there was to get a better grasp of their timing. With a more clear grasp of their timing, they could better calculate the distance in which the two could have travelled. This way, their search would be more effective. Now that they had the exact timing, they had a better grasp of their target's range of movement as well. It was just that they didn't have enough time to arrange a search in a more specific area. Now that their spiral formation wasn't yielding any results either, they would have to increase their range to continue.

An increase in the area searched without a change in manpower meant that there was more room for their targets to run and a higher chance to successfully escape. Should they continue like this or...

Xiao Shiqin fell into deep thought. The everchanging pro league battlefield had long since created a habit of making split-second decisions in him. His contemplation only lasted three seconds before he came to a decision.

Circle back inwards!

This was the message Xiao Shiqin sent to the other three. The three who received this were stunned for a moment. They had already been prepared to expand their search outwards, but now they were going to cut back inwards? Having obtained the exact time that their targets had to run, they could calculate their approximate distance from the center; they just didn't know the direction, so that's why they were moving outwards in a spiral.

Based on the amount of time, their targets were already outside of the range of their spiral formation, given that they had run in a straight line. If they shrunk their range instead of pushing outwards, wasn't that just turning their back on their opponents?

"Let's take a risk; they might not not moved at all!" Xiao Shiqin then sent such a message.

The three were stunned.

If their targets never moved, then if they continued in their spiral formation, they would only get further and further. However, someone who dared to linger with eight stockings on them had to have guts of steel!

The three were surprised even as they followed Xiao Shiqin's orders, beginning to shrink their formation inwards. As the perimeter of their spiral shrunk, the area did as well. Even if they couldn't prevent it, they could still be certain of the direction of any character that escaped this spiral. However, this time, Excellent Era's team found that they might be able to finish this battle inside their formation. Their circling inwards eventually revealed two figures to them.

Mechanic Listened Promise and Brawler Rain had come. These two really hadn't left; they really hadn't moved from their original place at all.

The original place was referring to the center of their formation. Of course, it wasn't that precise. It ended up that they were closer to Excellent Era's Striker, Shen Jian.

"I'm going to engage them. You guys hurry," Shen Jian sent into the party chat.

"Have you found them already?" The first one to reply in excitement was Sun Xiang who had yet to arrive.

"Go!" Xiao Shiqin didn't hesitate. At this point, their opponents would definitely have seen them if they weren't asleep. There was no point in hiding anymore. Sending the closest person up to stall for time was the optimal solution.

Shen Jian's Striker moved quickly and jumped forward to block the two escapees.

"I really can't help but praise you two. You really have guts," Shen Jian said as he sent a thumbs up emoji.

"Being praised by you... feels really weird..." His opponent said with a chuckle.

Shen Jian startled in front of his computer. This voice, this tone, wasn't this that guy?

Just in this moment of shock, Shen Jian was Bricked.

"Holy crap! How did that hit?" Steamed Bun didn't seem happy to have managed to hit the other so accurately with a brick, evidently shocked at how easily the brick managed to hit its target. Shen Jian quickly came back to the present, having been bricked, was glad that the brick had hit his face, so he wasn't dizzied. Seeing the Brawler Rain closing in and attempting to take advantage of the situation, his figure blurred as he sent an Emperor's Fist right at the attacker.

"Ah! He suddenly got stronger!" Steamed Bun knew that this skill was powerful and yelled as he dodged.

Boom!

The suddenly stronger Striker was swallowed up by smoke. Ye Xiu had long since used a skill when talking. Shen Jian's attention had been solely focused on Steamed Bun after his moment of absent-mindedness. He was distracted, and Ye Xiu managed to get in a frontal sneak attack. A Hand Grenade arrived with a bang, and then an Air Compressor was thrown out and with a ping, the poor Striker was blasted into the distance like the uncorking of a champagne bottle.

"Tsk tsk, leaving so soon!" Steamed Bun was rather disappointed.

"Let's go, too!" Ye Xiu called out, immediately getting the hell out of there.

Chapter 912: No Hurry to Run Away

"What's going on?" The Excellent Era players were collectively alarmed. Wasn't he supposed to be blocking him? Why was he the one sent flying? Xiao Shiqin wasn't at the correct angle, but who could be more familiar with a Mechanic than him? He immediately deduced that Shen Jian had been blown away by an Air Compressor.

"It's Ye Qiu!" Shen Jian typed out while his character was still flying through the air.

"Ye Qiu!" Everyone was astonished. What a coincidence! To think they would actually bump into him.

"Steady!" As soon as Xiao Shiqin heard Ye Qiu's name, he became even more calm. It was too easy for Excellent Era to lose their cool when facing Ye Qiu. It was a huge problem for the current team, no, the entire club. Just look at Shen Jian. As soon as he met Ye Qiu face to face, he had been sent flying. How could that happen to a pro player? He had clearly been distracted for a moment when he discovered that he was facing Ye Qiu. As a result, Xiao Shiqin reminded himself that he must stay calm if he encountered Ye Qiu.

He was just about to give another command and was about instinctively order them to stop him, but Xiao Shiqin was afraid that his teammates wouldn't be able to keep their calm, so he changed it to steady.

"Ye Qiu! Hurry up and stop him!"

Xiao Shiqin may not have given the command to stop Ye Qiu, but Sun Xiang did it on his behalf. Sun Xiang was still on his way over from the revival point, but as soon as he heard Ye Qiu's name, he hated how he didn't have eight Teleports, so he could arrive instantly.

"There's no hurry. Let's take it slowly." Xiao Shiqin hastily said.

"Don't let him escape!" Sun Xiang continued to shout.

On Excellent Era's side, apart from Shen Jian's Striker, there was Zhang Jiaxin's Cleric and Wang Zhe's Sharpshooter. Along with Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic, the four had surrounded Ye Qiu. It was just that Shen Jian's Striker was a bit closer. Once Shen Jian's Striker was sent flying, the formation seemed to widen instantly. Xiao Shiqin and the other two quickly contracted their encirclement. After Shen Jian's Striker fell to the ground, he teched it with a Quick Recover and quickly jumped away.

Air Compressor had a very powerful Blow Away effect, but its damage wasn't high. Shen Jian pulled himself together and prepared to block Ye Qiu. It turned out that he didn't need to worry. Ye Xiu's Mechanic and that Brawler had already pounced on him.

"This is..." Shen Jian said he was going to block them, but when he took a look at his opponents, was that still classified as blocking? The other side had come to kill him!

Seeing the other three's positions, fighting a 1v2 for a short while couldn't be avoided. Shen Jian originally had confidence in dragging out the 1v2 long enough for his teammates to arrive, but after knowing that one of the two was Ye Qiu, he immediately became nervous.

Can I do it?

Shen Jian was already doubting himself.

When Xiao Shiqin saw the actions of the other side, he immediately understood their intentions. The other side weren't set on escaping. If they could kill off Shen Jian's Striker in the passing, they wouldn't mind doing so.

Shen Jian had stockings on him. Their team's strength was more than enough to sweep the field for these event quests, so unlike normal player teams that needed to concern themselves with either pooling their stockings onto one person or splitting their stockings evenly among everyone, it didn't matter who picked up the stockings. Their final stocking count was all that mattered.

So at this moment, Xiao Shiqin was certain that Shen Jian had stockings. He had no impression of how many stockings Shen Jian had. The other side wasn't in a hurry to run and planned on attacking Shen Jian. Their goal was obviously those stockings on him.

"Too bold!" Xiao Shiqin thought to himself. Shen Jian was a pro player and part of the main roster for a powerhouse like Excellent Era. Even if he lost, it wouldn't be too quick. Surviving until the three rushed over to rescue him should be a very easy task. He wasn't going to die in a few seconds like a normal player, right?

In the end, Xiao Shiqin wasn't able to understand the emotions tumbling around in Shen Jian's heart. He had undying faith. Now, trouble had come and their first exchange shocked Shen Jian.

Slide Kick?!

Ye Xiu's Mechanic, Listened Promise, had initiated with a Slide Kick. Shen Jian couldn't understand. Slide Kick was a gunner skill pre-job advancement. All four classes could learn it, but Mechanics usually used it as a movement skill or to widen the distance between themselves and their opponents, but using it to initiate a fight and close the distance? He had never heard of it being used in such a way! He was a Striker, an extremely powerful class in close quarters. Mechanics had some level of close combat capabilities, but compared to a Striker, it was too illogical, no?

Ye Xiu was very experienced facing Strikers. In the Glory scene, if he claimed to be second in terms of experience, no one would claim first. How could he not understand such obvious reasoning?

So was this a trap?

Was this a new playstyle?

Or perhaps he was being looked down on?

Shen Jian thought too much. By the time he finished thinking, Ye Xiu's Mechanic, Listened Promise, had slid to his Striker's feet. Ye Xiu tossed a Mechanical Seeker robot from his mechanical box and it landed by his Striker's feet like a brick. The seeker part of the skill was completely ignored. Ye Xiu directly had it explode on the Striker.

Bang!

Shen Jian's Striker staggered from the explosion. Mechanical Seeker's power wasn't too great. Whether it could knock the target down depended on the situation. With his Striker standing firmly on the ground, it wasn't enough to sweep him off his feet.

But Ye Xiu's attacks didn't stop there. His Mechanic, Listened Promise, raised his hands and followed up with a Machine Punch. Two gun shots followed. The combo finally begun.

Shen Jian's brain was still whirring!

What's this? It seemed like Ye Qiu's Mechanic was using a Gun Martial Arts style? But a Mechanic's close combat skills weren't entirely close combat. They weren't as agile as Sharpshooters. Could a Mechanic perform this maneuver as well? The chain of attacks just now wasn't very tight?

Shen Jian was still a pro player. He subconsciously made some deductions. He saw that Ye Xiu's combo wasn't linked very well and instinctively moved. His Striker used a beautiful Whirlwind Kick. Sure enough, it directly interrupted the enemy Mechanic's combo.

Shen Jian followed up with a Reinforced Iron Bones. This skill increased his defense immensely for 20 seconds, but usually, Strikers liked to use it when they planned on bursting the opponent. Because apart from increasing his defense, it also gave him 20 seconds of Super Armor.

With Super Armor, his character couldn't be knocked down, knocked into the air, knocked back, interrupted, and so on. Under these conditions, he could forcefully lengthen his combo. It had a vulgar nickname: Rape**!

In reality, Super Armor wasn't invincible. The character would be immune to status effects like being knocked down and being knocked into the air, but the character would still take the full amount of damage. As a result, the nickname, Rape, was only one way of looking at it. Sometimes, the character would lose more health than the opponent. However, the Striker skill Reinforced Iron Bones also increased his defense immensely and gave a Super Armor effect. It made this class' Rape much more valiant. Every Striker liked to establish their dominance by using this skill.

Shen Jiang obviously didn't have any intention of showing off and immediately felt that using Rape to fight a Mechanic for a short amount of time couldn't be a better choice.

After he activated Reinforced Iron Bones and made his first strike, Shen Jian suddenly saw his character's health deplete. The Super Armor had suddenly disappeared and changed into a Bleed effect.

Inject Poison!

Shen Jian reacted.

The other side had a Brawler! This despicable and dirty class had a skill like Inject Poison that could negate an opponent's Super Armor.

He had just activated Reinforced Iron Bones, and yet the other side immediately used Inject Poison. If the other side hadn't planned for this to happen, who would believe it?

The Super Armor was gone, but the increased defense from Reinforced Iron Bones was still there. However, his character no longer had the aura of a tyrant. His punch had been intercepted and nullified by an Airdrop. The enemy Mechanic and Brawler began attacking him full-force. Shen Jian struggled to survive. He saw an opportunity and used Cloud Body to escape, when he suddenly heard Ye Qiu's voice: "Steamed Bun, move one step to the left."

Move one step to the left?

Such a detailed command was rarely seen on a pro team. If a battle had to be micromanaged to the smallest detail, then apart from the commander, was everyone else just a marionette?

Shen Jian was astonished! It was only after his Striker started moving with Cloud Body did he realize what that one step had done.

Steamed Bun's Brawler moved one step to the left and just happened to bump into his Cloud Body.....

Strangle!

Steamed Bun had been prepared and took advantage of it. His Brawler, Rain, lifted his head and reached out to grip the enemy Striker's throat. The Striker's Cloud Body was blocked and was interrupted. Shen Jian had been a step slower, but his timing had been prompt. His Striker leaped backwards to dodge this Strangle. He raised his fists, ready to counterattack, but then he heard Ye Qiu shout: "Emperor's Fist! Don't go forward!"

Shen Jian's heart turned ice-cold. His hand stiffened over his keyboard and he didn't know what to do because in that instant, he was just about to use Emperor's Fist.

He knows me too well!

Shen Jian's Striker turned his head and saw this unfamiliar Mechanic character. In his head, an image of Ye Qiu and his smiling face appeared.

His habits. His weaknesses. This former captain knew it like the back of his hand. It wasn't an understanding that could be gained from watching lots of his past fights and fighting against him. It was an understanding slowly formed from playing together for large amounts of time.

"Toss sand towards me!"

"Have Inject Poison ready!"

"Tiger Flips the Mountain!"

Ye Xiu's pointers were mostly to warn Steamed Bun. He didn't need to tell himself. His actions also took advantage of Shen Jian's habits and weaknesses. A pro player of the main roster of a powerhouse was completely suppressed. Xiao Shiqin had thought that it was impossible for Shen Jian to die as quickly as a normal player, but it was currently happening. What's more, it was faster than just Ye Xiu fighting a normal player 1v1 because this was a 2v1.

"Shen Jian died!" A notification telling them that one of their teammates had died. The other players on Excellent Era had no choice but to accept reality. Afterwards, three system announcements popped up.

"Not bad! Three stockings. It looks like our efforts weren't in vain!" Ye Xiu nodded his head and called out to Steamed Bun. This time, they were running away for real.

Chapter 913: To Chase or To Not Chase

Without Shen Jian in the way, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun easily escaped. However, they had now completely revealed their identities to Excellent Era's team members. They had escaped, but escaping cleanly wouldn't be so easy now. Xiao Shiqin and the other two team members were following closely behind. At the same time, Sun Xiang knew which direction they were heading in and was trying to intercept them.

The map had a total of 20 stockings. Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had stolen 11. They instantly became the leaders on the scoreboard. Such an abrupt rise left even other players feeling satisfied.

Of course, those other players didn't have any pressure on them, so if they really did meet anyone with stockings, they would certainly give it a try no matter how powerful you were.

Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun kept on running. Xiao Shiqin's group chased after them from behind. As they ran, they ran into quite a few other players.

These players saw that not one of these characters didn't belong to a team with stockings. Who cares if you were running at the front or the rear. Whoever was easier to target would be the target!

As a result, there were people attacking Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun, and there were people attacking Excellent Era as well. Normal players didn't pose a threat to either side, but neither side was willing to stop to fight with these normal players. As Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun ran and Xiao Shiqin's group chased, more and more players gradually joined the pack. All of them had been stumbled upon along the way. Even if they failed to stop them, they didn't give up and continued to give chase.

Normal players couldn't control their stamina as well as pro players could. As everyone continued to run, the normal players started to lag behind. However, there would always be other people making up for them. This situation lasted for a full five minutes.

The route that Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun and took was too random. If not, Xiao Shiqin would have predicted their pathing and sent people to intercept them. However, the two were running too carefreely. If they themselves didn't know where they were going, how could anyone hope to predict their pathing?

Unable to make any predictions, Xiao Shiqin could only update Sun Xiang and Shen Jian with their coordinates. With their coordinates constantly changing and without conforming to any sort of patterns, having Sun Xiang and Shen Jian catch up to them became quite troublesome. In the end, they just became two other pursuers chasing from different directions.

It was true that Xiao Shiqin's group couldn't anticipate their targets' movements, but such randomness made it a competition of speed. Normal players who couldn't control their stamina well might fall behind, but for pro players, no one was much better than the other in terms of fundamental skills. As a result, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun couldn't throw off Xiao Shiqin's group, which was why it ended up with

everyone running around for five minutes. Then, a system announcement appeared. The 20th stocking had been picked up.

Who knew which corner of the map the 20th stocking had been spawned, so that no one was able to find it until now, but after someone had picked it up, all 20 stockings had an owner. The system finally began counting down from 120 seconds.

According to Excellent Era's usual strategy, if their total stocking count didn't meet their expectations, they would drop a stocking to stall for time, but in their current situation, Xiao Shiqin suddenly felt his heart thump.

No one would stop them from dropping a stocking, but the problem was that they had so many players following them. If they dropped one, someone from behind would pick it up immediately. Very little time would be bought. As for dropping it and then picking it up, this apparent hole in the rules had been specially patched. The system would not fall for that trap.

"This is also Ye Qiu's scheme!" Xiao Shiqin felt annoyed. No wonder the other side just kept running aimlessly. It seemed like they were already satisfied with their 11 stockings this round and agreed to let the round end here. They might approve, but Excellent Era didn't! Could they catch up to those two in two minutes?

Let alone whether they could catch up, even if they did, Xiao Shiqin wasn't confident they could end the battle within the 2 minute time limit.

"Should I find somewhere to drop a stocking?" His teammate Zhang Jiabin understood their current predicament.

"It seems like that's all we can do." Xiao Shiqin said.

"Okay, I'll be going then." Zhang Jiabin said. His Cleric immediately split off from the other two and ran somewhere else.

The players following behind saw their targets split up. Which side had the stockings? According to common sense, that Cleric was charging out unaccompanied, so he probably wasn't the one protecting the stockings, but what if this was a reverse psychology trap?

This question was never-ending loop. They were still running and didn't have time to think carefully. Some believed it to be a reverse psychology trap, while others didn't. Thus, the group of players split up as well.

Those who continued chasing Xiao Shiqin's group did so mainly because Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun were too grandiose. So as long as they still had the stamina, they would keep following closely. Zhang Jiabin's goal was to find a place with no one around to drop his stocking. He obviously wouldn't be so honorable. He lured a bunch of pursuers and ran around. After running along a route that he had planned, he quickly lost his pursuers.

After Zhang Jiabin ditched his pursuers, he needed to find a remote area to throw his stocking. He couldn't throw it somewhere easy to find. Otherwise, the amount of time gained from it would be pointless.

Zhang Jiaxin hadn't thrown his stocking yet, when Xiao Shiqin suddenly noticed something strange.

Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun had been running quite vulgarly the entire time, but they seemed to have suddenly switched strategies.

"Watch them closely!" Xiao Shiqin reminded Wang Ze, but when he gave his warning, he suddenly noticed that something wasn't right!

Excellent Era originally had five players. After running around for so long, right now weren't he and Wang Ze the only ones who would be fighting against Ye Qiu?

"Wait. This isn't good!" Xiao Shiqin thought of this and immediately called out to Wang Ze.

"What's wrong?" Wang Ze's Sharpshooter had been moving with Aerial Fire the entire time. Rhythm was important for Aerial Fire, and he had been maintaining it perfectly. He felt rather sad to stop when Xiao Shiqin told him to wait.

"This isn't right." Xiao Shiqin said.

"What's not right?" Wang Ze said.

"If we continue chasing, it'll be troublesome." Xiao Shiqin was quite confident in his deduction. With Ye Qiu's boldness, would he be afraid to fight a 2v2?

Seeing how Shen Jian had instantly died, Ye Xiu's existence must cause a huge amount of psychological pressure on Excellent Era's players. They were two people, but in Ye Qiu's eyes, they might only be 1.5? Or 1.2?

"But if we don't chase them, we'll be caught." Wang Ze looked ahead. Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun were gradually getting farther away. When he looked behind, the various teams were gradually getting closer.

After being reminded, Xiao Shiqin also looked back and suddenly felt his head hurt.

In their eyes, there was Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun, but in the other players' eyes, their targets were him and Wang Ze. If they continued chasing, they might fall into Ye Qiu's trap. If they didn't chase, they needed to figure out some way to escape from the other players. Even though the pressure wasn't huge, it would require time. During that time, did Ye Qiu have anything in store for them? Even if he didn't, that amount of time would be enough for him to disappear without a trace.

The more difficult the choice, the quicker the choice needed to be made. Xiao Shiqin knew this and after a quick calculation, he finally clenched his teeth: "Continue chasing!"

Ye Qiu wasn't the only one with courage. Xiao Shiqin was able to lead a mediocre team like Team Thunderclap to the playoffs every season. Their journey definitely hadn't been through extreme caution. Their achievements had come with risks that paid off. And the person who made these risky decisions under huge pressure was Xiao Shiqin.

In comparison, how could this trifling event count for anything?

Xiao Shiqin made his decision. He no longer hesitated. His Mechanic could also use Aerial Fire, but now that he knew that he might run into trouble with Ye Qiu up ahead, Aerial Fire would be too reckless

considering that he would only be able to see behind him and would be unable to pay attention to what was up ahead. Xiao Shiqin immediately began running with his two legs. On the other hand, Wang Ze continued to move using Aerial Fire. With Xiao Shiqin, they would have their eyes on the front and back, allowing them to see the entire situation.

"Around the corner! Adjust your line of sight."

Up ahead, Ye Qiu and Steamed Bun went around a corner and temporarily disappeared from everyone's view. It was a commonly used tactic to get away from pursuers, but the two had rarely done so previously. If Xiao Shiqin had known they would do this, then he could observe the surrounding terrain and make some predictions. Right now, he still needed to guess a bit, but more importantly, he needed to be on guard.

The awareness by the two players were on point. When they turned the corner, they were prepared. Both characters held their guns out. Wang Ze's Sharpshooter opened the path and leaped out. It didn't matter if there were no opponents or not, he fired randomly. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic flew into the air with Rotor Wing and coordinated with Wang Ze, but when they rushed out, they saw the other side hadn't set up an ambush. They were still running for their lives! This was also the advantage of using the terrain to escape. The ones escaping didn't need to worry about ambushes, but the ones chasing needed to. Guarding against an ambush wasted time. They might be guarding, but there might be nothing to guard against.

Xiao Shiqin wasn't inflexible. He glanced at the terrain. Their Excellent Era had come here before. This Master Tactician was very keen with the terrain and quickly outlined what choices the other side could make. He quickly notified the team. If the others could quickly come to the rescue, that would be the way of the king. If they could fight a 5v2, why fight a 2v2? This was Xiao Shiqin's philosophy. If he had to fight on equal terms, then the mediocre Team Thunderclaps wouldn't have been able to obtain such accomplishments.

"Got it!" Sun Xiang, Shen Jian, and even Zhang Jiabin, who had gone to drop a stocking, replied in the team chat.

Just when Xiao Shiqin's heart steadied. Two figures leaped out from the right. Those two figures didn't give a greeting and directly attacked them.

Lower Your Head.

None Dare Attack!

Chapter 914: I'm a Cicada, You're a Shell

Where did these two come from?

A coincidence? Or Ye Qiu's schemes?

Xiao Shiqin was more willing to believe the latter, because this timing was just too serendipitous. These two barriers had suddenly appeared just at the most inconvenient time.

Of course, Xiao Shiqin wasn't afraid of Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, it was just that they had no time to waste on these two sockless characters. If it were any other normal players, Excellent Era's players could easily break through them and leave them in the dust, but these two?

The two sides opened fire.

Four characters were all gunners, three Sharpshooters, one Mechanic. Their battle were a slew of flying bullets, almost like a shooter game. The two sides never closed in on each other, running as they shot at each other. Xiao Shiqin wanted to shake them off as soon as possible, fighting a battle of skills as he talked.

"We have six pairs of stockings here, and those two have eleven," Xiao Shiqin began bluntly, striking at the core of the argument. The distribution of stockings was like so: eleven were with Ye Xiu's group, while Xiao Shiqin and Wang Ze's characters had six between them. Zhang Jiaying's Cleric had two and another normal player team had one. Six versus eleven. The difference in significance was obvious.

"But they're always two people, while you guys are rarely two," Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack also replied with numbers.

The usual Excellent Era was a five man team. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack didn't dare to face them head on, so they wanted to take the chance to snatch these stockings first. Ye Qiu's pair would always only be a pair, so it wouldn't make a difference when they decided to face off.

Hearing this, Xiao Shiqin could be certain that this wasn't a coincidence. They came to take advantage of Xiao Shiqin and Wang Ze's lack of backup. Someone was definitely feeding them information, and this person was definitely Ye Qiu. This was because only they, being at the lead, could predict where they were going and could give an accurate report.

"We've fallen into one of his schemes!" Xiao Shiqin was depressed.

"What should we do?" Wang Ze asked.

"Don't get surrounded, let's fight as we run!" Xiao Shiqin turned his view to see a following of normal players in pursuit, and instantly felt even more helpless. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were onto them and the players in pursuit were, too. Ye Qiu was a cicada shedding its shell, and treated them like that shell*.

"Wang Ze and I have been blocked. We're leaving Ye Qiu up to you guys," Xiao Shiqin informed the others helplessly in the party chat. After having several exchanges with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, Xiao Shiqin had a good understanding of their skill level. If they really wanted to break through their barricade, it wasn't like they didn't have a chance. However, if these two charged over, they wouldn't be able to easily wipe out or shake them off. If they continued being pursued by these two and Ye Qiu decided to turn around to catch them in a tricky situation, then they probably wouldn't survive. To be truthful, Xiao Shiqin believed that this was exactly what Ye Qiu was planning.

So, Xiao Shiqin suppressed his impulsive side, fighting and retreating alongside Wang Ze and decisively not pursuing Ye Qiu.

Ye Xiu had, of course, taken note of Xiao Shiqin's decision, and was a little disappointed. Xiao Shiqin's guess was correct. Their ultimate goal was still to take the chance to steal stockings. Just as the last

pieces were falling into place, Xiao Shiqin didn't fall for it. Ye Xiu was disappointed, but this was Xiao Shiqin. If it were Sun Xiang, then he probably had long since charged forth and gotten pincered by the four.

Xiao Shiqin's pair didn't actively chase after them and Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun didn't go back for them either. This was because there were still other players over there and if they returned, everyone's attention would swap over to them, the characters with eleven pairs of stockings. So they could only watch and wait.

Sun Xiang and Shen Jian had gotten to the places Xiao Shiqin had given them in accordance with his calculations. They looked around their prepared areas, but never saw Ye Xiu's pair.

"They don't seem to be on this path," Shen Jian reported.

"They haven't come here, either," Sun Xiang added.

This guy!

Xiao Shiqin felt cold sweat beading on his head again, making a quick 360 degree turn to have a quick look at his surroundings.

Ye Qiu hadn't retreated along his calculated paths. Was it because there weren't any more pursuers so they didn't need to use the same path, or was it because these two had already turned back and were lying in wait for a chance to strike?

Considering Ye Xiu's bold and gutsy personality, Xiao Shiqin guessed that it was the latter. He probably wanted to snatch benefits from their tricky situation and see if there was a chance to steal the stockings....

"Gather here!" Xiao Shiqin hurriedly told the others. They couldn't continue on like this. They needed to gather their forces again.

"Be careful, Ye Qiu might be nearby," Xiao Shiqin warned Wang Ze.

Gunshots thundered.

The battle between Xiao Shiqin and Lower Your Head's pairs was still going on strong. The two sides fired even as they continued to move at a high pace. At first, Xiao Shiqin's pathing and movement was used to shake off some of their pursuers. However, needing to be careful of Ye Qiu, they could use these players to their advantage, so Xiao Shiqin wasn't impatient to shake them off, but let them hang around.

"As expected, this guy is a tricky opponent!" Ye Xiu, who really was lying in wait nearby, saw through Xiao Shiqin's plan, but had no way of dealing with it. In a situation where each side understood what situation the other feared, they could only watch and wait for an opportunity to strike. There was no other solution.

By this time, Zhang Jiaying had long since thrown down a stocking and ended the 120 second countdown. This was all part of Xiao Shiqin's orders. He quickly headed back over.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, who had always been outstanding, experienced the strength of pro players again, not long after their beating at Ye Xiu's hands in the last round.

Xiao Shiqin and Wang Ze didn't have any trouble keeping up with the sisters even with the harassment of the many normal players. Eventually, Excellent Era's players Sun Xiang, Shen Jian, and Zhang Jiaying arrived one by one. Among them, Sun Xiang was the most vicious. His charge over had knocked down multiple normal players. When he got closer to Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, he had even less hesitation.

The strength of Excellent Era's party, having gathered, multiplied instantly. With a few rounds of vicious offense, the normal players started dropping like flies. Their number advantage seemed nonexistent. If this continued, they would be wiped out.

If it wasn't for the fact that barefooted people didn't fear wearing shoes*, the players would've dispersed a long time ago. Despite this, many people got bored of this meaningless task after a while of being beat.

They couldn't be bothered to continue, but they couldn't be bothered to leave either, so they all became spectators. In the end, the only people who were still fighting were Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack.

These two girls didn't dare to face the five members of Excellent Era on their own, so they had resorted to following and hiding. Now, in this situation, they didn't really want to continue and began to break away.

Excellent Era couldn't be arsed to continue engaging the two either. It was only Sun Xiang who took a few steps in pursuit, but that was when a system announcement popped up: Player Listened Promise has collected the 10th Christmas Stocking.

"F*ck!" Zhang Jiaying almost spat blood.

After dropping the stocking, he had hurried over. Yet it wasn't long before someone came to collect it and, how coincidental, it was Ye Qiu.

Seeing the 120 second countdown start up again, Xiao Shiqin realized something and was immediately frustrated enough to slap his own forehead.

"I was careless! Again," Xiao Shiqin lamented.

"What?" the others weren't as quick to understand.

"Ye Qiu and the others were nearby, so they saw you coming back," Xiao Shiqin directed his words at Zhang Jiaying.

"Ah?" Zhang Jiaying was stunned, seeming to have realized something, but not completely.

"With a clear understanding of which direction you came from, and then combining that with the timing of when you dropping the stocking, they can calculate where you dropped it." Xiao Shiqin said.

"F*ck!" Zhang Jiaying really did look like he was about to cough blood this time, his entire face had gone red.

"Quickly, drop another stocking," Sun Xiang said. He wasn't at all satisfied with their current score, especially after realizing that they were up against Ye Qiu this round. He didn't want to lose, not at all.

There were still players watching them from the sidelines. Though they didn't come to bother them anymore, they couldn't throw the stocking here. Excellent Era's party quickly left. 120 seconds wasn't very long, but not very short either, so the group moved quickly, shaking off normal players even more quickly, but they soon realized that they had two unshakeable tails.

Lower Your Head, None Dare Attack.

"These two, we should've dealt with them just now!" Sun Xiang said in anger. This time he was very on point. Excellent Era really shouldn't have let them go just like that. However, if they wanted to settle this now, they wouldn't have enough time. If they really wanted to deal with them, they would have to throw away a stocking to stop the countdown. Even so, these two were Sharpshooters and didn't need to close in to fight. It would be easier for them to run. It was easier to run away and these two weren't bad tactically. If they ended up splitting up, that wouldn't be good.

"You two, I'm sure you understand the current situation," rules were dead, but people weren't. Under the situation in which they couldn't change the rules, they could only talk it out. The two sides were ten body units apart, yelling to be heard. Xiao Shiqin began to discuss things loudly with the two. "If we don't throw down a sock this time around, this round will end quickly, but your current actions make me doubt that you'll let us!"

"If we don't, are you willing to accept defeat?" Lower Your Head yelled back, voice clear and crisp. Just from the voice, it seemed like this was a pretty lady.

"We, at least, still have seven pairs, but you have none. I doubt you'll be willing to accept that, right?" Xiao Shiqin asked.

Chapter 915: An Expert

"Do you think we can accept just letting you free to steal stockings?" Lower Your Head replied, "Or do you plan to say that you'll share a portion of your stockings with us if we cooperate?"

Going by Lower Your Head's tone, it was clear that she didn't believe that they would do this. As for Xiao Shiqin, was unable to respond due to their tone. While on the battlefield, he had no trouble using deceiving and cunning tactics against his opponent, but for something like this, he found it hard to make false promises.

As for using stockings to bribe the two? Too little, and they wouldn't think it was worth it; too many, then why would they still need to go after Ye Qiu? There was no way to implement this realistically, yet Xiao Shiqin couldn't bring himself to deceive them either.

So under the watchful gaze of Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, Excellent Era's members completed a trade, distributing some stockings to those without anyone before the five split up, each going their own way.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were flummoxed. Their opponent had five people who all had stockings. Any of them could throw away one. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were only two. They would have no way of being certain who would drop the stocking.

But after a moment of thought, the two suddenly realized: under these circumstances, did they have to be certain of who would drop the stocking?

The two Sharpshooters quickly picked someone and chased after them together.

While Excellent Era operating as a group, the two could only watch on. Now that they split up voluntarily, would Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack still feel pressure engaging them as a pair? Of course not! These two even dared to challenge Sun Xiang. How could the two be afraid of challenging the members of Excellent Era as individuals?

They set their sights on Shen Jian. The two knew that the person they were onto would definitely not drop stockings, but this time they were aiming to steal the stockings and not just pick up what scraps they could get.

At first, they were afraid that their opponents might see through their intentions, feigning hesitation in an attempt to hide their plans, but when they saw Excellent Era split up, they suddenly started to put all their effort into chasing them down.

The countdown was still ticking. Excellent Era seemed to have decided to wait till the last second to throw a stocking away. However, the two sisters didn't care anymore. They only cared if they could catch up to Shen Jian and strike.

Their control of stamina usage was equally skilled. At first, the two sisters had a hard time making up for the distance they had gained while hiding their intentions and pretending to have been shaken off. It was a good thing that they hadn't let Shen Jian out of their sight. The two Sharpshooters combined Aerial Fire with Swift Run, pulling closer to their target. By now, the countdown had stopped and the number of collected stockings returned to 19.

The two sisters weren't certain if it was Shen Jian's Striker that threw away the stocking, but they had a clear view of the path the Striker had gone on. If he dropped anything, it would be on this path, so long as they kept chasing, they would be fine.

Searching as they chased, they quickly confirmed that Shen Jian really hadn't dropped any stocking and the distance between the two sides shrunk significantly. Shen Jian had noticed his two tails, too, and decisively had his character come to a stop, turning to meet the two.

"As expected of a pro player, he's very confident!" To Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, it looked like this guy had confidence in fighting one on two against them, stopping to wait for them. They didn't hesitate either, raising their guns as soon as they were in range.

Bang!

Yet, the first gunshot didn't come from their chamber.

Bang! Bang! Bang bang!

The two hadn't even begun to attack before they were attacked by repeated fire. Having experience on the battlefield, the two quickly figured out where the bullets were coming from and turned to look at each side. Xiao Shqin's Mechanic and Wang Ze's Sharpshooter had arrived to flank them.

Looking behind them, Sun Xiang's Battle Mage was as bold as ever, charging forward as if he were a bullet himself. The opponent's Cleric didn't even position himself in a place where he could cover everyone with his healing. This was an offensive positioning, prepared to buff their own attacks.

"It's a trap!" The two immediately realized.

It their plan, but now they realized that their opponents had long since guessed what they would do and made such an arrangement to trap them.

Where were the dropped stockings? They had no clue.

Stealing the stockings from Shen Jian? That, too, had become an impossible task. What was important was if they could escape from Excellent Era.

The answer seemed to be negative....

Five against two, a perfect trap, completely surrounded. If they still couldn't crush two players with no pro match experience under these circumstances, then Excellent Era wouldn't be worthy of being called a powerhouse in the pro league.

"Don't cause any more trouble," Xiao Shiqin said this like he was giving a piece of advice, but it sounded like a threat to the two. And then, they were sent to the nearest revival point.

The two sisters were depressed!

Excellent Era's encirclement had completely wiped the floor with them. They had finally truly witnessed the power of pro players. However, it was because of this pro team that their future had been stained. Two consecutive stockingless rounds would make their score today look terrible, and if their efforts were viewed as just a sudden burst of luck, then their futures were in jeopardy.

"What should we do?"

"At the very least, we can't let them get away scot-free!"

Knowing that getting a good score in this round would be exceptionally hard, the sisters were just about to give up and simply cause the others as much trouble as they could.

Thus, Ye Xiu's Mechanic Listened Promise received a message from Lower Your Head: "Let's work together!"

"Oh?"

"We can work together against Excellent Era, four versus five," Lower Your Head said.

"And then?" Ye Xiu asked.

"We can take their stockings first, anything else and we'll just cross that bridge when we get there," Lower Your Head replied.

"Haha, I like your 'cross that bridge when we get there'."

"Let's band together and defeat our biggest adversary first!" Lower Your Head said.

"Ok, do you know their current location?" Ye Xiu asked.

"They just left coordinate 124, 45," Lower Your Head reported.

"Hm, their current target is definitely us. So, we should find a place to set up and ambush and just lie in wait," Ye Xiu said.

"You're right."

"Then, come to 186, 151."

"See you there," Lower Your Head replied.

Near coordinates 186, 151, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack soon saw Mechanic Listened Promise and Brawler Rain upon arriving. They didn't hide themselves at all, boldly standing in the open and looking around, waiting. Seeing the two rush over, the two characters turned one after the other and walked towards them.

"You're planning an ambush here?" Lower Your Head carefully scanned the terrain. There were a set of ruins buried under the white snow. It wasn't clear as to what they used to be, but if they dusted the snow away, they could find many scorch marks. It seemed to have been devoured up by flames, and now it was covered by snow.

"In our four man team, there are three Gunners. There's plenty of cover here, which is good for a ranged encirclement. However, we can't play an endurance match against Excellent Era because we don't have any healers, so we need to find a way to scatter them and quickly deal with them individually. This terrain is much more suitable for that," Ye Xiu said.

"En..." Lower Your Head felt that what Ye Xiu had said was very reasonable, unable to find anything wrong with it.

"We can analyze the problem of their direction of approach from the coordinates you gave us just now. Their target is me, so this gives us a starting point. What they definitely know is the point where I collected the stockings that they dropped. Calculating our movements from there, your possible pathings are..."

Ye Xiu began to analyze with eloquence, bringing up a ton of coordinates and analyses. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack listened, half lost.

"So, I think they're most likely to come from the North to this point, a little to the East, and pass through this area," Ye Xiu concluded from his mass of analyses.

"Who are you, really?" Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had long since started looking at him with shock.

"An expert," Ye Xiu replied.

"..."

"Now, we'll make the arrangements for our positioning for this ambush and the possible pathing and movements we'll force a fight. I know you two are very in sync with each other, but right now, you have

to remember that we are four, so you have to think from the perspective of a four man team. You might not be able to adapt to it immediately, but do your best to overcome it. When needed, I'll warn you guys," Ye Xiu said.

"..."

After a while, they finished their tactics meetings. It wasn't too in depth, but very obviously used the terrain to its fullest. Soon enough, they all stood at their starting positions. Steamed Bun's Rain was a melee character, yet he wasn't set at the front of their formation, but lying in wait in the deepest area. Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, who were never seen apart had been separated by Ye Xiu. None Dare Attack was hidden a little deeper, while Lower Your Head was at the very outside with Ye Xiu's Listened Promise.

They each hid in their respective positions, quietly awaiting Excellent Era's players. Lower Your Head turned her view and saw Listened Promise playing with his automatic handgun. She knew this was just a repeated action done out of boredom.

One minute, two minutes, three minutes...

Time passed and, actually, in this time, stocking ownership had been changed twice, but this was all between those small normal player teams. Excellent Era still hadn't arrived.

"Hey..." Lower Your Head couldn't help but speak up, watching Listened Promise silently playing around with this repeated animation.

"What?"

"You aren't afraid of the possibility that we are tricking you into meeting us and planning to steal your stockings when we have the chance?" Lower Your Head said.

"Nope," Ye Xiu said.

"You trust us so much?" Lower Your Head asked.

"I'm don't trust you," Ye Xiu said, "I'm just simply not afraid of you two."

Lower Your Head paused before realizing this asshole was saying that he was confident in their ability to defeat the two sisters, and that was why he wasn't afraid that this was a scheme.

In this moment, Lower Your Head really wanted to take out her gun and just murder this guy.

Chapter 916: Ambush

Lower Your Head's cursor swayed about Listened Promise's head. It looked like his character was repeatedly aiming at him. If he clicked, even an immortal wouldn't be able to dodge at this distance.

I'll just give him a scare! It's just a game, so it's not like he would die from a headshot.

Lower Your Head agreed to deal with Excellent Era together first. She wasn't a petty person, who went back on her word. However, at this moment, she really did have these mischievous thoughts. Listened Promise didn't turn his head, but his voice could be heard: "Stop messing around. They're almost here."

"How did you know?" Lower Your Head was astonished.

"From my analysis of their search route, it's about time for them to arrive." Ye Xiu said.

"I was asking how'd you know I... was doing that....." Lower Your Head said.

"Hm? You were doing what?" Listened Promise's character turned around.

Lower Your Head felt extremely embarrassed. She realized that Ye Xiu's "Stop messing around" was just a reminder before the battle began. She thought he had some ulterior motive and accidentally took a general comment as a personal attack.

"It's nothing! Let's focus!" Lower Your Head adjusted her camera. She didn't look at Listened Promise and looked ahead.

"Make sure you're hidden." Ye Xiu said and didn't say anything more. His Listened Promise raised his automatic pistol and quietly stood there, paying attention to what was ahead.

Lower Your Head felt like it was the calm before a storm*. When she thought of how Excellent Era had killed the two of them previously, she still had some lingering fears. The strength of a pro team wasn't as simple as the sum of the individual players. Their team was just a temporary alliance. Let alone not having the tacit understanding and the tactical coordination of a pro team, they were even lacking a player, an irreplaceable healer class too. Thinking of the incoming challenge, Lower Your Head suddenly became somewhat nervous. Her confidence and pride had started to waver after facing a pro team.

"What are your thoughts on our chances of winning?" Lower Your Head couldn't help but ask Ye Xiu.

"Pretty high." Ye Xiu said.

"Why?" Lower Your Head said.

"Because we have more people." Ye Xiu said.

"How do we have more people!" Lower Your Head almost cried out loudly.

"Are you thinking that all five of them are moving together? I don't think so. They're probably using the most efficient way to search for us. Their plan is to split up, find the target, gather together. Then, after making ample preparations, they deal with us in one strike." Ye Xiu said.

"Uh...." Lower Your Head couldn't make any arguments. Ye Xiu's words were very logical.

"So it shouldn't be the entire team passing through here. It should just be one player maybe two. The others definitely won't be too far away though. Their searching won't be random. It will definitely be planned, so even if we have the numbers advantage, we can't be careless. If we miss this opportunity, we'll need to face their entire team." Ye Xiu's aid.

"If we face their entire team, what happens?" Lower Your Head asked.

"You two protect us and then we'll take the stockings and run. How does that sound?" Ye Xiu said.

Lower Your Head's cursor suddenly flashed to Listened Promise's head. This time, it wasn't the back of his head, but at his forehead.

"Calm down and think about it. What's important isn't your or me, but the stockings. If we can keep our stockings, we'll have the advantage. So letting us protect the stockings and escape is the smart choice. You can't expect us to just hand over our stockings to you two and sacrifice ourselves valiantly to let you two escape, right?" Ye Xiu said.

"Okay..." Lower Your Head lowered her gun. She agreed that Ye Xiu was right.

"Good. Then let's stop chatting. The other side could be here at any moment. Our voices will expose us. If you want to say anything, type it out." Ye Xiu said.

"..."

The calm before the storm continued. This time, the moment they were waiting for finally came.

A Mechanic and a Cleric stepped into this area. It was Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing. The two characters would look around from time to time, naturally to check any hiding places in their surroundings. At this moment, Lower Your Head felt a bit of admiration for this Listened Promise. His prediction was completely on point. This hiding spot was absolutely perfect too. If those two were just casually glancing around, they definitely wouldn't be found by them.

Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing were searching around, but they clearly didn't think the other side would hide so meticulously. The two stepped closer and closer to Ye Xiu's trap. Lower Your Head had already raised her gun. All she needed to do was click to attack. But at this moment, the Mechanic suddenly stopped moving. His gaze shifted towards them.

"Attack!" Ye Xiu immediately said.

Xiao Shiqin might not have seen them, but his intuition was very sharp. His glance in this direction might just be an instinctive move, but this move was enough for him to discover their hiding place, so Ye Xiu made his decision. They stopped hiding and Lower Your Head attacked.

A gunshot broke the silence.

Lower Your Head had been waiting for this moment to come, but this sudden change made her react a half beat too slow despite Ye Xiu's warning. Her Thunder Snipe didn't achieve the desired effect. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic rolled away.

Bang!

None Dare Attack's attack closely followed. As the two attacked, they flew out and surprise attacked the enemies.

"Hm.... it's you two again...." Xiao Shiqin sounded rather helpless. As for Zhang Jiaxing, their helplessness made him irritated: "You two just never stop!"

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack didn't answer and continued attacking.

"Did you really think we can't deal with you?" Zhang Jiaying was a Cleric, but his battle spirit was hoisted high like a powerful combat class. He seemed to want to lead the charge.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack were sighing at Listened Promise's plan. They had four players, but they weren't going to come out all at once. The two of them would first attack, giving the misperception that they were the only two enemies. Then, the other two would wait for a good opportunity and catch the enemies off guard. It was clearly more threatening than four people swarming the enemies all together.

The two didn't need to think too much. They just fought with their opponents like they usually did. Listened Promise and Rain would seize the right opportunity on their own accord.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had backup, so facing these two, they attacked with confidence. Zhang Jiaying was like a combat class in the beginning. His Cleric looked like he was about to charge at them, but their assault made him shrink back. He cursed, "These two girls are really fierce," and then obediently took the role of a support class.

Xiao Shiqin was obviously the target of his support. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic shouldered the responsibility of attacking the two Sharpshooters. He seemed to have lost his cool and directly pounced on None Dare Attack.

Only a highly skilled player would understand that Xiao Shiqin's simple and crude move was to close the distance with None Dare Attack and to pull apart the distance from Lower Your Head. It was a method of disrupting the coordination between the two's pincer attack.

However, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack had extraordinary synergy with each other. This move didn't seem to be too useful. Their attacks continued to suppress their target. But Xiao Shiqin had set his heart on completing the charge. He had a Cleric supporting him, so he could bear to take some damage. Simple and efficient. Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic utilized several skills to quickly close the distance with None Dare Attack.

Both sides were gunners, and the two entered a close quarter fight. In this situation, the duo couldn't coordinate with each other. As a result, Lower Your Head might as well turn her gun away. She let None Dare Attack fight with Xiao Shiqin, while she fired at Zhang Jiaying's Cleric.

Zhang Jiaying's Cleric was left on his own, but just because he was alone didn't mean he would be thrashed around, even more so since he was a pro player. He might be inferior in trading blows with the opponent, but self-preservation was a compulsory course for healers.

Seeing that Lower Your Head had made this decision, Zhang Jiaying sneered. She felt like that girl didn't know the difference between heaven and earth. Did she think she could instantly kill him and then calmly help her partner face Xiao Shiqin?

"It looks like I should let you witness the power of a Cleric!" Zhang Jiaying shouted. His Cleric raised his staff. Then, he heard an explosion. His character's camera shook violently. Zhang Jiaying knew that he had been ambushed, but Lower Your Head was in front of him. Where did that attack come from? Zhang Jiaying immediately steadied himself, when he heard a voice from behind.

"Healers can have murderous intent, but a healer with too heavy of a murderous intent cannot be a good healer."

Zhang Jiaxing turned his head.

It wasn't his character that turned around, but Zhang Jiaxing himself.

There was no one behind him!

He instantly snapped back to reality. Ye Qiu wasn't in their team anymore. There was no way he could be standing behind him preaching.

By the time he turned his head around, his character's camera shook extremely violently. In the amount of time it took for him to turn his head, he had suffered even fiercer attacks. While stabilizing his camera, Zhang Jiaxing found his attacker: Listened Promise. Mechanic, Listened Promise. Ye Qiu's alternate account. So it really is him!

"Why are you here!" Zhang Jiaxing shouted. This time, his character directly flew out. It wasn't just Listened Promise here, but Rain as well. The Brawler, Rain, had dashed to him and started beating him wildly.

Xiao Shiqin had noticed the situation. The first thing he did wasn't to rescue Zhang Jiaxing, but to use a skill to get away from None Dare Attack and Aerial Fire backwards. Seeing this scene, it looked like Xiao Shiqin was planning on leaving Zhang Jiaxing to die, while he ran away for his life.

Lower Your Head and the others were very surprised by it, but it was within Ye Xiu's expectations. His Listened Promise had already moved ahead to block him.

Chapter 917: Finished

Xiao Shiqin had his Mechanic slow to a stop in helplessness. Ye Xiu's guess was correct. They currently had six pairs of stockings, all here with him and Zhang Jiaxing. The reason for this was to prevent the others, who were all searching for Ye Qiu alone, from being destroyed two on one and losing all their stockings.

As for Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing, they were together, decreasing the ground they could cover, but this was to protect the stockings. If the two met Ye Qiu, it would be two on two, giving them a chance. Even if they couldn't win, their reinforcements would've probably arrived before they were defeated.

However, Xiao Shiqin had never considered the possibility that Ye Qiu would have allied with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack. Two against four wasn't much different from two against one. Even if these four weren't as in sync as their pair, Ye Xiu's tactical arrangements made up for it. Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing had thought they were only dealing with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, so when Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun's characters jumped out, the two Excellent Era players suddenly seemed full of openings. Xiao Shiqin decisively decided to retreat, instantly realizing that there was no chance they would be able to last until reinforcements came. Yet that was when Ye Xiu saw through their intentions and Mechanic Listened Promise blocked their retreat, declared them to have all the stockings and struck without hesitation.

They couldn't run anymore. They could only stall for time.

Xiao Shiqin's reaction was also extremely fast. His character immediately backed away, rushing to help Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric.

As a Cleric that wasn't very good at directly fighting, going against two characters alone and getting closed in on meant nothing good, even for a pro player. Zhang Jiaxing was struggling and straining to hold on, his energy from before when he said he was going to let go and fight Lower Your Head completely gone.

Xiao Shiqin wanted to come and help, but how could Ye Xiu let him go so easily? Listened Promise used skills to rush forth as None Dare Attack provided ranged support.

"Which do we kill first?" Lower Your Head asked loudly. She felt like focusing fire to get rid of one first was important at a time like this.

"Mechanic, the stockings are all on him," Ye Xiu yelled back.

So shameless!

This thought popped into Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack's head at the same time. It, of course, wasn't because Ye Xiu had told them to kill the one with the stockings first, but because when Ye Xiu yelled this, he also rapidly typed a message to the two: Cleric.

If it wasn't for how Ye Xiu had told them to keep a lookout for messages during the battle beforehand, the two wouldn't have the time to bother checking. So even checking messages was a part of his scheme?

The decision to focus fire on the Mechanic made Xiao Shiqin unwilling to drop his guard even a little. Yet, just as he geared himself up for a fight, the four characters all turned to fire their skills at Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric.

A trap!

Xiao Shiqin quickly recovered from his surprise. Though falling for this trap was a thing of the moment, even the smallest of details could mean the difference between victory and defeat in a match between experts. Zhang Jiaxing had thought he could have a break upon hearing that the opponent planned to focus their fire on Xiao Shiqin. He would've never have guessed that what was coming was a round of even more furious attacks. He didn't have any chance to use any skills that needed casting, throwing out all the instant emergency skills. However, could that possibly be enough to defend against the focused fire of four different characters? By the time Xiao Shiqin had recovered, his Mechanic's help wasn't enough anymore. He wanted to run, but Ye Qiu's Listened Promise was always standing at just the right angle to prevent that.

The call for reinforcements had long been sent, but watching the current progression of events, it didn't seem like they would last till reinforcements came. Xiao Shiqin was relatively clear on where the other members of Excellent Era were. Estimating the time it would take them to arrive, his mood fell further.

Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric passed away just like that, and, as expected, there were no stockings on him. Ye xiu had been correct. Clerics easily became the target of focused fire and, in a pair, it was harder to keep

a Cleric protected, so the Stockings were better given to the other person. Under the support of a Cleric, breaking through an encirclement or surviving danger was much more manageable.

It was unfortunate that this was only if the two sides had a more equal number of people. With the current two versus four, this wouldn't work. There were more than enough people to suppress the Cleric, and their stronger torrent of skills could immediately destroy a character.

With the Cleric down, Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic was still struggling to hold on. He had wanted to find a chance to escape, but in this moment, Ye Xiu's team of four were practically right up against him, surrounding him. It didn't seem to matter if they were Sharpshooters or Mechanics, as if they had all become melee characters.

Xiao Shiqin wanted to cry. He didn't know what sort of agreement Ye Qiu and Lower Your Head's pair had come to, but seeing these actions, it probably wasn't a very harmonious one. They hadn't even killed him and they were already preparing to steal to snatch the stockings.

Xiao Shiqin only hated the fact that this was a game. If this was reality, he would take a pair of stockings and throw them as far as possible, possibly giving him an opening to escape. Yet in the game, dropped items fell at one's feet, totally unrealistic.

However, he didn't have any more ideas, so he could only try it out.

As he was being beaten up, Xiao Shiqin took the chance to throw out a pair of stockings.

Dropped items would end up at your feet?

This time, Xiao Shiqin didn't even have the chance to see that happen. The stockings had just left his hand, heading towards the floor, when they were somehow collected.

"Holy crap!"

Xiao Shiqin couldn't help but curse. He had hoped to create an opening with that! Yet it seemed like the four surrounding him probably wouldn't have even noticed if it weren't for the system announcements.

System Announcement, Listened Promise has obtained one pair of stockings...

"What?" Lower Your Head had obviously seen the System Announcement and cried out in surprise. Her tone was bewildered, but she quickly understood what had happened, feeling very disappointed and quickly sparing some of her attention on preparing to catch stockings.

But her thoughts were too naive.

The two sisters kept their eyes on Xiao Shiqin's health bar, awaiting that eruption of drops at the end. Yet Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun erupted first. What had erupted from them wasn't stockings, of course, but skills. AoE skills.

The two sides weren't on the same team, and you couldn't team up in the middle of an event either, so there was no immunity to damage given. They had been careful of that during the battle. In this moment, a person who threw out an AoE didn't only damage Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic, but also the two sisters' Sharpshooters.

Boom!

The explosion created by Ye Xiu's Listened Promise managed to blast the two sisters to one side. It was only then that the two realized what had happened. There was no need to explain how frustrated they were. As they were blown away by the blast, their bullets all shot towards Listened Promise, but this attack wouldn't change the situation. With Listened Promise and Rain each unleashing a torrent of skills, Xiao Shiqin's Mechanic was killed and Christmas stockings fell like rain. Listened Promise walked in a circle, collecting them before they even hit the ground. The systems messages flashed like crazy.

"Let's go!"

After that, they turned and ran, not bothering with Lower Your Head's pair any longer. The two sisters wouldn't give up so easily, running after them like crazy.

However, Ye Xiu wasn't afraid of the two, he was just on guard against Excellent Era arriving. That was what would truly be troublesome. And if Excellent Era's people came now, there wouldn't be anyone to work with them anymore. The two sisters would definitely join with Excellent Era to kill them.

It wasn't easy to shake the two girls off. What they were even more afraid of is if the two sisters joined forces with Excellent Era and reported their positions. If Excellent Era came, then that would be a whole other can of worms.

So, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun never turned to fight the two girls. They just kept running like headless flies. That way, even if Excellent Era found out their current position, they wouldn't be able to figure out their direction so they couldn't arrange a blockade. If they just ran, then the situation would be the opposite to what it had been before. So long as they didn't engage in combat, stalling for time was no problem.

What Ye Xiu was hoping for now, was that the last uncollected pair of stockings would gain an owner soon.

Currently out of the 20 pairs, Ye Xiu and Steamed Bun had 18 pairs. One pair belonged to a team of normal players and another pair was the pair that Zhang Jiaying had dropped the second time, uncollected as of yet. Quite a bit of time had passed. The more time that passed, the chance of the stockings being collected became higher. Ye Xiu was just hoping for that moment.

So, after running for about a minute, the time had finally come.

The last pair of stockings was collected by another team of normal players. With all 20 pairs collected, the countdown began, but this time Excellent Era had no way of forcing the countdown to reset.

Don't drop them again!

At this point, Ye Xiu didn't have any thoughts to get the two pairs of stockings. He only hoped that the round would end quickly, without any more mishaps.

Ye Xiu had planned for the worst case scenario, but what actually happened wasn't as bad as he expected. Xiao Shiqin, seeing how Ye Xiu had taken all the stockings, could guess that the alliance over there had come to an end, and initiated contact with Lower Your Head.

However, his offer to work together was rejected by Lower Your Head.

Excellent Era was a five man team. Joining forces with them would inevitably result in a situation unfavorable to them. Yet it seemed that joining forces with Listened Promise's pair would also result in nothing good. However, at the very least they would still hunt the two down, running after them. If it was Excellent Era, they would probably only be able to look on from afar...

Ye Xiu obviously could think of this sort of reasoning, but for safety and stability, he planned in accordance to the worst case scenario. He and Steamed Bun continued to run and the 120 second countdown didn't reset again. Finally, the countdown was complete and Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack gave up, helpless. They sent a message to Listened Promise, not taking the result lying down: "You're vicious!"

"So so," Ye Xiu responded.

"You're really skilled. Are you a pro player?" Lower Your Head's pair finally began to suspect. Even a god like Xiao Shiqin had been beaten to the point of helplessness. This wasn't something you could accomplish with mechanics alone.

"Er, if we're currently fighting in the Challenger League, does that make us pros?" Ye Xiu replied.

"Challenger League? Which team?"

"Happy!"

"Which Happy?!"

"The Happy that talked to you guys before."

"You you you..."

"Yup, that's me... So? Aren't I amazing?" Any interest in joining our team?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Go kill yourself!!" The two sisters yelled.

Chapter 918: Challenger League Ninth Round

The two girls failed to get a single stocking two rounds in a row. They were obviously feeling terrible, and felt especially worried about whether this would affect their future. And now, after knowing that the outcome of these two rounds were closely related with Ye Qiu, the two girls couldn't keep their cool.

Going onto his alternate and pretending to be a pig to eat the tiger, what's with this guy?

The two girls complained and angrily blacklisted Ye Xiu's Lord Grim and Listened Promise. They used to have a decent impression of Listened Promise. Even though this guy stole away all the stockings in the end, they had managed to ally together and cheated a powerhouse team like Excellent Era. That feeling of satisfaction filled up the hole from acquiring zero stockings, but after finding out Listened Promise's identity, the feeling of satisfaction disappeared and what replaced it was a feeling of being cheated. Twice too!

When they checked the Christmas rankings, the two of them still stood out from the regular crowd. However, after two rounds of no stockings, they only stood out by a tiny bit now. Their stunning performance on the first day couldn't be seen at all today, especially in contrast to the leading teams.

As for Excellent Era's team, once this round passed, they were doomed to be unable to surpass the second place team of Lord Grim and Steamed Bun Invasion.

Seeing the placings for those two, Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack gnashed their teeth furiously.

The timber has already been turned into a boat though. They could no longer replicate their splendor from the first day. The two were more worried whether the various teams would notice this fall and change their minds, making them value every invite extended to them even more.

In reality, the amount of time for them to consider the offers wasn't very much.

There were only two transfer windows per year in the Glory Pro Alliance. One was the summer transfer window, lasting for the entirety of July and August. There was plenty of time, and it also took place during the transition between the previous season and the new season. Most transfers occurred during this transfer window.

The other was the winter transfer window, which took place in December.

By December, about a third of the season would be completed. Initially, when December became the winter transfer period, the Alliance didn't yet have 20 teams. There weren't as many matches in a season, so back then, December was actually the midway point of the season. As the number of teams increased, the number of matches increased, and December moved closer and closer to the beginning of the season. The Alliance once thought of moving the winter transfer window to January, but the teams felt like having an early transfer window in December was quite nice,

because there usually wouldn't be any extremely pre-planned important transfers during this period. There were more emergency transfers. For example, if they found out that a new player transferred during the summer window didn't fit the team, a transfer might be put in place during the winter window. Or if a player suddenly got injured and couldn't continue playing for the rest of the season, the team might transfer a different player over to replace him. Then, there were also retirement announcements like when Ye Xiu had left the team. That would naturally need someone transferred over as a replacement. For teams, these types of transfers were obviously better earlier on in the season. That way, there would be more time for teams to adjust and fix any issues regarding the roster.

As a result, the discussion on whether to move the winter transfer window to January kept getting dragged on. At least, for season nine, the winter transfer window was still in December. This season's December was similar to the vast majority of winter transfer windows. Just like the winter cold, there were more teams that traded rather than bought.

Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack weren't pro players yet. They were transfers that could freely sign a contract, but it wasn't necessary for them to sign during the beginning of the transfer window. It was 12/26 and there were still five days left until the transfer window closed. If they wanted to join a team earlier, then they needed to make their decision within these five days. The two originally had a lot of confidence, but after fighting against Excellent Era's pro players, they realized actually fighting them was very different than seeing them play in matches. In addition, their performance on the second day

was terrible. They started to worry that delaying their decision might bring them trouble. If they didn't make their decision in this winter transfer window and waited until the summer, would they still receive this many cordial invitations?

It was time to make the decision that would affect their future!

The two girls logged out of the game and carefully considered their future as pro players.

On Ye Xiu's side, Listened Promise and Rain had only completed one round of the event. They naturally continued with their second and third round. They didn't coincidentally encounter Excellent Era these two times, but with Excellent Era not getting a single stocking in one of the rounds, their end total for today instantly became ugly to look at.

"Hahahaha, you did beautifully! Seeing your performance, I'm becoming more and more confident in our chances of victory against Team Excellent Era." Wei Chen was obviously the happiest about this outcome. Excellent Era's performance today was equivalent to having one less round. Wei Chen's only chance of losing to them was if his team also gave up on a round.

"Our first place on the team rankings is already set in stone!" Wei Chen laughed delightedly.

"It's too early to be excited, no? I'll have to trouble you to open your eyes." Ye Xiu said.

"What? Did something happen?" Wei Chen shouted. He immediately looked at what Ye Xiu was pointing at. Ye Xiu wasn't pointing at someone else's team, but rather his own Lord Grim and Steamed Bun duo.

In the round with Lower Your Head and None Dare Attack, they ended up with a grand slam. Their total stocking count naturally wouldn't be low. Excellent Era's team had been thrown back, but the two of them were closely chasing Wei Chen's team. It was possible that if Wei Chen's luck was poor tomorrow and Ye Xiu's luck burst out and got another grand slam, first place might just go to the duo.

"Don't be stupid." Wei Chen said gravely, "Seeing how a grand slam rewards each player, from my understanding, the final ranking rewards will be the same. Us getting first place will get us five rewards, but you guys would only get two. I'm sure even you can do such simple arithmetic."

"Hahahaha." Ye Xiu gave a hollow laugh. He got up and looked at everyone: "Everyone go to sleep early today. Tomorrow, finish up all the quests in the morning. We still have a match tomorrow night."

"It's just an trivial match. As long as we don't forget to go, what's there to worry about?" Wei Chen objected.

Ye Xiu wasn't sure what to say towards this attitude.

Apart from Team Everlasting, Team Happy had only encountered normal teams. Against these teams, if Ye Xiu stressed how they couldn't be careless, it would be a bit overboard.

12/27 was the final day of the Christmas event and the ninth round of the Challenger League.

14218 teams had registered for the Challenger League. After eight rounds, only 40 teams remained.

The ninth round would determine the final 20 teams. These 20 teams would be split into four groups. Each group would have five teams, and these five teams would compete in a round robin style

tournament. The two teams in the lead would enter the playoffs. The final winner of the playoffs would be the champions for this season's Challenger League and they would be the team entering the Pro Alliance.

Starting from these 20 teams, the Alliance would organize an offline tournament for everyone. These offline tournaments would have some sponsorship support, as well as media broadcasting. Teams that reached this point would have the qualifications to have a share of the profit.

For normal player teams, reaching this step was already considered a huge success, but having reached this step, many of them would begin scouting other teams and dream of entering the pro scene. Any team that could make it to this step certainly had some real skill. However, their strength could only pale in comparison to a powerhouse team like Excellent Era.

The ninth round was the final test before the offline tournament. What was most important in passing this test? It was obviously luck.

No matter how outstanding you were, if you drew Excellent Era, your journey would end. However, among the 39 teams, there had to be one team, including Happy, that would draw Excellent Era, and because there were fewer teams, the chances of drawing Excellent Era at this stage was the highest.

In the end, a different team sadly drew Excellent Era. Happy could now relax. Meeting Excellent Era early and getting eliminated wouldn't happen. Because in the round robin, even if they were placed together with Excellent Era in a group, the top two teams in the group would qualify for the next round, so there would be a seat for Happy regardless.

As for meeting Excellent Era later, that would only happen in the finals at the end of the Challenger League. This conformed with Happy's hopes. What they planned naturally wouldn't be thwarted beforehand.

On 12/27, Happy cleared their Christmas quests early. Wei Chen's team ended up sitting at first place. In the individual rankings, first place actually belonged to Mo Fan's Deception. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle, and Tang Rou's Soft Mist followed afterwards. Then, it was their alternates. All of them were at the very front with considerable achievements.

The rewards wouldn't be given today though. The presents from the stockings, as well as the ranking rewards, would be given out after today ended and the event concluded.

Everyone in Happy had been through this before. They wouldn't lose their cool because of these rewards. After finishing their quests, everyone began preparing for their match tonight.

Their opponents tonight was a normal player team called Team Crack. Ye Xiu had looked over a few of their matches before. After confirming it, he concluded that tonight's match shouldn't pose any problems for Team Happy. On the other hand, Team Crack was crestfallen. When they drew their opponents, they were initially cheering because they didn't meet Excellent Era, but after seeing Happy's name, their cheering stopped.

Team Happy was no longer a team that was taken lightly. They had been covered on Esports Home several times already. Even though many still believed that beating Excellent Era was beyond them, if

they themselves had to go on stage, they had no choice but to admit that they had no chance against Happy.

That night, in the ninth round of the Challenger League, Team Happy beat Team Crack; their entry into the offline knockout tournament was decided.

Around the same time, Team Excellent Era also crushed their opponents and was now locked into the offline tournament as well.

"What a pity.... Wouldn't it be great if they had been eliminated here?" Chen Guo felt regretful.

Ye Xiu smiled. Their match with Excellent Era would eventually come.

Chapter 919: Distance

On the 27th, the Christmas event came to a close. The stockings they collected could finally be exchanged for rewards, and many players were awaiting midnight on this day.

Though the members of Happy tried to maintain a good schedule, special moments like this needed special attention. With all these stockings, how could they sleep well without getting their rewards as soon as possible?

Teams, main accounts, side accounts, all with a whole stack of stockings; not even they bothered to count how many they had in total. It didn't matter, because as soon as midnight arrived, everyone brought at least two accounts and began to squeeze over to login and claim their rewards.

Nothing could compare to the traffic at a peak time like this, when the rewards would all be given out from a specified time onwards. Since there were so many people, it was inconvenient to have an NPC just for collecting rewards, so this time, the method of exchanging rewards was very simple: open the inventory, click on the stockings to use and immediately Santa Claus would whistle by on his sleigh, dropping the rewards directly into your inventory.

So, at exactly midnight, the world of Glory was full of stocking redeeming players, and the sky was filled with Santa Clauses flying across the sky or hovering there. It was a miracle that no accidents occurred. Then all sorts of sparkling rewards fell from heavens. Many players subconsciously ran to catch them and snatch them, but this was just something like a cutscene. The falling items would fall directly into the inventories of the players, so no one could steal them.

In that instant, the system messages began to flash like crazy.

In this event, 50 people would share 20 pairs of stockings, so that made it, at most, a 40% chance to win a reward, not very high, so the rewards given were pretty generous. From the TV, it could be seen that purple equipment weren't worthy of getting a TV announcement. Purple Equipment seemed to be rather common among these rewards. The only rewards that would get on TV were Orange Equipment, skill books, or very precious materials.

If even purple equipment weren't worthy of getting on TV, then it was obvious that things like experience books, money bags, blue equipment, food, and potions would meet the same fate. Even an event with generous rewards would still mostly give out trashy rewards. With only 40% of people

getting rewards*, most players were already eliminated. So, those who were able to obtain stockings wouldn't receive rewards that were too trashy. People who got these trashy rewards were probably loathed by lady luck.

For Happy's members, they had so many stockings, that, as they clicked on them one by one, the Santa Clauses above their heads lined up like a train, an impressive sight.

Ye Xiu and co couldn't help but count the items that popped up in their inventories. With so many rewards, they also had many more higher-grade rewards.

They didn't notice it much, but the other players were burning with jealousy at seeing the words flash across the system messages channel.

However, from the list of their rewards, skill books seemed especially rare, and this item couldn't be traded away, so only people who obtained it could use it. What was quite the tragedy was, even with all these stockings Happy had, they only managed to obtain four skill books, three with 20 points, and one with 10. Two were even on their side accounts, which was even more heartbreaking.

As for the things like materials, it was given to Ye Xiu to keep for now. Currently only him and Wei Chen had the ability to research materials. As for Orange equipment, those gained using stockings didn't care what class you were, giving them out at random; the quality of the items also varied greatly. However, equipment could always be traded or sold, and everyone was all a part of the same team, the family, so a Battle Mage getting a Brawler's equipment wasn't a problem. They just had to trade. What was disappointing is when they obtained equipment for classes that their team didn't have, but were still beautiful and high grade. It was depressing.

The Orange equipment Happy had gained from the stockings reinforced their strength further. However, what was more exciting was the rewards from the leaderboard placings.

These rewards weren't random at all, just like the grand slam rewards, and high quality Orange equipment was given out according to each character's class.

Every person who obtained equipment practically shivered with excitement. This equipment was crucial to upgrading the level of their equipment, but what was unfortunate, was that these rewards would be announced on TV, causing jealousy among players as well as revealing the equipment to their adversaries. It couldn't be used as a hidden ace like silver weapons could on the battlefield.

With this event, Happy's equipment had all seen great improvement. Before level 75 Silver equipment completely replaced level 70 Silver equipment, level 75 Orange equipment would bring a strange period of balance to the pro circle.

During this period of time, the gap between the characters of strong and weak teams would shrink greatly. This was because character strength was largely dependent on equipment and the difference between strong and weak teams relied primarily on the difference in the number of level 70 silver weaponry they had equipped. Level 75 Orange equipment was about the same level as level 70 Silver equipment. So, for many teams with level 70 Silver equipment, level 75 Orange equipment wouldn't bring much improvement to them. Instead, it was the teams with less level 70 Silver weapons that would see huge improvements from the level 75 equipment. This was how the gap between them would be closed.

It was yet unknown if any weak teams would be able to rise up during this special period of time. However, the situation in the alliance would be affected for sure, if history had anything to say about it. How would the teams fare this time? Starting from January, everything would become clear.

The competition in the Alliance still wasn't any of Happy's business. However, they certainly benefited from this special period of time. The gap between them and Excellent Era had been closed by this. As for how things would be when they met on the field, that would depend on how many pieces of level 75 Silver equipment Excellent Era would be able to create before they fought!

Ye Xiu had an in-depth understanding of Excellent Era's strength in all categories. For Silver equipment development, Excellent Era had never been weak. The account that was currently considered the strongest character, Battle God One Autumn Leaf, was the best proof.

"Who knows, maybe facing off against Excellent Era now would be best..." Ye Xiu mumbled to himself, "Now, the earliest we can face them would be in over a month's time, and by then that guy would have probably already come up with several pieces of equipment. It's been so many years, he had always been prepared. Speaking of, I do kind of want to see how One Autumn Leaf will end up after this update..."

As Excellent Era's ace, Battle God One Autumn Leaf's equipment would definitely be the most important for Excellent Era's level 75 Silver equipment upgrades. Yet, the people behind this went unseen. What players saw was the players behind the accounts, the soul they gave to those characters. As for the heroes that provided the stats, they were rarely noticed.

The person Ye Xiu thought of then was like that.

Guan Rongfei.

He was a core member of Excellent Era's tech team, a crazy Glory fan, a genius that stayed behind the scenes. Who knew how many of Excellent Era's Silver equipment had been his workmanship? With him at Excellent Era, they didn't need to worry about level 75 Silver equipment at all. He had made designs on improving the current equipment long before this update. For people like this, their current focus was probably just on researching and going through the new materials. And, with his years of experience, that wouldn't be hard. So long as he had enough materials. After all, new updates, new materials, it would all be added in accordance with the current structure of Glory; it wouldn't be completely new. A lot of things could be figured out through experience with similar things. For them, getting a hang of new additions wasn't hard.

The existence of this person limited Ye Xiu's optimism about using the update to close the gap between Happy and Excellent Era, but he wouldn't talk about this with the others for now. Everyone had amazing morale right now, so there was no need to rain on their parade so soon!

Today was the day for the players to happily collect rewards for their stockings, and also the start of a new round of matches in the pro circle.

After the three event days, the equipment of the pro teams had gone through a complete makeover, especially the weak teams.

The stockings from Ye Xiu's side had all been acquired through their own efforts, but these teams? They relied on the players in their guilds to gain more stockings.

However, players had to get used to new equipment. The pro teams had only gotten their new equipment on the day of the match. Whether they should use the equipment immediately or not was a question of much debate. Most teams chose stability, picking new equipment carefully. However, there were also many teams that had been poor for so long that suddenly obtained equipment that could be better than the strong teams, and impatiently switched their equipment out.

For example, Team Heavenly Swords.

Loulan Slash and the others were now proper pro players, very rarely coming to the game to play. In the Christmas event, their characters didn't appear at all, also relying on their guilds to accumulate rewards. Their spoils weren't bad in the end. They swapped their equipment as soon as possible, having worried about equipment for a long time coming.

Speaking of, Heavenly Swords regretted buying out Team Everlasting a little with this new update. Level 70 equipment and materials were a little outdated now, but back then Heavenly Swords had bought this, treating it like the ultimate equipment and materials treasure chest. However, this problem was an inevitable and natural occurrence in the pro circle. The members of Heavenly Sword didn't really have anything they could complain about except to think themselves unfortunate. It was a good thing that even outdated equipment was an important part of development. Without this old equipment, how would they get to the ultimate upgrade?

In this round, Team Heavenly Swords switched their equipment like someone who had just won the lottery, and their mood had influenced their performance, causing them to perform at their peak in that round. They even managed to win a flawless victory against their opponent, taking all 10 points!

For Team Heavenly Swords, this was a historical victory and their entire team was celebrating. Of course, they would also go and share this with all of their friends.

"Did you see our match!?" It was then that Lou Guanning messaged Ye Xiu excitedly.

Chapter 920: A New Branch of All Stars

"Oh? How'd it go?" Ye Xiu's reply revealed that he didn't watch Heavenly Sword's match. The matches had just ended. If you watched the stream, then you would be watching the most popular match. Heavenly Sword's match didn't belong in that category.

"Perfect win!!!!" Lou Guanning couldn't suppress his excitement.

"Oh, how amazing!" Ye Xiu praised sincerely. A perfect win wasn't easy to achieve, even if it was a match between a top-tier team and a low-tier team. There were too many factors that determined the outcome of every match. Gods performing poorly or coming across unexpected accidents could always happen.

A perfect win didn't necessarily mean that team's strength was vastly superior, but there was no need to doubt that the players on the winning team performed exceptionally well.

"Hahaha, it feels too great." Lou Guanning had become more and more professional. A perfect win didn't make him believe that his team had become a salted fish that turned over. However, he still took pleasure in the boost of morale that had been brought by it.

"Keep working hard. If you can keep up that performance, you'll certainly be noticed." Ye Xiu said.

Speaking of which, because Heavenly Swords had promoted themselves too ferociously before, the expectations placed on them had been too high for them to meet. Before the season began, the predictions placing them at tenth was the greatest proof of these expectations. However, it turned out that Heavenly Sword's actual strength was all talk and no action. They kept on wavering around the relegation zone. They weren't any different from the other new teams that joined every season. This match gave them a grand ten points. For weak teams, which found it difficult to acquire points, but easy to lose points, it was a grand victory similar to a gift of charcoal in snowy weather. Only this kind of victory fit with Heavenly Justice's initial claim.

"Yes yes, definitely. There's still something else, God!" Lou Guanning continued.

"What is it?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Next week is All Stars." Lou Guanning said.

"I know." Ye Xiu said.

Glory's All Stars Weekend took place on the first weekend of the new year. This year was no exception.

This year's All Stars will be managed by Tiny Herb. We and Tiny Herb are both in City B." Lou Guanning said.

"Yeah, I know that."

"God, are you interested in coming for a visit!" Lou Guanning came out with the main subject for this conversation.

"Oh?" Ye Xiu wasn't sure what the intent was. Even though the 24 All Stars were the highlight of the show, in reality, it could be considered a festival for all pro players. Although no one in Heavenly Swords would be voted in as an All Star, they would certainly appear at the All Stars Weekend event.

"Hahaha, we can all have a good time together! If there's time, you can come over to our Heavenly Swords and give us some pointers." Lou Guanning said.

"Oh, so it's like that? Let me ask my boss!" Ye Xiu said.

"Your entire team can come. Everyone is invited!" Lou Guanning said boldly.

"Sure sure sure, thanks!" Ye Xiu wasn't too polite because he knew that this type of invitation was a trivial matter for Lou Guanning. If he was too polite, it might seem like he was treating him as an outsider rather than a friend.

Immediately afterwards, he told everyone in Happy about this.

"All Stars? Boring." Wei Chen snorted disdainfully at first. It was mainly to show that he was once famous in the scene. An event that numerous players hoped to participate in wasn't something he cared much about anymore.

Mo Fan was even less so. When he heard Ye Xiu talk about All Stars, he didn't even lift his head.

Wu Chen had never been chosen as an All Star, but he had once been a pro player, so he had participated in the All Stars before. He wasn't too interested as a spectator. If he wanted to watch, the stream was good enough.

Qiao Yifan may be invisible, but he had been with Tiny Herb for a year. He had seen the big stage before and had also participated in the All Stars Rookie Challenge. The current him was also improving steadily. He didn't feel too strongly about a fun event like All Stars.

As for Tang Rou, she had gpmc last year and even went on stage. She had a deep impression of it, but it was just a deep impression. With Tang Rou's personality, how could she be too interested in an event, where being showy was more important than real combat.

Then, there was Chen Guo and Steamed Bun.

Chen Guo was a standard Glory fan. If she had time, she would buy a ticket to join in on the fun. How could she refuse this kind of opportunity?

Steamed Bun? No one knew if he understood what was going on. He simply rubbed his chin and mumbled: "All Stars? That sounds exciting."

From this, it was very obvious who would be going and who wouldn't.

But because Chen Guo wanted to go, Tang Rou was dragged along. Chen Guo even wanted to invite Su Mucheng to come.

Excellent Era's All Stars hadn't been forgotten by fans, but because they were part of a relegated team, they didn't even have the qualifications for an invitation to All Stars, let alone getting voted to participate.

Being unable to participate in the All Stars Weekend was humiliating for Excellent Era, but even if they were invited to go, Excellent Era would still feel humiliated. It was simply emphasizing their special status as a relegated team. What was the difference between that and a slap to their face?

In the end, what remained unseen was deemed clean. During All Stars, Excellent Era was completely sealed off. Su Mucheng was still a member of Excellent Era, so it wasn't convenient for her to just leave.

As a result, Ye Xiu, Steamed Bun, Chen Guo, and Tang Rou journeyed to City B. Lou Ji resided in City T, which was fairly close to City B. He said that if he had the chance to, he would also attend.

An Wenyi actually wanted to go very badly, but as a university student, January meant that final exams were imminent. An Wenyi wasn't a genius like Luo Ji. Practicing Glory every day used up a lot of his time. Only cramming in the following few days would allow him to pass his exams. Without any guarantees for a pro career, how could the calm and rational An Wenyi so easily abandon his studies? As for if he could really become a pro, no one needed to worry about what choice he would make.

Happy's schedule next weekend was planned out. As for the pro scene, they began making preparations for All Stars.

The polls to select the 24 All Stars had begun. It could be found in the game and on the website. The only thing needed to vote was a Glory account card. Each card was limited to one vote. The polls had opened as soon as the opening match of the season began. The players that used their votes didn't use this opening match as a reference. Instead, they picked their All Stars based on the latter half of the previous season and the playoffs. As a result, the All Star rankings corresponded with what players thought of a pro that year.

When this year concluded and the first day of the new year began, the polls would be closed. The 24 All Stars chosen didn't need to be announced. Players could just look at the rankings and check.

Usually, the company would put out a promotional video for the 24 All Stars as fast as possible. This year was no exception. On 1/1, the first day of the new year, the promotional All Stars video quietly appeared on the Glory website. Players spread the news.

Zhou Zekai stood at first place without any contest. After Samsara became the champions last summer, everyone pretty much predicted this outcome. The popularity of Samsara's vice-captain Jiang Botao also shot up too. He was fifth in the polls, beating out numerous Gods.

In second, third, and fourth was Huang Shaotian, Wang Jiexi, and Han Wenqing, the residing Gods of the three powerhouses. Their fame and popularity practically guaranteed their status as All Stars until they retired.

At sixth place was the ace player of Team Wind Howl: Tang Hao.

Tang Hao's vote count wasn't too far from the ones ahead of him, but he wasn't a champion like Jiang Botain or a fan-favorite like Huang Shaotian, Wang Jiexi, or Han Wenqing. As a player that had just transferred in over the summer, while Tang Hao won numerous new fans from his new team, he also lost a lot of his fans from his former team. Even so, by relying on his incredible performance in the latter half of last season, he won the support of more and more players and officially rose to the ranks of the Gods.

After Tang Hao, it was the two Master Tacticians in the Alliance, Blue Rain's Yu Wenzhou and Tyranny's Zhang Xinjie. Although the two played critical roles in their teams, because the two weren't flashy attackers, their popularity was always much lower. It was similar to how the forward was always more popular than the backfielders in football.

These two were the dividing line. The votes for the All Stars after them had a lot fewer votes. Those who could become All Stars could be named Gods, but there were differences in the popularity between Gods. Among the remaining All Stars, many were frequent visitors to the All Stars, but they were still missing something in comparison to the top Gods.

Among these All Stars, the most discussed player was Zhang Jiale.

After coming back to the Alliance a year later, this God had been affected by his year of absence. In addition, Zhang Jiale joining Team Tyranny had been extremely controversial. There were still posts talking bad about him in the forums. Zhang Jiale's popularity was greatly impacted, even if he still used

the famous Spitfire, Dazzling Hundred Blossoms. His popularity wasn't the same as it had been last year. He went from a top God on the rankings to the middle of the pack. However, it was only in terms of popularity. His decision to join Team Tyranny had been proved correct through the team's matches. After a year of absence, he quickly became comfortable with the competitive environment with the help of his experienced teammates. The current Zhang Jiale didn't seem to be any different from when he had retired. His decision to retire was once again criticized angrily, but it didn't affect him at all.

Amid both praise and criticism, Zhang Jiale steadily advanced forward. During the summer, Tyranny had undergone a huge transformation. The team fought together for about a year and was currently in first place. They were on their way towards having the greatest regular season in all of Glory history. They already made history with four of their players being among the 24 All Stars. This had never happened before in Glory history.

However, these four were long-time All Stars. Apart from Zhang Jiale, there was nothing new about the other three. Everyone was more interested in the new faces among this year's All Stars.