

## Avatar 931

### Chapter 931: The Injured God

Sun Zheping!

Those who had only started playing Glory two or three years ago might not recognize the name, but it wasn't possible for veterans with more than five years of experience in Glory to not know this name, especially for Berserkers. If they didn't know of Sun Zheping, they were probably lone wolves like Mo Fan.

When Ye Xiu said this name, apart from Tang Rou and Steamed Bun, everyone else was stunned.

Besides those two, everyone else in the room had played Glory for a very long time. All of them recognized him.

A God like Sun Zheping had once been all over the TV, news, and Internet. However, none of them had ever met him in real life, so when Sun Zheping entered the room, no one had recognized him. When his name was revealed, everyone started to see the similarities. Sure enough, it really was Sun Zheping!

Lou Guanning obviously knew this person the best. Sun Zheping. During his career, his fame as the number one Berserker shined even brighter than Yu Feng's current fame. Sun Zheping and Zhang Jiale had entered the Alliance before the Golden Generation and were the undisputed Best Duo. Their greatest achievement happened in the third season of the league; they had led Team Hundred Blossoms into the finals. Unfortunately, Ye Qiu and Team Excellent Era beat them, completing Team Excellent Era's three-peat championship.

This was why Sun Zheping had gnashed his teeth when he saw Ye Qiu. He had almost become the champion, but Ye Qiu stole the title away from him. After that, when Team Hundred Blossoms returned even stronger than before, Sun Zheping injured his hand and left midway through the season. After the season ended, he retired quietly and never returned. Team Hundred Blossoms reaching the finals in season five and season seven could be attributed to Zhang Jiale alone. Sun Zheping's only chance for the title had been that one time.

The others didn't know that the previous confrontation had been between two top Gods. Everyone once again fell into shock. When they regained their composure, they all took the same action without any prior agreement. They all looked directly at Sun Zheping's left hand.

As the skill level in Glory rose, the effects of an injury became even more clear. Thumbs, wrists, elbows, and shoulders. For a pro player, these needed to be kept in good condition. Perhaps some pain could be tolerated, but in a high skill level competition, any amount of pain would affect the player's ability. The player would naturally be incapable of performing well.

There were numerous cases where complications arose for a player because of an injury. However, the most well-known and significant case so far still belonged to Sun Zheping. The injury in his left hand led to his departure from the stage midway through the season. In the end, he retired even more quietly. It had clearly been a very serious injury.

Right now, it had been four years since Sun Zheping's injury. He had unexpectedly appeared here and fought an intense match with Ye Qiu. Had his injury been healed?

Thinking of this, everyone couldn't help but look at Sun Zheping's left hand. When they looked at it, they saw his left hand was covered in white bandages.

"Ah!" Everyone heard a fearful cry. The source of that cry was Steamed Bun.

"This is... Wicked King Immolation Fist's Supreme Technique, Dragon of the Darkness Flame!" Steamed Bun cried out in awe.

"Steamed Bun, stop spouting nonsense!" Chen Guo was furious. The injury on Sun Zheping's left hand was a huge scar in his heart. Using that to jab at him was too inhumane, even if she knew that Steamed Bun wasn't speaking with bad intentions because Steamed Bun was staring intently and nervously at his boss, Ye Xiu. He wasn't actually thinking that Sun Zheping would undo his bandage and actually summon flames from hell to obliterate Ye Xiu, did he?

"Ahem, your hand is healed?" Ye Xiu probably felt that Steamed Bun's words weren't appropriate, so he immediately changed subjects.

"Not too good." Sun Zheping looked at his left hand, "But it's still enough to beat you."

"Oh my! How arrogant!" Ye Xiu patted the table, "How about another round? Little Tang, give me your account card."

"No need." Sun Zheping smiled slyly. If he wanted to forever brag about his win over someone, winning once and then ignoring him afterwards was obviously the safest method. Of course, Sun Zheping and Ye Xiu had definitely fought against each other more than once. They were the most famous Gods of Glory during the early stages of the Alliance. It was just that today, he didn't want to give Ye Xiu another chance.

"So it's Senior Sun Zheping. I've been too inconsiderate!" Lou Guanning found a chance to speak a few words and hastily said the words that a host should say. Even though he also played the Berserker class, but he didn't do anything in particular for this God. He didn't show any more respect to him compared to a normal senior.

And then.....

"Senior, are you planning on returning?" Lou Guanning asked.

He didn't look at Sun Zheping being an ancient God. He had become a pro player very young. Right now, he was still only 25 years old. Pro players nowadays underwent more scientific practicing. The length of their careers kept increasing. In the past, 25 was retirement age, but now, there were many players at this age struggling on stage. Their condition might not be as good as their prime years, but it was still early for them to retire. A 25 year old could still come back to the stage and shine. Team Tyranny's extraordinary achievements this season made many forget the age of their three core players.

"Return....." A bitter expression appeared on Sun Zheping's face. He slowly lifted his bandaged left hand, "With my hand, I'm unable to cope with the fast-paced competitive scene."

"But what about just now....." Chen Guo questioned. The intensity of the match between Ye Xiu and Sun Zheping didn't lose out to any pro match. If not, the room wouldn't have been so shocked.

"It's fine if it's only from time to time, but I can't play for very long. If not, did you really think I would be scared to play a round against his Battle Mage?" Sun Zheping said.

The former number one Berserker had left the competitive scene for a very long time, but he was still as proud and confident as ever.

But the practice room instantly fell silent. Pain and bitterness hid underneath that pride. How could the onlookers not sense such a strong emotion?

It had already been four years since his departure from the competitive scene. Sun Zheping could still beat Ye Qiu though, which meant that he hadn't given up on Glory yet. During these four years, in some unknown corner, how much effort had he put into Glory? But in the end, this was the only outcome. How could they not feel that same pain?

"Old Lou, think you'd cheat! That's too despicable, no?" Under this stifling atmosphere, someone suddenly spoke out. It was Lou Guanning's bad friend.

"Ahem..." Lou Guanning coughed. In the end, that issue hadn't been forgotten. After seeing the confrontation between Sun Zheping and Ye Xiu, he couldn't help but admit: "I would not have been senior's opponent."

After saying these words, Lou Guanning ignored his bad friend. Then, he suddenly turned his head towards Sun Zheping as if he had made an important decision: "Senior, are you interested in joining our Team Heavenly Swords?"

"Hm?" Sun Zheping was surprised, "Did you not hear me? I'm unable to deal with the fast pace of the competitive scene."

"I heard you clearly, but I also heard that an occasional match wouldn't be a problem, no?" Lou Guanning said.

Sun Zheping continued to be surprised: "You need that type of player?"

Any pro player would cost quite a sum of money for the team. Spending this money to raise a player, who could only play a limited number of matches and suddenly step down because of a sudden injury, was something no team would want. When he heard Lou Guanning's invite, Sun Zheping was surprised, but he wasn't happy because he felt that Lou Guanning's invite was out of sympathy. That wasn't something he was willing to accept.

"Of course it's needed. Our team needs a high skill level senior to guide us. Even if you don't show up on stage, we still need you very much." Lou Guanning said.

Sun Zheping hesitated. That was a solid reason, but it could also be an excuse for helping him.

Then, he heard Ye Xiu speak up: "Yeah, I told you guys before. Your team should have an old general. Even if his strength isn't good, he'd still be of great help to your team's growth."

"Are you saying my strength is no good?" Sun Zheping looked gloomy.

"Don't take it too personally." Ye Xiu reminded him.

"Senior, consider it!" Lou Guanning urged him. He wasn't pretending. Lou Guanning also didn't mind helping Sun Zheping out of sympathy. He dearly loved Glory and was both a player and an owner. He wasn't like any of the other owners who only formed the team based solely on financial interest. His urging was truly because he wanted a God like Sun Zheping to join their team. If Sun Zheping really had recovered from his injury, Lou Guanning would have been more careful with his invitation. Even if the invitation was successful, it might not be handled well.

Team Heavenly Swords didn't have an experienced player guiding them like Ye Xiu had recommended them to have. It wasn't that Lou Guanning couldn't do it. With Team Heavenly Sword's financial resources and their momentum as a new team, finding this type of player wasn't difficult. In reality, it was because of Team Heavenly Sword's unusualness that he didn't do it.

This Sun Zheping had the skill, but because of his injury, he couldn't participate in matches like a normal player. For Sun Zheping himself, it was truly a tragedy, but for Lou Guanning, someone like him was just too appropriate for their Team Heavenly Swords.

"Join us!" Lou Guanning continued to urge sincerely.

Sun Zheping was starting to feel tempted, seeing his attitude.

"I could give it a try." Sun Zheping finally nodded his head.

"Great!" Lou Guanning was excited, "Senior, what requirements do you have? Should we talk about the contract right now? The season's transfer window has already closed though. Senior, you'll have to wait until next season to come out on stage."

"I know that." Sun Zheping nodded his head.

"Hm? Then for the next half of the season, why not join our Team Happy?" Ye Xiu suddenly said.

Chapter 932: For Victory

"Happy? In the Challenger League?" Sun Zheping still cared greatly about Glory, even knowing the current situation of the Challenger League.

"Yup!" Ye Xiu said joyfully, "It's the Challenger League, so it's nowhere near as intensive. You can have a go and try to find your footing. You'll also get a chance to go against Excellent Era in the Challenger League! Take it as a chance to get your revenge on them for taking your championship all those years ago."

Everyone cast him a sidelong glance.

The Excellent Era that had taken the championship from Hundred Blossoms, wasn't it this God that had led them? Now he was talking as if he had nothing to do with the event.

Yet before Sun Zheping could say anything, Ye Xiu slapped the desk and shouted, "You're really a lucky one! There's only one more round until the offline matches begin. You can still make it. Otherwise, if you were just a bit late, you wouldn't have the chance with the offline matches starting!"

The rules of the Challenger League were that you could switch and add team members in the online elimination rounds. However, after arriving at the offline matches, it wasn't so lax. It was almost like actual pro matches.

The way Ye Xiu put it, it was like he was giving Sun Zheping a great opportunity. Everyone stared at the old god, stunned. Would Sun Zheping cherish this "opportunity"?

"Do you want me to help you take revenge on Excellent Era?" Sun Zheping smiled coldly.

"Revenge?" Ye Xiu smiled, "I just want to win."

"Good, it's the same for me too," Sun Zheping replied.

"Hero, let's go forth together!" Ye Xiu said.

"Sign me up." Sun Zheping flicked his hand and an account card flew towards Ye Xiu. To register an account card for the Challenger League, you just had to swipe and log in with it.

"Good choice!" Ye Xiu caught the card, and immediately logged into the webpage to update Happy's team roster. The crowd was staring again. What? With just a few quick exchanges, a seemingly very important decision had been made just like that?

By the time everyone came back to their senses, Chen Guo was the first to become excited! Their team had gained just gained a legendary member; didn't this mean they had an even greater chance of defeating Excellent Era?

As for Lou Guanning... In theory, Sun Zheping had already agreed to join Team Heavenly Swords, so he was technically already a member of Team Heavenly Swords. Even if he couldn't play for them this season, shouldn't he first make sure the team was ok with this before agreeing? Any normal boss would probably be pissed by this development, but Lou Guanning didn't mind, looking on cheerfully.

"Whatever, be happy, I'm leaving." Lou Guanning's bad friend stood up and prepared to leave with a casual goodbye.

Sun Zheping, Ye Xiu, they were all renowned figures in the Glory circle, but he didn't care at all.

"You coming to my party tomorrow?" Seeing his bad friend leave, Lou Guanning yelled after him.

"We'll see!" His bad friend didn't even turn around, simply waving his hand and leaving.

Lou Guanning didn't bother paying him attention anymore, turning around to smile at Ye Xiu and co. "After the events tomorrow, I'm throwing a party. Why don't you all come?"

Ye Xiu, Chen Guo and the others looked at each other, expressing their agreement. Coming to B City this time was on Lou Guanning's invitation, so of course they'd have to go with him, as his guests.

"Then should we continue the tour? Senior Sun can come along too," Lou Guanning offered.

"Ok." Everyone nodded and continued their tour of Team Heavenly Sword's club with Lou Guanning as their guide. After that, they made arrangements for lunch and in the afternoon, Sun Zheping went to talk with Team Heavenly Swords about the details of their contract. Ye Xiu and co went to take a look around and then all ended up in the training room to play Glory.

That night, the All Stars Weekend continued. Tonight's events were focused on pro player audience interaction. The game content tonight was a mod for glory, but this sort of mod was designed officially. It would be released for players to download afterwards. For example, last year's All Star hurdle mod was very popular. Rumor had it that the Glory developers were planning on implementing these mods in the arena soon.

What were the contents of tonight's All Star games event? This was a huge part of the suspense of the second day. Even the pro players that signed up didn't know the details.

The opening ended and the event began.

The first game's map was shown through the holographic projector. It was, surprisingly, a swimming pool and high above it was a springboard. There was no need for explanation; everyone could guess what the first game was about: diving.

After the host called the All Star who would pick the audience members, the two of them explained the event together very cooperatively. Then, the All Star began to pick audience members.

The All Star that had come up for the diving event was the captain of Team Void, Li Xuan. As he picked, Chen Guo thought nostalgically of last year, when she and Tang Rou had gone up to participate in the event. Back then, she was just a Su Mucheng fan. Having the chance to interact with her idol at such a close distance had made her practically vibrate in excitement. Now a year had passed and her idol had become a friend that she could easily chat and gossip or go out for food and drink with. Chen Guo was very satisfied.

The Tiny Herb stadium could fit 18,000 people, and the entire place was filled to the brim. Without Su Mucheng manipulating things this time, Ye Xiu and co hadn't been picked. After the four lucky audience members arrived on the stage, the pro players who were participating in this event had gone on stage as well.

For the games event, it was usually interaction between four lucky audience members, an All Star, and three normal pro players. However, for this diving event, there were four other pros apart from Li Xuan who came down. What caught the attention of most was two ladies who came down together last, hand in hand.

"Next, we'll be grandly introducing two new faces to you," As the two sisters came down, the host was also yelling out a commentary, "These two are the two rookies that Team Misty Rain managed to discover during the winter transfer window, Shu Keyi, Shu Kexin! By their names, everyone should've already noticed that these two rookies are actually sisters. As for the characters they use in game, many of you have probably noticed during the Christmas event: Lower Your Head! None Dare Attack! Two very imposing IDs! If we didn't know, who would've thought it was these two beautiful ladies?"

Since this was a games event, the introductions made by the host wouldn't be too serious. A close up of the two sisters was also shown on the big screen. They wouldn't lie about it when they said they were beautiful.

A ruckus immediately spread through the audience. Even when Li Xuan had come down, the audience hadn't reacted with such vigor. It could be seen that beautiful women gained special treatment wherever they were. It was especially so since girls were relatively less common in online games and even less common in the pro circle. Under these circumstances, two girls had suddenly popped up, and they were beautiful sisters to boot. The audience seemed to have abruptly converted to Misty Rain fans, yelling and shouting. However, among these yells, the cries of support and encouragement were the minority, most of it was just whistling and hooting.

"So it's them!" Ye Xiu couldn't help but lament. These two were rookies that had caught his eye and that he had tried to recruit, but ultimately went to Misty Rain. Now it seemed that apart from their skill, these two were quite something. Beautiful sisters, that was a very valuable selling point if played right!

No wonder the two didn't even bother considering Ye Xiu's invite before rejecting it. These two probably didn't only consider their competitive skill. They had thought about other perspectives from the start, wanting to become stars in all aspects.

Thinking of this, Ye Xiu couldn't help but sigh. As time went on and the alliance developed, the competitive aspect wasn't as pure and simple as it had previously been. At first, the players were only passively encouraged by their clubs to develop on the commercial side. Yet now, the players had started to think of their own values from different points of view. Because of this, the alliance would become greater, but Ye Xiu hoped that the competitive aspect would at least be kept pure. This was because, looking at other developments in sports, when sponsors and money became a deeper part of it, the competitive aspect would start to become impure. People would start to consider looking good in the sport, or even play scripted matches. When the players all lost their competitive spirit, this competition would become nothing more than an entertainment program. Ye Xiu hoped that a day like that would never arrive for Glory.

By the time Ye Xiu brought himself back to the present, the nine on the stage had all joked around with the host for a bit. The reason for having nine people participate was also revealed. The beautiful sisters Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin wanted to do a synchronized dive.

"They knew the contents beforehand!" Ye Xiu could tell that Misty Rain wanted to use this year's All Stars to promote the two sisters.

The two sisters had the right to enter the Rookie Challenges, but the thing was, it was far better to promote the two together. In the Rookie Challenges, even if it wasn't a true fight, there was no two on one. So if the sisters wanted to enter the stage together, they could only do so in other events. So, this diving event could show off the two sisters' synergy rather well.

Splash!

As the beautiful sisters' characters hit the water at the same time, there was thunderous applause.

From the jump to all the movements made by skills in the air, the two characters had little to no deviation. Even the splash from the landing was similar. This had completely overshadowed the elegant

movements made by all of the other participants. There was no need to talk about normal players, but just from the poise and timing, they had also outstripped the other pros by miles.

There was a need for scoring with diving and the system couldn't do something like that, so the job of scoring was given to the audience. Each seat had a scoring instrument, and the characters would be ranked by the total points they each gained.

Each character jumped three times and Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin's synchronization was practically perfect with every jump. Their scores skyrocketed, leaving the other seven in the dust and eventually winning the event without any doubt. The two had also managed to use this event to make a lasting impression on the audience. Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin had become the hottest topic of this year's All Stars. Misty Rain's promotion had exceeded expectations with just the first step alone.

For the games event on the second day, there was a parkour and shooting mod after the diving one. Naturally, it was the pro players that won first with ease. After that came the audience challenges. For the pro sent out, it was as always one of the home team members. Tiny Herb sent Gao Yingjie out, who easily defeated a few audience members, bringing the events of the second day to a close.

### Chapter 933: Cocktail Party

The third day of the All Star Weekend was always the main act. The All Star competition actually only referred to this one day as well.

Twenty four All Stars would, on this day, be split into two teams of twelve to battle. If it wasn't for the fact that the All Star Weekend was more of a show than anything else and the players wouldn't be so serious about victory and defeat, this could be seen as the creme de la creme of matches.

The teams for the twenty-four All Stars was decided through official channels. On principle, they wouldn't divide the members of a team into different groups. Historically, the number of players coming from each team had always been a good number to work with, so there was no circumstance in which they ever had to forcibly separate the members of the teams in order to form two groups with an equal number of people.

Today was no different. The twenty-four participants were harmoniously divided into two groups.

Samsara's three, Tiny Herb's three, plus Wind Howl and Hundred Blossom's pairs as well as Royal Style, Seaside's singles formed a team of twelve.

Tyranny's four, Blue Rain's three, plus the duos from Void and Misty Rain, as well as the single from 301 Degrees formed another team of twelve.

Though the split was peaceful, the alliance would usually separate the teams so that there would be some tension between the two. For example, last year's champions and runner-ups Samsara and Blue Rain wouldn't be placed together. Tiny Herb's Gao Yingjie and Blue Rain's Lu Hanwen were the two most eye-catching rookies in the alliance, so their two teams were also on different sides, attempting to create a match between the two. Wind Howl and Hundred Blossom's veterans had both transferred to Tyranny, and Zhang Jiale's transfer was especially nerve-grating for Hundred Blossoms fans, so these two teams were placed against Tyranny.



Apart from that, they had to make sure that the divisions didn't repeat too much. After all, many gods always made it into the All Stars year after year. What the audience wanted to see was different participants becoming teammates and opponents. If it was the same few people fighting each other every year, it would get tiring very quickly.

These arrangements were to make the All Stars as spectacular as possible. In reality, the All Star competitions were usually rather dense. Even though everyone knew this was just a show, they also knew that this was a show that gained the attention of many fans. The normal players were all too willing to use this match to judge which characters did better or worse. The pro players didn't want the normal players to misjudge them so easily. In addition to that, there was the tension that was purposefully injected, so the All Stars wouldn't give too much slack.

However, there was one awkward reality that had plagued two consecutive years of the All Star competitions. That was that there was only one healer among the All Stars last year, Zhang Xinjie, and the same was true for this year too.

The one thing that no pro team would ever be without was a healer. Healers were a very important aspect of the team competitions, so their skill had to be good. For the healers of each big team, it was hard to rank them by strength since they usually didn't battle. This meant that most healers got approximately the same amount of votes for each All Stars. Zhang Xinjie was the current number one healer, but it was difficult to say how many of his votes were because of his identity as a Master Tactician. . When talking about pure healing ability, there was one undeniable God of Healing in the history of Glory and that was the player behind Tiny Herb's Paladin Wind Guard, Fang Shiqian. It was a shame that he had retired after the seventh season when Tiny Herb won their second championship. It was after his retirement that the Alliance had fallen into this awkward situation of only having one All Star healer on stage. And by the looks of things, this awkward situation would continue for a while.

The performance and skill among the current healers were steady, and there were no signs of anyone having abrupt improvement. As for the rookie healers, none of them seemed to have the same level of talent that Fang Shiqian had, who rose up above the other experts.

However, not having a healer wouldn't influence how spectacular the All Stars were. In last year's All Stars, the healerless side had gone wild, their team members unleashing burst after burst of intensive techniques, eventually defeating their opponents. It had to be said, however, that such a victory would probably only appear in the All Star Weekend. In this show, there wasn't as much pressure to win on the players, so they would be a lot more relaxed. There wouldn't be any particularly serious tactical limits either, so unpredictable situations weren't too unusual.

For this year's All Stars, the situation of these gods unleashing burst after burst of skill didn't appear again. The presence of a healer became the eventual deciding factor between the two sides. The side with Zhang Xinjie obtained the victory for this year's All Star competition.

This season's All Star Weekend had come to an end. In comparison to last year, there wasn't as much to talk about, but it was still a highly successful All Star Weekend.

As the event ended and everyone left, Lou Guanning's group had to exeunt via the pro player exit. Ye Xiu's group of four made their way out by following the crowd. Lou Gianning had already arranged for a car to pick them up afterwards, directly taking the four directly to the cocktail party.

Lou Guanning's party was in a place that wasn't very far from the Tiny Herb stadium so they arrived rather quickly. With Lou Guanning having notified the staff of their arrival, they made their way in without experiencing any hitches. Lou Guanning and co had already arrived at the party, dressed immaculately. Seeing Ye Xiu's group arriving, they hurriedly came over to welcome them.

"So cool! It's just like watching a movie!" Steamed Bun had obviously never seen such an event, and looked around in curiosity.

"Haha," Lou Guanning laughed.

Chen Guo was more composed than Steamed Bun, and after looking around for a moment, she asked Lou Guanning in confusion, "How come I don't see anyone else."

"Anyone else?" Lou Guanning turned his head to look around a little. There weren't many people here, true, but it wasn't like there was no one here either. What did she mean by "anyone else"? Lou Guanning was bewildered.

Chen Guo seemed to be afraid of missing anything and swept her gaze around again, carefully. "I don't see any of them!"

Hearing this, Lou Guanning managed to decipher the meaning behind her words, smiling and saying, "You mean the other pro players? Of course they wouldn't be here. I didn't invite them after all."

"Ah?" Chen Guo looked back in confusion. She had thought that this party was hosted in hospitality as a gathering for the teams out of friendship.

"Haha, it is Tiny Herb's turf, after all!" Lou Guanning said.

Chen Guo didn't understand, but Ye Xiu did immediately. At first he had thought this party was a gathering for the teams, but now he realized that this guy truly had tact.

This time's All Star Weekend was hosted by Tiny Herb. Heavenly Swords might also be a home team, but if they used this occasion to throw a party, there would be suspicions of trying to steal the spotlight. Especially since Heavenly Swords was very conspicuous from the start, if they did such a thing now, the other teams probably wouldn't believe that this was done out of hospitality, but was rather a chance for this rich guy to gain attention and boast again. So, at this time, it wasn't very appropriate to invite the teams over for a party. Chen Guo's personality was rather bold, so she might not have considered such small details. After hearing what Lou Guanning had to say about Tiny Herb's turf, she was still rather confused and asked, "Then what are we here for?"

"Making more connections with people is always a good thing!" Lou Guanning said.

"Who are all these people?" Chen Guo looked left and right.

"Come on, I'll introduce you." Not many of the guests had come yet. Lou Guanning took care in guiding Chen Guo and the others, joining a random pair's conversations and introducing them.

These two people were some sort of investment consultant and an executive director of a kind, rather imposing titles. No matter how big Chen Guo's Internet cafe was, it wasn't very upscale, so she had never interacted with these kinds of people before. Then she heard Lou Guanning introduce her as Team Happy's boss and she finally understood the point of this party.

"Getting sponsors?" Chen Guo quietly asked Lou Guanning after chatting about nonsense with the two for a bit.

"That's right." Lou Guanning nodded.

It was only then that Ye Xiu's group understood what connections Lou Guanning wanted them to make at this party. Bringing them here was extremely generous. Both being teams in the alliance, they could be considered rivals.

"Little Lou, you're really too nice!" Chen Guo had completely accepted Lou Guanning by now, not having any further reason to dislike him.

Chen Guo had no experience in this sort of situation, but she had guts and the heart to give her all to the team. She wanted to be a good boss, so she dutifully went to find people to establish connections with. With Chen Guo's openness, she was good at making friends on the fly, but her attitude became a little rude in this situation. Chen Guo evidently understood that as well, so she was careful to be a little more reserved. However, there were many people among Lou Guanning's guests that didn't really understand Glory and its competitive scene, so Chen Guo was having some difficulty communicating. However, she refused to give up, still inserting herself into conversations wherever she could.

This sort of thing wasn't something Steamed Bun could manage either. This guy acted like he was in a zoo, wandering around randomly and occasionally running back to Ye Xiu's group to gush about something he had just seen. Whenever someone came up to talk to him, he would introduce himself as Steamed Bun and sometimes show them the tattoo on his left arm, shocking people left and right. Being able to expose your arm to this cold winter was rather impressive.

As for Ye Xiu and Tang Rou, the two stayed curled in a corner. Tang Rou had casually taken a glass of wine to sip at while Ye Xiu held a very deep ashtray, going through cigarette after cigarette and filling the air around them with smoke. Tang Rou was a radiant-looking lady, yet no one had come up to talk to her, all thanks to Ye Xiu.

They didn't ask when the party ended. From when they arrived, guests continuously came in. Lou Guanning was at the center of it all, being able to chat a bit with everyone, no matter their age or gender. Then, when he glanced over at Ye Xiu and Tang Rou, he tapped his glass twice and dragged Happy into the spotlight. "Today, I have a few good friends that I would like to introduce to everyone."

"This guy..." Ye Xiu was helpless and could only come over with the others cooperatively as they were introduced.

Who would've thought that after this introduction, a voice of discord would appear in the party.

"Hahahaha, since when did a bunch of gamers get so serious as if they did anything of note?"

Everyone turned to look at the voice. The owner was a tall, handsome young man. He was rather rude, but he looked to be gentle and refined with an extraordinary air.

"Who on earth is this?" Ye Xiu asked Lou Guanning.

"No idea!" Lou Guanning replied.

"I say, isn't this your party?" Ye Xiu was a little exasperated.

"I threw it very casually and didn't send out invites, so anyone who passes by can come in and see what's going on," Lou Guanning answered.

Chapter 934: Hand Speed

"So in reality, the people that we're meeting today, you've only known since today, as well?" Ye Xiu looked at Lou Guanning.

"Hahahaha... Actually, my social life is mostly based in Glory as well. You should understand," Lou Guanning said.

Ye Xiu was speechless. He understood this all too well. That meant, though Lou Guanning looked like a social butterfly, he was, in fact, a hermit that was completely obsessed with gaming. However, his identity and background was different, so we managed to fit in here naturally.

"You seem pretty familiar with this place?" Ye Xiu asked. Ye Xiu and co didn't even need invites to get into this private club. With just a single notice from Lou Guanning and they could enter and exit at will. It was clear that he had good relations with this place's owner.

"Of course, we always come here to play Glory, after all!" Lou Guanning explained.

"Impressive..." Ye Xiu gave Lou Guanning a resolute thumbs-up. A year's worth of membership in this sort of club might cost several hundred thousand, maybe even over a million. Playing Glory here and playing Glory in an Internet cafe were two completely different concepts.

.

The two were still chatting over here when Chen Guo had long since charged over to the guy with reckless abandon.

"What did you say!?" Chen Guo was very clear on the fact that anyone who could come here would all be rich and upscale. The young man in front of her looked like that too, obviously not a normal person. However, being mocked like this wasn't something that she could take sitting down.

"Yelling like that, you've used too much commoner's language, haven't you?" The young man glanced at Chen Guo, not moved by the fact that she was a beautiful woman, and continued to mock at them without care, "All you people know is how to play games. You don't know what to do with your lives and remain uncultured and uneducated. Does your existence truly have any value?"

Chen Guo was even more angry, but she couldn't help but admit that what the young man said was a rather common view in many parts of society. Even though Glory's pro circle was so active and grand nowadays, there were still many who didn't view gaming as any sort of worthwhile skill. When Chen Guo was chatting with all these people before, she had gotten such a feeling as well. For these people, Glory was no more than a tool they could use to earn money. Speaking of Glory's commercial future was much more effective than talking with them about how interesting or how classic this game was.

They didn't care what game this was or how interesting it was, all they saw was what profits this game could bring them. As for pro players? In their eyes, pros were just cash-trees. What pro players dedicated to this game was something these people wouldn't understand.

"I don't have anything to say to people like you..." Chen Guo wasn't a particularly eloquent person, her emotions were intensely felt, but hard to express with words. She could only bite out these words without thinking it through.

"Haha, see? Uneducated. Of course you can't say anything. As for people like me, well, we can't be compared to people like you."

"You can't say that now!" Ye Xiu finally walked over, "Many players of Glory are talented in many ways. For them, gaming is just a way of relaxing, a hobby. It's no different from if you come to this club to drink a little or go for a few rounds of cards."

"I'm sorry, I wasn't talking about those people who see games as a pastime. I'm talking about you, pro players who don't know anything but playing games."

"Who says that all we know is how to play games?" Ye Xiu said.

"Really?" The young man's gaze swept across the room before alighting on a corner and he smiled, saying, "Then do you have any sort of talent that you can show everyone? How about the piano or some other kind of musical instrument? Why don't you play a song for us?"

The corner which the young man had set his gaze on had a piano sitting there. This could be a decoration, or you could find someone to play tunes on it, or one of the guests could come up and play something for everyone. With those words, he turned to Ye Xiu with a mocking expression, as if certain that the other would only humiliate himself here.

"Musical instruments?" Ye Xiu paused. "Talent doesn't necessarily mean music, no?"

"Haha, then what can you do? Drink tons without getting drunk?" The young man laughed exaggeratedly, glancing left and right as if expecting people to laugh with him. There were people who laughed with him, but everyone was very reserved in their laughter. No one openly laughed aloud.

"I apologize, but I'm even worse at alcohol. Then I'll play a tune, as you suggested?" Ye Xiu said.

"What did you say?" The man widened his eyes, face full of surprise.

Ye Xiu ignored him, walking over to the piano under the shocked stares of many people, including Lou Guanning and Chen Guo.

"I say," Ye Xiu suddenly spoke up again, "Do you know how to play, having challenged me to do so?"

"Of course," Despite his expression of disbelief, he still replied with confidence.

"That's good..." Ye Xiu reached out and pressed a random key before saying, "I'm going to play a tune. After that, I don't need you to play it any better, I just want you show me that you, too, can play the original tune..."

"Hahaha," The person didn't wait for Ye Xiu to finish before laughing again. "You don't know how to play and are just going to play randomly, aren't you? Don't you think such tricks are rather boring?"

Ye Xiu smiled slightly, not explaining. His hands were already on the keys.

"Wow, this God has much more depth to him than he shows!" Lou Guanning breathed out in awe.

"This really is quite deep..." Chen Guo, who had just walked over, said, still stunned.

As they talked, Ye Xiu had already begun to play. Like a storm that arrived without warning, it came suddenly, a burst of wild notes like an explosion, darting into everyone's ears.

"What is this?" Chen Guo was shocked, Lou Guanning stared dumbly, yet Tang Rou had already found humor with just a few notes, laughing very very cheerfully.

"What?" Chen Guo hurriedly asked. From what she heard, it sounded like Ye Xiu was just slamming on keys randomly.

"Flight of the Bumblebee," Tang Rou said.

"What?" Chen Guo was confused.

"This tune is called Flight of the Bumblebee. It's a tune with a very fast rhythm; most people play it to show off their hand speed," Tang Rou explained.

"Hand Speed?" Chen Guo was stunned for a moment, before finally understanding why Tang Rou was smiling.

"How shameless, that's just bullying!" Chen Guo said with a massive grin.

"Yup, he's definitely bullying him..." Tang Rou nodded.

"That guy definitely can't play this, right?" Chen Guo watched the young man, delighting in his misfortune. The young man's face was twisted in shock, seeming to have no idea what to do.

"Not just him. At this pace, there's probably no one on earth that can manage it," Tang Rou said.

"You've got to exaggerating!" Chen Guo was shocked.

"At least not that I know of..." Tang Rou also felt like she had exaggerated a little too much and hurriedly corrected herself.

With just these few sentences, Ye Xiu finished his performance. Because he was so fast, it was just several tens of second before Ye Xiu had finished the tune. The crowd was silent, looking at Ye Xiu wide eyed. Out of the people here, there was probably none that didn't understand music at all, and that was why everyone was so shocked.

"Should we clap?" Chen Guo whispered at Tang Rou.

"Probably not!" Tang Rou said.

"How come?"

"Actually, apart from being fast and accurate, there's nothing of note about the performance itself," Tang Rou explained.

"He probably learned the song just to train his hand speed!" Chen Guo guessed.

"I think so..." Tang Rou said.

Anyone who had any form of accomplishment in music all shared Tang Rou's thoughts. Such a fast performance was worthy of applause, but the problem was that this guy only pursued speed and nothing else. Any sort of tune had content and emotion, but this performance had pretty much no artistic aesthetic behind it. You could even say that this performance didn't even have rhythm, it was just fast, fast, and faster, as fast as possible. Apart from that, he had been accurate. Applause for this sort of performance? Everyone felt like that was a disrespect to art.

Ye Xiu didn't seem to care about this, standing up once he had finished and asked the perpetrator casually, "Should I give an encore?"

"You... You..." The man was a little panicked, but luckily he was someone with some skill and understanding. "Your performance was just fast; you don't understand anything about music!"

"Don't put it like that. All you can say is I'm not very accomplished in music, but I did, at least, manage to accurately play a piece, right? You're up next," Ye Xiu said with a smile.

The man's face was red, unable to say a word.

"Seems like you can't manage it, what a shame, then..."

"I didn't agree to anything!" This guy was evidently afraid that Ye Xiu would use this against him to humiliate him in front of everyone and luckily cut Ye Xiu off before Ye Xiu could make any sort of arrangements, and Ye Xiu didn't continue. In the current moment, he couldn't be bothered with civilities anymore, grabbing onto this like a lifeline and hanging on shamelessly.

"I never had you agree to anything, but you really can't play it, can you?" Ye Xiu said.

"There's no meaning to this sort of performance anyways!" The guy made an excuse.

"Well, since you can't play it, then I can only deem you as someone who doesn't know what to do with their life and is uncultured and uneducated," Ye Xiu said.

"You..." The young man was enraged, but someone tugged at him. Turning his head, he saw it was one of the employees from the club.

"Young master Lu, you're drunk..." Hearing of what was happening, the staff of the club hurriedly came over. In the end, what they saw was the end of this young master's thorough humiliation. On their way, they had already learned of the situation and knew it was this man that had been the perpetrator of this trouble.

Lou Guanning and co usually were holed up in the club playing Glory, rarely appearing in these social situations, so not many people recognized them. This young man obviously didn't realize this, so he had no idea what sort of background the one who threw this party had. Seeing the pro players being introduced, he had resolutely began mocking them out of disdain. If he knew the background of the one that threw this party, he wouldn't have made such a huge ruckus of this, even if he was disdainful. He didn't have any sort of grudge, after all.

The club staff came to smooth things out. They couldn't afford to anger any of these people and didn't dare to show favoritism to any side. If they started calling people out, that would be excessive. That would be forcing one side to bow, and would probably anger a lot of people. So these staff came and

gave this white lie in order to give one side a way out. If both sides could compromise, then this thing would soon be over.

It was unfortunate that with the enraged young master Lu, this became a futile hope.

"I'm not drunk!" The man referred to as young master Lu responded angrily, seeming to be unwilling to let go.

Chapter 935: Could I Trouble You

"How was I?" Ye Xiu stopped paying attention to Young Master Lu, who was arguing incessantly, and returned to his little clique.

"Your hand position is too ugly." Tang Rou sighed.

"My left hand's okay, but my right hand always feels a bit twisted." Ye Xiu said.

"Why?" Chen Guo asked.

"My right hand is used to holding a mouse." Ye Xiu said.

"..."

"You probably only know how to play that piece, don't you!" Chen Guo said.

"Of course not!" Ye Xiu said proudly.

"Oh?" Chen Guo was surprised.

"I know one other song." Ye Xiu said.

"..." Chen Guo was once again rendered speechless. Knowing one piece or two was practically the same thing, no? It seemed like he only played the piano to practice his hand speed.

"Which other one?" Tang Rou was quite interested.

"Pathetique third movement." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh." Tang Rou nodded her head.

"What's that?" Chen Guo didn't feel ashamed to ask.

"Beethoven's Sonata Pathetique. It consists of three movements. The third movement has a fast tempo." Tang Rou said.

"Uh..." Chen Guo stared at Ye Xiu. Her expression was complicated. It was hard to connect the guy in front of her and a famous musician like Beethoven, even in this situation.

Young Master Lu felt even more unhappy, when he saw them chatting pleasantly together. He completely ignored the club staff, who had tried to give him a way out of this embarrassing situation, and walked over: "I'm not done! Don't run!"



"Do you need another show of talent? Would you like me to show everyone some boxing?" Steamed Bun heard his words and jumped out excitedly.

"Box.... boxing?" Young Master Lu stared blankly. From his hesitation, that didn't seem to be something he was good at.

"Are you threatening me?" Young Master Lu looked at the guy, who was waving his fists around eagerly.

Steamed Bun looked puzzled: "Threaten? Isn't this a talent show? I do it once, then you do it. If you can't do it, then you lose."

Young Master Lu was furious. This guy must be trying to humiliate me! I haven't even finished settling that previous grudge and now this guy wants to take the initiative to strike at me.

"If you want to play this game, then I should be allowed to go first. The rest is the same. How about it?" Young Master Lu said.

"That's reasonable!" Steamed Bun nodded his head, "What are you going to be performing!"

"I'm going to play a piece too. If...."

"What? I thought you didn't know how to?" Steamed Bun interrupted and questioned him.

"Who says I don't!" Young Master Lu roared.

"You just said that you couldn't." Steamed Bun said.

"How does that count? I'm going to be playing real music!" Young Master Lu shouted.

"Real music? What's that?" Steamed Bun didn't understand.

"You'll know soon." Young Master Lu smiled with confidence and strode over to the piano. He knew very well that it was astonishing how the way that guy played the piece with purely speed and without rhythm nor musicality, it didn't mean anything. That guy had actually played a clever trick. However, speed alone couldn't capture an audience. Young Master Lu believed in his piece. Just based on the types of people here, his audience had superior taste. That guy's way of playing was only good for scaring plebeians who didn't understand music!

As if he was scared of being blocked, Young Master Lu quickly dashed over to the piano.

The party had gone down to a standstill. Everyone was watching the ongoing drama, but when Young Master Lu began playing his piece, everyone was gradually enamored by the music. Even for someone like Chen Guo, who couldn't appreciate the complexities of music, could recognize that Young Master Lu was on a higher level than Ye Xiu through just the simple reasoning that it sounded good.

"He really is quite good." Tang Rou nodded her head.

"Should we give him a round of applause?" Ye Xiu didn't really care.

"You're planning on bringing things to a conclusion?" Chen Guo asked.

"Do you think ignoring him would be a good idea?" Ye Xiu said.

"Despicable!" Chen Guo wasn't happy. Putting it plainly, this time, Ye Xiu had left too big of an opening. He gave the other side an opportunity to counterattack. Even Chen Guo could tell that Young Master Lu was a superior piano player, let alone the others at the party. By the time that guy finished, he would arrogantly follow up with a provocation and push Ye Xiu into doing something beyond his ability. "Ignoring him" was too shameful of a solution.

"Have Little Tang go up against him." Ye Xiu said.

"Oh?" Chen Guo looked at Tang Rou.

"Look at how clear she is on this subject and you'll know that she's an expert." Ye Xiu said.

"Really?" Chen Guo had always felt like Tang Rou wasn't an ordinary person.

"Mm... if you compare me to Ye Xiu, then I'd dare to call myself a God." Tang Rou smiled.

"Then what about compared to him?" Chen Guo said.

Tang Rou smiled, but didn't reply.

During their conversation, Young Master Lu had finished his performance. The audience gave a sincere round of applause. Young Master Lu seemed very satisfied with his performance and politely bowed to express his gratitude, thanking the audience for knowing what was what; the audience recognized true gold and wouldn't get swindled by that guy's little trick.

"I say...." Young Master Lu looked over to their side smugly.

"Now it's my turn to fight a round of boxing, right!" Steamed Bun jumped out excitedly.

"..."

"I'll go!" Tang Rou smiled and stepped forward.

"Mm?" Young Master Lu saw that it wasn't Ye Xiu and was surprised. He stood still, not moving.

"I can't?" Tang Rou said.

"You're also a pro player?" Young Master Lu said.

"I'm still a bit lacking compared to a pro player, but becoming a pro player is my goal." Tang Rou said.

Young Master Lu had been confident with his performance, so he displayed some grace in front of this beauty. He didn't say anything more and moved aside, inviting her to use the piano.

Tang Rou nodded her head as if to give a greeting to everyone and sat down.

Her two hands stroked the keyboard. In an instant, piano sounds danced about.

Fast!

Tang Rou played very fast, but it wasn't like Ye Xiu who only pursued speed. All of his notes had been squeezed together with practically no pauses. Tang Rou also played fast, but her playing had purpose and followed a certain tempo. Despite the fast tempo, every note was solid and steady, displaying her extremely deep fundamentals.

"Ah, it sounds familiar." Chen Guo heard Tang Rou's piece and felt pleasantly surprised.

"Uh, that's the other piece that I know how to play." Ye Xiu said.

Beethoven's Sonata Pathetique Third Movement.

"I've heard of it before?" Chen Guo was surprised.

"There are a lot of famous pieces that are recognized by everyone. Many just don't know the name of the piece, that's all." Ye Xiu said.

"Then the piece you played wasn't famous!" Chen Guo said.

"Maybe someone else would have recognized the tune...." Ye Xiu said.

"Little Tang is playing better than that guy, right!" Chen Guo said.

"Can't you tell just from everyone's reactions?" Ye Xiu smiled.

Ye Xiu had shocked everyone, but that was because they didn't think the piece could be played at such speed. On the other hand, Young Master Lu's serenade had been quite good, and everyone expressed their appreciation towards it. However, Tang Rou's performance was both shocking and appreciative. It was beyond their expectations.

As for Young Master Lu, the look on his face was even more brilliant. Even though he had been shocked by Ye Xiu's performance, he didn't feel embarrassed because he understood that even if he could repeat that same performance, it would just be a joke. Who played the piano like that? However, Tang Rou's performance gave him a feeling of powerlessness. When it was obvious who played better than the other, the disparity between the two sides wasn't small. Young Master Lu could not be blamed. Only those at a professional level could give rise to such a feeling of powerlessness in him.

The audience erupted into an applause after the final note. Tang Rou politely expressed her thanks to everyone and smiled towards Young Master Lu.

"I feel sorry that a pianist at your level wants to become a pro player." Young Master Lu said.

"Then I'll have to trouble you." Tang Rou said.

"Aren't you letting down your family with that choice?" Young Master Lu said.

"I'll also have to trouble you with her family." A voice drifted over from the main entrance to the party. Everyone turned their heads to see who it was. When they saw the speaker, the expressions of many in the audience changed. There were clearly many who recognized this person, and in this type of club, someone who was recognized by the vast majority of the people here clearly wasn't someone simple. Even Young Master Lu's expression couldn't help but change when he turned his head to see the speaker. His expression was filled with disbelief.

This person had come over with a glass of wine. He clearly wasn't here for Lou Guanning's party. He walked over to the piano and everyone in his path moved out of his way.

"When I heard those piano notes, I thought it was you." The newcomer walked directly towards the piano. He didn't even glance at Young Master Lu and started talking directly to Tang Rou.

"Hee hee." Tang Rou didn't say anything. She simply chuckled naughtily.

"Why are you here?" The newcomer asked.

"I dropped by with some of my friends." Tang Rou said.

"Oh?" The newcomer came with Tang Rou over to Ye Xiu's little circle.

"This is my father." Tang Rou introduced.

Ye Xiu and the others looked at each other. They felt that Tang Rou wasn't simple. Ye Xiu had been wondering if she had run away from home like he had, but from how the father and daughter spoke to each other, their relationship seemed very normal. If she had ran away from home, it would have been surprising if she wasn't beat to death!

"These three are your friends?" Father Tang looked at Ye Xiu's group and smiled.

"Yeah! Ye Xiu, Chen Guo, Steamed Bun." Tang Rou introduced one after the other.

"It's Bao Rongxing. Hi, uncle." Steamed Bun replied rather enthusiastically.

"Hi everyone." Father Tang greeted. His next few words were ordinary words, expressing how he was indebted to everyone for taking care of his daughter. As for the other guests, they had gathered over almost like they were lining up. They were clearly trying to get an opportunity to say a few words to him. However, after Father Tang said a few normal words to Ye Xiu and the others, he gave a toast to everyone and then pulled Tang Rou to the side to talk.

Ye Xiu and the others didn't know what exactly Father Tang's identity was, but judging from how eighty percent of the searches for the surname resulted in him, Tang Rou was at the very least the daughter of a very influential family.

"Keeping one's own counsel." Chen Guo sighed.

"Hey, that what's his name isn't done yet! Don't run!" At this moment, Lou Guanning suddenly leaped out. Everyone looked over and saw Young Master Lu getting ready to slip away.

"After having enough fun watching the show, now you come out to say something?" Chen Guo said.

"I was having so much fun that I almost forgot that this was my party!" Lou Guanning said.

Chapter 936: Finisher

As the host of this party, Lou Guanning would lose a lot of face running into this sort of trouble. Then, Ye Xiu and Tang Rou came out to slap faces and. In the end, even Tang Rou's dad came, blow after blow landing on the troublemaker, resulting in Lou Guanning not even having the chance to make a move. If he really let Young Master Lu go just like that, how was he going to show his face in the future?

Young Master Lu had wanted to flee when no one was paying attention, yet someone had seen him. Running away without care was something that uncultured people did. For them, on the other hand, image was very important.

Young Master Lu turned his head back, afraid to initiate anything further, just waiting to see what Lou Guanning had planned.

"I remember there was a rule here, that if more than a certain number of members agreed, we could kick someone out, right?" Lou Guanning said, looking at the club staff that had yet to leave.

Everyone was surprised upon hearing this. They hadn't thought that this host, who had been watching the drama unfold all this time, would suddenly strike, and strike so viciously. Getting kicked from the club was a most humiliating thing.

Hearing this, the staff were also shocked, but the guest had asked for the rules, so he could only oblige and answer truthfully, "Yes."

"Wonderful. Then I suggest we kick out this uncultured, uneducated person, who doesn't seem to have any idea what to do with his life. Does anyone concur?" Lou Guanning immediately called out. Ye Xiu and the others heard his tone, immediately reminding them of someone shouting and looking for a party outside a dungeon entrance!

The guests were all here to spectate. Who would concur to such an offensive decision? Ye Xiu's group weren't members themselves, so they didn't have the right to concur.

"I concur."

"I agree."

"I'm all for this."

"I'm definitely in accord."

It was then that several voices rose up in agreement. The guests were all shocked. Someone was willing to risk offending people and agree?

Ye Xiu's group turned to look, only to find that the ones that sent out voices of agreement were Zou Yunhai, Wen Kebei, Gu Xiye, and Zhong Yeli. The four of them were composed as they walked over to stand at Lou Guanning's side, looking at Young Master Lu tauntingly.

These people...

Ye Xiu paused for a moment before having a sudden understanding.

Zou Yunhai and the other three could give a response, meaning that they were members of the club, and if you wanted to join a club like this, you had to be worthy of it. If they were just Lou Guanning's playmates, then they would, at most, be like Ye Xiu's group, here as Lou Guanning's guests. If they wanted to be members, then they had to have some sort of background. If they were merely Lou Guanning's Glory friends, then that wasn't enough.

Seeing how these four were also dressed immaculately, fitting in completely with the environment, how could they possibly be normal Glory players? These four were also of the upper-class. Considering their age and how they were always holed up, playing Glory, it was evident that they couldn't have been young geniuses that built themselves up from scratch. They should also be the young masters of rich families.

Team Heavenly Swords wasn't just the creation of Lou Guanning, this one money warrior, but rather five money warriors.

No wonder they hadn't listened to Ye Xiu's suggestion to find a skilled veteran to strengthen their team. It was because their team, no matter what, would have them five as the core. This could not be changed. This team was theirs and the five of them were all bosses in their own right. They had built a team to have fun in the pro circle, not as an investment. Anyone who came to Team Heavenly Swords would want to take the place of a core member. This sort of stable line-up of Team Heavenly Sword's was unprecedented and very possibly never to occur again. That was why the addition of a God like Sun Zheping who had special circumstances made Lou Guanning so happy. Otherwise, nevermind a God, any skilled player wouldn't be able to accept being a sub in a team where they would never have a chance to become a core player of.

The number of people who had concurred with the idea of kicking young master Lu out had suddenly become five. Young Master Lu's complexion became extremely ugly. He didn't recognize any of these people, but being members of this club, they definitely weren't normal people. Yet with the situation between them having escalated to this, Young Master Lu didn't bother to worry about offending them. Seeing that there were a total of five, he laughed mockingly. "So few people, I think that's far from enough."

"Count me in as well." Young Master Lu then heard a voice say from behind him.

Who was this?

Thinking of how Tang Rou's father had come before, Young Master Lu felt that this definitely was a good omen. Turning his head to look, he saw a person who only lacked the words "savage" written on his face walk in. The people who came in and out of the club, even the staff, were all well-dressed. Only Ye Xiu's group wasn't up to standard. This was also one of the reasons why Young Master Lu felt disdain when seeing them: dog meat wasn't fit for ceremony\*. However, this person, was also dressed casually, not at all classy enough for this club. Yet since this person could concur, he also had to be a member.

Young Master Lu didn't recognize this person either, but he saw that the staff had already gone over to him, greeting him respectfully, "Young Master Zhong came."

"Yup, I came, do we have enough people yet?" The person referred to as Young Master Zhong was that frenemy of Lou Guanning's. The party had already been going on for half a day and this guy only arrived now, it was definitely not giving the host any face. Yet as soon as he came, the first thing he did was back the host up.

"Um, I still don't think it's enough..." The club staff said.

"Really? How many votes are we missing? I'll call them over!" As Young Master Zhong said this, he grabbed his phone. With the way he was yelling, it was like he was calling for reinforcements in a gang war or something.

Young Master Lu looked around at the people present, his head aching.

Tang Rou's father was obviously controlling himself. Considering his identity, he was above getting into petty fights with these juniors. After shutting up Young Master Lu with a single sentence, he had gone to one side to talk with his daughter, completely ignoring the matter.

What about Young Master Zhong? He didn't have any sort of elder's tolerance. What this guy did most often in this club was make a big deal out of something small, and make it such a deal that there was no way to settle it. Causing trouble was his forte. Why was he so unlucky as to have run into this guy today?

At this point, going over to try and smooth things over would be uttering humiliating. Young Master Lu, face pale, glared at them as well as Young Master Zhong, whom he was secretly somewhat afraid of.

"I see how it is..." With that sentence, Young Master Lu turned and left.

"Hey, how come you're leaving? You should at least struggle a bit. Are you just willing to get kicked out without any resistance?" Young Master Zhong was still yelling loudly.

Yet what reason would Young Master Lu have for turning back? He was gone quickly, as if he had activated an Assassin's Shadow Move. In the end, he still ran like a street gangster that couldn't win in a fight. However, this was a smart move considering the situation. Running and ruining his own image gave the other side a reason to stop. After all, running off like that was better than being kicked out. It would be too easy for others to misunderstand being kicked, thinking that he had done something terrible. It would ruin his reputation.

"How boring!" Seeing Young Master Lu running away, Young Master Zhong put away his phone as his interest flagged visibly.

"You're early!" Lou Guanning didn't express any form of gratitude to Young Master Zhong at all, his first words mocking how late this guy was.

"Shut up. I just came out of a Board of Directors meeting. Do you think I'm like you, having nothing to do but play games?" Young Master Zhong asked.

Ye Xiu's group was bewildered by the true nature of the relationship between these two, sweat dripping at these words. Wouldn't you call taking the time to find someone just to strike a blow at Lou Guanning's face "having nothing to do"? Board of Director's meeting? Placing something like that with this person was like talking about Ye Xiu and Beethoven together. They did not complement each other at all, completely unimaginable.

"Hey, you guys came too." Young Master Zhong even greeted Ye Xiu's group, surprising them greatly.

By the time he had finished greeting them, a waiter had already brought over a plate of wine glasses.

Young Master Zhong took one glass at random, raising it in a toast to everyone. "I'd arranged to meet with someone about a contract, so I was just passing by. Now that I've finished passing by, bye bye." After that, he put the emptied glass back on the plate and left.

"Your friend..." Chen Guo seemed to have a thought.

"Yes?" Lou Guanning asked.

"Was he really passing by, or was he busy and came over for you after hearing of your trouble?" Chen Guo asked.

"God knows what he's thinking." Lou Guanning seemed to think it not worth his time to consider Young Master Zhong's train of thought.

With Young Master Lu's departure, the party went back to normal. It was just that with Tang Rou's father here, more and more people began to pay attention to Ye Xiu's group. Originally, with their unfitting attire, everyone could tell they weren't on their level, so very few people initiated conversation with them. Now, everyone kept coming over. Even Ye Xiu, who kept hiding in a corner, smoking, had been pulled into a conversation by someone. Team Happy wasn't something that went in one ear and came out the other anymore. Many people had taken notice, prepared to research once they got back, especially what the heiress of the Tang family was doing there. That was the crucial point.

No one knew where Tang Rou and her father had gone. All they knew was that they came back a long time after they had left. With her identity, not dressed well? That could easily be ignored.

With Tang Rou's return, she was immediately surrounded. These immaculately dressed people seemed to have forgotten all propriety.

"Don't you think it might be time for us to leave?" Chen Guo hurriedly suggested, seeing the situation. Lou Guanning, their host, for the first time didn't seem to want them to stay.

Seeing that Tang Rou was going to leave, many voices called for them to stay, but no one dared to cling to them and force them to do so. Seeing that they still wanted to go, the crowd could only try to leave a good and lasting last impression as they sent Ye Xiu's group off. Lou Guanning's party almost ended because everyone wanted to say goodbye to Tang Rou.

"The car will be here soon." Lou Guanning could feel himself sweating at the sight of all these people who had lost their cool at the entrance of the club. These people were crowding around and fighting over a send off! The job of chauffeuring suddenly became a something everyone wanted to offer.

"My Lady!" It was at this moment that a car drove past the front door, parking itself at the side of the road. The chauffeur came out and called over.

An abrupt silence fell.

"Shall I drive you back?" The chauffeur said.

"What if we ride my dad's car?" Tang Rou asked Ye Xiu's group.

Who dared to try and argue when Tang Rou's father wanted to take them back?

"Sure." Ye Xiu didn't care at all.

The four got on and left. Lou Guanning let out a breath of relief.

"I never would've guessed that Soft Mist would be the heiress of the Tang Family," Zou Yunhai said, edging over. They were still more used to calling Ye Xiu's group by their in-game tags.

"Yeah... who would've?" Lou Guanning agreed.



## Chapter 937: As Long As You're Happy

The chauffeur deserved his title as a professional. He drove the car swiftly and steadily.

Tang Rou sat shotgun, while Ye Xiu, Chen Guo, and Steamed Bun sat in the back. No one said anything. Chen Guo fished out her cellphone and went online to do a quick search.

A moment later, she gently nudged Ye Xiu and put her cellphone in front of him to look at.

Tang Corporation Limited. The corporation started out as a spinning, weaving, printing, and dyeing business. After ten years of growth, their main business was in spinning and weaving. They were an enormous conglomerate with developments in several other areas as well and had about 14,000 employees. The corporation could even be ranked on an international level.

There was a big picture of the corporation's chairman, Tang Shusan, who was the person they had just met: Tang Rou's father. He had a huge list of gorgeous achievements and honors. The Internet didn't have much information on his family background though. Was Tang Rou an only child? Did she have any brothers or sisters? Searching for Tang Rou didn't yield any results.

Their hotel wasn't far. No one said a word on the way there, and they soon arrived. The chauffeur got out of the car and sent them on their way. After bidding them farewell, he left.

After the car drove off, Tang Rou turned around. The other three were standing neatly behind her.

"Miss, would you like us to carry your bags for you?" Ye Xiu asked.

Tang Rou didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"Go go go, let's go up first." Chen Guo called out.

When they returned to the room, the four sat together in a circle. Ye Xiu lit up a cigarette, but it was snatched away by Chen Guo.

Ye Xiu was helpless. He could only jump to the main topic. He looked at Tang Rou: "What's the situation?"

"Uh, it's not as complicated as you think it is." Tang Rou obviously knew that the other three wanted to talk to her.

"What?"

"I was originally studying music abroad, but I didn't want to anymore all of a sudden. Then, my father said that if I didn't want to anymore, then to just come back home, so I came back home. Then, he asked me what I wanted to do. I said I didn't know. He told me I should go and travel around to relax, so I did. Later, I passed by Happy and saw that it was hiring, so that's how I got there. And once I was there, I stayed." Tang Rou said.

"This... your father said that? He doesn't care what you do?" Chen Guo was dumbstruck.

"When I decided to stay here, I told him! I told him I found a job. He asked me what type of job? I said as an Internet cafe employee. He asked, what do you do there? I said that I managed the computers at an Internet cafe. He asked me how long I would do it and I said I didn't know. He said okay and told me to call and come back often. That's about it." Tang Rou said.

"That that that that.... That's not scientific at all!" Chen Guo was having an intense struggle in her heart. From what she had thought, Tang Rou had such a powerful background. There must be some sort of special reason or conflict that made her become an Internet cafe employee! But it turned out that everything between Tang Rou and her father was just that plain and simple. Let alone a household like hers, even a very normal family would be worried about their child's job, no?

"Hm? What's not scientific?" Tang Rou asked.

"Internet cafe employee..... this..."

"Haha, for me and my father, it doesn't matter what I do!" Tang Rou said.

"How can you say that?"

"Because he always tell me that it doesn't matter as long as I'm healthy and happy." Tang Rou said.

In this instant, everyone understood. Tang Rou had been born with a silver spoon in her mouth. She never had to worry about clothes or food. She was the child of a wealthy family who didn't know which direction to go. And it turns out that her father was someone who only hoped she enjoyed her life and didn't care which direction she went in.

Enjoying life. This concept differed from person to person. Some people considered struggling towards a goal as enjoying life. Some people considered having clothes and food and idling their time away as enjoying life. So on and so forth. In reality, Tang Rou was someone who treated struggling and competition as enjoying life, but the problem was that struggling and competing required a goal. During her time at the Internet cafe with Chen Guo, she was rather bored because she didn't have a goal, but now, Glory had become her inspiration, so now everyone could see a Tang Rou, who was filled with enthusiasm.

"Does your father know that you want to be a pro player?" Chen Guo asked.

"Yeah, he knows!" Tang Rou said.

"What does he think of it?" Chen Guo asked.

"He watched the Pro League streams three weeks in a row and even had his secretary record all of the matches for him. Then, he asked where I was." Tang Rou said.

"Pft..." Chen Guo couldn't help but laugh. No matter how powerful Tang Shusen was, it seemed like he was no different than the average father. He truly didn't know much about something like Glory, which was more of a young person thing.

"He should understand now, right?" Chen Guo said.

"He gets it now. He's been watching our journey through the Challenger League ever since." Tang Rou said.

"Does he understand it?" Chen Guo asked.

"He didn't at first, but slowly, he's getting a feel for it." Tang Rou said.

"Oh?"

"He at least knows that Soft Mist can't shoot bullets." Tang Rou said.

"Haha, you should help your father expand his knowledge on Glory." Chen Guo said.

"I heard that his secretary had to research Glory until his head bled." Tang Rou said.

"What a pity." Chen Guo sighed.

"That's just the way it is."

"So you can still continue playing for our team, right!" Chen Guo said.

"Of course." Tang Rou smiled.

"Then, let's keep working hard!" Chen Guo was excited. Tang Rou's identity had made her worried the most. She didn't know whether Tang Rou could continue playing the game with them, but she could finally relax.

"Let's rest for now. We'll go back tomorrow and get ready for the final round of the online portion of the Challenger League!" Chen Guo announced.

The next day, Lou Guanning personally came over to send them off.

"Where's Old Sun?" After Ye Xiu saw him, he asked about Sun Zheping's situation.

"He's already signed the contract. He'll be with us for now. He'll go over to you guys when you guys need him for the offline part of the Challenger League." Lou Guanning said.

"Use him well. Don't waste this opportunity." Ye Xiu patted Lou Guanning.

"Couldn't you describe it in a different way? Using him sounds too despicable." Lou Guanning said.

"Use? Exploit? Utilize? Put to use? Take advantage of?" Ye Xiu displayed his flexible vocabulary.

"..."

Airport, farewell, boarding, home.

Their biggest takeaway from their trip to All-Stars was getting a helping hand from Sun Zheping. Even though he could only provide a limited amount of help for them, for Happy, they didn't always need him to be there. A help of the hand at the crucial moment could turn situations around.

After this news was told to everyone else at Happy, Wei Chen and Wu Chen were astonished.

Wei Chen didn't need to be mentioned. He had fought against Sun Zheping in the past. He knew about how skilled the former number one Berserker was. As for Wu Chen, he had also heard of Berserker's fame. Such a powerful helper couldn't be compared to a jack of all trades who came from the game.

"What a pity. It'd be perfect if he wasn't injured." Wei Chen lamented.

"If he actually recovered, we wouldn't be able to get him to join us." Ye Xiu said.

"That's true." Wei Chen nodded his head. If Sun Zheping was truly at his peak, he would have joined another team long ago. He wouldn't be helping Happy, in any case.

"How's his equipment?" Wei Chen asked.

"It's okay." Ye Xiu said. Their requirements towards equipment emulated those of pro teams. Sun Zheping's equipment for Another Summer of Sleep was absolutely high-end in the Heavenly Domain, but for a pro team, it was just so-so.

"Let's see if he wants any of our equipment over here." Wei Chen was very generous at this moment.

"During this time, let's continue working hard to collect equipment!" Ye Xiu said.

"How's your Myriad Manifestations Umbrella going?" Wei Chen said.

"I'm still unsure about the materials for one part." Ye Xiu said. Self-made equipment was like this. If a single part wasn't good, a good piece of equipment couldn't be created. A passable one would affect the stats too. It wasn't impossible for Level 60 Silver equipment to have Level 40 stats. Ye Xiu wasn't certain about an important axle when the umbrella transformed. If the material he chose wasn't a good fit, it was known from past mistakes that, in the worst case scenario, the umbrella would immediately collapse when it transformed. In the best case scenario, it would damage its durability.

Ye Xiu had whittled it down to two materials. Both of them eliminated the possibility of the umbrella immediately collapsing, but he didn't know which one could guarantee its durability.

"Let me take a look." Wei Chen said. Ye Xiu took out what he had researched during this time and the two began discussing.

As soon as they arrived, Ye Xiu immediately got to work with Glory. Chen Guo was already speechless. He didn't want to chat about Tang Rou? How boring.

Not only did Ye Xiu not gossip about it, he even pulled Wei Chen over to talk about work. The remaining Wu Chen, Qiao Yifan, and Mo Fan weren't really targets for gossiping to, so Chen Guo could only endure.

"It really is troublesome." After Wei Chen and Ye Xiu studied for an hour, he also wasn't sure like Ye Xiu.

Wei Chen wasn't an equipment editor expert at first, but after retiring, he concentrated fully on it, especially after reaching Level 50. His research on Heavenly Domain materials was much deeper than Ye Xiu's. At this point, Ye Xiu had been focused on the matches. His research towards materials gradually slowed down. Right now, he was mainly relying on his solid foundation and inferred things from what he already knew. However, even Wei Chen wasn't sure either.

"If we can't think of anything, we can only test it out." Wei Chen sighed, "A 50% chance isn't bad. Let's gamble! Prepare the the earlier stage materials."

Earlier stage materials meant that if this upgrade failed, they could immediately create another Level 55 Myriad Manifestations Umbrella.

"It looks like that's our only choice." Ye Xiu sighed. Self-made equipment often came with uncertainties. In the end, they could only rely on testing directly. If the material used was optimal, they could record it. Sometimes there was nothing else that could be done.

"Hm?" Wei Chen suddenly thought of something, "Perhaps Luo Ji could calculate it?" .

"How do you calculate this?" Ye Xiu asked.

"Rubbish. If you understood how to do so, you would have done it already." Wei Chen said.

"Okay, then give it to him to see." Ye Xiu thought about it and contacted Lou Ji. He then told him about the problem and gave him a bunch of information.

Soon afterwards, Luo Ji replied: "This... I could calculate it in theory, but the information that you've researched doesn't help me that much. I would need the data on what materials were used in the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. What type of equipment could these materials create? The more information I have on that end, the more accurate of a grasp I'll have on the data."

"I understand that," Ye Xiu sighed, "but we just don't have that many materials to choose from."

#### Chapter 938: Offline Matches

Having researched Glory for so long, Ye Xiu might not have eaten pork before, but had still seen pigs run\*. In regards to researching and developing equipment, the pro clubs currently had two groups working on it in tandem. One was comprised of people like Ye Xiu and Wei Chen who utilized their knowledge and experience of Glory, the other did what Luo Ji had mentioned and used math to calculate and understand the specifics of each material. These two talents were people that the clubs would have on their development teams, supporting each other to complete research on Glory in general, not just custom equipment.

Theoretically, Happy had both kinds of people as well. However, while Wei Chen and Ye Xiu had plenty of experience and knowledge, Luo Ji was only beginning to apply his mathematical knowledge to Glory. That meant he had no stock of data and info to rely on. It was precisely this compiled data and information that was the core component of each team's R&D team. Even though Ye Xiu used to be Team Excellent Era's captain, he still wouldn't have been able to obtain all of this information. As for Wei Chen, there was no need to mention him; back in his day and age, R&D wasn't so structured, they all relied purely on experience.

"How about we do this," another message came from Luo Ji, "Compile a list of all the materials used in each upgrade and the creation of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. Then, list out all the uses of these materials that you can think of. Give me the stats and data of the equipment these materials are used in, the more detailed the better, and I'll see if I can find a pattern within."

"Ok!" Ye Xiu replied with a simple word, but Wei Chen's face had already gone green. Only people who had researched Silver Equipment before knew how much work was involved in such a job.

"It's not just me who will be doing it," Ye Xiu said to the green-faced Wei Chen, "You should organize everything you know about materials as well. We still have so much silver equipment to research!"

Wei Chen immediately understood what he meant by this. They would start building Happy's database up from this day forth.

"I really can't believe that we're starting to get there!" Wei Chen suddenly had a feeling of being distanced from the world. To be honest, when Ye Xiu first pulled him in, he had the intentions of yoloing it for the last thrill before it all ended. People like him who understood the pro circle more clearly had less confidence in grassroots teams. The current pro league wasn't like how it had been eight or nine years ago.

Yet Happy had come this far, their players, equipment, funds, materials, and guilds had all come out from nothing. Now, their database was on its way to being built as well. Wei Chen had suddenly realized, Happy had gradually become a young sparrow, ready to fly. Any team that looked at Happy as a grassroots team would pay the price for underestimating them.

"Organize materials!" Wei Chen suddenly hollered, causing everyone in the room to jump in surprise. Yet he had already buried his head into his computer monitor, searching through his memories, the internet, and all the experience he had accumulated from his years of research, organizing them.

"Organize materials!" Without waiting for anyone to react, Ye Xiu suddenly hollered as well, before busying himself with his own computer.

"What's up with those two?" The room of people exchanged glances. All they could be sure of was that these two hadn't gone crazy. They were just extremely focused, even more focused than in matches.

The newest round of the Challenger League happening this week and the last round of the online matches, finally arrived on Friday. Team Happy had completed their last updates to their line-up before the last round. Berserker, Another Summer of Sleep, appeared on their member's list. However, a change like this in a team in the Challenger League wouldn't be noticed. Even the reporters that were interested in Happy didn't even notice.

The last online round of the Challenger League ended without suspense. The twenty teams that had survived till the offline matches had been locked in. Any team that could come to this point would have some sort of foundation in skill. However, for Happy, skilled normal player teams weren't enough to make them feel threatened. Apart from Excellent Era, Team Mysterious Fantasy, who had also been relegated last season, had also made it into the top twenty.

Mysterious Fantasy's relegation wasn't something shocking like Excellent Era's. In the last season, they had been steadily last for 90 percent of the time, not giving any other teams a chance to take their spot. Their relegation was undebatable; they were the weakest, there was no fault with that result.

However, their weakness was relative.

In comparison to normal player teams, they were definitely much stronger. However, in the pro circle, Mysterious Fantasy couldn't even match up to Everlasting. Everlasting had three years of experience in the pro league, while Mysterious Fantasy hadn't even been able to hold on for two years before getting kicked out. In addition, their ability to remain in the league seemed to be all thanks to a miraculous idea of getting retired veteran Zhang Yiwei to coach them. With such an experienced ex-pro giving pointers, Mysterious Fantasy's rookies managed ok in their first season, but Zhang Yiwei wasn't able to pull off

another miracle in the second year, causing them to fall like a mountain's collapse. The topic of if a coach could change a team warmed up again.

Usually, a relegated team wanting to keep its strength was a hard task, but Mysterious Fantasy's members had pretty much all stayed. It wasn't so much that the team had done a good job as it was that other teams hadn't shown much interest in Mysterious Fantasy's members. Could a Mysterious Fantasy of this strength win against Excellent Era in the Challenger League? Normal players weren't bothered to even try to consider this question. In the past, the face off between two teams that were relegated in the same season would be the hottest topic of the Challenger League. As for this year? It was probably more worth your time to keep an eye on that grassroots team Happy that swore to beat Excellent Era than on Mysterious Fantasy!

After Mysterious Fantasy, another team with a history was Team Jade Dynasty\*\*. Jade Dynasty didn't just have background, but it even had a history. Even Ye Xiu and Wei Chen felt their hearts warmed by seeing the name Jade Dynasty. Team Jade Dynasty was a team that was in the League since its creation. Just this seniority was enough to instantly kill half the teams in the League right now.

However, in comparison to their seniority, what was more touching about Jade Dynasty was their rocky road to life.

From the very first year when Jade Dynasty joined the League, they had ranked last. However, since there was no relegations in the first year, they still participated the next year.

Unfortunately, in the second year, relegation became a thing and Jade Dynasty, who had been at the bottom of the charts again, were relegated.

In the third year, Team Jade Dynasty conquered the Challenger League

So they returned in the fourth year and were relegated once more.

In the fifth year they won the Challenger League again, entering the Alliance, and in the sixth year of matches, they were kicked again.

Jade Dynasty, with the moniker Revival King, had somehow slipped up in the seventh year and lost this "title". In this year's Challenger League, they had failed.

Then in the eighth year, they slipped up once more.

Jade Dynasty still hadn't disbanded, entering their ninth year, this year's Challenger League.

Nine years of pro Glory, five in the Challenger League, Jade Dynasty was definitely the most experienced team in the Challenger League. However, there was probably no team in the pro league that really cared about how strong they really were anymore. Some teams might've even forgotten about their existence. A team that struggled even in the Challenger League didn't seem to be anything that the powerhouses of the alliance cared about, even if they did revive themselves.

Even Wei Chen was surprised at seeing Jade Dynasty's name in the list of twenty that had made it.

"Is it that Jade Dynasty?" Wei Chen asked in shock.

"It is that Jade Dynasty," Ye Xiu confirmed.

"They haven't disbanded yet?" Wei Chen asked.

"Not yet," Ye Xiu replied.

"This is an opponent worthy of our respect," Wei Chen said with great respect.

"Yes."

"If they get eliminated again, you think they'll finally disband?" Respect was respect, trash talking was trash talking.

"Who knows?" Ye Xiu responded.

"Do you still know anyone on the team?" Wei Chen questioned.

"That, I really am not sure of," Ye Xiu said. It was already the third year Jade Dynasty was struggling through in the Challenger League. Ye Xiu didn't know what line-up they had. Even if they had interacted in the sixth season, this sort of third string team wasn't one that would leave a deep impression on Ye Xiu's mind.

"Who was in it back then?" Wei Chen tried his best to remember, but it was obvious that the weak links would always not make much of an impression. Amongst Wei Chen's few memories in the pro league, all that he was left with about Jade Dynasty was their name.

The title of Revival King for Jade Dynasty was no more than a joke; no one truly cared to notice how they were doing. This was especially true after two years of failure, when it wasn't even a joke anymore; they were close to being completely forgotten.

"No matter what, we must take them seriously," Ye Xiu said solemnly.

"Yes yes, take them seriously." Wei Chen nodded. Only he knew if he was actually taking it to heart.

Excellent Era, Mysterious Fantasy, and Jade Dynasty. Those were the ones amongst the twenty teams that had some history of being in the pro league. Usually, they would be the titans of the Challenger League. Apart from them, it was just normal player teams, the real grassroots. Being able to get here, they definitely had some skill. The big teams would keep an eye on their behavior, and some might be noticed by the teams, becoming pro players.

What was a shame was that there were no teams amongst these grassroots teams that had taken names mocking Excellent Era. That was a big point of interest lost. However, in comparison to people who tried to use their team names to mock Excellent Era, Team Happy who had sworn to defeat them was the greatest taunt. That was because it seemed that Happy was serious!

The offline matches were about to begin and the big Glory media outlets finally decided the Challenger League worthy of more articles, Excellent Era's grand line-up, Mysterious Fantasy's coach Jade Dynasty's rise and fall, Happy's shameless boasting... These all became interesting topics. As for the alliance, they began to officially contact the teams, informing them of the place and time of their offline matches.

Yet before this, an important event needed to happen.

Drawing lots.



In some sense, an event that would determine the future of these teams had just begun.

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Super long TN ahead:

\*This means that though someone might not have personally been an expert at, worked in, or have intentionally undergone training in an area, they still had some idea of how it worked because of their experience.

\*\*Some of you may recognize Jade Dynasty from the MMORPG by the same name. This MMORPG is actually based on the novel, Jade Dynasty, also known as Zhu Xian (诛仙). The novel itself is very famous in China. It's considered a Chinese fantasy masterpiece. Along with Legend of the Simple Soldier (小兵传奇) and A Fleeting Journey (飘渺之旅), Zhu Xian is considered one of the Three Masterpieces. It was published in around 2003 (Qidian was created in 2003), so it could be considered as a defining work during the early Chinese scene.

Unfortunately, those early masterpieces like Legend of the Simple Soldier and A Fleeting Journey aren't being translated. I've also heard good things about other early s like 佣兵天下 (Mercenaries Under the Sky), 紫川 (Purple River), 风姿物语 (A Tale of Wind's Gesture). These most likely won't be translated though as I don't think they would be popular in the current scene, which is dominated by 'YY' novels (more on that later).

If you were around 2-3 years ago when the international scene began, you could consider Zhu Xian or those other two early works mentioned as the Coiling Dragon of the Chinese scene. It had around 30,000,000 views/clicks back when it was serialized, which is incredible, considering that there were way way fewer Chinese readers in the scene than now. TKA (serialized in 2011) had around 25,000,000 views/clicks to put that into perspective, and TKA is very popular in China.

The most popular/"clicked" is Battle Through the Heavens (斗破苍穹) published in 2008 with 151,300,000 views/clicks. BTTH could also be considered a defining work in the Chinese scene, although not necessarily because of the quality of the work unlike the three mentioned above. I want to say that along with IET's Stellar Transformations (also published in 2008), it helped popularize the scene immensely. I also want to say that BTTH is how YY novels got popularized. These are just conjectures though, so take it with a grain of salt. Also, in case you didn't know, YY novels are your typical Chinese s filled with tropes like arrogant young masters who don't recognize Mt. Tai, old grandpa teacher, alchemy, auctions, tournaments, faceslapping, OP MC, and so on. You can consider YY novels as fast food. They're very fun/delicious and addicting, but not exactly quality stuff. And there's nothing wrong with that. I have my fair share of YY novels that I love.

Chapter 939: Drawing Lots

The next groupings for the twenty teams would be determined by drawn lots. What opponents you would have was clear. If this was important or not, it was obvious from what had happened with the teams Everlasting and Sunset Fire.

These teams both had pro backgrounds and, under usual circumstances, wouldn't have too much of a problem getting into the offline match portion of the League. Yet the two hadn't draw lucky lots. Everlasting had gotten Happy and Sunset Fire managed to draw Excellent Era, being eliminated from the Challenger League early on. Everlasting had completely disbanded, and there hadn't been any news from Sunset Fire since. How many people would care to notice a poor eliminated Challenger League Team?

Such an important drawing of lots had to happen offline, of course, for transparency and fairness. Team Happy obtained messages via email and then phone, wanting them to confirm that they understood that they had to arrive at the Alliance's headquarters before January 18th for the lot drawing ceremony.

January 18th was a Saturday. Putting this on a weekend was an act of kindness from the Alliance. After all, many of the players had work or school and were only free on the weekend.

However, this kindness ended there. Following that, all the teams were gathered together for the offline matches, which would occur over the course of a full month. The work and school of the participants would be affected. Their own decision on how to proceed was on themselves.

"For this, I think I should just go?" Chen Guo suggested to everyone after getting the message from the Alliance.

To be honest, Chen Guo was feeling quite nervous. The captain or someone should be the one attending this sort of ceremony. However, Ye Xiu and Wei Chen had spent the past few days and nights organizing all of the knowledge they had accumulated over the years regarding materials. Chen Guo couldn't bear to trouble them with such an errand. The headquarters of the Alliance wasn't in H City, which would make this trip take even longer. Seeing how these two practically looked like they were trying to crack a minute into two halves to use, Chen Guo decided that she should be the one to handle the task.

"Sure, it doesn't matter who goes." Ye Xiu didn't care.

"Get a good draw." Wei Chen, on the other hand, had to give Chen Guo some pressure.

"I'll go with you?" Tang Rou said.

"No need, you should stay and continue training with the others!" Chen Guo said with a smile.

"That's true." Ye Xiu nodded, "We need to focus on preparing ourselves mentally for the matches to come."

In the end, Chen Guo, represented Happy to attend the Lot Drawing Ceremony.

January 18th, Glory Alliance Headquarters, the lot drawing ceremony began at 2 PM. Chen Guo arrived timely and sat in a random spot after registering her arrival. Taking a look around the place, she saw that a large group of people were crowding around one place. It was only after the host's urging that they slowly dispersed. Looking again, Chen Guo saw that Excellent Era's captain and vice captain were sitting there, Sun Xiang and Xiao Shiqin. Were those people crowding around to get autographs?

After watching everyone leave, the two spotted Chen Guo as well.

The two sides hadn't met each other many times, but they knew each other. Xiao Shiqin smiled and nodded in greeting and Chen Guo nodded back in acknowledgement. This scene was seen by many

people and they all began to guess what relationship this beautiful lady had with Xiao Shiqin. It was only under the host's urging, again, that the crowd quieted.

As the host announced the lot drawing ceremony in motion, the first one to walk onto the stage was the biggest Boss of the Glory Alliance, Chairman Feng Xianjun.

Though the Challenger League wasn't on the same level as the Pro League, it was still an official event hosted by the Alliance. No matter how limited the attention given to the Challenger League was, the Alliance itself still needed it. The big Boss Feng Xianjun had to come to such an event to say a few words, even if it was just civilities about his gratitude, well-wishes, and hopes.

After that, the ceremony started. First, the computer randomly gave each team a number and the teams began to go up one by one to draw their lots.

Team Happy was randomly assigned to draw their group fourth and their turn came quickly. Chen Guo rose and walked on stage, and the audience burst into a wave of discussion. Even though the attention given to the Challenger League might be limited, the teams that were in the Challenger League themselves were very well acquainted with the rumors and hot topics going around within the League. Team Happy had gained a lot of attention by challenging Excellent Era, and shortly after they defeated Team Everlasting, becoming the hottest topic in the Challenger League. In comparison, Excellent Era, who had also defeated a pro team, Sunset Fire, wouldn't become such a hot topic because it was to be expected!

Rumor had it that god Ye Qiu was at Team Happy. The representatives from each team had hoped to see him at the Lot Drawing Ceremony. Yet who they actually saw was this beautiful woman.

No matter how mysterious Ye Qiu was, there was no doubt that he was a guy. When the audience saw, they at least didn't have any strange and convoluted ideas and guesses about how Ye Qiu might actually be a beautiful lady.

"Team Happy, Group B."

After Chen Guo drew her slip, she took a glance at it before handing it over to the host. The host announced the draw and on the big screen, in the list of Group B teams, Team Happy's name appeared.

At that moment, four teams had been assigned groups. A and B each had a team and C had two, but D had yet to get any.

Chen Guo returned to her seat, taking a deep breath.

The teams that everyone took notice of was the pro teams. They all hoped to god that there wouldn't be a pro team in their group. Chen Guo was the same, so she had memorized the the number of Excellent Era, Mysterious Fantasy, and Jade Dynasty were positioned at, 12, 8, and 15 respectively.

After Chen Guo, number 5, 6 and 7 went up to draw their groups. The seventh team, called Seven Steps One Kill, managed to draw Group B, the same as Team Happy. Then, Chen Guo saw that, when the member of Seven Steps One Kill came down, he shot her an anxious glance and she realized that while she was focused on the three pro teams, Team Happy was a team of note, one to avoid for the other normal player teams.

This felt... pretty good!

Chen Guo enjoyed this feeling, but then the eighth team Mysterious Fantasy came onstage to draw their lot and the host soon announced their result: Group B.

Chen Guo paused for a moment and then looked over to see that member of Seven Steps One Kill again. Now he didn't just look anxious, he looked like he was about to cry.

Excellent Era, Mysterious Fantasy, Jade Dynasty, and Happy. These were the teams that were hard to deal with, which meant that each team would take a place for themselves.

Team Happy had gotten Group B, taking a place from there. It could be predicted that the competition for the remaining place would be intense, so the member of Ten Steps One Kill began to become nervous. Yet, Mysterious Fantasy took a spot in Group B. That meant that the remaining place had been taken as well. From now on, the result of Group B's competition was set. Seven Steps One Kill's member naturally wanted to weep.

Those who had drawn their lots and not gotten Group B felt immense relief. Those who had yet to draw their group watched Group B warily, silently praying to themselves. Everyone had the same wish in their hearts: Excellent Era and Jade Fantasy, if only they had also went to Group B.

Then, the tenth team, Team Trader drew Group B. When that player came down from the stage, his demeanor made him seem like he was the twin brother of Seven Steps One Kill's player.

Soon enough, it was number 12, Team Excellent Era's turn. The one who went on stage was Captain Sun Xiang, and he didn't even bother to check his group after drawing it, handing the slip directly to the host and leaving the stage before anything was even announced. This was a portrayal of Excellent Era's atypical status: these draws were meaningless to them.

"Team Excellent Era, Group D," the host announced.

All of the present players were stoic. Though everyone had been crowding around the two gods present at Excellent Era, the reality was that, with the current circumstances, no one wanted Excellent Era here. No one enjoyed seeing Sun Xiang's display of arrogance. Though everyone was willing to admit that they were, by far, no match for Excellent Era, they were all still hoping to win. Everyone loved miracles.

After Excellent Era, three of the strongest teams had already been assigned to a group, and only Jade Dynasty was left. Currently, the most nervous ones were Group D's teams, praying desperately that Jade Dynasty wouldn't fall into Group D.

This time, their prayers were answered.

"Team Jade Dynasty, Group A."

As the host announced this, the audience seemed to erupt. Everyone's tense and on edge nerves had finally found relief. Those in Group C were the luckiest, then Group A. Group D had Excellent Era, so there was little hope for that spot, but at the very least there was another for people to compete over. As for Group B... The teams in Group B didn't even want to speak.

The audience exploded into a ruckus, as if the drawing was already over, making number 16, who was coming onto the stage, extremely awkward. The host knew the reason for this commotion and knew

that it would be futile to try and maintain decorum. The numbers 16 to 20 quickly went by. Among them, one team had gotten Group B, but no one cared at all, so they could only silently go to one side and weep.

The assignments for the twenty teams had been completed, and the schedule of the matches was automatically generated and printed out by the computer, then distributed to all the representatives.

After all the members of the teams obtained a copy of the schedule and got their souvenirs, they took a group photo. This was an event that the chairman had to participate in. After Feng Xianjun took a picture with everyone, he started to chat with the two gods of Excellent Era and then turned, catching sight of Chen Guo.

"Team Happy," Feng Xianjun referred to Chen Guo by saying this, "How come Ye Qiu isn't here?"

Everyone's ears perked up.

Was Ye Qiu in Team Happy? This question was passed around, one day he wasn't there, and the next he wasn't Ye Qiu. No one ever gained a precise answer. Was the chairman's words a revelation?

"Er..." Chen Guo had no idea how to respond to this question. She had always had a thought: Ye Xiu had used his brother Ye Qiu's identity to play matches and now he was switching back. Would the Alliance acknowledge this?

Chen Guo had been tripped up by this, yet unexpectedly, someone came to her rescue. She wouldn't have ever expected this person to be Sun Xiang.

"As the captain, how could he not come to such an important event? Does Happy think themselves above the Challenger League?" Sun Xiang said.

Sun Xiang felt like he had made a very impressive taunt and the others did find it impressive: you clearly thought yourself above this, yet you still used this. Using eight hundred to strike down a thousand\*, that was truly a god, so courageous!

"Team Happy's captain hasn't come, but their boss has," Chen Guo smiled and said. After being around the old foxes Ye Xiu and Wei Chen for so long, Sun Xiang's taunt could only be called weak to Chen Guo.

Chapter 940: Another Year

"How about it? Are you interested in joining our Team Happy?" After Chen Guo made her status as the boss known, she gave Sun Xiang another blow. After her encounter with Lou Guanning, Chen Guo truly experienced the greatness of having the status as a boss, so she started utilizing it more freely.

"Hmph. We'll see each other on stage." Sun Xiang sneered coldly, but then he thought of something and immediately added: "I hope we can."

"We won't be!" Chen Guo smirked, "I'm here as the boss."

This time, everyone laughed. Chen Guo knew when to stop. She swiftly left, not giving Sun Xiang another chance to speak.

Once Happy drew the lots and got their competition schedules, everyone took a look. Happy and Excellent Era had been split up into two different brackets, which meant that if the two were to meet, it would only be in the finals. Unfortunately, the two former pro teams, Mysterious Fantasy and Jade Dynasty had been placed in the same bracket. In order to reach the finals, Happy would need to beat these two teams.

"The offline matches will officially begin in three months." Chen Guo said.

"Yes." Ye Xiu nodded his head. He obviously knew that. The number of teams participating in the Challenger League changed every year, so it wasn't possible to know how many rounds there would be in the online part of the league. The offline matches always started in the middle of April and lasted until the middle of May. It took place before the climax of the season and before playoffs, so there wouldn't be a split in attention from the fans.

"Go back home and celebrate New Year's! Then, let's start preparing!" Ye Xiu announced.

This year's Spring Festival took place a little earlier than usual. 1/22 was the Lunar New Year's Eve. After Chen Guo brought back the results from the lot drawing, everyone in Happy was busy preparing to go back home and celebrate the Spring Festival. The first one to leave was Mo Fan. He didn't say farewell to anyone. Instead, he chose a time when everyone was still there. He picked up his luggage bag in front of everyone and left without uttering a word.

"This guy's going to come back, right?" Everyone began to discuss.

"Let's go check his room." Wei Chen went up stairs with a cigarette held in his mouth. Randomly barging into someone's room was nothing for someone as shameless as Old Wei.

"Fuck! It's locked. Is there a spare key for it?" Wei Chen yelled a short moment later.

"Forget it!" Chen Guo said. She obviously had a spare key, but if she gave it away, wouldn't she become Wei Chen's accomplice in performing shameless acts?

"If he took the keys, then doesn't that mean he plans on coming back?" Tang Rou said.

"What if that bastard locked his keys in there?" Wei Chen said.

"Damn, the keys are in there, but the door's locked? Boss, let me climb up and get in through the window....." Steamed Bun shouted hoarsely.

"He's not Steamed Bun..." Tang Rou replied calmly to Wei Chen's question.

"Okay then!" Wei Chen approved.

Ye Xiu felt like Mo Fan would come back. Even though that guy never said anything, that was just the type of person he was. The current situation made Ye Xiu feel like he was approaching a dead end though.

After Ye Xiu won him over, he let him do his own thing and appeared to completely ignore him, but in reality, Mo Fan had never escaped his attention. It could even be said that he paid the most attention to him out of everyone here.

Ye Xiu saw all of the changes in Mo Fan.

Mo Fan sometimes watched Glory pro matches in secret. After the update came out and new dungeons popped up, he began getting used to coordinating with the team. After all, his foundation was solid. As soon as he started becoming aware of how to coordinate with the team, he improved rapidly. In Ye Xiu's eyes, PvE could not completely reveal Mo Fan's true potential. PvP was his expertise. It was just that there weren't any chances to test him right now.

These tests also needed to happen naturally. Urge him or ask him? With Mo Fan's personality, it would most likely backfire. Wait for him to ask about it himself? He was someone who stayed to himself and kept quiet. It was unlikely that he would take the initiative to request it. This was the dead-end that Ye Xiu felt like he was approaching. He needed to find some way around it.

The others spared Ye Xiu the trouble. Everyone followed the appropriate practice routine. Their practice tools still came from the game, whether that was through clearing dungeons, killing bosses, or fighting different opponents in the Arena. Their skill levels rose, and they accumulated all sorts of different experiences. Sudden growth and improvement would no longer happen anymore for anyone on Happy because none of them were noobs now. Their following growth would depend on the slow and steady accumulation of experience.

In the game, as players obtained better equipment, the new Level 75 wild bosses in the Heavenly Domain were gradually capable of being killed, and not just the materials, but the Level 75 Orange equipment dropped from these bosses were extremely valuable. It had been a month since the update. No Level 75 Silver equipment had appeared in the pro scene yet. The R&D departments of the various teams were still actively studying the new Level 75 materials. To research materials, the guild department needed to provide these materials to the R&D departments. With such a large player foundation, their ability to obtain dungeon materials was stable, but wild boss materials were always challenging to get their hands on.

To get ahead of the others in Silver equipment, they needed to get ahead of the others in fighting wild bosses. The fires of battle in the Heavenly Domain reached the skies. Level 75 wild bosses needed to be won, but Level 70, Level 65, etc. bosses couldn't be let go of either! When upgrading a piece of equipment, a large number of materials would be consumed. Apart from new materials, the past materials needed to keep up too.

Even though Happy was small, they were still ambitious. All bosses would be fought over.

There were six Level 75 maps with a total of eight Level 75 wild bosses. The total number of wild bosses had now reached 82. Eleven wild bosses spawned each day on average, which came to around a wild boss every two hours. The intensity of work for wild bosses grew all the more. The top guilds increased the number of organized teams. Elite groups one, two, and three were thrown into the front lines of battle. The entire world was searching for and killing bosses. Supposedly, the clubs had increased the pay and bonuses for their guild department employees at this crucial moment, so no one dared to slack off.

Happy didn't have a professional guild department yet, so they didn't have these types of conditions. As a result, foresight from Happy and the guild alliance was now revealed. Happy didn't have the resources, but the other guilds did. Happy had been the core of the alliance since the start. As Ye Xiu's focus

gradually shifted away, Happy seemed to have become more and more like a freeloader. However, the allied guilds had tasted the fruits of collaboration. At this time, they didn't want to rashly disrupt the peace because everyone understood one thing very well. With their strength, if they did not ally together, they were pretty much spectators in these boss hunts. In addition, Ye Xiu had looked for mid-tier teams as allies. These guilds were not good enough to be at the top, but they could not accept being at the bottom either. They were the group under the least amount of pressure during the season. The competitiveness between them wasn't as intense as the competitiveness between the powerhouses. The longer they allied together the better.

As for Happy, they had recruited Wu Chen over to help with the guild. By the time this alliance would no longer hold, Happy would have their own guild department by then and would have no trouble operating.

As Happy competed for bosses, Happy accumulated all sorts of materials bit by bit. Because they hadn't begun developing Silver equipment, these materials didn't get used up. More and more materials started being amassed.

Ye Xiu and Wei Chen hadn't finished organizing the materials yet. The ones that they had finished organizing were all given to Luo Ji. When Luo Ji saw the enormous amount of materials, he wasn't flustered. He said calmly, "It'll be much easier with this." Luo Ji was incomparably confident at his area of expertise.

1/20. Monday of the new week.

Relatively speaking, it was simple and crude. Happy's "training base" was usually filled with energy, but now, the people were gone and the place was completely empty. On the other hand, at Happy Internet Cafe, Ye Xiu, Chen Guo, and Su Mucheng had gathered together again.

"You're not going back home again?" Chen Guo could see that Ye Xiu had no intentions of going back.

"Hm? Have you seen my brother's QQ name?" Ye Xiu said.

"What is it?" Chen Guo was puzzled.

"He changed his QQ name to this today." Ye Xiu said.

"How could I know!" Chen Guo rolled her eyes. It was purely a coincidence, okay?

However, for Chen Guo, suddenly having two people by her side to celebrate the New Year made her very happy. She had to celebrate the Lunar New Year's Eve alone many times. She could no longer remember how many exactly. She could only remember that she had been very lonely one year, so she let many of the kids, who just received their red envelopes, play at her Internet cafe.

In the end, even though she didn't take any money from these kids, according to Internet cafe regulations, whether or not she charged them wasn't important. Letting in so many minors was enough for Happy's business license to be suspended.

It was better now. She didn't need to take these kinds of risks anymore. It was just that this Lunar New Year's Eve didn't seem any different from normal? Why were they still playing Glory?

Chen Guo thought about it and felt a bit angry. She got up.



"What's up, boss?" Ye Xiu noticed Chen Guo's action.

"I'm going to watch the Spring Festival Gala." Chen Guo said.

"Isn't using the projector to watch the Spring Festival Gala a little overboard?" Ye Xiu asked.

"It's clearer that way." Chen Guo said.

"Too clear!" A close-up on screen showed a nose as big as a person's head. Ye Xiu almost jumped up in fright.

"I'll watch while I play." Chen Guo went back to her seat. With the Spring Festival Gala playing, the new year's vibe instantly came.

"Where are you at?" Although the projector was showing the Spring Festival Gala, Chen Guo constantly looked towards Ye Xiu's screen out of habit.

"82%." Ye Xiu said calmly.

"How are you so fast!" Chen Guo was furious. They were both doing the Spring Festival events. Ye Xiu was 82% of the way done, while she was still only at 31%.

"Do you really need me to say why?" Ye Xiu asked.

Chen Guo fumed.

"Haha, I'm done." Su Mucheng suddenly cheered.

"No way! How did you do it? Let me see! You're cheating!" Ye Xiu was astonished.

"Hahahaha, it looks like Mu Mu is still the best!" Chen Guo was happy. Su Mucheng was faster than her by 69%, but Chen Guo didn't mind. In fact, her anger disappeared because Su Mucheng was faster than Ye Xiu by 18%.

"How did you do it?" Ye Xiu never slacked off when it came to studying Glory.

"It's over here. You can do it like this." Su Mucheng explained. Chen Guo understood half of it, but she still went over to listen.

In the end, it seemed like no one was watching the Spring Festival Gala...