

## Avatar 1031

### Chapter 1031: What Kind of Opponent!

The crowd was starting to grow restless. There was finally a change in Happy's tactics, but that change alone wasn't enough for them to see through their intentions. The poor commentators, Pan Lin and Li Yibo, saw the change, but they remained very cautious with their words. They had fallen into too many traps because of these players, especially on Happy's side. Ye Xiu was definitely the leader of the group. The two of them didn't dare to make any rash guesses, so for the previous "childish annoyance", the two could only grind their teeth and talk about other unrelated things.

Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle and the other four teammates split up. When Excellent Era arrived, they naturally failed to find them for a third time. This failure didn't seem to deter Excellent Era's players. They carefully searched the area like before, but unfortunately, still discovered nothing.

What was Happy planning on doing?

The crowd could wait for the answer to appear, but Excellent Era couldn't. They needed to guess and be prepared. When the answer finally came, what if the answer wasn't something they were prepared to defend against?

A fourth shot rang out. Excellent Era didn't immediately chase after the source of the gunshot like before.

"Wait a second." Xiao Shiqin gave out his first order of this match. There was one small subtlety in this. Orders were usually given out in the team chat to prevent the opponents from seeing them. However, it seemed as if Xiao Shiqin forgot about this detail and announced it for everyone to read.

"Hahahaha." Li Yibo laughed. He was just about to comment on it.

"Go!" But in Excellent Era's team chat, Xiao Shiqin unexpectedly gave out a completely opposite order.

Li Yibo swallowed his words.

Too crafty. I almost fell into a trap again.

On the other hand, the crowd was smiling with joy. As Excellent Era's fans, they felt like Xiao Shiqin's actions were quick-witted. On Happy's side, their supporters saw Xiao Shiqin's actions and shook their heads.

"Those who play with tactics are too dirty\*\*!" Wei Chen sighed.

"Yeah!" Sun Zheping nodded his head.

Just when Team Excellent Era finished pulling off their bluff and prepared to chase after the sound to achieve their aim through a trick, another gunshot rang out. This time, it came from the opposite direction.

Team Excellent Era stared blankly. Everyone stared blankly. However, the crowd could at least see that this gunshot had come from the group that split apart from Dawn Rifle. The only one among them who could make a gunshot was their unspecialized, Lord Grim.

The Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's gunform wasn't a handcannon. His attacks make an exploding noise. Lord Grim had fired Anti-Tank Missiles, but cancelled the skill after the first missile flew out. By doing this, he was able to perfectly replicate the sound of gunfire from Dawn Rifle's handcannon. It must have taken painstaking efforts to perform.

However, what was his intention?

Just looking at the idea, it was just as childish as the earlier blank shots to get the enemy's attention.

But this was a confrontation between two Master Tacticians. How could such childish thinking appear in this kind of high-level match?

What was the point of firing gunshots on opposite sides?

All that did was tell the other side that the enemy team had split into two. And then? Was Happy hoping for the other side to split up and give chase? Or was Happy hoping for Excellent Era to focus one target? And then how was Happy going to respond to the Excellent Era's decision?

The purpose of tactics was to give your side an advantage. However, Happy's move didn't seem to be able to get them any advantage. Wasn't splitting the team apart supposed to be a secret? Wasn't announcing it to the enemy team the same as giving away your advantage?

I don't understand. I just don't understand.

Pan Lin and Li Yibo had their brows furrowed in deep thought. After a long time, they turned their heads and saw the same puzzled look on each other's face before dumbly turning their heads back to the match.

They obviously couldn't explain things that they didn't understand.

Deliberately mystifying things?

Apart from calling it "childish", this was the only other possibility that Li Yibo could think of. However, the problem was that even if Happy was deliberately mystifying things, there had to be some sort of goal in mind. So what if Happy confused Excellent Era with their actions?

Team Excellent Era merely hesitated a bit when they heard two gunshots from two different locations. Soon afterwards, Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher resolutely headed towards their original target. The other four characters followed him, maintaining their formation as they continued to move in perfect sync.

The five players had chosen to bite Wu Chen.

Let alone him just being a player from a relegated team, even a top God from the Alliance would be at an absolute disadvantage.

What was Ye Xiu thinking?

Everyone was puzzled.

This time, it wasn't just Pan Lin and Li Yibo who weren't skilled enough to understand what was going on. The three Team Tiny Herb players were also confused, unable to see through Ye Xiu's intentions.

If they couldn't guess, they could only keep watching and wait for the answer to come to them.

Team Excellent Era moved swiftly, an advantage of having powerful characters. Strong characters were strong in all aspects. Attack and defense were just one part of the equation. As a team, equipping a character might not simply be for the sole purpose of improving one's own individual strength, but rather for the purpose of synergizing with the other characters in the team.

For example, take movement speed. Every character had their own movement speed. The entire team's movement speed depended on the slowest team member. Perhaps this character didn't need high movement speed, but sometimes, in order to increase the speed of the entire team, this character would need to wear equipment that was pointless alone. However, for the team, it was a very meaningful upgrade.

And this was another layer to research into Silver equipment. It wasn't just about higher stats, but rather how Silver equipment interacted with each other in a team.

Happy clearly weren't at that level yet. Even in the Alliance, only a few powerhouses had reached this step. Team Excellent Era had a new addition, Life Extinguisher. Just like how the player needed to meld into the team, the character needed to as well. And now it looked like Excellent Era had done a good job. Whether it was Xiao Shiqin or Life Extinguisher, Team Excellent Era was already a single entity. Their movements didn't seem to be crude in the slightest.

Their advantage in movement speed allowed Team Excellent Era to get closer to Team Happy bit by bit. Happy's equipment was simple and crude. The vast majority of their equipment was Orange, so their stats were known, giving Excellent Era a rough estimate of the strength of Happy's characters. The movement speed of Happy's character was one of these estimates.

After missing three times, Excellent Era wasn't shaken because they knew that as long as they kept on chasing, they would soon find the other side.

Fourth time!

Judging by the difference between our movement speeds, we definitely won't miss a fourth time. Xiao Shiqin had calculated it. However, this time, when they chased after their target, they still missed.

Xiao Shiqin obviously wasn't hoping for Happy to just sit there waiting. When he was certain that they wouldn't miss, he meant that they should see signs of Happy within their field of view.

However, when they gave chase for the fourth time, they still didn't see any signs of their target.

Bang!

At this moment, a new gunshot rang, clearly from up ahead.

"Hurry up and give chase!" A God like Sun Xiang obviously had very good judgement. He also had a good idea of their movement speed advantage. He felt like their miss this time was probably because they

slowed down a bit every time they reached their target location. If they hurried, they would certainly catch the other side the next time.

"We won't be able to catch them." Xiao Shiqin suddenly typed.

"It's only one person here. His movement speed is above our team's." Xiao Shiqin said. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle wore a full set of Orange equipment, so Xiao Shiqin naturally had a very strong grasp of Dawn Rifle's movement speed.

Why did Happy split up? Hints for why could finally be seen. It was a very precise tactical change. Xiao Shiqin had been certain that they would catch their target the fourth time. As a result, Happy split up before this. Happy couldn't compare to Excellent Era in terms of their overall team movement speed, but Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle on his own was faster than Excellent Era.

What had Happy gained from this minute change? Was it just to continue with their "childish annoyance?"

The crowd members could finally see glimmers of the thinking, but it came with new questions. Neither side had yet to fight yet. They were just running around, baffling everyone. Many people had already gotten impatient. The boos from the crowd had naturally become extremely loud. Excellent Era's fans were very unhappy with Happy's mysterious strategy.

At this moment, another gunshot rang out.

Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle once again reminded Excellent Era where he was located.

To give chase or to not give chase?

Xiao Shiqin finally hesitated. If they chased, they definitely wouldn't be able to catch him. If they didn't chase, they wouldn't lose anything, but then what should they do?

Xiao Shiqin felt his head hurt a bit. He suddenly realized that this was a rather unfamiliar situation because up until now, he had been leading the weaker team. Through tactics, they contended with stronger teams. Overwhelming strength? Team Thunderclap had never possessed that.

But now? Xiao Shiqin realized that if he had been in Ye Xiu's position, perhaps he would have had an easier time because beating the strong as the weak was his strength. The strong beating the weak? He had started experiencing that this season, but the opponents that they encountered were too weak. So weak that he couldn't get any experience from it. In the blink of an eye, it was the finals. Now, they had encountered a weak team, but not strong enough to pose a threat.

And his opponent was another Master Tactician, Ye Xiu. To Xiao Shiqin, his generation had been hugely affected by this God. Their Glory knowledge had more or less come from this God. Why else was he called the Glory Textbook?

Quite a few of Xiao Shiqin's tactics and strategies had been learned from Ye Xiu's matches. His tactical ability wasn't any better than the opposing God.

Xiao Shiqin suddenly became aware that the opponents he had to beat this match were similar... to the former Team Thunderclap that he had once led.

## Chapter 1032: Attempted Exchange

The current situation made Xiao Shiqin feel somewhat embarrassed. Besides Xiao Shiqin, even his teammates might not notice this small detail.

Although Team Excellent Era's captain was Sun Xiang, the commanding position had been transferred to him when he joined the team as vice captain. At this moment Xiao Shiqin suddenly became silent. In a situation like this, which required the team to choose, they had come to a sudden halt, almost as if a fire had been extinguished.

Xiao Shiqin immediately recovered his senses. Coming to a stop like this could be fatal on stage. He needed to quickly adjust himself instead of getting distracted, so he could grasp their current situation. After Xiao Shiqin understood that Ye Xiu was trying to do what he had been doing the entire time throughout his career, his train of thought became incomparably smooth.

Simply put, Ye Xiu was Ye Xiu, Xiao Shiqin was Xiao Shiqin. Even if they were doing the same thing, they weren't the same people. Ye Xiu was someone Xiao Shiqin had studied, but this didn't mean that he completely grasped Ye Xiu's patterns. After thinking about things from Ye Xiu's perspective, Xiao Shiqin was suddenly at a loss.

From Ye Xiu, he had learned tactics to fight the strong with the weak, and for the most part, it involved deducing many things from what he already knew. During Ye Xiu's entire time at Excellent Era, the team hadn't been anywhere near as weak as Thunderclap was. At most they would be disadvantaged during a match, yet they never fought with the mentality of a weak team facing a stronger team. Even during the season when Excellent Era had been in danger of being relegated, no one had thought that they were a weak team. Excellent Era's relegation had been considered something of a miracle.

Even taking Happy's current position into consideration, Xiao Shiqin still couldn't determine what Happy's intentions were. At the very least, if he were the one playing the Happy card, he wouldn't have brought it to this kind of situation.

Should they keep chasing, or should they stop?

To be honest, in the current situation, Excellent Era really didn't need to be so vigorous in taking the initiative. Because they had won the group arena, they were currently in the lead. They could simply sit and wait for Happy to come knocking at their door.

But the problem was, they were Excellent Era. They were the team that held the clear advantage in this competition. The dignity of a powerhouse prevented them from acting in such a passive manner. This was why Excellent Era's actions in the past had always been proactive and aggressive. They vigorously searched for Team Happy's position, wanting to quickly decide victory or defeat, as if they were the ones falling behind.

Except now, they had a target right in front of them, yet they couldn't reach it.

Split up?

Xiao Shiqin shook his head. If they really divided their troops so that one group was fast enough to catch up, they might actually fall into Happy's trap.

"This way."

Xiao Shiqin once again sent this message in the public chat. Afterwards, he directed his character to lead Team Excellent Era in the opposite direction.

He gave up on chasing after Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle, instead charging in the direction of Ye Xiu and his Lord Grim's fake shot. However, his message in the public chat was intended to cause confusion. This way ... which way was this way?

Xiao Shiqin obviously didn't want Happy to easily deduce his intentions. However, this time, when Wu Chen fired a projectile, he didn't immediately leave. Xiao Shiqin's message of "this way" hadn't done anything to sway him. He waited for a short period of time, but he didn't discover any traces of Team Excellent Era. In Team Happy's chat, Wu Chen reported this occurrence. A moment later, Ye Xiu replied with his coordinates.

The members of the audience, who paid close attention, could see that these coordinates pointed to the place where Lord Grim had pretended to fire his shot. This was also in the direction that Team Excellent Era was currently headed.

Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle decisively altered his course, also heading towards this location.

From their omniscient view, the audience could see the whole situation very clearly. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle increased his speed, gradually pressing closer to Team Excellent Era from behind. Yet, Team Happy's other four members moved in a wide arc, seeming to want to circle their way behind Dawn Rifle.

Everyone anxiously watched the scene unfold. Finally, Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle caught up to Team Excellent Era. All five members of the team were currently within his field of view.

However, at the same time, he was also discovered by Excellent Era. Even if they had clearly been focused on getting to their destination, how could an experienced pro team like Excellent Era forget to keep track of their surroundings while moving?

"Behind!" Zhang Jiaying called out, discovering Dawn Rifle during one of his routine sweeps.

No one rushed to look back. In a flash, the other four members had already created a protective encirclement around Zhang Jiaying's Cleric. The entire team turned around as one.

Immediately afterwards, artillery fire rained down ...

Excellent Era's five members easily dodged, but they had no way of returning fire. At this distance, only Launcher's had the range to fight back. Team Excellent Era's current team composition consisted of two Battle Mages, a Striker, a Mechanic, and a Cleric.

Mechanic Life Extinguisher was without a doubt their number one long range attacker. However, compared to Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle, his range was insufficient. After releasing his first attack, Dawn Rifle had already begun charging up a second attack, then a third ...

Everyone was struck dumb. Dawn Rifle seemed inclined to challenge Excellent Era's entire team alone. Was this really Team Happy's secret weapon?

Team Excellent Era obviously wouldn't sit passively or be thrown into disorder by Wu Chen's long-ranged attacks. The team rapidly flew towards Wu Chen, quickly closing the distance.

However, Wu Chen wasn't greedy at all. As soon as he saw Team Excellent Era charging towards him, he immediately retreated. He moved even faster than he had previously, even utilizing Aerial Fire.

Team Excellent Era could only watch helplessly. Dawn Rifle's movement speed was indeed above their team's. This had already been previously confirmed.

However, as soon as they stopped, Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle once again happily rained skills down onto them.

Was this ... kiting?

Once again, everyone stared blankly. Wu Chen, a completely unknown player, was actually single-handedly kiting Excellent Era?

In reality, this kind of max range offensive couldn't effectively hurt Excellent Era's players because their characters were simply too strong. However, this kind of endless harassment made them unable to just sit still and let it happen.

In fact, the reason the team's speed was slower than Dawn Rifle was because they were being held back by the slowest member.\*\* If we were only considering each individuals, any member of Excellent Era outside of Zhang Jiaying's Cleric could surpass Dawn Rifle in terms of speed.

Leave the Cleric behind and kill Dawn Rifle first?

Just as Xiao Shiqin had this thought, his entire body suddenly broke out in a cold sweat.

If they really did this, they would be abandoning their Cleric. Wouldn't this be just the opportunity Team Happy was looking for? Even if Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle was caught and killed this way, to trade his life for Excellent Era's Cleric would definitely be worth it.

So treacherous, so despicable!

Was the initial wild goose chase a ploy to make Excellent Era drop their guard?

So they could quickly pick off our Cleric?

Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher looked around, sweeping the surrounding terrain. As a Master Tactician, he had an experienced eye, quickly locating a location extremely suited to this kind of sneak attack.

"Go!" This time, the order was only sent in the team chat. Team Excellent Era suddenly changed directions, charging towards the optimal attack location that Xiao Shiqin had calculated.

Translator's Thoughts

Nomyummi Nomyummi

\*\* TL Note: 木桶理论 literally means that a barrel's capacity is limited by the length of the shortest plank. In economics, this is known as Liebig's law of the minimum ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liebig%27s\\_law\\_of\\_the\\_minimum#Liebig's\\_barrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liebig%27s_law_of_the_minimum#Liebig's_barrel)). It essentially states that maximum potential is limited by the resource is scarecest, instead of by the sum of all resources. The concept itself is pretty straightforward, although it can be applied to a lot of situations outside of economics, as seen here. -- Veriquity

Chapter 1033: Heading for Tiger-Borne Mountains

Xiao Shiqin gave the signal to attack and the team immediately obeyed. One Autumn Leaf, who had been at the back of their formation, charged to the front and dashed in the direction Xiao Shiqin had pointed out to them along with Qiu Fei's Combat Form.

Now knowing that all that was behind them was a far off Dawn Rifle, there was no need for Excellent Era to be so cautious about their backs. The two Battle Mages advanced together, swiftly arriving at the place Xiao Shiqin had pointed out to them.

A miss!

They had missed again.

The place Xiao Shiqin had predicted would be the best spot for Happy to ambush them was devoid of people.

"Could it be that Ye Xiu had predicted I would realize this and didn't choose this position on purpose?" Xiao Shiqin unavoidably began to do another mental multiple choice with himself.

That's how Team Excellent Era was sent into uncertainty once more. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle courageously moved forward a few steps and fired wildly at them. Though it wasn't any serious threat, Excellent Era's players still had to dodge it, so it still caused them trouble, no?

Xiao Shiqin might have been considering their strategy, he also managed to react swiftly. In the current Team Excellent Era, the one who could get Dawn Rifle in range first was Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher.

Who would've thought that Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle would immediately and resolutely go into a full retreat the moment he began to act.

Xiao Shiqin felt helpless.

For this player, he had only done research on him just in case. Although Wu Chen had barely appeared in the Challenger League, he had still fought in the pro league prior to that, so Xiao Shiqin had found some resources. Dawn Rifle was a player with a good grasp of the foundations, but no other particularly striking abilities. Xiao Shiqin hadn't gone in-depth with how they should deal with him.

Yet now, it was this player that was causing them the most trouble.

He didn't need or want to do anything fantastic, he just wanted to complete his mission without mistakes. Wu Chen carefully maneuvered his Dawn Rifle. He was clear on his own skill level. Against

Excellent Era, he didn't have the ability to deal any significant damage to them, but he could still accomplish this sort of harassment.

This was because this wasn't a task with any true difficulty. Other pro players probably wouldn't be willing to accept such a simple task, but not Wu Chen. He knew he was a player with no talent to shoulder such important tasks. This sort of simple task was a chance for him to do what he could, and he took it very seriously.

It was easy to imagine the result of him taking a simple task so seriously.

Excellent Era really had gotten frustrated with Wu Chen's harassment.

The entire team wouldn't be able to catch up to him, so they could only split up if they wanted to hit him.

Xiao Shiqin had realized Ye Xiu's intentions, but... he had no choice but to comply.

This was because he wasn't in command of Thunderclap anymore, where he could lower his position. He was in command of Excellent Era, the strongest team, the only team to ever erect a dynasty. Even being relegated couldn't kill the pride this team had. They thought of themselves as that team that had created a dynasty, and their fans saw them as a powerhouse team that was second to none. Being relegated was nothing more than an accident.

A team like this couldn't perform as if they were disadvantaged. When relegated, they were even more sensitive, and even more repulsed by such an idea. They would let Dawn Rifle buzz around them like a fly. Xiao Shiqin thought it wouldn't matter in the larger scheme; everyone just had to dodge a little more.

However, because they were Team Excellent Era, their fans and the audience wouldn't accept it if they couldn't even deal with a bother like this. Excellent Era couldn't just win. They had to crush their opponents and win with conviction.

They had to attack...

Team Excellent Era adjusted their direction, chasing after Dawn Rifle. Except, this time, they didn't move as a unit. Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher and Qiu Fei's Combat Form brought out their fastest movement speed. They swiftly began to close in on Dawn Rifle while, behind them, Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf and Shen Jian's Striker stuck close to and protected their Cleric, Woven Shadow.

Xiao Shiqin actually felt very insecure. He knew that the situation Ye Xiu had been waiting for had appeared. Team Happy definitely would've made arrangements for such a situation. However, he couldn't do anything about it. He had finally been given a clear experience of how a powerhouse had to act even when they knew they shouldn't. Throughout the Challenger League, they could still steamroll their opponents like that, but this time, they were facing an enemy that worried them.

Seeing Life Extinguisher and Combat Form in pursuit so suddenly, Dawn Rifle fled without a care for harassing them any more.

"Slow down," Xiao Shiqin typed into the channel, directing this mostly towards Qiu Fei.

If they went at full speed, they would be able to catch up to Dawn Rifle faster, but they would also widen the distance between them and the other three. Knowing that Happy would capitalize on this, Xiao Shiqin would naturally do the best he could to weaken what advantage they could gain. He wouldn't use his all to chase after Dawn Rifle, but just choose a speed that could catch up to Dawn Rifle. This way, they wouldn't draw away from One Autumn Leaf and the other two so quickly.

Xiao Shiqin hoped that Happy would strike sooner than later, yet Happy didn't act.

The audience could clearly see that Happy's Lord Grim and co were following Dawn Rifle a small ways away and were prepared to coordinate. However, when Dawn Rifle began to retreat, the four darted away from their positions and got into positions for an ambush. Yet, not long after, the four began to move again, leaving their original positions.

Now that the arrangements of each team were crystal clear, the commentators Li Yibo and Pan Lin could finally begin to commentate confidently.

"Happy wants to use the harassment from Dawn Rifle to force Excellent Era to split their forces," Pan Lin said.

"Yes... In reality, Dawn Rifle can't do very much to harass them, at least not to the point of forcing them. However, it seems like Excellent Era is very confident in their ability to deal with this," Li Yibo added.

"Uh... It doesn't seem like Life Extinguisher and Combat Form are running in pursuit at full speed?" Pan Lin questioned.

"Yeah... they're trying to preserve the team formation as much as possible. They don't want to split up too much. It seems like Xiao Shiqin has a clear understanding of Happy's strategy," Li Yibo said.

"So that's why Happy hasn't struck yet. Their offensive formation has yet again been shifted," Pan Lin noted.

"Why isn't Team Excellent Era being more resolute? If they use One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form to lead the charge and have Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher in the middle with his long-range capabilities, they can split the team into three parts and better deal with the situation." That was when Li Yibo voiced an uncertainty and it really did seem like a more secure arrangement than Xiao Shiqin's.

This, naturally, wasn't a question Pan Lin could answer. The audience, too, could only be puzzled, feeling that Li Yibo was very correct. Why didn't a Master Tactician like Xiao Shiqin choose a better strategy?

Yet, it was Chen Guo on Team Happy's bench, the Chen Guo that usually worried over not being able to understand anything that was going on in the match grinned smugly at the commentary.

"For the team competition against Excellent Era, this is our breakthrough point!"

When Ye Xiu had said this in Team Happy's strategy meeting and pointed at Xiao Shiqin's name on their strategy board, Chen Guo had found it extremely strange. Even though she wasn't very skilled, she was also relentlessly thinking of a method on how to beat Excellent Era. When fighting stronger opponents, you had to find your opponent's weak point. This was something Chen Guo understood. However, she had never imagined that Xiao Shiqin would be Excellent Era's weak point.

"Why?" Though Chen Guo wouldn't take part in the matches, she was still the first person to question this out of curiosity.

Because Xiao Shiqin still hadn't synced up with Excellent Era's rhythm yet.

This was the answer Chen Guo had received.

Xiao Shiqin's background had influenced a lot of his tactical style and playstyle. For a powerhouse like Excellent Era, Xiao Shiqin's tactical style held them back. His detailed, calculated and nitpicking style wasn't noble enough for Team Excellent Era.

That was something that Xiao Shiqin had been acutely aware of since joining Excellent Era.

He had made adjustments and the two sides synced up cheerfully. Unfortunately, they had never met an opponent that could truly test them, because for Excellent Era, the Challenger League was too low a level. Any sort of adjustment would seem seamless at this sort of level.

Only strong opponents would be true tests of their success.

Happy might not be a powerful opponent, but they were the only true test Excellent Era had been pitted up against since their relegation.

Any dissonance that existed between Xiao Shiqin and Excellent Era would be tested for here. If there was a problem, they would have to resolve it on the field. If they couldn't resolve it well, more problems might become apparent.

Happy's tactics were so simple that they seemed almost childish. However, they had managed to accurately strike at the disharmony between Xiao Shiqin and Excellent Era.

Xiao Shiqin, with his original style, wouldn't have bothered about this sort of childish harassment. However, after taking on Excellent Era, he had to find a way to deal with it.

Knowing that a mountain hid tigers, yet heading for those tiger-borne mountains anyways. This wasn't Xiao Shiqin's preferred style at all, but he had to deal with these problems in such a way. He could only face this with care, but the arrangements he made weren't nearly as proactive and daring as Li Yibo's ideas.

This was because Xiao Shiqin still subconsciously displayed the style he was most comfortable with in uncertain situations.

He didn't want Excellent Era to seem cautious and nervous like a mid to low tier team.

Thus, he had used a different method to avoid executing his original cautious method...

Team Excellent Era, having split into two, continued to pursue Dawn Rifle, but Dawn Rifle was running for his life and Happy's other members were retreating for their lives. Xiao Shiqin might've suppressed his speed, but Happy drew out the duration. In the end, the two groups still managed to pull apart to a distance that Xiao Shiqin was reluctant to have.

Even Pan Lin couldn't help but sigh in disappointment for Excellent Era, "If they had known sooner, Life Extinguisher and Combat Form might as well have sped up. That way, they would at least be able to attack Dawn Rifle a couple times."

"Isn't Excellent Era being a little too cautious? They're so much stronger than Happy, after all. They can totally afford to be a little more headstrong," Li Yibo commented. This time, he really hadn't gotten anything wrong. Xiao Shiqin, struggling to make a decision, had reverted to what he was most comfortable with.

Team Excellent Era was forced to exercise excessive caution under this style.

Chapter 1034: 1v2

Xiao Shiqin and Qiu Fei accelerated in pursuit of Dawn Rifle, but they weren't thorough enough.. In the end,, they still pulled a certain amount of distance away from Sun Xiang's group. Even worse, not only were they not getting closer to Dawn Rifle, the two saw signs of the other Happy members.

Not good!!

When Xiao Shiqin saw the other members of Happy in that direction, his heart skipped a beat. He thought Happy would disengage and then regroup to ambush their Cleric, but judging from their current position, it was obvious that they didn't have such intentions. Their true targets were the players pursuing Dawn Rifle.

"Stop!"

After realising that they had fallen into a trap, Xiao Shiqin subconsciously made adjustments, gesturing to Qiu Fei to stop his pursuit. He then spun his view to look at the distance between them and the three characters behind him.

"Retreat!" The distance caused Xiao Shiqin to feel a lack of security, so he had Life Extinguisher retreat.

Qiu Fei's Combat Form visibly hesitated for a moment, but obeyed the order nonetheless.

However, the members of Happy had already appeared. How could they let them escape so easily? Dawn Rifle stopped retreating while the other silhouettes quickly grew clearer. They carried out a fan formation and moved to encircle Life Extinguisher and Combat Form.

This was indeed a trap!

Xiao Shiqin felt fortunate for being able to react quickly, so he could retreat in time. The loss shouldn't be too great, right?

The loss was indeed insignificant. Even though Happy pressed them fiercely, the other three members of Excellent Era weren't so far behind that they couldn't be seen. Reinforcements arrived in the blink of an eye. Happy only advanced on them, attacking only for a moment, and then retreated before the members of Excellent Era finished grouping up.

Xiao Shiqin let out a long sigh of relief. He was pretty satisfied with his response towards the situation. However, it was unknown if the commentators, viewers, and other pro players understood his reasoning... Everyone apart from him felt that his choice of action meant an opportunity wasted.

"Why did he retreat?" Pan Lin was very puzzled.

"Excellent Era is fighting very hesitantly! Since they've already given chase, why did they choose to retreat? Even though Excellent Era had been outnumbered, from the strengths of their pro players and characters, they shouldn't need to escape. Reinforcements would have arrived if they held out a bit longer, so Happy wouldn't have attacked too rashly. By retreating, Happy could attack fiercely without needing to heed the consequences! Excellent Era is currently retreating very quickly. They have no continuity in their attacks at all!" Li Yibo spoke.

"Excellent Era's performance is quite abnormal today." Pan Lin said.

"Is it because the group arena didn't meet their expectations? Or is it because they've never met a troublesome opponent like Happy in the Challenger League? No matter what the reason may be, Excellent Era shouldn't fight with such a lack of confidence..." Li Yibo only mentioned the problem, but was still thinking about the specific reason. Even though he roughly knew what it was, what was it specifically?

"Xiao Shiqin... is treating Excellent Era like Thunderclap." In the end, it was a pro player from Tiny Herb who discovered the exact problem.

"He lacked comprehensive and high-level practice this season, so he wasn't able to judge thoroughly enough. In stressful situations, he subconsciously responds with the play style he used to lead Team Thunderclap." Xu Bin said.

Xu Bin had the right to talk about Xiao Shiqin. This is because his former team, 301 Degrees, was a mid-tier one along with Xiao Shiqin's Thunderclap. The two were direct rivals, so they always fought to the death with each other in order to vie for the spot in the finals. Their matches would greatly impact their final rankings, so they always had to thoroughly investigate each other.

"Yes. He is now leading Team Excellent Era! With fierce players like Sun Xiang, there's no need for him to fight like that. I'd say, if he let Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf rush to the front, he might have been able to neutralize Happy's ambush." Liu Xiaobie said.

Whatever was said could only remain as words; the match didn't progress like they thought. At this time, Xiao Shiqin started to realize that something was wrong. This was thanks to their Cleric, Zhang Jiaying, one of the three members who had caught up to him.

"Aren't we fighting a bit too passively? I think we can be more proactive." Zhang Jiaying expressed his opinion. There was only one shot caller, but other players had the right to give advice and speak their thoughts. Among Excellent Era's roster, Zhang Jiaying was the only player who had been a core member of the team the entire time. Coincidentally, the Cleric was a character who needed to be able to observe the general situation, so he could acutely discover what was off today.

Xiao Shiqin woke up with these words. He immediately became aware that he mistook Excellent Era for Thunderclap when he was commanding. In fact, he had been reminding himself to change his character

for the entire season. However, he was still unable to take on his new role with familiarity during crucial moments in the match. The tactical habits he had developed from Thunderclap were still deeply rooted in him. He needed time and matches to erase it. Although he had ample time this year, he didn't have enough matches. The level of the opponents in the Challenger League weren't adequate enough.

"You're right, we need to be more proactive!" Xiao Shiqin was not the type to save his face when the problem was found. Saving face was mostly found in powerhouses, so players from medium to small teams wouldn't have this shortcoming even for an All Star.

Xiao Shiqin immediately made adjustments after noticing the problem. Excellent Era's ace, One Autumn Leaf, finally pushed towards the peak of the formation. Combat Form and One Autumn Leaf immediately accelerated in pursuit, while Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher acted as a support in the middle. Shen Jian's Striker took the responsibility of protecting the team's Cleric.

"Yes, it seems like Excellent Era has finally discovered the problem and is quickly making adjustments." Li Yibo spoke happily. It was not because he felt happy for Excellent Era, but because their adjustments followed the format he thought was best before. He was able to show his skills as a commentator through the comments today, so Li Yibo was rather pleased with himself.

Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf and Qiu Fei's Combat Form no longer held any reservations. They attacked with full power while moving swiftly. Soon, the retreating characters of Team Happy appeared in the two's field of view.

Lord Grim!

The one they were able to catch up to was coincidentally Ye Xiu, who had defeated Qiu Fei and Sun Xiang in the group arena. They were able to meet in the team competition again.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

The two Battle Mages of Excellent Era, One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form, suddenly used this high-level move. The two characters raced out in sync. Yet after dashing out, they immediately pulled a distance between them. It wasn't a coincidence. This was obviously a combination that the Battle Mage duo were trained to do. The opponent they teamed up in challenging was the person, who had brought Battle Mages to the pinnacle.

Boom boom boom!

Lord Grim swept the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, and three artillery shells were sent towards the two challengers from the umbrella's tip.

This attack couldn't stop Dragon Breaks the Rank's momentum at all, but Lord Grim was able to fly a great distance backwards using Anti-Tank Missiles' recoil. He then swung the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella up over his head and a Rotor Wing twirled above his head as he flew up into the sky. The moment his feet left the ground, Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf arrived. When he saw Lord Grim flying up, he readjusted Evil Annihilation's trajectory, but he was too late. One Autumn Leaf speedily swept across, but hit nothing. Combat Form, who was a step slower, naturally ended up in a similar

situation. However, the two Dragon Breaks the Ranks still came out from below, causing him to sway to and fro due to the strong winds from the attacks. The force from their attacks could clearly be seen.

While rocking in midair, Lord Grim retracted the Rotor Wing and unsheathed his tachi. He tilted his body in mid air and used a Sword Draw towards the two, who had just used a high-level skill.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks could be quickly cancelled with no ending lag, and Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei's reactions were very quick. One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form jumped to the left and right respectively, dodging the sword slash from Sword Draw.

Falling Light Blade!

Lord Grim used this skill afterwards, aiming for the space between the two characters. The skill had a small attack range, but it was just enough to reach the two.

But because it was only just enough to reach them, One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form only had to take a step back in order to escape from the attack range. Two spears glinted as they crossed at an angle towards Lord Grim.

Slide Kick!

Lord Grim didn't pause after Falling Light Blade and slipped away with a Slide Kick. By matching skills across different classes, he used the most prominent feature of an unspecialized. When Excellent Era learned they were going against Ye Xiu's unspecialized, they trained specifically for him. The players in Team Excellent Era were all familiar with what skills an unspecialized could use. This was done by interpreting the unspecialized as the 25th class.

Even though they were familiar with the possible skills available to an unspecialized, Excellent Era, the team who was most familiar with Ye Xiu, was unable to predict how Ye Xiu would use the skills. When Ye Xiu was in the team, he focused his efforts on Battle Mages. However, this was only 1/24 of his battle capabilities when applying their prior knowledge to his unspecialized. By changing his class, Excellent Era's familiarity towards Ye Xiu became extremely limited.

A Slide Kick after Falling Light Blade?

Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei's reactions were relatively quick, but still a beat too slow. The spears the two characters held weren't able to catch Lord Grim.

After Lord Grim dashed away with the Slide Kick, he threw a grenade behind him. One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form leapt aside once again, and the explosion's flames flashed between the two characters. One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form turned around to chase him, but a purple fog rose up after they took two steps. They happened to step onto a Poison Gas Trap. The two were completely unaware when Lord Grim had planted this trap.

The stadium bubbled with excitement. Everyone thought Ye Xiu's Lord Grim would immediately find a chance to break away and leave, but from what they were seeing, this guy was carrying out a 1v2!

The audience had an omniscient view, so they also knew that the other members of Happy were pushing towards Excellent Era to ambush their Cleric.

Chapter 1035: Cut Off From the Team

The team competition between Happy and Excellent Era had completely unfolded. In the beginning, Excellent Era nipped at Happy's heels, refusing to let up until they finally caught up and started attacking, but the crowd could see that Team Happy's Ye Xiu was performing a 1v2, while the other four were preparing to ambush Excellent Era from the rear.

Team Excellent Era was clearly unaware of it. Xiao Shiqin had just realized that he wasn't being daring enough, so he adopted a more proactive attitude. On the other hand, Team Happy had already changed their strategy.

The commentators Pan Lin and Li Yibo saw these changes, but restrained themselves from making any early conclusions. It was only when the movements of Team Happy's Soft Mist, Dawn Rifle, One Inch Ash, and Little Cold Hands became very obvious did they dare to comment on it.

"How unexpected.... It's simply too unexpected." Li Yibo sighed, "We were just talking about how Team Excellent Era was playing a bit too conservatively, unlike a strong team. In the blink of an eye, it's Happy that's moving out in an imposing manner. Happy's ace player is pinning down Excellent Era's main force, while the others are preparing for a sneak attack from the rear. This is a standard strategy for a powerhouse team with a top-tier ace player!!"

Li Yibo's statement woke up many people.

Indeed, Happy's current strategy was a standard powerhouse strategy. By using a top player, a character to pin down as many opponents as possible, would allow for more openings to attack. This principle was applicable to many sports. For example, in basketball, a skilled player might have two or three defenders on him, giving his other teammates more openings and opportunities to score.

But the problem was that the powerhouse should be Team Excellent Era! But in this match, it was Happy employing this strategy. Wasn't that kind of weird?

"For this strategy to work, the ace player's performance is crucial! Ye Xiu probably isn't a stranger towards this strategy, but the problem is that the current him is no longer the Battle God Ye Qiu from before. Right now, he's facing a pincer attack from Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei. One Autumn Leaf doesn't need to be mentioned. Even Qiu Fei's Combat Form is a formidable character. Can Ye Xiu hold on?" Pan Lin spoke swiftly.

Can he hold on?

The answer didn't matter. Team Excellent Era's rear had already caught on fire. Team Happy's timing had been perfectly executed; they didn't let Ye Xiu take too pressure alone. His main purpose was to draw the attention of Team Excellent Era and have them pull away from each other.

Now, Happy's group of four got into position and charged forward without any hesitation.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

By the time Shen Jian noticed the ambush, Soft Mist's spear had already arrived. Excellent Era thought that Dawn Rifle and One Inch Ash were ahead of them, but those two had now suddenly appeared at their flank within attack range.

Shen Jian's responsibility was to defend their healer, so he naturally stepped forward and acted as a meat shield. He had his Striker step forward and shield Zhang Jiaxin's Cleric with his body.

Soft Mist's Dragon Breaks the Ranks hit him square in the stomach, but it failed to send him flying. The instant that Shen Jian stepped forward, he immediately activated Reinforced Iron Bones. Under this skill's effect, his Striker wouldn't be pushed back by the knockback. Immediately afterwards, he made his counterattack towards Soft Mist. Suddenly, a Satellite Beam descended from the sky, completely enveloping him. Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle had shot out a high-level skill in coordination with Soft Mist's attack.

Tang Rou didn't fight with Shen Jian. She had Soft Mist circle around and attack Zhang Jiaxin's Cleric, Woven Shadow.

Zhang Jiaxin deserved to be the healer for a powerhouse like Team Excellent Era. He didn't panic. In the team competition, the healer was often a priority target. Staying calm in these situations was a fundamental trait that every healer needed. As someone qualified to be part of a powerhouse's starting line up, he obviously wouldn't be lacking in this regard.

The instant Shen Jian did his job, Zhang Jiaxin had his Cleric retreat. In these situations, the healer needed to win as much time as possible because no team would let their healer die so easily. When a healer was attacked, the team would immediately come to save him, so the healer needed to minimize the losses they would take during this period of time and coordinate with his teammates coming to the rescue.

As Zhang Jiaxin had Woven Shadow retreat, he grasped his current situation. Excellent Era's formation was still intact. As soon as Happy launched their ambush, Life Extinguisher changed directions and went back to assist his team's Cleric. This was already enough to make Zhang Jiaxin feel at peace.

3v4. With Excellent Era's strength, Zhang Jiaxin felt like there shouldn't be any problem.

With this support, Zhang Jiaxin became even more calm. When he saw Soft Mist charge directly towards him, he had his Woven Shadow retreat even faster. Kiting Tang Rou for some time was doable for Zhang Jiaxin, but doing that wasn't smart. Zhang Jiaxin grasped Happy's formation. Tang Rou's Soft Mist was at the very front and, from what he understood, despite this player being very pretty, her aggressiveness on stage didn't lose out to any male player. Zhang Jiaxin had his Woven Shadow continue to retreat. He wanted to lure Soft Mist in further to pull her away from her team. That way, when Excellent Era counterattacked, she would become Happy's burden.

In this short instant, being able to come up with this kind of plan was enough to show his worth as an experienced player, but when he saw the way Soft Mist was holding her spear, Zhang Jiaxin suddenly felt like something wasn't right.

"Behind you!" Before Zhang Jiaxin could yell out his warning, Soft Mist already turned around 180 degrees and thrust forward with her spear. Magic waves surged forth. It was a Rising Dragon Soars the Sky. At this distance, it would be a back attack.

Hit!

Shen Jian had been struggling due to the combo from Dawn Rifle's Satellite Beam. At the same time, he had to pay attention to all of the other members of Happy. Soft Mist didn't attack him and instead circled around, so he naturally thought that she was going for their Cleric. As a result, he didn't even think that Soft Mist would be circling around to attack him from behind. It was an extremely powerful attack too.

After being hit, he was sent flying away. By activating Reinforced Iron Bones, he could resist the effects of most attacks, but a high-level skill like Rising Dragon Soars the Sky had grab priority, the one flaw of Reinforced Iron Bones.

He was sent flying. As a result, it wasn't Soft Mist splitting apart from the team, but him. He landed in a location, where Qiao Yifan had set up numerous ghost boundaries. From this, it could be seen that Happy had been plotting a one-wave offense the entire time.

Chapter 1036: Bypass

Poor Zhang Jiaxing played a Cleric. In this situation, he could only support Shen Jian and help him endure, but couldn't turn the tides. If he wasn't careful, he might even get caught up in it himself.

The hesitant Zhang Jiaxing didn't dare have his Cleric, Woven Shadow, get any closer. Right now, all he wanted was for Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher to hurry back over. However, considering Happy's detailed strategic arrangements, there was little chance that they would've neglected to think of such a situation. Although Ye Xiu wasn't here, Tang Rou and the other three still fought methodically. After Shen Jian's Striker was sent into one of One Inch Ash's ghost boundaries, Qiao Yifan didn't hesitate to send a relentless barrage of attacks. In an instant, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash shot up on the DPS charts to first place. Somehow, the one who headed Happy's offensive as the main DPS was a Phantom Demon. This was something that was completely unforeseen to most people.

No matter if it was Zhang Jiaxing or Shen Jian, the two were more focused on Soft Mist, who had led the charge when ambushing. They had neglected the Phantom Demon, which was usually a supporting role, and now they were paying the price. After falling into One Inch Ash's ghost boundaries, Successive Strike's health had immediately plummeted. When One Inch Ash then triggered Ghost Feast, Happy's Cleric, Little Cold Hands, had even given Successive Strike a Holy Commandment. Tang Rou's Soft Mist and Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle took this instant to strike with their strongest skills as well.

Boom!

The explosions created by Launchers had the most impressive sound effects, and spirits wrecked havoc amongst the flashing light. Soft Mist's valiant figure was blurred and engulfed by smoke, and Shen Jian was at a loss as to where to strike, only able to clearly see his character's health falling rapidly.

As for Woven Shadows?

In that moment, Shen Jian had even forgotten that Woven Shadow was someone he should protect. Instead, he was just hoping that Woven Shadow could hurry up and save him.

Clerics were rather helpless to prevent this sort of offense, but they could help hold the situation steady. To Zhang Jiaxing, it looked like Happy was pulling Shen Jian's Successive Strike to one side while

attacking. It looked a little like a street brawl, where you first pulled your victim into an alleyway to beat up.

The reason for pulling a victim into an alleyway was to avoid witnesses. Happy's current actions were, naturally, to get for as much time as possible before Life Extinguisher came to support.

Taking a careful look, Zhang Jiaxing realized that if he just let Shen Jian endure on his own, he'd probably get killed. There was no room for further consideration; he hurriedly had Woven Shadows step up to heal Shen Jian.

Yet the healing spell hadn't been finished before a missile exploded in front of him. Having seen Woven Shadow's actions, Wu Chen immediately swung his canon around to interrupt the healing Zhang Jiaxing had been trying to give.

Interrupting healing was basic knowledge in team competitions. As a player, Wu Chen didn't have any striking talents, but he had great foundations. Since he knew that his natural talent was limited and he wouldn't make any high-end breakthroughs, he made sure he had a solid grasp on these basics as possible. His current healing interruption was giving even Excellent Era's healer a hard time. After all, Zhang Jiaxing had no cover right now and was casting heals while completely exposed to the other's canonfire.

Again and again, Woven Shadow's casts for healing were interrupted rhythmically by Dawn Rifle. In the blink of an eye, four casts had already failed.

Zhang Jiaxing felt a deep-seated helplessness and, in the end, could only send out the instant cast Cures. Cures didn't need casting and healed for quite a lot, but consumed a lot of mana and also had long cooldowns. Usually, healers would save them as a last resort, leaving them for when they were truly and direly needed during the match. However, Zhang Jiaxing was helpless in the current situation. If he didn't help Shen Jian hold on, this might become a critical point that would lose them the match. Though, originally, with Zhang Jiaxing's belief that they would have no problem fighting three on four, losing a person first wasn't a problem, he wasn't so optimistic after seeing how much damage Happy could and did deal with their tactics.

Wu Chen had little ability to interrupt the Cures that came down. Though you could focus fire a single target in team competitions, it was hard to take down a character in a single wave of attacks because of healers.

Tang Rou and the others had done their best, but in the end, they didn't manage to wipe out Shen Jian's Successive Strike with this wave of attacks. Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher arrived as support with a hail of Air Drops.

Even so, Team Happy was still fighting four against three with an advantage in numbers. However, they didn't loiter and hurriedly fled before Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher got too close.

Team Happy had launched an offensive worthy of a powerhouse team. Their ace player had stalled the main force of their opponents while the others fought fewer with more. Yet in the end, they had retreated in a very un-powerhouse-like manner. In a situation where they had the advantage in numbers, they chose to retreat.

"Ah..." Commentator Pan Lin thought that this was quite the missed chance, "Successive Strike doesn't have much health left..."

"However, Xiao Shiqin has already come back. Under the cover he can provide, Zhang Jiaying can heal better. The situation will be pulled back to a head on fight. While Happy has the advantage in numbers, what about in skill and character strength? Especially since healing is a huge factor in team competitions. Happy's healer isn't all that skilled!" Li Yibo commented.

"That's true," Pan Lin agreed with a nod, "If this was a powerhouse team of a similar strength to Excellent Era, this tactical ambush might've become a decisive point to the match!"

"Not necessarily," Li Yibo said, smiling, "If this really was a team that matched Excellent Era in strength, they probably wouldn't handle things the same way. Look, after the ambush, only Xiao Shiqin ran to support, but Qiu Fei and Sun Xiang are still there sticking to Ye Xiu!"

"Seems like Excellent Era feels that the three of them are enough to deal with the four of Happy!"

"That's one of the reasons. Another is that Excellent Era doesn't want to waste this chance where Ye Xiu is alone and without support! Who is the largest threat in Happy to Excellent Era? It's, of course, Ye Xiu. If they can send him out of the match early, then the ending of this match would be set. I think Happy has neglected to consider this aspect. All they thought of was how Ye Xiu could be a diversion, but forgot that this was also giving their opponent a chance!" Li Yibo said.

"Alright, let's have a look at the situation over there..." Pan Lin said.

For the broadcast, this sort of situation was rather troublesome. This was because the battle had split into two. They might have cut to Happy's ambush, but Ye Xiu's exchange with Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei had never stopped!

"Seems like Ye Xiu's situation isn't looking good!" Pan Lin said when the shot switched back to the battle over there.

This was originally a very interesting one versus two. Weren't Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei both Ye Xiu's successors? It was rare that there would be a chance for them to brawl undisturbed like this in a team competition. However, when the shot switched over, they saw Ye Xiu's Lord Grim curled up into a ball shooting out from between One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form with an Aerial Fire. The sight of such an incredibly precise technique made Pan Lin's scalp tingle. He didn't even have the time to play up this face-off. They had already fought for so long. The climax might've already gone by.

**Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart!**

Right after Lord Grim darted out through the gap, Combat Form followed with a powerful technique, his spear heading directly for Lord Grim's chest. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella immediately changed forms and Lord Grim used a Guard in midair, accurately blocking the attack. Then his umbrella swiftly returned to gun form and fired to add momentum to what Dragon Breaks the Ranks had given him. Lord Grim flew backwards lightning fast and the stab One Autumn Leaf had tried to give after Combat Form's attack hit air.

After landing, Lord Grim didn't bother engaging the two any longer, turning and fleeing. Everyone could see that in Happy's team chat, the four had informed Ye Xiu that their offensive was over. Thus, Ye Xiu naturally wouldn't continue playing with the two. He had never thought of dealing with these two alone.

"Lord Grim has retreated and now on both sides it's Happy retreating while Excellent Era is in pursuit. It was Happy that was on the offensive just now, yet it seems like Excellent Era has the initiative now," Pan Lin noted.

"It can't be helped. If Happy's attack just now had managed to wipe out one of Excellent Era's players then it might not be like this. However, they had managed to do so, letting Excellent Era turn the tides," Li Yibo explained.

"Then that means... the attack by Happy was a failure?"

"Having not achieve what they planned, it should count as a failure. I believe that Happy didn't just aim to deal some damage to Successive Strike and have Woven Shadow expend some mana, right? Such a grandiose set up, even putting Ye Xiu in danger, it wouldn't be worth it."

"Ok, so now Happy is trying to throw their pursuers off on both sides," Pan Lin said as the shot switched between the two sides.

"At the moment, the four over here aren't doing so well! They have the advantage in numbers, meaning that their movement is more restricted, and their movement speed as a whole has dropped."

"In this situation, Happy probably won't be able to throw off their pursuers. I'm afraid that they'll probably have to go all-out to hold on," Li Yibo said.

"Now let's check on Ye Xiu... Ah, he threw them off! Lord Grim's movement speed shouldn't have such a big advantage against One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form... How did he do it?" The switching of the shot somehow managed to miss out on Lord Grim escaping from the two Battle Mages, surprising Pan Lin greatly. It was a good thing that there wasn't anything substantial happening currently, so they had the time to playback. Thus, the process of Ye Xiu throwing off his pursuers was replayed.

"Seems like it's still old ginger that's more spicy\*..." After watching, Li Yibo sighed.

Ye Xiu hadn't raced with the two, but instead used the environment to his advantage. He had clearly known where to go when first retreating. As expected, after running into an area with a lot of cover, Lord Grim vanished from the two's view with a few turns. And now, Lord Grim had already skipped town while One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form were still running in circles back there!

Even at hide-and-seek, God Ye Xiu's skill was at the top of the top, making people awestruck. Sun Xiang might also be a God at the top, but in this situation, he stood no chance.

"Ye Xiu's escaped." Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei had to inform the others through the team chat.

Hearing this, Xiao Shiqin's heart stuttered.

Could it be... Xiao Shiqin hoped that his guess was incorrect.

"Stop the pursuit! Coordinates, regroup," Xiao Shiqin hurriedly ordered in the team chat.

## Chapter 1037: Unrescuable

They say that team competitions are ever changing with all sorts of playstyles, but these differences never deviated from a set of standards. In the end, all these changing elements were geared towards creating the eventual situation of many against few, strong against weak.

Seeing the coordinates given by Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei, Xiao Shiqin wasn't just anxious anymore, he was shocked.

The distance between them had been drawn out so far, and how did that happen? Xiao Shiqin's three person group had chased the four members of Happy while Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei pursued Ye Xiu.

That's right. This happened through their chase of Happy.

This was the finals of the Challenger League, not ten random players going five on five in the in-game arena. When retreating from being chased, you had to be tactical, too, and not just run around like a headless chicken. If Happy's path of retreat was planned out, then that meant that Excellent Era's split was intentionally caused by Happy. Then, Ye Xiu easily threw Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei off his tail. If he didn't realize something was wrong by now, then Xiao Shiqin's tactical sense would be terrible and he wouldn't deserve to be known as one of the Four Master Tacticians.

"Regroup!" After Xiao Shiqin sent some coordinates in the team chat, he and his two teammates didn't bother with Happy's four anymore and quickly turned to leave. Yet they had just turned when Happy's four person team that had been fleeing clumsily suddenly turned to launch an energetic counterattack, chasing after the three and taking advantage of their situations. Their attacks in pursuit were smooth and well-versed; it was clear that they had practiced specifically for such a situation. Xiao Shiqin's heart fell further.

Yet the three of them hadn't gotten very far before a figure flashed in front of them.

There were only so many characters on the field, so who other than Lord Grim could appear at this time?

As expected!

Xiao Shiqin now knew that his guess was completely correct. They had, once again, fallen into Happy's trap. It seemed like the wave of attacks that they had launched was more than satisfactory, but Happy's scheme didn't end there. They had long since prepared for the next step. After pulling Excellent Era's two groups far apart enough to be out of support range, Ye Xiu would throw his opponents off his tail to regroup with them first, once again turning this into many against few.

After giving their exact coordinates, Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei would also run over as fast as possible. However, before then, Xiao Shiqin's three person group had to deal with an offensive from these five. It might seem like five people was just one more person than four, but the problem was that this time, Ye Xiu was there. The Ye Xiu that was even more of a threat than the rest of Happy put together.

A pincer attack.

"Charge through!" Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher was the first to attack. Shen Jian's Striker, Successive Strike, followed, fists swinging. Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric, Woven Shadow, wasn't idle either, using the skills that Clerics had to harass the character blocking their way.

Ye Xiu was scary, but if he was just blocking the way on his own, he can't block us all, right?

There might be people in pursuit behind them, but Excellent Era's three were still very confident against Ye Xiu's blockade and the three charged forwards together.

As expected, Ye Xiu alone couldn't block all three of them. They were all pro players, not normal players in the online game. Not only did he fail to block them, Lord Grim also received significant damage against the three's charge.

Breakthrough, regroup with Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei, then turn back and crush Happy. That's what Xiao Shiqin had planned, but then he looked left and right. Shen Jian's Striker, Successive Strike, had charged through, but where was Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric, Woven Shadow?

Xiao Shiqin hurriedly looked back with Life Extinguisher and immediately felt like crying.

As expected, Ye Xiu didn't have the power to block all three of them, so he hadn't bothered trying. He only wanted to block one of them. Life Extinguisher and Successive Strike had broken through, but Zhang Jiaxing's Woven Shadow had been blocked by Lord Grim. It was totally worth the damage that he had taken.

Dragon Tooth, Sky Strike, Falling Flower Palm.

Turning his view, Xiao Shiqin saw Lord Grim smoothly execute the simple three-hit Battle Mage combo. After Woven Shadow was hit by Falling Flower Palm, he was immediately blown far away. Happy's other four had managed to catch up by then. Soft Mist jumped, spear in hand and used a Circle Swing to catch the airborne Woven Shadow, swinging him in a circle before smashing him to the ground.

On the ground, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had already managed to lay down several ghost boundaries. They were like several large pots, emitting the aroma of the Phantom Ghost's power and awaiting ingredients to complete this dish!

Zhang Jiaxing's Woven Shadow was, without a doubt, the long-awaited ingredients. After being thrown into the pot by Soft Mist's Circle Swing, they immediately began cooking. Little Cold Hand's Sacred Fire came down as the spices, then Dawn Rifle blasted attacks at him. The flames were rising!

Woven Shadow was cooked immediately. In such a situation, Clerics had a very hard time saving themselves. As a magic class, most of his skills had to be casted. Thus, when he was being attacked continuously like this, he couldn't use any of those casts. He could only hope for outside help.

Xiao Shiqin was extremely frustrated with his own carelessness. Though it would be hard with their disadvantage in numbers, but they couldn't just leave their healer to die. Life Extinguisher and Successive Strike simultaneously turned to charge back into the fray, but found their way blocked by Lord Grim again.

Xiao Shiqin didn't have time to deal with Ye Xiu. Life Extinguisher sent all his long-ranged skills towards Woven Shadow, but Happy's team ignored them, fighting through Life Extinguisher's attacks.

As for Shen Jian's Successive Strike, he had to get close to deal damage. Being blocked by Lord Grim, he couldn't charge over to help for now. However, in this exchange, Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher had managed to get closer. However, for him, getting closer was no different than staying away. Most of his attacks didn't require for him to close in. Even if he used them, no one would pay any heed to it. Even if they had to take more damage, they were determined to kill Woven Shadow.

Xiao Shiqin knew very well that this exchange was definitely worth it. It went without saying that he alone wouldn't be able to kill a target when the opponent had a Cleric. Even if he could, it would still be more worth it for their opponents to take out their healer.

Firepower coverage was ignored. Go up to wreck havoc? No matter how bad their opponents were, they still had four people, and Mechanics weren't a class that could charge bodily into an opponent's formation. With Xiao Shiqin's tactical knowledge, he obviously wouldn't do something so mindless.

With a turn of view, Life Extinguisher launched another round of attacks, but this time he focused his firepower on Little Cold Hands, Happy's healer.

As expected of a Master Tactician. In this helpless situation, he decided to surround Wei to save Zhao\*. How could Happy just leave their healer to be attacked?

Team Happy really did just ignore their healer being attacked, speeding up their attacks on Woven Shadow. Xiao Shiqin felt like crying. Was Woven Shadow really unrescuable? Kill the opponent's healer as an exchange? The problem was, there were three people surrounding and attacking Woven Shadow who was helpless. As for his side? It was just his Life Extinguisher attacking Little Cold Hands alone. Even though his technique was good enough to make Little Cold Hands helpless, his DPS couldn't compare to the combined DPS of three characters. Plus, he had been late in striking. If his opponents killed Woven Shadow first and then went over to support Little Cold Hands, then wouldn't all his hard work be for nothing?

In these crucial times, Xiao Shiqin was quick and decisive. Life Extinguisher abruptly turned his fire towards Lord Grim.

This action was very confusing to everyone. The commentators, Pan Lin and Li Yibo analyzed this as trying to kill off Lord Grim, exchanging a Cleric for Team Happy's ace.

The two used a very questioning and uncertain tone when saying this. Was Ye Xiu the type that could be killed so easily? Under Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei's combined offense, Ye Xiu had managed to play a graceful game of hide and seek and threw them off his tail. Even when hopelessly outnumbered, he still had very strong self-preservation skills. Trying to take out Lord Grim wasn't even as feasible as trying to take out Little Cold Hands.

Yet, Xiao Shiqin's intentions soon became very clear. Turning his fire on Lord Grim and attacking wildly had given Shen Jian a chance to slip away. Successive Strike charged past Lord Grim, ignoring all else, and towards the enemy's formation.

Xiao Shiqin also took this chance to change focus again, showering Soft Mist and the others. This time, it provided cover for Shen Jian's Striker's charge and Tang Rou and co's encirclement was finally broken open.

Zhang Jiaxing was an experienced pro as well, not a weakling that needed to be constantly protected in the online game. He took the chance to dart out of the opening. Xiao Shiqin was delighted and hurried to provide suppressing fire. Woven Shadow was like a little lamb that had finally found its way home, stumbling and tripping as he shot towards Life Extinguisher.

The two regrouped and immediately turned to flee. They hadn't taken two steps when Xiao Shiqin suddenly realized something was missing. Turning his view to look, he was close to bursting into tears. They might have pulled Zhang Jiaxing's Woven Shadow out, but Shen Jian's Striker, Successive Strike had been trapped in.

The audience was stunned.

This was Xiao Shiqin! Because of him and him alone, an ordinary team like Thunderclap had become a regular visitor of the playoffs. This team had managed to continuously cause trouble for the powerhouses. They could cause a headache for any team.

Yet now they were so careless when playing now. They had lost their Cleric a moment ago. Now that they had picked their Cleric back up, they lost their Striker.

Normal characters weren't as valuable as healers, but they couldn't just leave him there either, right? There was a total headcount of six on each side. Losing one meant losing a portion of their strength. Many team competitions had ended with one team losing one member and then spiralling downhill, unable to hold on.

Xiao Shiqin helplessly had Life Extinguisher turn back and Zhang Jiaxing couldn't ignore this either. He wasn't a helpless rescued princess; he was here to help out on the field.

Rescuing Shen Jian's Striker would be easier than rescuing a healer. After all, Strikers had great offensive capabilities and could easily find an opening with assistance from outside.

With Zhang Jiaxing's Cleric, Woven Shadow, helping out with Sacred Fire and similar skills, Successive Strike finally broke out. Like Woven Shadow before, he hurried towards the warm embrace of his team.

"Careful!!!" Xiao Shiqin hurriedly type out that message, but didn't manage to help Shen Jian. Lord Grim suddenly came in from an angle and used a Circle Swing with his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella to impale Successive Strike and, running and swinging him about, threw Successive Strike back into the encirclement.

After going in this massive circle, would the first to die in the team competition still be Successive Strike?

"Keep up his health!!!" Xiao Shiqin was like a commander in a dungeon, yelling at the healer to keep his health stable.

Translator's Thoughts

Nomyummi Nomyummi

TN: Surrounding Wei to save Zhao comes from an event in the warring states where the army laid siege to Wei to force their troops to retreat from Zhao, thus saving Zhao. - Jouissance

Chapter 1038: Emergency Substitution

Everyone was struck dumb.

In the group arena, Excellent Era had only won one point. This was already inconsistent with the expectations of many people, but what about now? Unexpectedly, Team Happy continuously held the initiative, dominating the whole way, whereas Excellent Era was forced to constantly run for their lives. Just looking at the current situation, just who was the powerhouse here? Who was the grassroots team?

Many in the audience had wanted to see Happy emerge victorious, because it would be an exciting upset. However, seeing the scene before them, it really did seem inconceivable. Yet, this was something they were looking forward to, so obviously it would be something that made them excited. The stadium wasn't only made up of Excellent Era fans; this wasn't Team Excellent Era's home ground.

Only, these audience members, who wanted to see Happy succeed, couldn't really be called Happy's fans. Truthfully, they only wanted to see a major upset. Thus, they wouldn't act like Happy's true fans and recklessly cheer for the team. Since Happy's chances really weren't optimistic, this kind of cheering could easily end with them getting their faces slapped. False fans would obviously be willing to risk this.

Except now, Happy had actually grasped an advantage during the team competition. These spectators, who were only looking for an upset, were also beginning to stir. Those who were more hot-blooded had already started cheering. Gradually, the others followed suit, expressing what they truly wished in their hearts. They too began loudly shouting encouragement. On the flip side, Excellent Era's fans, seeing their team's passive movements, could only sit stupidly.

Originally, they had been prepared to cheer to add to Excellent Era's beautiful performance. Now, with the team acting so passively, it would be more like sending help at the darkest hour.\*\* They weren't mentally prepared for this! Thus, in that instant, the stadium was suddenly filled with loud voices cheering for Happy, drowning out the voices of Excellent Era fans who had been distracted. It seemed like ages before they reacted, desperately raising their voices to cheer for Excellent Era.

Often, cheers from fans in the stadium would be a sort of catalyst for the players on stage. However, Glory was an exception to this, because the players would be completely sealed within their player booths. They weren't able to hear anything going on in the stadium. Although the reasoning behind this was simple, the fans' wishful thinking still caused them to believe that their cheers would somehow transfer strength to their players. At the same time, the pro players didn't do anything to deny this. Even if they couldn't hear any of this support, it wouldn't do them any good to betray their fans good intentions.

At this very moment, the stadium echoed with two equally powerful cheers, yet on stage the situation didn't really change.

"Heal! Heal!"

Truthfully, Xiao Shiqin's directions were a bit redundant. At times like this, it wasn't as if Zhang Jiaying could still just sit and watch! He had long since controlled his Cleric Woven Shadow to heal Successive Strike. Unfortunately, he was a bit late, because Happy's side also wasn't just sitting back and doing nothing. Besides Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was also harassing him non-stop. Zhang Jiaying had already expended the cooldowns of all of his instantaneous skills. While his chanting skills

were off cooldown, the problem was he couldn't find any opportunities to use them. He was constantly interrupted, as if he was dancing from excitement.

"Protect! Protect!"

Zhang Jiaxing also yelled out in the chat.

However, this reminder was just like Xiao Shiqin's earlier reminder to heal. How could Xiao Shiqin not know to shield the Cleric? Of course he knew, but he couldn't do anything. This was because they were currently faced with the existence of an uncontrollable factor ... Team Happy had more people.

Yes, more people. This advantage had been personally cultivated by Ye Xiu from the start, until it reached an utterly heartless degree. Zhang Jiaxing's heals weren't enough. Xiao Shiqin's cover fire wasn't enough. And these two definitely weren't any ordinary players! Zhang Jiaxing was the main healer of Excellent Era, a powerhouse team, and Xiao Shiqin was an All-Star! He had just showed off his military might during the group arena, gracefully retreating off stage when he knew he was finished. Except now, when facing against all of Team Happy, these two seemed to be completely stuck.

But even in a situation like this, as long as the two persevered, it wouldn't all be for nothing. Every so often one of Woven Shadow's skills would find an opening and heal a little. Furthermore, Shen Jian was still doing his best to struggle and break free. Although everyone was on edge, at least they still had hope. Yet Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaxing were constantly sending each other warnings in the team channel. The true use of the channel was seen here.

With this kind of shouting, it could be seen that Excellent Era was truly in a dire position. Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei began accelerating without any regard for future consequences. For example, even a Dragon Breaks the Ranks was brought out and used as a movement skill. The broadcast switched to a close-up view of the map, showing the two characters moving at a breakneck pace. The audience could see that the time it would take for these two to reach the battlefield could be measured in seconds.

Missing just one final step?

At this moment, this sentence appeared in everyone's minds.\*\*\* If these two Battle Mages reached the battlefield in time, they could definitely reverse the situation. Team Happy's characters were really a bit disappointing; at a crucial moment like this, their damage output was really too low. If these characters could stand shoulder to shoulder with the ones from a powerhouse like Excellent Era, perhaps Shen Jian would have been killed already.

Beautiful tactics. Beautiful execution. But in the end, would they lose it all because of useless characters?

At this moment, the silhouettes of One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form could be seen on the horizon. Looking at Successive Strike's health and doing a few quick calculations, Xiao Shiqin quietly let out the breath he had been holding. At the same time, he felt ashamed. Just a while ago, when he was still in Team Thunderclap, he had lost many matches because of this kind of disparity in character strength. Back then, he had often fantasized about having a powerhouse character within his grasp. But now, he finally achieved that dream, and he was instead relying on the brute force of the characters. It looked like Happy's beautiful display would soon be thwarted, but right now Xiao Shiqin felt disgusted. This kind of

brute force was what he had admired for so long before. But now that he was truly winning only because of this, he couldn't feel any joy.

Happy's characters ...

As Xiao Shiqin wistfully looked at these characters, he was suddenly startled.

What's going on? How come there were only four characters on Happy's side?

Where's the Cleric? Where was Little Cold Hands?

In his haste to protect Woven Shadow and save Shen Jian's Successive Strike, Xiao Shiqin had neglected such a huge change! Now that he suddenly discovered it, his heartbeat quickened, and his mind quickly mapped out this entire region.

Not good!

Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher suddenly rushed forward like a melee character. This move caused Zhang Jiaying to jump with fright.

Was this the beginning of a counterattack?

But Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei still hadn't reached the battlefield! And even if they had, as a Mechanic, there was no reason for him to jump to the front lines like this!

In the end, Zhang Jiaying was also stupefied.

A shadow of a person flew into the attackers' encirclement. Yet this character originally shouldn't have appeared.

Steamed Bun Invasion!

Unexpectedly, it was Steamed Bun Invasion!

"When did he appear?" It wasn't just the harried and preoccupied Xiao Shiqin and Zhang Jiaying who had failed to notice. Even the spectators, with their omniscient view, had been so focused on the fight that they hadn't paid attention to the fact that Happy had actually switched out a player.

At this moment, there was no time for a replay. Steamed Bun Invasion had suddenly joined the fight, immediately using Strangle. However, in a crucial moment like this, Happy had actually managed to complete a character substitution?

Cleric Little Cold Hands had withdrawn. Brawler Steamed Bun Invasion had joined the fight.

Happy no longer had the damage output of four characters. They now had five!

It was only after realizing this that Xiao Shiqin had recklessly charged forward. He knew that against the damage output of five characters, Successive Strike wouldn't be able to last until One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form arrived. He needed to charge in at this moment in order to disrupt the setup.

At this very moment, Happy didn't have a healer either. If they took this opportunity to focus their attacks on one character and managed to take out a lot of health, with the support incoming from Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei, perhaps they would be able to swap again.

Just as Xiao Shiqin made this decision, he saw the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella in Lord Grim hand shake ...

Tears streamed down Xiao Shiqin's face ... In his moment of desperation, he had once again forgotten this unspecialized character. An unspecialized's healing capabilities were still weak, but ... no matter how small a mosquito was, it was still flesh. On a professional stage, even a tiny bit could mean the difference between victory and defeat. With him here to heal the team, Happy could likely sustain until they found the chance to switch their healer back in. After all, this position was quite close to a support zone. It was only after Xiao Shiqin become conscious of their current position, after he mapped out the area in his head just now, that he finally realized Happy's intent. However, his realization had arrived a bit late.

Steamed Bun Invasion had joined the fight, and Team Happy's damage output had immediately increased by a level. Every time Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher rushed over, he was blocked by Lord Grim. His ultimate decision to do everything he could to disrupt the situation had also fallen to pieces.

It wasn't possible for Ye Xiu to kill him in an instant, but blocking him and obstructing his disturbance wasn't a problem.

Boom!

Another round of explosions occurred. Shen Jian's Striker finally fell.

After an unbearably bad performance during the group arena, Shen Jian became the first to fall during the team competition. But from a fair point of view, this time, it wasn't really his fault. Facing this kind of trap, any player would find it hard to cope. It was regretful, but competition was just this cruel sometimes. This kind of situation had happened to him, ending his performance in this match here. He hadn't made any eye-catching plays and was even the first to be killed. As far as those who hadn't bothered to ask about the sequence of events were concerned, this was basically the worst performance of the match.

However, up until now, had anyone really performed poorly during this team competition? No, everyone had worked hard to bring out their individual skills, but in a fight, there would always be a winner and a loser. Shen Jian very much regretted being the first one out. He could definitely be called the most unlucky player tonight. With this being the most important match of the season for Excellent Era, his performance was really too terrible. Shen Jian sat paralyzed in his seat, as if he could see himself returning to the time when he had been a substitute player.

Translator's Thoughts

Nomyummi Nomyummi

TL Note: \*\*The first idiom used, 锦上添花, means to add flowers to embroidery, or to decorate something that is already perfect. The second idiom, 雪中送炭, means to send charcoal in snowy weather, or to provide help in a time of great need.

\*\*\*The "phrase" mentioned here is actually a chenyu, 功亏一篑. Literally translated, it means that in the process of piling up many hills (usually nine) of dirt, one bucket is missed. Basically it means to almost finish something, but end up missing by just a tiny bit, the last step. --Veriquity

Chapter 1039: Shadow Play

"Steamed Bun Invasion! Strangle! Happy is focusing their attacks! One wave rush! Beautiful!!!"

With a fierce battle ongoing, there was no time for the commentators to give any lengthy explanations or play-by-plays. Pan Lin ended up using short and hurried keywords, which helped make the intensity of the match even more clear.

"Happy... The first kill goes to Happy!!!" He stumbled a bit on this result. Pan Lin wanted to shout that Happy had taken the first point, but he thought about it again and remembered that wasn't how the point system worked anymore! Killing the opponent didn't count as a point. The number of points won depended on how many of your players were left standing at the end of the match. The two methods of calculating points didn't have any impact on the end result, but for the experienced Pan Lin, he felt like calculating points through kills would be more exciting and fun.

I'll give them my recommendation later.

Pan Lin quietly thought to himself. The new tournament format was being tested in the Challenger League. The Alliance was currently taking feedback. As part of the broadcast team, he had quite a lot of authority in this matter. Much of the competitive format was established for the convenience of the broadcast. For this season's potential change, the broadcast had put a good amount of effort into pushing for it.

These thoughts flashed through Pan Lin's head. There was still a match going on. He couldn't spend his time thinking about his recommendation at the moment.

Shen Jian's Successive Strike was killed. Even though the sixth player Wang Ze immediately loaded in, he would appear in the support zone. He would be in the same situation as Sun Xiang and Shen Jian; he needed time to arrive.

For now, Excellent Era was at a one player disadvantage, but if the situation was calmly looked at, not many would think that Happy was at an advantage.

Excellent Era had one fewer player, but One Autumn Leaf and Combat Form had finally arrived. As for Happy, to make up for their insufficient DPS, they did a character switch. While they had killed Successive Strike, they left behind a hidden danger: Happy didn't have a healer right now.

Admittedly, Lord Grim had healing capabilities, but for a team competition, his healing would be like trying to extinguish a burning cart with a cup of water; it barely counted as support.

Even though Excellent Era lost a player, it was a good time for them to make a strong counterattack.

Xiao Shiqin obviously wouldn't miss this opportunity. He had already made preparations for this situation. He couldn't do anything about Lord Grim's healing, but this was their opportunity to give

Happy a heavy blow. If Ye Xiu wasn't able to control the situation well enough, it was very possible that Happy would be swept away by Excellent Era in one swoop because Excellent Era's ace player Sun Xiang and his One Autumn Leaf had arrived.

Shattering the Lands!

Sun Xiang possessed the spirit of an ace player. One of his teammates had been killed. It didn't matter how strong or confident Excellent Era was, this irrefutable reality was a blow to their morale. The ace player needed to stand out at times like this to turn the tides through a brilliant performance to win back their morale.

As a result, Sun Xiang started off immediately with a high-level skill. One Autumn Leaf leapt high in the air with Evil Annihilation raised up and jumped directly into the middle of Team Happy.

"Scatter!"

Ye Xiu shouted in the team chat.

The oppressiveness of Battle God One Autumn Leaf wasn't something any of Team Happy's characters could contend against. The ghost boundaries set up by One Inch Ash wouldn't be effective. Shattering the Lands was an AoE attack. In addition to the possible Landslide effect from Evil Annihilation, he would turn the sky and earth upside down despite being trapped within the ghost boundaries.

Just this single move was enough to force Team Happy to scatter. This was the might of the number one character in the Alliance, Battle God One Autumn Leaf.

The other members of Excellent Era had already started coordinating their attacks with One Autumn Leaf. Qiu Fei's Combat Form followed One Autumn Leaf like a shadow. Excellent Era had never played with dual Battle Mages before. The previous matches hadn't showed anything particularly special about it. It was only until this match did hints of it appear. Qiu Fei's Combat Form was like wingman for One Autumn Leaf. His attacks were a guide for One Autumn Leaf, filling in any holes. This was a very famous playstyle called Shadow Play. However, in the era of stars, it was rarely seen nowadays. Of the 24 All Stars, not one of them were shadows.

It could be said that shadows did the dirty work. They were oftentimes the ones that covered up the mistakes made by ace players. With them, the ace players would perform more brilliantly, but the existence of the shadow was likely to be ignored. Who would be willing to be that type of player? As it turned out, being an invisible shadow also required a very high level of skill. Not just anyone was qualified to take on that role, so very few teams used it because there was no one appropriate for the role.

But Qiu Fei? His skill was solid. A year and a half after Ye Xiu's departure from Excellent Era, he could already contend with Ye Xiu 1v1. He was also a new rookie with no name, so no one was surprised that he was pushed into this position.

But then again, this decision also depended on the team's needs and style.

Tiny Herb and Blue Rain also had incredible rookies with the same class as their team's ace players. However, neither Gao Yingjie nor Lu Hanwen were appointed as shadows for their Gods. They had their own place on the stage. They worked hard to demonstrate their skill and continued to shine brightly.

Neither choice was right or wrong. Objectively speaking, Excellent Era's ace player Sun Xiang was younger. Sun Xiang wasn't like Tiny Herb's Wang Jiexi or Blue Rain's Huang Shaotian who needed to train a successor soon. Sun Xiang was still rising, so a shadow by his side was a very good push forward. The advantages of having a better ace player didn't need to be mentioned. Compared to Tiny Herb and Blue Rain, Excellent Era was very suitable for a Shadow Play. It was just that using Qiu Fei as a stepping stone for Sun Xiang was a bit regrettable.

Then again, gold always shines. Shadows were easily ignored by the general crowd, but they wouldn't escape the eyes of professionals. This was also why the Shadow Play was difficult to maintain. Outstanding shadows were too easily recruited. Just the promise of no longer having to be a shadow was more than enough. If they could have their own stage to shine, who would be willing to remain as a stepping stone?

Qiu Fei was a diligent and steadfast player, so he didn't reject the team's choice. He took on the burden willingly. However, through the Challenger League, Sun Xiang didn't need a shadow to crush his opponents. For Excellent Era, this was their first formidable opponent for their newly formed duo.

But just before, under everyone's watch, the two of them had failed to catch a single player. The two of them had targeted Lord Grim, yet Lord Grim was able to escape from their grasp so easily. Then, Lord Grim ran over to help his teammates kill one of Excellent Era's players.

From how long it took for Lord Grim and how long it took for the two of them to reach the battlefield, it could be seen just how cleanly Ye Xiu was able to escape from them. If not for Xiao Shiqin noticing the change in tactics early on, the two of them might have still been searching for Lord Grim!

It easy to think of what Sun Xiang was feeling like after being played around like that. He had been preparing to show his superiority over Ye Xiu in this team competition. Not yelling at Qiu Fei to move to the side was already a huge improvement for him.

After losing to Ye Xiu in the group arena, Sun Xiang underwent a huge transformation. For the sake of victory, he started to reach a compromise. He abandoned his previous attitude towards his reputation. Victory. Right now, the only desire in his heart was victory.

The team competition had only just started and Excellent Era was losing. If this was the previous Sun Xiang, he would have become irritated long ago. But now, he was able to maintain his calm and follow Xiao Shiqin's arrangements.

Shattering the Land scattered Team Happy's formation. Qiu Fei's Combat Form seized the opportunity to charge forward. Shattering the Land didn't have that aspect to it, so it was up to him to make up for it.

With this duo joining the battle, Team Excellent Era exploded with fighting strength. Team Happy scattered, but didn't show any plans to counterattack. They clearly didn't want to clash directly with Excellent Era here, even if they had the numbers advantage.

"Focus Dawn Rifle!" Xiao Shiqin gave a new target.

Wu Chen was someone who had never appeared on stage before this point. Xiao Shiqin picked him not because he was underestimating Wu Chen or because Wu Chen was the most convenient target, it was because he recognized that this person was biggest hidden danger to Excellent Era.

Launcher!

He had noticed it earlier. Was there any class more fitting to partner with Ye Xiu? His Battle Mage and Su Mucheng's Launcher were titled Best Partners every year in the Alliance before his retirement.

Wu Chen couldn't compare to Su Mucheng whether it was in individual skill or character strength, but with Ye Xiu by his side, his fighting strength was vastly improved. In the entire Glory scene, no one understood how to coordinate with Launchers better than Ye Xiu. Even though right now, Wu Chen's Dawn Rifle was mainly just being guided around, Xiao Shiqin didn't think his value stopped there. From Wu Chen's careful harassment to his solid fundamentals that he showed when interrupting their Cleric, Xiao Shiqin was certain that under Ye Xiu's lead, Wu Chen would show even greater potential. And this had never been seen before this match. This sort of unknown variable made Xiao Shiqin feel uneasy. He decided that it would be best to hurry up and get rid of him before his potential erupted.

Sun Xiang had originally planned on targeting Lord Grim, but then he saw Xiao Shiqin's orders.....

Victory! For the sake of victory!

Sun Xiang grinded his teeth as he went against his wishes. When Shattering the Lands ended, he immediately had One Autumn Leaf rush towards Dawn Rifle.

Xiao Shiqin wasn't just someone who ordered people around. All sorts of gadgets poured out from his Life Extinguisher and marched towards Dawn Rifle like an army.

Translator's Thoughts

Nomyummi Nomyummi

TKA's #2!!! If we can get to #1 this week or next week, I'll post a special video when the EE vs Happy match ends :)

Chapter 1040: This Again

How fast!

Seeing One Autumn Leaf suddenly turn around and then the famed spear Evil Annihilation flash in front of his eyes, Wu Chen only had this single thought in his mind.

He was just an average player. He didn't have crazy reaction speeds nor insane hand speed. This type of attack was truly hard for him to defend against. He had been carefully maintaining his distance the entire time, but at this moment, One Autumn Leaf was too close. He leaped back in panic while simultaneously preparing to use Aerial Fire, but he felt like it was already too late.

Ding!

A clinging noise sounded.

The sounds of two weapons clashing felt so real. A scarlet spear stabbed forward and blocked the black Evil Annihilation.

So he's here!

The instant he blocked, Sun Xiang unconsciously thought that he was facing Ye Xiu. The only player in Team Happy that he had his eyes on was Ye Xiu. In his eyes, Ye Xiu was the only one qualified to block his attacks.

But unfortunately, in the next second, Sun Xiang saw his opponent clearly, Soft Mist.

Sun Xiang felt somewhat annoyed.

If it were Ye Xiu's Lord Grim, he might have stopped for a bit to fight him, but seeing that it was Soft Mist, he resolved himself to carry out Xiao Shiqin's orders and take Dawn Rifle out of the match.

At this moment, a stream of fire flowed out from Soft Mist's scarlet spear towards One Autumn Leaf.

Flowing Flame!

Sun Xiang recognized this effect and knew it was a special effect from a weapon. The probability of triggering the effect usually wasn't high, but it looked like the other side was lucky. To think she was able to trigger it with just a single block. But so what?

Sun Xiang ignored the flaming attack. It was just a weapon effect. Was it necessary for the Battle God One Autumn Leaf to dodge it?

One Autumn Leaf didn't retreat and instead advanced. Under Sun Xiang's control, One Autumn Leaf was going to force his way through Soft Mist's interception. Suddenly, Soft Mist's spear pierced through the flames?

Dragon Tooth?

No.

Double Stab?

No.

Circle Swing?

Definitely not.

Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart!

This spear aimed for One Autumn Leaf's heart. It was the Level 60 Battle Mage skill, Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart. It was best described as a simple stab, but its might was far greater than a Dragon Tooth.

How could a normal attack be enough to defend against a high-level skill? It definitely couldn't be blocked with just one's body. In the end, Sun Xiang was forced to retreat and leapt backwards twice to just barely dodge the attack. However, Soft Mist wasn't done yet. She was just about to execute her

next attack. However, Qiu Fei's Combat Style attacked from the flank, stopping Soft Mist from continuing her assault.

From an outsider's point of view, it was a very normal assistance from a teammate, but in Sun Xiang's eyes, it was disgraceful! Just Soft Mist alone had forced him to require Qiu Fei's assistance?

Sun Xiang was angry. One Autumn Leaf stepped forward one step. Tooth for tooth. He unleashed his own Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart, except compared to Soft Mist's, it was more crafty and fast.

Qiu Fei's Combat Form had been at the front, but when he saw Sun Xiang's One Autumn Leaf return to attack, he immediately opened up space for him. He followed Xiao Shiqin's orders and thrust his spear at Dawn Rifle.

But with Tang Rou's interception, Wu Chen had seized the opportunity to use Aerial Fire to escape. The army of machines created by Xiao Shiqin's Life Extinguisher rushed forward, but they were stopped by Qiao Yifan's ghost boundaries. The gadgets from Mechanics were far weaker than the summons from Summoners. Many of them were one-time use tools. In addition, ghost boundaries could injure Mechanic gadgets and Summoner summons. As soon as the weak gadgets entered the boundary, there was almost no chance of them leaving. Xiao Shiqin hastily made adjustments. He couldn't let all of these skills go to waste. In the end, he also lost his opportunity to catch Dawn Rifle.

Xiao Shiqin was extremely annoyed. He knew that Ye Xiu had once again been one step ahead of him. Soft Mist's interception, One Inch Ash's trap. Both of them were to protect Dawn Rifle. Happy had guessed that Excellent Era would target him.

He really is.... So troublesome.....

Xiao Shiqin sighed. He wasn't as single-minded as Sun Xiang, but Ye Xiu was undoubtedly the biggest threat in Happy. He didn't lack experience fighting with Ye Xiu. In short, he had lost more times than he won, but back then, Ye Xiu's Excellent Era was much more powerful than his Thunderclap. Xiao Shiqin had been at a clear disadvantage in all of those matches, so even though he lost more times, he was still confident in his ability. But now, the two had switched positions. He was the one with Excellent Era, as for Ye Xiu? His team was a grassroots team even weaker than Thunderclap, but how was the match going? It was beyond anyone's expectations.

God of Glory...

Thinking of Ye Xiu's most spectacular title, Xiao Shiqin didn't need to ascertain Ye Xiu's skill. Ye Xiu had always been a part of a powerhouse like Excellent Era. A powerful team would often cover up how much an individual shined. For example, when Xiao Shiqin lost to Ye Xiu before, he didn't think that it was because he was worse than Ye Xiu. The difference lay in the team's overall strength!

But now, the positions had switched. Why was Excellent Era in such dire straits? This time, there was no excuse!

Dawn Rifle had already escaped. What next?

Xiao Shiqin observed their situation. Mindlessly attacking wasn't a thing. He needed to find a breakthrough point and deal a damaging blow towards Happy.

Bang!

The noise from Falling Flower Palm got Xiao Shiqin's attention. Sun Xiang versus Soft Mist. Sun Xiang was more skilled and had the stronger character, so after a few exchanges, One Autumn Leaf's Falling Flower Palm sent Soft Mist flying. He and Combat Form rushed forward after her.

Dawn Rifle had escaped outside of their attack range, so Sun Xiang and Qiu Fei switched targets to Soft Mist. Listening to the shotcaller was very important in a match, but players weren't wooden dolls who could only do as they were told. Oftentimes, players needed to make decisions based on their circumstances.

Xiao Shiqin noticed the two switch targets already and saw that the situation looked good, so he immediately started attacking Soft Mist as well. Right now, he was the only other attacker on Excellent Era. When those two switched targets, it was easy for him to switch targets too. He didn't need to give anyone instructions. As for Zhang Jiang, he had been healing when needed.

"Go die!" Sun Xiang typed in the public chat. He was clearly not happy about Soft Mist disrupting his plans. He was even angrier that it wasn't Ye Xiu who had blocked him, but this little character.

Sun Xiang and the shadow Qiu Fei, along with Xiao Shiqin's support. This trio wasn't something any one person could defend against, but Tang Rou didn't back down from the fight. She raised her spear and actually stood in an attacking stance.

"What a noob..." Sun Xiang remarked disdainfully. She didn't know her own strength and she was going to die for it.

But this remark caught Xiao Shiqin's eyes. He was startled by it.

Were there noobs among Happy? Perhaps in the past, but right now, how could Ye Xiu let a noob participate in the finals?

Everyone in Happy should be able to see the difference in strength between the two sides, yet no one helped Soft Mist. Was she sacrificing herself to give others time or?

Xiao Shiqin looked around wildly. The others in Happy didn't disperse after Soft Mist became the focus of Excellent Era. They were still in a battle stance.

But what about Lord Grim?

Xiao Shiqin swept the field and discovered that Lord Grim was nowhere to be found!

Lord Grim had been the character that he had been paying close attention to the entire time. His attention had shifted when he switched his target to Soft Mist. During those few seconds, where could he have gone?

He turned 720 degrees and finally found Lord Grim. That guy had stealthily hid behind a tree trunk. Xiao Shiqin had noticed his head sticking out. Then, he saw Lord Grim open his hands. Xiao Shiqin was greatly alarmed and he looked towards where Lord Grim's palms were facing. Woven Shadow! Zhang Jiaying's Woven Shadow!

"!!!" Xiao Shiqin wasn't able to type out any words. He only had time to warn everyone in this way. Unfortunately, it was too late. Zhang Jiaying's attention had been focused on One Autumn Leaf's and Combat Form's health. He hadn't noticed that there was an ambush set up for him. The instant that Xiao Shiqin typed out the warning, Woven Shadow flew out.

Cloud Grasping Fist!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened up. It was a low-level Grappler skill. Ye Xiu had used this method in the match against Team Jade Dynasty to grab the opponent from afar and his target had been Team Jade Dynasty's Cleric.

And this time, Team Excellent Era had actually fallen for this move too.

It was the same technique, but used differently.

With Jade Dynasty, no one had expected that an unspecialized could do this, so Lord Grim had been very brazen. His teammates just needed to get the opposing side's attention for him to use it.

Facing Excellent Era, Ye Xiu had thought about what the opposing side might do and waited patiently until an opportunity arose. Tang Rou's Soft Mist do a 1v3? This wasn't a noob acting rashly. This was bait to attract Excellent Era's attention. With such an advantage, who wouldn't want to take it? Just when they thought that they had an opportunity to kill Soft Mist, their healer was snatched away.

Was this a trade?

No!

Soft Mist's tenaciousness exceeded their expectations. Three Battle Mages fought. She was in a 1v2 and even though she was losing, her spear danced like flowing water.

What type of hand speed is this?

Seeing Soft Mist's insanely fast rhythm, everyone was dumbfounded.

"How is she... compared to you?" In the crowd, Tiny Herb's Xu Bin suddenly asked his teammate Liu Xiaobie. Hand speed had always been Liu Xiaobie's greatest weapon.

Liu Xiaobie didn't respond. Was it because he didn't feel like responding, or because he felt too embarrassed to admit that his hand speed wasn't as high?