

Avatar 1181

Chapter 1181: The Demonic Journey to Championship

Although Samsara's performance was as strong as ever, on the points rankings after this round, they slipped down two places. Tiny Herb, who had originally only lagged behind by one point, won 9 to 1 against Miracle and surpassed Samsara by one point. Wind Howl, who was originally behind Samsara by two points, had swept Bright Green 10 to 0 and were also now one point ahead of Samsara. Because of their alphabetical advantage, Wind Howl (Huxiao) was currently in the lead. Tiny Herb (Weicao) was in second with the same number of points, 36, and third place was Samsara with 35.

After losing in their away game to Samsara, 3 to 7, there was a bit of distance between their 30 points and the first three places. Misty Rain had 30 points as well, but lost alphabetically (Yanyu) to Blue Rain (Lanyu) and were currently in fifth.

Sixth place Tyranny was now a full ten points below the first place. Although their 7-3 win against Happy wasn't terrible, the fact that they'd gotten a big fat 0 in the individual competition was still snatched up by the reporters looking for a topic of interest.

There were two other teams also at 26 points, Thunderclap and Void. This round, Thunderclap played an away game at 301 Degrees, and in the end they tied at 5 to 5.

This result happened when one team won all of their individual battles, and the other team won 5 points in the team competition. This result was relatively rare. The individual battles were split into the individual competition and the group arena, and those 5 points were split up, so a team could normally snatch at least one or two points. Unlike the team round, there were no teammates to help save a dangerous situation, and the team's strength was scattered. There could be a situation like Tian Ji's Horse Race*, or just one large mistake that affected a battle's outcome.

Thus, even when a powerhouse faced a weak team, they wouldn't dare to guarantee a full 10 point victory. With one small mistake, the opponent could snatch that one or two points. It could be said that it was even more difficult to get all 5 points of the individual battles than the 5 of the team competition, since the team competition was determined in one battle.

And in this match, 301 Degrees won 5 points in the individual battles. As long as they won the team competition, they would win 10 to 0, a perfect victory. But in the end, even though they had the home advantage, they were still defeated by Thunderclap...

To fail to get a single point in the individual battles would definitely have an effect on a team's mindset when entering the team competition. Thunderclap, however, was exceptionally resolute. Thunderclap's change this season had been discussed all throughout the past three rounds, some people felt that they had changed, while others felt that this was just the return of the old Thunderclap. But after this team competition, famous commentator Cha Xiaoxia wrote that Thunderclap had indeed changed, even from the previous Thunderclap that had Xiao Shiqin.

"The current Thunderclap is more confident and more determined.

This change is what Xiao Shiqin brought back upon his return. He experienced a failed year with Excellent Era, but he found exactly what he needed. He brought this back and changed the face of Thunderclap. I look forward to their performance this season."

This was the commentary Cha Xiaoxia wrote after this round. And, as a self-proclaimed Happy fanboy, he of course wouldn't skip on the commentary of Happy vs Tyranny.

Regarding Tang Rou's promise of a 1v3, fanboy Cha Xiaoxia was resolute in his hope that Tang Rou would succeed, but he was still a bit worried. He worried that Tang Rou couldn't accomplish it, but he also worried that Happy, in order to facilitate the 1v3, would ruin the rhythm of their team arrangement. In this round, Happy's order of battle for the individual battles were indeed different from before.

In comparison, the Esports Time reporter Ruan Cheng, who attacked Tang Rou the most, didn't write much after Tang Rou lost to the first opponent in this match. All he said was a simple "as expected." It seemed that Ruan Cheng wasn't someone who would get excited over the just smallest thing, and it even seemed that he had begun to lose interest in this matter. However, the people who knew Ruan Cheng understood that this was just because the time wasn't yet ripe. She had five rounds to 1v3, this was only the first.

"If she doesn't do it in four rounds, and in the eighth round, Ruan Cheng isn't at the Tiny Herb vs Happy post-match press conference, then there are only two possibilities. One, Tang Rou completed the 1v3 in that match. Two, Ruan Cheng experienced an inescapable natural disaster." This was the judgment of someone who knew Ruan Cheng well. This wasn't even a Glory match any more, it seemed to be a showdown between player and reporter.

Winning 7 points against Happy, Tyranny's current score of 26 points wasn't too bad. But Void (Xukong), who also had 26 points and was one place behind Tyranny (Batu) by alphabet, hadn't done too well this round. Although they were playing an away game, their opponent Conquering Clouds wasn't any strong team. The final score of 6 to 4 was unsatisfactory to Void supporters.

There was also Hundred Blossoms. After losing to Happy in their away game, they played a home game in the third round, but lost to 301 Degrees, 3 to 7. It seemed like Hundred Blossoms was beaten senseless. This round they fought an away game against Seaside, but the end result was still only 6-4. It had to be remembered that Seaside was the team with the worst performance in the first three rounds. Aside from winning 2 points against Misty Rain in the first round, they were swept in the second and third round. In low spirits, they fought against Hundred Blossoms who was also in bad condition, they actually managed to snatch 4 points. Even though Hundred Blossoms won and Seaside lost, but because of each of their skill levels and positions, Hundred Blossoms was the one unsatisfied, while Seaside seemed to have found the light of dawn.

After Hundred Blossoms' small victory of 6 points, they were 11th on the leaderboard with 18 points. Ahead of them was the team that had tied with Thunderclap, 301 Degrees with 19 points. Ninth was Parade, after fighting a home game against Radiant, a team around their skill level, they earned a beautiful 8 to 2, and currently had 20 points.

Royal Style was at 12th, having suffered in their away game this round against Heavenly Swords 3 to 7. Royal Style slid down two places on the leaderboard, while these 7 points allowed Heavenly Swords to finally fight out of the relegation area, to 16th place.

At 13th was Happy, at 15 points after four rounds. Aside from their big win against Hundred Blossoms in the second round, they had not tasted another victory. Disregarding the first place on the leaderboard, their distance to eighth place, the last playoff spot, was a large 11 point difference.

This ranking was a far cry from their early declaration of aiming for the championship. Quite a few people talked about this alongside Tang Rou's 1v3 in five rounds. Was this sort of arrogant attitude just Happy's style?

Crashing in two consecutive rounds, Happy couldn't help but feel a little disheartened. Even though they knew that this team still had problems here and there, their thirst for victory wouldn't be dampened at all. Sundays after match Saturdays were Alliance-regulated rest days, but when Chen Guo came to the Internet cafe early Sunday morning, she saw that the door to the second floor was already opened, everyone already lined up in the training room.

These guys...

Chen Guo couldn't help but sigh. In reality, she'd already lamented this many times. Even if Happy's people might lack in skill, their spirit was never something to worry about. Big loss, big win, ups and downs, many people might not even be able to sleep at night. But Happy's people could always adjust, and continue to sit in front of their computers, working hard.

Like this, we'll win for sure. Chen Guo carried this thought, and Happy continued to train hard.

Round 5...

Round 6...

Time passed quickly. September was over in the blink of an eye, and they were now halfway through October. Starting from the fifth round, the Pro Alliance was reaching consecutive highs, powerful matches appearing one after another.

In Round 5, Samsara played an away game at Tiny Herb. Samsara's crushing dominance seemed to shrink again, but they still managed to win, 6 to 4. On Tiny Herb's home field, Samsara obtained a small victory. In the same round, another match between powerhouses received attention, Tyranny against Blue Rain. On their home field, Blue Rain emerged victorious, 7 to 3.

And then in Round 6, there were two more important faceoffs. Tiny Herb at Tyranny, Wind Howl at Samsara.

In the end, Tyranny earned a small victory over Tiny Herb, 6 to 4. But the discussions about their capabilities didn't quiet down. Compared to their strength last season, where they had led the leaderboard the entire time, this season Tyranny was hovering just above the cutoff for playoffs, even falling down occasionally. They no longer had the boldness of last year.

Samsara had their home game this match, taking down Wind Howl 8 to 2. And in the post-match press conference, the manager of Club Samsara suddenly expressed his complaints about Samsara's match schedule this season.

"Starting from Round 3, Tyranny, Blue Rain, Tiny Herb, Wind Howl... If I called this the most demonic match schedule in history, I don't think anyone would object? At the same time I haven't forgotten, after this round in Rounds 7 and 8, we're facing Misty Rain and Void. This is truly an unforgettable journey to the championship."

In reality, the sharper reporters discovered early on that Samsara's match schedule was so demonic, and they'd used this in some of their questions toward Samsara. Samsara didn't try to avoid the topic, but they downplayed it. Now after six rounds of opponents, four of which were powerhouses, no matter whether they were home or away, Samsara managed to defeat all of them. No one asked, but Samsara now voluntarily brought up this point.

The reporters suddenly understood. Samsara didn't want to discuss this before because they wanted to follow the style of their captain Zhou Zekai: no talk, just do!

And so they won their way here. Big or small victories, they won against every powerhouse.

And so now, they could discuss this problem with no pressure at all. This wouldn't feel like an excuse, because they had completely conquered this challenging match order.

The cameras clicked and flashed as the reporters asked each of the players onstage about their feelings after facing this demonic match schedule.

"These victories were extremely important, both in earning points for our team, and in suppressing our main competitors. I'm glad we were able to accomplish this," Vice-captain Jiang Botao said.

"Not bad, but I think that we can do even better." Bringing One Autumn Leaf from Excellent Era and swiftly becoming a crucial player for Samsara, Sun Xiang had become less haughty than before, but his confidence had increased quite a lot.

"..." Samsara's Captain Zhou Zekai, after about ten seconds of long thinking, finally nodded. "Good."

"What's good? That winning these matches was just 'good,' or 'good' thing you managed to win these matches?" one reporter asked.

"Mm..." The long thinking was inevitable, and everyone waited patiently.

"Both!" After this long thinking, Zhou Zekai replied with this one word.

"Could you talk about your views of Tang Rou of Happy, who declared she would complete a 1v3 in five rounds?" The reporters tirelessly chased after almost every player in the Alliance with this question. They were still asking, which meant that Tang Rou had yet to succeed. Right now, three of the five rounds had passed. Tang Rou only had two more chances.

Chapter 1182: Round 5, Round 6

In the fifth and sixth rounds, Team Happy's opponents were Team Parade and Team Blue Rain.

Away game against Parade, home game against Blue Rain, but their scores were 3-7 and 1-9. After their win against Hundred Blossoms in the second round, Happy had now lost four matches in a row. Even though their losses to powerhouses like Tyranny and Blue Rain were expected, teams like Radiant and Parade were only mid-tier teams in the Alliance. Disregarding the championship, even if their goal was just to make it to playoffs, they needed to earn points against teams like these.

But facing Radiant and Parade, the final score was 3 to 7 for both matches. They won all three individual battles, but in the group arena and the team competition, they couldn't defeat their opponent.

The strongest new team in history?

After the sixth round, the issue of Esports Time that released once again used this title, the same title that had been brought up after the second round. That time, Happy was the headline on the front page, but this time, they were just in a casual spot in the issue, and the title now had a large question mark after it.

After 6 rounds, Happy had 19 points at 15th place, only 9 points away from the relegation zone of ten points. Maintain their current position? Everyone felt that this goal was realistic for them. As for championship or whatnot... That was such a joke, wasn't it?

This was Ruan Cheng's mockery in the latest issue of Esports Time. It seemed like he was no longer interested in Tang Rou's promise of 1v3, and he now focused his efforts on doubting the entirety of Happy. It had to be said that Ruan Cheng was an experienced reporter. After six rounds, he accurately pinpointed all of Happy's problems.

"The various teams all worried in the face of Lord Grim's new unspecialized class, but it now seems that this worry was unnecessary. Instead of saying that Lord Grim is their threat, it should be said that Lord Grim is their helper. I think that if Ye Xiu were not using this unspecialized right now, and was instead using a Battle Mage, Team Happy's scores would be slightly better than what they are right now. Though, if that were the case, would the self-declared 1v3 pretty female rookie still have a spot on the team?"

Ruan Cheng correctly identified Lord Grim as the culprit of the problems of coordination that Happy faced, his tone all sorts of mocking, and in the end he still remembered to single out Tang Rou and her bet.

Esports Time's articles could to some extent influence public opinion. In round 7, Happy played their away game at Heavenly Swords, and in the pre-match press conference, the reporters were already coming to attack.

"Losing four matches in a row, the unspecialized has a strong problem of compatibility with the rest of the team members. Happy's performance in this season so far is far from your target of the championship. What do you think about this problem?" one reporter asked Ye Xiu.

"Our team is improving every day, and every round could see a turning point," Ye Xiu answered.

"Really? Then could you give a prediction of how many more rounds that'd take?" someone asked, biting on that "more." Ye Xiu took a look, wasn't this that reporter from Esports Time, Ruan Cheng?

Unlike Esports Home, Esports Time didn't have reporters stationed everywhere and reporters following teams. As a half-monthly magazine, they didn't need news as urgently as weekly publications did. They generally didn't report extensively on specific matches, and instead published more overview-type articles. So their reporters often wouldn't appear at every live match, and would instead hunt for material as needed for what they wanted to write.

It was clear that after Tang Rou, Ruan Cheng considered Happy as his material. After his article, he once again came to Happy's home game. This was the fourth round of the five-round promise. In two rounds, the bet would be decided, and it happened to fall on a week where Esports Time was set to release an issue. Ruan Cheng was calmly absent from the previous three rounds, but this round he finally couldn't restrain himself and came to Happy.

To emphasize that "more," he was clearly referencing the fact that Tang Rou's five-round promise was nearing its end. Ruan Cheng certainly had reasons for being unable to stay away from this match. Tang Rou's five-round promise happened to fall during a demonic match order. Tyranny, Blue Rain, Tiny Herb, who expected a rookie to accomplish a glorious 1v3 in the face of these powerhouses? Thus, the key was in the rounds against Parade and Heavenly Swords.

Tang Rou had failed in their match against Parade, so now, their match against Heavenly Swords was critical.

Plus, there was the fact that Heavenly Swords and Happy were on such good terms with each other. What if they had some prior arrangement? Everyone could see Tang Rou's importance to Happy. If she really ended up quitting, not only would it affect herself, it would be a huge blow to Happy as a whole. Under these conditions, whether or not she could complete a 1v3, Happy was probably even more nervous than Tang Rou.

At this time, they met Heavenly Swords. Heavenly Swords and Happy had a good relationship. And this team had a special characteristic. Their captain was the boss, the main players were just a group of the boss's friends. A team that played Glory so much that they invested money into a team to enter the Pro Alliance, one could imagine how unscrupulous these people were. Ruan Cheng truly worried that these guys would throw a match. So he wanted to come to this match in person. If Heavenly Swords did do this, then Ruan Cheng would be powerless to stop it, but he could at least carefully stare at everything that happened in this match. He wouldn't let these group of people carelessly discard the spirit of competition.

So in this pre-match press conference, he asked a question like "how many more rounds" because he wanted to see if Happy dared to confidently declare that today was the day.

Ye Xiu looked at this guy, laughed a little and asked, "What do you think?"

Ruan Cheng blinked, then chuckled. "I'm the one asking the questions here, how come you're asking me now?"

"Yes, I'm asking you, how about you help give us a prediction?" Ye Xiu said.

"I hope that Happy will obtain satisfactory results today." Although Ruan Cheng hoped that Happy would fall over and die in the street forever, in public he still got by with some righteous words.

When the other reporters asked questions, they were all about Happy's difficulties and Tang Rou's 1v3.

After six rounds, the standings were becoming clearer and clearer. Right now, they were separated into three tiers.

The first seven teams all had scores above 40 points. Samsara, with 49 points, was once again in the lead. Wind Howl was second with 47. Blue Rain and Misty Rain with 46 points each were third and fourth. Because Tiny Herb lost consecutively to Samsara and Tyranny, they had 44 points and were in fifth. Thunderclap, the team regarded as changing the most this season, were in sixth also with 44 points. Void had 42 points, seventh place.

After these seven teams, the 40+ point top tier ended. Tyranny at eighth place was still in range for playoffs, but they only had 35 points right now. Although this score was a distance away from the first seven, it was about the same distance from the teams in ninth through twelfth. All five of these teams were in the 30-point mid-tier. Judging by the current point standings, they all had a chance of earning the eighth spot in the playoffs. Hundred Blossoms hadn't encountered a strong team in rounds 5 and 6, so they finally performed rather well and earned the ninth place spot with 32 points. Afterwards, Parade, 301 Degrees, and Royal Style were tenth through twelfth place.

After them were Radiant and Heavenly Swords with 22 points each, and after that were the bottom tier teams with below 20 points. Happy, at 19, was first among these teams.

There weren't too many surprises in the sixth round. The strong teams continued to be strong, the weak teams lost in all sorts of ways. The final point counts were about as expected, comparing the teams' strengths on paper. Tyranny was the biggest disappointment. Last season they had swept countless forces, challenging records, yet this season they were at the doorway to the playoffs, a distance away from the first seven.

Thunderclap was the biggest excitement. Even though they frequently made it to playoffs, it was normally by a small margin, squeezed in like Tyranny was now. But now, their point score was good, only five points away from first place. Aside from points, what was also important was their change in matches. Their current confidence and resolve was a rare sight in the past.

Last season, Hundred Blossoms had gotten off to a weak start before ending strong. Their playoff fight against the strongest team at the time, Tyranny, made them optimistic about their future. But this season, in the very second round they were powerfully defeated by Happy, then drifted along in a dreamlike state for a few rounds. These past two rounds though, they finally seemed to wake up, but on the whole, their performance was rather disappointing.

These three teams, as well as Team Happy, were currently the subjects of the most discussion. Clearly, there wasn't much good to say. People generally enjoyed seeing other people's suffering.

At this time, the round 7 matches were finally about to begin. Like the previous rounds, this round didn't lack exciting matchups. Samsara, with their demonic match order, after fighting four powerhouses would be facing Misty Rain this round. In addition, the four powerhouses were all fighting each other this round: Tyranny at Wind Howl, Blue Rain at Tiny Herb.

The television broadcast team was in a dilemma! It was too hard to reconcile all of these conflicting important matches. Happy, Hundred Blossoms, Thunderclap? No matter how much discussion they

generated, they couldn't compare in such a situation. In the end, they chose to broadcast Wind Howl versus Tyranny. Tiny Herb and Blue Rain had their old rivalry, but Wind Howl versus Tyranny represented a confrontation between the new and the old. Ever since Tyranny gathered its three old veterans, this sort of conflict noticeably became much more intense.

At the same time, the players of the various teams appeared onstage.

"God, hello! Everyone, long time no see!" Lou Guanning pulled out the attitude of a host at this home game, giving Happy's members a grand and warm welcome.

"Long time no see, long time no see." Upon investigation, Happy's closest friendships were really just with these few from Heavenly Swords. Compared to the previous rounds, where the pre-match player greetings were just formalities, this time they truly expressed their feelings of having not met in a while, shaking hands, and even chatting a bit.

"How are you? Going onstage today?" Ye Xiu asked as he shook Sun Zheping's hand.

"Of course," Sun Zheping said.

"Oh really? I really want to just crush your hand right now!" Ye Xiu laughed.

"Just try it." As Sun Zheping spoke, he tightened his grip. His hand was injured, but not to the extent where he couldn't feel anything. He just couldn't endure the rapid, long-term, high-intensity controls required in playing Glory competitively, that was all.

"Haha, see you onstage." Ye Xiu shook his hand free and went to the next player. In Heavenly Swords, it was still just the same five plus Sun Zheping who had the professional attitude. The other filler members just skillfully walked by with no fighting spirit, as though they just wanted to hurry up and sit back down.

"God, have some mercy on us!" Lou Guanning cracked a joke when he shook hands with Ye Xiu.

"Not good, the judge is listening!" said Ye Xiu.

"Kidding, kidding!" Lou Guanning quickly said. Glancing to the side, he saw the judge really was aiming his ears toward them. Because of Tang Rou's promise, the relationship between these two teams had been brought up again and again, and Lou Guanning was well aware of this. But in the middle of this turmoil, Ye Xiu still said this sort of thing.

"God, you're just too good at making small talk!" Lou Guanning said, wiping away sweat.

Chapter 1183: That Familiar Feeling

After this genuinely warm-hearted greeting, Happy and Heavenly Swords began their match.

This was Heavenly Swords' home game. Although they were a very distinctive team, just from the number of seats filled, it could be seen that they weren't a particularly popular team right now. Even after one year in the Alliance, they weren't any better than Happy. In the end, strength was the most important thing in competition, and Heavenly Swords' strength was only about mid- to low-tier. Additionally, Heavenly Swords wasn't the only professional team in their home city. For many years

now, City B was home to Tiny Herb, which was a team that was much more famous and had long established themselves as this city's symbol of Glory. Heavenly Swords was both a weaker and a later team, so it was very difficult for them to establish themselves here.

While they were preparing for this, they had billed themselves as a grassroots team, which made a lot of noise in game. But now everyone knew the truth. The only thing "grassroots" about Heavenly Swords was their strength. The five players were all from extremely rich families. Not a single hair on their heads was "grassroots."

Heavenly Swords wasn't too successful commercially, but no matter how senior or professional a Glory commentator was, they wouldn't casually try to judge the operations of a team like Heavenly Swords, which was formed by some people who played Glory themselves and invested their own money to form a team, even acquiring a stadium. Their beginnings were different, so it wasn't suitable to apply conventional logic to them.

But no matter what kind of background or what kind of business operations, when a team stood here, victory was everything. The players of both teams returned to their respective player areas, until only the first two players in the individual competition remained onstage.

Ye Xiu.

Sun Zheping.

"Not bad." Sun Zheping was very pleased with this matchup, and a fire ignited in his eyes.

He'd retired for many years, and then returned to this stage. This was all familiar to him, and yet foreign at the same time.

What was familiar was that, no matter what updates and upgrades there were, this was still Glory's battlefield, it was still the same 24 classes to slaughter.

What was foreign was that many people he had known in the past were no longer here. With every round of battle this season, all Sun Zheping saw were unfamiliar faces, including the people currently standing by his side. None of them were the Alliance of his memory, the teammates of his memory.

Characters as strong as iron, players like flowing water.

It's all in the past...

This wasn't the first time this sigh had crossed Sun Zheping's mind. But now, in this moment, the one who stood before him on the battlefield - Ye Xiu!

Sun Zheping felt as though he were suddenly transported to those earliest seasons, with familiar people, familiar characters, familiar settings, familiar feelings.

"Let's begin!" Sun Zheping clenched his right hand into a fist, lifted it to his mouth, and blew inside.

In the past, this motion had been his habit, but many fans had now forgotten it. Even Sun Zheping himself hadn't revived this habit after his return. But now, after suddenly rediscovering this feeling of familiarity, this trademark motion naturally reappeared.

"Don't push yourself." Ye Xiu saw everything. He smiled, and entered the competitor booth.

The battle began.

Berserker Another Summer of Sleep, unspecialized Lord Grim, appeared at the two corners of the map.

When the map loaded, the audience was stunned.

This was Heavenly Swords' home game, they had the right to choose the map. For the individual battles, the maps were of course chosen by the battling player. And the map that Sun Zheping chose was the Arena, the map that was limited in size, with no obstacles or changing features. It was the same map that Ye Xiu had chosen in the match against Tyranny, when he completely defeated Zhang Jiale.

And now, Sun Zheping chose this same map to welcome Ye Xiu in a battle. Of course, he hadn't known beforehand that his opponent would be Ye Xiu, but the choice of this map still seemed like it was sending some message to Happy.

"What a..."

Once they entered the map, Ye Xiu was about to send a message, but he'd only typed out two words before Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep had already sprinted several steps forward, sending a Collapsing Mountain his way.

It was a very normal opening for a Berserker, but when Sun Zheping displayed this skill, something felt different about its momentum.

Why was that?

For someone like Ye Xiu, with many years of Glory experience, this wasn't enough to cause a doubt.

It was rhythm, Sun Zheping's rhythm, revealing this fierce and aggressive momentum. Ye Xiu had only typed two words before the light of the blade was already falling.

Ye Xiu could only switch his attention to controlling his character. Complain about the map choice? Sadly, Sun Zheping didn't give him this time.

When the Collapsing Mountain fell, Lord Grim had already rolled to the side. Without waiting, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened to become a spear, slashing up with a Sky Strike. It seemed that this skill was a bit hasty, since Sky Strike had lesser priority than Collapsing Mountain. If these two skills met, Collapsing Mountain would shatter the Sky Strike.

But experienced Glory players could quickly realize that the timing of Lord Grim's Sky Strike was impeccable. It would hit the opponent exactly when Another Summer of Sleep's Collapsing Mountain hit the ground and ended, completely avoiding the system's determination of priority.

Unfortunately, Sun Zheping was one of these experienced Glory Players. The Collapsing Mountain, about to hit the ground, was suddenly twisted to the side.

Such a small twist didn't change the time difference between these skills, but it allowed the shockwaves from Collapsing Mountain head closer toward Lord Grim...

The skill had reached its ending sounds, and Ye Xiu noticed this change, but there was no time to change his controls.

Collapsing Mountain hit the ground, and in this moment the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella lifted up in a Sky Strike.

Hit!

Another Summer of Sleep was sent to the air, but at the same time, Lord Grim was blown back.

Lord Grim was unable to dodge the shockwaves of Collapsing Mountain.

This was just two low-level skills, but they encompassed such a rich, exciting confrontation, completed in a rise and fall. Those with weaker eyes, whose skills weren't high enough, didn't even notice the precise timing of the Sky Strike or the urgent adjustment of Collapsing Mountain. Those who just treated this as a direct clash of two skills were, as the saying went, burning a piano for fuel and cooking a crane for meat.

Boom!

At this moment, there was another explosion between the two characters as they were pushed away. Lord Grim, knocked away by the shockwaves of Collapsing Mountain, shifted his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella into gun form and sent an attack toward Another Summer of Sleep. But Another Summer of Sleep immediately used a Blade Master's Guard, parrying the fired bullets with his sword.

"Your reaction's not bad!" This time, Ye Xiu had time to type out a message. This was a change of skill that only an unspecialized could manage, but Sun Zheping still managed to react in time.

"Don't push yourself." Sun Zheping didn't care if the time wasn't exactly right, he just shoved Ye Xiu's exact words from before the match right back at him.

"Not at all." Ye Xiu still sent a reply. As soon as Lord Grim hit the ground after the shockwave, he lifted a cold light and swept toward Another Summer of Sleep.

Assassin skill, Shining Cut!

In an instant, the distance that seemed to be growing between the two characters was suddenly shrunk again. And in this moment, Another Summer of Sleep was still rolling on the ground, a Quick Recover after being hit by Sky Strike.

Destruction Slash!

As Another Summer of Sleep stood up, he unleashed this Destruction Slash.

The Berserker was a wild and aggressive class, and the skills of this classes often had one characteristic: high priority.

The sub-level 20 skills of an unspecialized had no way of competing with the priority of a Destruction Slash. Lord Grim's rushed approach with a Shining Cut seemed more like he was delivering himself into the jaws of a tiger.

The Destruction Slash, carrying the Berserker's intent to kill, surged toward Lord Grim.

But Lord Grim's body vibrated, and a strong aura seemed to envelop his body.

Reinforced Iron Bones!

Lord Grim used this Striker skill now, meaning that he intended to take this Destruction Slash head-on.

The damage of a Destruction Slash wasn't very high, as it was more of an effect-inducing attack. Targets hit by a Destruction Slash would have a large reduction in defense, this was the so-called "destruction." So, taking a Destruction Slash wasn't just sacrificing some health, it also meant that in the next five seconds, the character's defense would be reduced by up to 70%. Classes with naturally high defenses were especially affected by this skill, which was why it was called a nightmare for high-defense classes.

Lord Grim's equipment was a chaotic mess, with no bonus effects from class armor, and the defense granted was all over the place, not following the logic of a single level. And now that he activated Reinforced Iron Bones, which raised his defense not by percent but by points. This, plus the chaotic defense of the character Lord Grim himself, and then reduced 70%, the question of what his defense would ultimately be after all of that was a complicated calculation...

The audience didn't need to calculate, because once this attack hit, they could directly see the changes of the character's stats. And the pro players? With their practiced calculation ability, they could instantly grasp the effect on Lord Grim's defense after a points increase and a percentage decrease.

The end result: 7% reduction.

7% decrease in defense, ten times less than 70%. The effect of this Destruction Slash was basically negated by this Reinforced Iron Bones. But the Reinforced Iron Bones wasn't as simple as just increasing defense. In the 20 seconds of Super Armor after activating this skill, it also guaranteed that the character could unleash unreasonably strong attacks.

The Destruction Slash slammed down.

Lord Grim's body swayed slightly, but under Super Armor, this swaying was basically the extent of the effect of Destruction Slash's priority.

Lord Grim swung his fists, which clenched the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, already shifted into two tonfas.

Straight Punch, Knee Attack, Uppercut, Qi Bullet...

The combo attack was already unleashed, landing like raindrops upon the body of Another Summer of Sleep. Lord Grim's strengthened state exuded an intense madness, hardly below that of a Berserker...

That's right... If he weren't like this, how could he have broken our Blood and Blossoms combination all by himself back then?

As he watched Another Summer of Sleep suffer this succession of attacks, Sun Zheping rediscovered another familiar feeling of days gone by.

Chapter 1184: That Terrible Feeling

Lord Grim practically only used Grappler close combat skills. In their match versus Tyranny, Zhang Jiale's Dazzling Hundred Blossoms was directly blown out under this howling whirlwind of attacks. What about Zhang Jiale's former partner of Blood and Blossoms, Sun Zheping?

There weren't many in the crowd with such old memories of the past, but for these two players, this match was a battle that had continued from the past until today. Sun Zheping seemed to have never left, and Ye Xiu seemed like that past Battle God.

"It won't be so easy!"

Sun Zheping roared in the chat. Another Summer of Sleep seized an opening, an aura of blood erupted from his body.

Berserk?

No, this was even stronger than Berserk. It was an Awakening skill learned at Level 50: Bloodthirsty Frenzy.

Bloodthirsty Frenzy could not be stacked with Berserk. Only one status effect could exist at one time. Bloodthirsty Frenzy increased offensive stats by 25% more than Berserk, and also gave the user Super Armor and a Bloodthirsty effect, which can be split into two opposing effects. Bloodthirsty gave the user 10% Life-Steal for all attacks, but Bloodthirsty also traded health with each attack, consuming one's own life to deal more damage to the opponent.

When this skill was activated, it was very rare for Berserkers to continue being on the defensive. Just the Super Armor effect that was stronger than Reinforced Iron Bones could let the Berserker avoid the effects of most skills.

However, grabs were a special case. As soon as Ye Xiu saw Sun Zheping activate his awakening skill, he immediately dashed forward to try Fling him. However, Bloodthirsty Berserkers were even more ferocious than Berserk Berserkers. The heavy greatsword was almost like a lightsaber as it cut through the air. Lord Grim's hand had yet to extend when Another Summer of Sleep's greatsword arrived. Ye Xiu realized that if they had to compete in speed, Lord Grim would be at the disadvantage.

Guard!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella transformed into a sword. Lord Grim raised the sword horizontally and blocked the attack with a clang. This Guard had been executed tightly, but the Bloodthirsty Another Summer of Sleep had extraordinary strength. Although this attack had been blocked, Lord Grim had actually been knocked back, his two feet sliding over the ground.

This wasn't outside of Ye Xiu's expectations though. Lord Grim borrowed the momentum and leaped back. His sword returned to its sheath, and the umbrella turned into a gun, shooting the ground with Aerial Fire to quickly pull the distance between the two of them. However, Another Summer of Sleep's greatsword had already arrived.

This guy!!

Sun Zheping's speed had exceeded Ye Xiu's imagination.

This attack wasn't a skill. It was just a normal attack, which had little starting and ending lag. The greatsword sliced through the air in an arc to try catch the Aerial-Fire retreating Lord Grim. Aerial Fire worked, but Lord Grim was still caught by the tip of Another Summer of Sleep's greatsword.

Bullets shot straight at Another Summer of Sleep's chest. Blood splattered everywhere, but Another Summer of Sleep didn't even flinch. He raised his greatsword in the air. Sword shadows from Wild Blood Strike spread through the air and hacked at Lord Grim, dragging along a bloody mist.

With just one attack, Lord Grim's health slid down. Even the crowd felt worried.

Knights had exceptional defense. It wasn't just because of the plate armor worn by them, but rather their Plate Armor Proficiency that took the health and defensive capabilities of plate armor to the next step. However, just the existence of Plate Armor Proficiency wouldn't make an Elementalist want to choose Plate Armor for better survivability because they couldn't give up the Intelligence and Cast Speed from Cloth Armor.

Every class obtained huge improvements in combat capabilities from Armor Proficiency, but the unspecialized didn't have these. Lord Grim could only rely on the original stats of the armor to strengthen himself. However, the effectiveness of the armor on Lord Grim was weak. It couldn't compare to his transforming Myriad Manifestations Umbrella.

Wild Blood Strike struck Lord Grim to the ground. Ye Xiu had Lord Grim try to roll away, but Sun Zheping's Another Summer of Sleep was already in pursuit. With an Earth-Shattering Slash and the offensive buffs from Bloodthirsty, it was almost like he teleported. His figure flickered. He suddenly appeared in front of Lord Grim and slashed downwards with his greatsword.

Lord Grim dodged again. However, Earth-Shattering Slash dealt AoE damage, and Lord Grim was unable to completely get out of its range. Under the intense swaying from the earthquake, Lord Grim wasn't able to stand up stably. Another Summer of Sleep slashed twice, horizontally and vertically, completing a Gore Cross.

Hit, hit, consecutive hits!

Sun Zheping bravely activated Bloodthirsty Frenzy, letting him forcefully interrupt Lord Grim's continuous attacks and also giving him the initiative.

This bravery and boldness did not let down his former title as the Number One Berserker. No, even now, no one had this same confidence and this same valor to employ such a brute-force method to take back the initiative. To many people, this type of choice might be unwise. If Lord Grim's grab had been just a bit faster, he might have been able to throw Another Summer of Sleep away before his frenzy of attacks.

However, Sun Zheping had done it. This wasn't his first time either. In his professional career, who knew how many times his risky and imprudent brute-force transformed into the deciding point. This was not just luck. Behind this brute force hid precise observation and judgement. After that was his determination and resolve to put everything into one move. This was what many lacked, but Sun Zheping possessed.

To others, the always advancing Han Wenqing was more fierce, while Sun Zheping was more wild. It was a wildness that disregarded everything else!

"It won't be so easy!"

In the public chat, Sun Zheping's words from before his Bloodthirsty Frenzy activation had yet to disappear. These same words suddenly popped up again. These two seemed to like to return each other's words in today's match. However, did just saying it won't be so easy make it easy?

Lord Grim suddenly trembled. This unspecialized also turned scarlet red. A dense aura of blood seemed to be emanating from his skin.

Bloodthirsty Frenzy?

No, that wasn't possible.

Those who understood the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella knew that while a skill could be added to each transformation, awakening skills such as Bloodthirsty Frenzy were exceptions. Level 50 awakening skills as well as Level 20 class advancement skills were every class's most distinct skills. They were skills that could not be used by any other class. An unspecialized was no exception.

Lord Grim wasn't using Bloodthirsty Frenzy, which meant the only other possibility was Berserk.

Berserk was very different from Bloodthirsty Frenzy, but it was generally viewed as a lower-leveled Bloodthirsty Frenzy. In fact, according to Glory's narrative, Berserkers learned Bloodthirsty Frenzy through their understanding and control over Berserk. Bloodthirsty Frenzy could be considered an upgraded version of Berserk.

At this moment, Lord Grim activated Berserk. Did he want to use the budget "Bloodthirsty Frenzy" to fight with the real Bloodthirsty Frenzy? And because it was a skill placed on his weapon, it would only have one skill point in it. This Berserk was far from the Berserk that Berserkers always maxed out. It was like trying to break a stone with an egg!

Everyone was thinking this, but Another Summer of Sleep's next attack unexpectedly missed.

No way?

Everyone was shocked.

It was just a level one Berserk. The buffs given to Lord Grim couldn't be that much, yet just this slight boost made it so that Sun Zheping was unable to react in time?

Yes, he couldn't react in time...

Another attack whiffed. Sun Zheping couldn't help but laugh bitterly.

It had been so many years from his injury to retirement to his return, yet his habits hadn't changed. And Ye Xiu still remembered. As a result, in this match, Sun Zheping searched for the feel from that year and burst forth. Ye Xiu's choice to fight measure for measure suddenly suppressed Sun Zheping's momentum.

The change was because of that Berserk.

Although it was only at level one and the buffs were minimal... Sun Zheping was unable to keep up with this tiny change. This had nothing to do with speed, but rather rhythm. Sun Zheping always pushed his

rhythm to the highest. Switch the beat, switch the speed? No. There was no such concept in Sun Zheping's mind. He got to his rhythm in one step and that one step reached the limit. As a result, when Ye Xiu's Lord Grim activated Berserk and his offensive stats increased, Sun Zheping's attack rhythm seemed to have reached a bottleneck, unable to reach the next step. This was because he had already been at his limits. Sun Zheping had always competed at his limits.

Sun Zheping needed to adjust his rhythm, but he wasn't good at it and he felt disgusted doing it. Moreover, he also knew very well that Ye Xiu wanted to stop him there. The instant he changed up his rhythm, Ye Xiu would take back the initiative once again. At their skill level, just this change up in tempo could be the deciding factor of this match.

The difficulties of subtleties within this fight was not able to be understood by even pro players, let alone the average viewer, if they did not understand these two well enough. They would be astonished just like the viewers: it was just a level one Berserk, why can't Sun Zheping keep up?

"How disgusting!" Having his surging offense get cut off like this by Ye Xiu made Sun Zheping feel as sick as if he had eaten a fly. It hadn't been easy for him to find back that familiar feeling from the past. Why did this terrible feeling have to come back too? This opponent is just as annoying as before!

A sense of rhythm... what was that? I'll probably never understand in this lifetime... Against this guy, I'm probably not even doing as well as Zhang Jiale.

In the end, Another Summer of Sleep fell.

The sense of rhythm was an extremely fatal flaw for this first-generation God. Compared to what a pro-level player should possess, his sense of rhythm could be described as a complete mess.

As a result, facing an opponent who knew him well, his weakness was quickly drawn out and he met a crushing defeat.

"Not bad. To think you could still get out that type of offense. You scared me." After the match, Ye Xiu specifically went to call out to him.

"Stop with the nonsense. I still lost." Sun Zheping was annoyed.

"How could you beat me alone?" Ye Xiu laughed.

Chapter 1185: An Opponent Thoroughly Understood

In Happy's away game, with Ye Xiu's victory, Happy led 1 to 0. However, for those who supported Happy, this sort of opening was unable to excite them. Recently, Happy had this kind of tempo; their openings were good, but then they started dropping points, especially in the team competition. Up until now, their only team competition victory was against Team Hundred Blossoms.

What about today?

In the current climate, it was still rather rare for Happy's fans to come to their away games. However, Happy had fought in City B in the Challenger League finals. It was the place where they beat Excellent Era. Seven Fields and his group of guild buddies were all residents of this city. In the Challenger League

finals, they had formed a small group and came to cheer them on. Guild Happy was flourishing at the moment, and Seven Fields and his guild buddies were core guild members. Team Happy was coming to their city to play a match, so how could they not organize guild members ahead of time to cheer for Happy?

The Pro League's seating arrangements weren't as casual as the Challenger League's. Away team fans would usually be grouped together in one area to avoid being mixed in with home team fans, so if any disagreements arose, there wouldn't be any conflicts. Seven Field's group sat at Happy's away team seats. Quite a few people had come. After Happy won the first round of the individual competition, all of them were cheering loudly. In a stadium usually filled with home team fans, it was quite a spectacle to see.

The second round of the individual competition took place under this type of atmosphere.

Team Happy, Qiao Yifan. Ghostblade, One Inch Ash.

Team Heavenly Swords, Zou Yunhai. Elementalist, Ocean Ahead.

Heavenly Swords' characters had been created when these friends first started playing the game. Now that they were in the pro circle, they switched out their equipment for new ones. After much effort from Lou Guanning and them, they replaced their old equipment for better ones. From this point, Heavenly Swords had pretty good equipment because their efforts were focused! The good things were all piled on their five core characters. Even if the other characters were butt-naked, they wouldn't care. With such a concentration of resources, their characters naturally became a lot stronger, albeit at the cost of their non-core characters.

Happy and Heavenly Swords used to play with each other constantly in the game, so they were all familiar with each other. After Qiao Yifan and Zou Yunhai entered the stage, they even chatted a bit in the chat. After the countdown started and the two began fighting, Qiao Yifan won in the end. His performance was always consistent. Even though he never had any overwhelming advantage over Zhou Yunhai, he always had control over the situation. When Zou Yunhai came down, his expression looked a bit ugly. He was clearly unhappy with being stuffed out in this fight.

Friendship first, competition second?

These were oftentimes just words. As long as one was on stage, who wouldn't want to win? Bad blood appearing because of a bad match wouldn't be anything new. Quarrels occasionally arose even when teammates practiced against each other, let alone an official match where victory or defeat mattered.

Of course, Zou Yunhai was just gloomy. He wasn't at the point where he would quarrel with Happy. It was just that after two consecutive losses, Heavenly Swords wasn't nearly as relaxed as before. Just because the two teams were good friends with each other, hoping for a peaceful ending was too sweet.

For Happy, their third player was Su Mucheng.

For Heavenly Swords, Lou Guanning had originally planned on saying a few words to their third player, but when he saw that their opponent was an All-Star, he ended up not saying anything. He simply patted their player's shoulder and sent him up.

Lou Guanning admitted that he was still a distance away from an All-Star. If he had to face an All-Star, whether he won depended on luck and how he performed that day, so he wasn't able to point out any crucial win conditions.

Heavenly Sword's player was called Li Weiyi. He was the one that Heavenly Swords had signed to meet the minimum requirements. The individual competition and group arena required six players to compete in, but Lou Guanning and his friends were five people. Among them, Zhong Yeli was a Cleric and could only come out in the team competition. Thus, there were only four remaining; two others were needed.

They didn't try to recruit any famed generals to meet this quota. The positions of the five friends were untouchable. What famed general would be willing to just be someone to meet the quota?

In the end, Lou Guanning found two people from who knew where. They had some skill, but there would be some objection to call them truly skilled. In the third round, Su Mucheng easily won. Happy had a 3 to 0 lead, sweeping the individual competition. Lou Guanning didn't say anything to the returning Li Weiyi. Asking a stopgap cheerleader to win over an All-Star was asking too much.

Team Heavenly Swords' roster was extremely abnormal. It wasn't like they didn't have the resources to change that, but rather they weren't willing to. Their original aspiration was to give the five of them an opportunity to fight on the pro stage. They weren't done yet, so they didn't plan on giving up on this opportunity to other pro players.

A short break followed after the individual competition. The two teams could talk and do some preparation for the group arena during this break. With the individual competition over, it was obvious who would be playing in the group arena.

However, the roster for the group arena was set before the match began and could not be changed at this time. The Alliance had considered letting teams make adjustments mid-match, but in the end, they hoped that the players would focus their attention on the match itself and not waste too much of their efforts on benefiting from making adjustments.

Because of their good relationship with each other, it was hard to avoid the two teams mingling together during this break time. The Alliance didn't forbid two teams from talking to each other during this break, but whenever there was any contact between two teams, the referee would always be watching over very strictly in case the players were violating the integrity of the competition. There was someone in Happy who had made a bet. With Happy's opponents being their friends, all sorts of rumors had flown around long ago. The staff members of the Alliance were watching the communication between the two teams very tightly.

But it wasn't Happy taking the initiative to go over and talk, but rather Heavenly Swords who had just gotten swept in the individual competition. Lou Guanning looked like he was at a funeral. He walked around Happy in a circle before finally saying to Ye Xiu: "God, you're too fierce. What you guys are doing is saving up your strength and then taking out the knife to start the operation!"

"Haha," Ye Xiu laughed, "It's undeniable, our understanding of you guys is the most comprehensive."

Lou Guanning was speechless. He was most scared of God Ye Xiu's calm and righteousness that was completely reasonable and irrefutable.

"But then again, you guys can't keep doing this long-term!" Ye Xiu said. "Even if you guys are constantly improving, if your team is always just you five, you lack variance. You'll quickly be completely grasped by others."

"I feel like... it's fine..." Lou Guanning said.

"That's because there aren't any teams who feel threatened by you guys, right?" Ye Xiu said.

"God..." Lou Guanning cried. Could you not be so honest? For their matches this season, Lou Guanning had felt quite satisfied with Heavenly Swords' performance. No matter who their opponents were, they always won a few points. In their fourth round, they even beat Royal Style 7 to 3.

That was Royal Style! Even though they were no longer frequent visitors of the playoffs, for good or bad, they had an All-Star and were a very experienced team. Taking them down gave Heavenly Swords a huge boost in confidence. All of them felt like they had grown and improved after a year in the Alliance. But to God Ye Xiu, they were just opponents "who weren't worthy of being studied."

This couldn't be considered as others looking down on them though. A team had 19 opponents in the Alliance. Everyone's time was limited, so teams needed to choose who to focus and who not to focus on. If a team tried to grab them all, it was very possible that the team would end up not grabbing any. And among these teams, Heavenly Swords belonged to the category of who not to focus on. Lou Guanning had no choice to concede on this point, which was why God Ye Xiu's words made him tearful.

"You'll be going up in the Group Arena, right? Hurry up and get ready. We'll let you guys see just how disastrous it is to be completely understood by your opponents," Ye Xiu said.

How disastrous it is to be completely understood by your opponents?

Lou Guanning and the others knew very well by the end of this match.

Facing Hundred Blossoms, they had won 2 points. Facing Blue Rain, they had won 1 point. Facing Royal Style, they had won 7 points. And facing Royal Style, who had beaten Happy, they had won 6 points. This season, they had utilized their home game advantage well. Both of their victories were their home games.

But this time, in their home game versus Happy, Heavenly Swords ended up with 0 points.

10 to 0!

Team Heavenly Swords was swept clean by a team that had only won one match so far.

Happy didn't give them any mercy. Of course, Heavenly Swords also maintained proper sportsmanship. In the group arena, after Tang Rou beat one of their players, she lost to their second player, Wen Kebei's Battle Mage.

1v3? Four rounds had passed, and Tang Rou had yet to achieve even a 1v2.

Her chance with Heavenly Swords ended with failure. Her only chance left was against Tiny Herb. A 1v3 against Tiny Herb?

What a joke.

In the post-match press conference, Ruan Cheng had snatched a good spot. He trusted that even though Happy had a perfect win today, their mood probably wasn't too good. From a long-term perspective, Tang Rou failing a 1v3 and leaving the team was an enormous loss to them, whether that was in strength or in popularity. This beautiful girl really did have some fans right now. Ruan Cheng had received no small amount of hate for his attacks on her.

"Did Tang Rou not come? What a pity. There's probably a lot of pressure on her, right?" Seeing that Tang Rou was missing from Happy's seats in the press conference, Ruan Cheng didn't even say any polite congratulatory words for their win today. He directly brought out the bet that he had been banking on this entire time.

"Everyone in the team from top to bottom is confident in Tang Rou," Ye Xiu said calmly.

"There's still one round left. We can't be too hasty with our words, so we'll just have to wait and see!" Ruan Cheng's words weren't said too early, but his confident look as if he had planned this in advance was truly loathsome. He might as well have just displayed the schadenfreude at the bottom of his heart out in the open. It would have looked more sincere and natural!

"Little Tang is too pure! I say, she only said what she would do if she didn't keep her promise. But if she succeeds? Don't you think you should do something?" Fang Rui said to Ruan Cheng.

"I'll send her my heartfelt blessings, really." Ruan Cheng put on an honest face. He wasn't about to be provoked!

"Grab me a bucket!" Fang Rui shouted. "I'm going to puke!"

Chapter 1186: Never Happened Before

After finishing their post-match interviews, Happy's group ran into Heavenly Swords' players.

Being swept 10 to 0 was truly embarrassing, and Heavenly Swords was clearly unhappy with tonight's match. However, they fulfilled the words "enemies on stage, friends off stage." They put their emotions in order and showed their hospitality as hosts to Happy.

Around this time, the other matches this round were also finishing up. The highlight matches this round coincidentally ended with the home teams losing as well.

Tiny Herb versus Blue Rain, 4 to 6.

Wind Howl versus Tyranny, 4 to 6.

The powerful young Team Wind Howl tripped up against the experienced old Team Tyranny. The controversy over Tyranny finally eased after this match.

Apart from these two matches, there was also Samsara versus Misty Rain, ending 9 to 1. Samsara continued onwards with their unstoppable march. During the pre-season, people had been worried about compatibility issues between Sun Xiang and Samsara, but from the looks of it, Sun Xiang's addition to the team was an exceptional move. Whether it was in the individual competitions or the team competition, Samsara's strength had improved remarkably. If their momentum stayed, Sun Xiang's

and One Autumn Leaf's transfer could definitely become a classic example of an amazing transfer in the history of Glory.

Apart from these powerhouses, the other powerhouse met with misfortune. Team Void had unexpectedly lost against visiting Team Miracle in their home game.

The other new team this season was not as weak as the other new teams in past seasons. The former Team Excellent Era players that made up Team Miracle showed why they had once been in a powerhouse team. After being swept by Team Blue Rain 10 to 0, Team Miracle was able to win a few points every round. This round was even more of an upset.

Although their 17 points at the moment was able to get them to 17th place, fourth from last, because they were a new team and because the other new team was very popular, the amount of attention towards Team Miracle was limited.

When Samsara complained about their demonic match schedule this season, if anyone had taken a look at Miracle's schedule, they would have noticed that within these seven matches, Miracle had already run into Tyranny, Blue Rain, Tiny Herb, Wind Howl, Misty Rain, and Void.

Demonic schedule? Team Miracle's was even worse. Despite their schedule, for their team to not even be in the relegations zone was already incredible. After this upset, Team Miracle finally received some attention. This team consisting of former Team Excellent Era players as the core had some substance to them.

Apart from these matches, the rest were practically all home team victories. Only Team Parade lost as the home team 4 to 6 against Team 301.

After these seven matches, Samsara remained at the top of the rankings with 58 points with Blue Rain in second. Thunderclap once again showed astonishing improvement. Thunderclap used to be a team pacing back and forth at the edge of the playoff zone. Right now, they had pushed their way to third place with 52 points, the same as Blue Rain. Fourth place, Wind Howl. Fifth place, Tiny Herb. Sixth place, Misty Rain. Seventh place, Void. Eighth place, Tyranny. Not much had changed between these eight playoff teams.

Happy crushed Heavenly Swords 10 to 0. With these 10 points, they were ranked 14th with a total of 29 points, one place up from last round. The bottom two relegation teams were Seaside and Bright Green. The gap between them and the other two teams had grown even wider. The distinction between top, middle, and bottom tier teams were becoming more and more clear.

That night, Happy accepted the hospitality of Heavenly Swords, who had suffered a crushing defeat by their hands. Heavenly Swords, of course, wasn't in too great of a mood. Happy didn't lose themselves just because of this long-awaited win though. At this moment, they were all concerned about one problem: Tang Rou. There was only one round remaining for her five round bet, and their opponents for this final round was Team Tiny Herb.

Complete a 1v3 against Tiny Herb?

Unfortunately, looking at past data, the situation was looking extremely unfavorable. Ever since Wang Jiexi joined Team Tiny Herb, Tiny Herb had never been 1v3ed in the group arena, whether this was

against the Battle God, Sword Saint, King of Fighting, or the Great Gunner. The teams with those Gods may have won the group arena in the end, but a 1v3 had never been done before by anyone.

Of course, just because it had never been done before didn't mean it couldn't happen in the future. These statistics were also reported to let people know just how much of a challenge Tang Rou faced.

There were obviously people who were rejoicing at her misfortune and quite a lot of them too. At Happy, the most worried was Chen Guo, of course. She was too afraid to talk to Tang Rou, fearing that her uncontrollable nervousness would infect and disturb her. Right now, she really wanted to hear a concise solution from Ye Xiu.

"What do we do?" she asked Ye Xiu.

Ye Xiu only shook his head. "She can only rely on herself."

"There's nothing you can do?" Chen Guo said.

"It's not possible to have a surefire method for something like a 1v3," Ye Xiu said.

"What if... she fails? What do we do?" Chen Guo was worried!

"Then it'll be her choice," Ye Xiu said.

"Didn't you help her choose 5 rounds? Why didn't you say 50!" Chen Guo didn't care about Ye Xiu's previous explanation.

"Be more serious!" Ye Xiu looked at her and said.

Chen Guo was speechless. She wasn't joking though. If Ye Xiu had said 50, perhaps this matter would have just been left as banter. But then again, even if a reporter like Ruan Cheng didn't deny Happy that opportunity to regard it as a joke, Tang Rou herself might not accept it. When she really put her mind to it, she was quite scary. Chen Guo remembered when Tang Rou helped her complete the Heavenly Domain challenge. Once she had decided on doing it, she kept trying again and again, unable to be pulled away.

Chen Guo let out a long sigh. She had thought of too many ifs. In the end, what had to come would come.

October 25th, the eighth round of the Glory Pro League sounded. There were several powerhouse confrontations: Blue Rain vs Wind Howl, Tyranny vs Misty Rain, Samsara vs Void. However, the match chosen to be broadcast was Happy vs Tiny Herb.

1v3 in 5 rounds was the biggest topic of this match. Even though practically no one thought Tang Rou could do it, they still hoped to personally witness this moment. The broadcast team had chosen this match to comply with the popular opinion.

When it was almost 8 PM, the players on both sides entered the stadium. After greeting each other, the first players in the individual competition went onto the stage. But in the commentary, they still hadn't started introducing these two players. They were still discussing Tang Rou's 1v3.

"A poll on whether Tang Rou could complete this 1v3 just closed right before this match started. We can see that among the 65525 voters, 64388 voters thought that Tang Rou will not be able to achieve a 1v3. In other words, only 1137 people believed in Tang Rou, which comes out to about 1.7%, not even 2%. Coach Li, what are your thoughts?" Pan Lin said.

"Uh... even though Happy is a new team, they're quite popular. We can see this from the number of seats filled in their home stadium. 1.7% means that many Happy supporters don't think that Tang Rou can complete it. In addition, fans don't always vote based on a logical analysis. Most of the times, they vote based on their feelings, a show of their well-wishes. However, from looking at how Happy's supporters are voting, we can see that even among their fans, Tang Rou's bold 1v3 promise is unpopular," Li Yibo started speaking.

"Oh, then what are your thoughts, Coach Li?" Pan Lin asked.

"Haha, the courage and confidence of young players is laudable, but they can't be too ignorant!" Li Yibo said.

"It looks like Coach Li doesn't think highly of Tang Rou's 1v3! Okay, then I'll stand opposite to you. I'll support Tang Rou." Pan Lin laughed. His attitude was clearly just to liven up the atmosphere. It didn't mean he was a true fan.

"If she can really do it, it'll be a historical moment! If I remember correctly, according to past data, Team Tiny Herb has never been 1v3ed before, right?" Li Yibo said.

"Yes! I hope we can see this historical moment! Okay, the first round of the individual competition is about to begin. Happy will be sending out their team captain, the former owner of the Battle God One Autumn Leaf. Nicknamed the Glory Textbook, Ye Xiu is using the unspecialized Lord Grim, a character that has received much attention this season. As for Tiny Herb, they sent out their new generation Witch, the genius Gao Yingjie. This could be considered a confrontation between two generations. The map chosen is Red Plum Pavilion. Coach Li, who do you think will win?" When the match went underway, Pan Lin immediately stopped discussing the topic of Tang Rou's 1v3 and started talking about this confrontation. Asking about predictions of the outcome was a common topic for commentators. In reality, the question wasn't simply for predictions on who would win. In order to make a prediction, an introduction and analysis of the two opposing players had to be done, so it always worked as a conversation topic.

"Ye Xiu is experienced, he's familiar with every class, and he uses an unspecialized. These are where his advantages lay. However, Gao Yingjie has grown into a youth that can take charge. He's young. He has energy. And to Ye Xiu, Gao Yingjie is perhaps an unfamiliar player. They have never fought before." Li Yibo was familiar with how to reply to this type of question. He lay bare the advantages that both sides possessed and didn't talk about his actual prediction. When the outcome of the match became clear, he could just follow up: See, I told you guys XX is very XXXX!

As for this fight? Who would be Li Yibo's justification this time? At this moment, the two sides finally started clashing.

Chapter 1187: Carefully Honed Talent

Magic Missile!

Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree started out simple, testing the waters with a not-so-powerful Magic Missile.

Lord Grim dodged easily. Obviously, he didn't lack in ranged methods of attack. Myriad Manifestations Umbrella raised, three Anti-Tank Missiles seemed to have been swung out, roaring with a fiery tail as they flew at their target.

Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree immediately waved a hand, and a star shaped symbol was tossed out, transforming into a Magic Ray as it darted forth.

Star Ray?

No!

This Magic Ray accurately struck one of the Anti-Tank Missiles, then immediately rebounded towards another, then another, and then sped right for Lord Grim.

This was a variant of Star Ray: Star Refraction. Compared to Star Ray, it wasn't as powerful, but one could utilize the distinguishing feature of this refraction to create unexpected attacks. Currently, after refracting thrice, the three Anti-Tank Missiles had already exploded in midair, light flashing and smoke billowing. As for Lord Grim? He had no choice but to dodge the attack that came refracted at him.

With his sidestep, Kind Tree was already charging out of the smoke and fire, directly at Lord Grim. With a wave of his hand, a Lava Flask was thrown down, and soon after, he was swinging his broom at Lord Grim. Gao Yingjie's flurry of attacks quickly followed swiftly after his Star Refraction, barely giving Ye Xiu any chance to react.

Sword Draw!

The broom was about to hit Lord Grim's head when a blade of light flashed out. Because of the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella's transformative abilities, it often hid a lot of very easily-distinguishable skills in strange movements. This Sword Draw was exactly this. However, the prodigious Gao Yingjie reacted swiftly. Kind Tree's advance immediately stopped and turned into a backwards jump.

The ground had already melted under the Lava Flask, but Ye Xiu refused to give up such a good opening. Lord Grim used a Knight's Charge and pursued Kind Tree against the damage from the lava.

The two figures moved, immediately changing positions. Lord Grim came over with his Charge while Gao Yingjie's Kind Tree avoided the attack by getting on his broom mid-jump.

Gao Yingjie's reaction speed was truly amazing. Even Ye Xiu was a little surprised at his miss. However, a counterattack immediately followed.

Broom Tornado!

Just barely dodging this attack by riding his broom, Kind Tree immediately turned his broom and quickly swung it down at Lord Grim. The entire process looked as if Kind Tree had simply switched directions twice in midair, smoothly and clearly.

This time, Lord Grim didn't have the time to dodge. With the rapid spinning of the broom that Broom Tornado created, it was hard to parry as well. Ye Xiu could only go onto the defensive, raising his sword horizontally with a Blade Master's Guard. What followed was the continuous sound of the broom clashing with the edge of the sword. Broom Tornado battered at Lord Grim at high speed, sweeping him back.

Star Ray!

Gao Yingjie wasn't greedy. Just as the Broom Tornado was going strong, he suddenly canceled the skill and threw out a Star Ray. At such a close distance, there was no way Lord Grim could dodge. The Magic Ray hit, causing Lord Grim to stumble. Kind Tree's broom was already enchanted with Frost Powder. As it was whipped through the air, it left a trail of shattered ice crystals in the air as it slapped down at Lord Grim.

For melee combat, Witches mostly just used normal attacks, but with specialized magic tools, they could enhance their weapon's damage and enchant their weapon with special effects. For example, Frost Powder had the chance of freezing the target directly. Even if you were unlucky, it would still inflict a slow. Everything depended on the target's resistance.

Now, the number of pieces of Silver equipment on Lord Grim's body was slowly increasing, but he still mostly had Orange equipment. This meant his stats were easy to figure out. Gao Yingjie currently used Frost Powder naturally because he had realized that Lord Grim didn't have much of a resistance to ice.

Slap, slap, slap...

That was how Witches attacked. Even with Frost Powder, normal attacks wouldn't do any significant damage, but if he was hit and frozen, that would be dreadful.

Kind Tree started off with three consecutive attacks which Lord Grim barely dodged. The fourth attack, Gao Yingjie knew the other wouldn't be able to dodge, but that was when Lord Grim threw a handful of powder over as well...

This was...

Gao Yingjie recognized it immediately, but Kind Tree's attack was already sweeping forth, he didn't have time to retract it.

A hit!

As expected, Ye Xiu couldn't dodge this attack, but it was just a hit. What could a normal attack do?

Freezing effect?

It was gone... What Lord Grim had thrown just now was something Gao Yingjie was more than familiar with, the Witch's Disperse Powder. The effect of Frost Powder on his weapon also counted as a buff. When met with Disperse Powder, it was immediately neutralized.

However, only the Frost Powder was neutralized, not Kind Tree's attack. This hit was just a normal attack, without the wanted freeze effect, but with the following attack, Gao Yingjie was already attempting to inflict his own effects.

Sweep!

The broom swept up diagonally with the Witch's knock-up skill. Lord Grim was immediately suspended in the air. Gao Yingjie quickly followed after with Kind Tree to take this chance to unleash a combo, but instead saw the suspended Lord Grim facing him, looking straight at him.

A trap!!!

Gao Yingjie instantly realized.

When struck with a knock-up skill, it was impossible to adjust your position so well, so there was only one explanation: Lord Grim hadn't actually been struck; he had merely jumped up. Ye Xiu had predicted his next move and cooperated to create the illusion that he had been struck, and then he would launch an unexpected counterattack...

The light of a blade flashed and Lord Grim plummeted with a Falling Light Blade. Gao Yingjie was already having Kind Tree hurriedly avoid it, but Falling Light Blade...

With this attack, it was clear that Ye Xiu had once again predicted Gao Yingjie's next move. Falling Light Blade's small shockwave was just enough to capture Kind Tree.

Kind Tree, hit by the shockwave, was knocked to the side. Gao Yingjie rushed to Quick Recover, but Lord Grim had already pursued him over, swing down from overhead with a Collapsing Mountain.

Was Collapsing Mountain a hard to dodge attack? No, but the problem was the timing Ye Xiu chose. He attacked right as Kind Tree was in the middle of his Quick Recover. He couldn't really cancel, but continuing wouldn't do him any good, and it was too late to change directions.

Another trap!

What a troublesome opponent....

In the Season 8, Gao Yingjie rarely had chances to play, so he hadn't fought Ye Xiu before. Afterwards, they had come to a few exchanges in the online game. In the new server, at the beginning, they had been crushed by the unspecialized with their low leveled classes. There was no helping that. For the unspecialized, if it wasn't for the lack of skill points, the class would be mature at level 20. But what about other classes? When they were level twenty, they only had five skills for their class. Even if they learned more from other classes of the same type, that couldn't compare to the unspecialized. Fewer skills meant fewer variations, then, considering how they were against God Ye Xiu with his comprehensive knowledge, their attacks would be easily seen through and dealt with. Training with Ye Xiu in the new server was a painful memory.

Back then, Tiny Herb's members all had the same thought. They all believed that their immature characters had crippled their ability, and would naturally be at a disadvantage against the unspecialized. If it wasn't so, then the result would be very different.

Now, fighting Ye Xiu one on one, Gao Yingjie really wanted to tell those teammates the truth. With a mature character, it really was different from using a low leveled character, but if you were to say the result would be different when fighting Ye Xiu, that wasn't necessarily true. Even with Kind Tree, Gao Yingjie still felt that he was using the low leveled character he had once used against Ye Xiu.

All of his intentions had been seen through, his every move predicted. The attacks God Ye Xiu executed weren't magnificent, but they were inescapable, always timed when you were incapable of dodging. How did he manage to hone his awareness and experience to such a degree? Gao Yingjie was suddenly a little envious. He had hand speed; he was quick at reacting; he could switch between playstyles and combinations whenever he wished. He was a prodigy; he was far faster at learning, at mastering anything thrown his way than other people. However, it was impossible for him to gain the carefully honed talent God Ye Xiu had sharpened from who knew how many battles.

It seemed as if everything that he was doing was being discerned and analyzed.

This feeling was so intense. Even against his captain, Wang Jiexi, Gao Yingjie had never felt such an imposing pressure. Shouldn't his captain understand him better than God Ye Xiu?

His usual combinations wouldn't be of any use. He had to do something that the other wouldn't be able to predict!

Gao Yingjie, after losing the initiative, fell into a helpless situation. No matter how he switched up his tactics, he wasn't able to escape Lord Grim's control.

From the outside, it seemed that he wasn't at such a disadvantage. Occasionally, he would still find chances to counterattack. In the beginning, that's what Gao Yingjie thought as well, but soon enough, he realized that while he had accurately grasped these seemingly valuable chances, he never managed to achieve what he had been intending. He could send out a few counterattacks every now and then, but in the blink of an eye, Ye Xiu would have taken back the advantage.

Thus, he came to a realization. These so-called chances were all under Ye Xiu's control as well. No one would dare say that their fighting was flawless, but Ye Xiu was able to keep the openings he revealed under his control. Thus, Gao Yingjie might've grasped chance after chance, but was never able to make anything out of it.

So this was the Glory Textbook? The strongest player in the history of Glory?

Gao Yingjie gazed at the weird character, swinging a strange weapon, and wearing an uncomfortably mismatched set of equipment, with fearful reverence.

He really is strong, but, I can't give up just like this!

Gao Yingjie grit his teeth. Kind Tree didn't have much health left, and he still wasn't able to find an opening to turn the tides. His only choice was to go all out!

Glory!

When the word flashed on the screen, the match came to an end.

So in the end, he still lost?

Gao Yingjie stared at the fallen Kind Tree, stunned.

Chapter 1188: Grinding Out a Win

Happy welcomed the visiting Tiny Herb. After Ye Xiu won the first round of the individual competition, the two competitors walked down from the stage.

"What do you think?" Wang Jiexi looked at Gao Yingjie, who had just been beaten by Ye Xiu and was looking a bit downcast.

"Amazing..." Gao Yingjie said. "He's even stronger than I imagined."

"But you're still young. Keep working hard, and one day you will surpass everyone," Wang Jiexi said.

"Yes!"

The Gao Yingjie of two years ago may have been named a genius and carried the hopes of countless people, but he had never dared to be so ambitious. He had always felt like having a seat in this team and playing on the competitive stage was already very, very good.

However, everyone in the club from top to bottom, his team captain, his teammates, they all had extremely high expectations of him. Just a member on the team? No, not nearly enough. Tiny Herb was expecting him to be the team's pillar, the one who would hold up Tiny Herb's banner after their captain Wang Jiexi retired.

Could he do it?

His goals were forced onto him. When he looked towards the figure of the Magician, Gao Yingjie had doubted himself more than just once. He felt like his captain was so strong. How could he ever hope to reach his level?

Everyone seemed to be more confident in Gao Yingjie than Gao Yingjie himself. While wallowing in uncertainty, Gao Yingjie grew, following what he was told blindly. Up until that day, the Season 8 All Stars Rookie Challenge, where he beat his captain under the gazes of millions of people.

At that time, Gao Yingjie had been astonished. He couldn't believe it. It was then that a seed had finally started to sprout in his heart.

So I really can do it.

Gao Yingjie began to think to himself. After that, practicing and growing, Gao Yingjie changed beyond recognition. He had found confidence in himself. He had recognized his potential. He could firmly advance towards that goal, which he had once thought as inconceivable.

That season, because he hadn't appeared in enough matches, he didn't have the qualifications for the title of Best Rookie. However, this wasn't important. In Season 9, Gao Yingjie became part of the starting lineup, directly learning, growing, battling alongside the person he would surpass and succeed. He was chosen as an All-Star and became one of the top 24 players in the competitive scene.

He had yet to reach the level of his captain, but Wang Jiexi had already given him a new target.

Surpass everyone!

And this time, Gao Yingjie didn't panic. He would work hard towards this goal. The road to Glory had no limit.

In the broadcast, commentator Pan Lin and guest Li Yibo hurried to give a recap of the brilliant plays that happened in this match. Pan Lin looked at the data in his hands and suddenly said, "Coach Li, I just discovered something. Happy has been the center of attention with so much to talk about, but there's a reality that everyone seems to have missed."

"Oh? What is it?" asked Li Yibo.

"After Samsara clean swept them in the Round 1, Ye Xiu began coming out as Happy's first player in their individual competitions. So far, he has a perfect record in these seven rounds, in seven individual matches. This is something that somehow no one noticed," Pan Lin said.

"Oh? Really?" Li Yibo immediately grabbed the data in his hands. Data from too far in the past might not be there, but the win records for the two teams this season should all be there.

"You're right..." Li Yibo looked at the data and confirmed it twice before continuing, "With this match, he's won seven consecutive individual matches. To think no one's reported on this yet."

"Even if Team Happy's win record at this point isn't too ideal, this point shouldn't be covered up!" Pan Lin said.

"Yes... seven consecutive wins. If I remember correctly, he's tied for the most consecutive individual wins in Glory history, no?" Li Yibo said.

The two of them didn't have this information on hand, but Pan Lin quickly found someone to search and confirm it. "Correct, the current best record for consecutive individual wins is seven, which had been set by Team Blue Rain's Yu Feng in Season 8."

"It looks like Ye Xiu's name is going to have to be added to it," Li Yibo said.

"Or perhaps he'll be the only one?" Pan Lin said.

"Who's Happy's opponents next round?" Li Yibo asked.

"Let's see... Miracle..." After Pan Lin found it, he became silent.

Li Yibo was suddenly speechless too. Miracle. Ignoring everything else, if this was just a 1v1, it was practically giving away this point to Ye Xiu. This team's foundation consisted of former Excellent Era players, who had grown under Ye Xiu's hands. As for the others, they were new rookies that had joined along with Miracle; their skill levels were subpar. It would be embarrassing to compare them with a God.

"Uh, let's go back to the match!" Li Yibo dragged the topic back to the match. Even though he had already given Ye Xiu eight wins in his heart, since the match hadn't been played yet, it wouldn't be good to talk about it.

The second players for the individual competition walked onto the stage.

Happy. Su Mucheng. Launcher, Dancing Rain.

Tiny Herb. Xu Bin. Knight, Angelica.

Xu Bin. During his time in Team 301, he had earned the nickname "Grind King".

This nickname wasn't a pretty one, but it was quite a mighty one. It really was the best title for Xu Bin's playstyle though. After joining the championship team Tiny Herb, Xu Bin didn't lose his defining feature. Instead, because of the support from better teammates, his speciality improved a step further. Last season, he had been voted into All-Stars at 14th place.

Against Su Mucheng, Xu Bin obviously wouldn't abandon his style. After encountering his opponent and being suppressed by heavy gunfire from Dancing Rain, he didn't panic. For someone to be named "Grind King," he possessed unimaginable toughness. Xu Bin contended patiently with Su Mucheng. It was as if he was also a long-ranged class, but in reality, he had absolutely no attacks that could pose any threat to her. He fought with Su Mucheng in a situation where he couldn't fight back, dodging and defending to skillfully dissolve Dancing Rain's attacks. At the same time, Angelica tried hard to decrease the distance between the two of them.

Grind King didn't mean Xu Bin was slow and that his playing wasn't clean. It was pointing to his style, where he wore down his opponent's spirit and skills, grinding at the opponent's patience and pushing the opponent's mentality off balance, or perhaps grinding until the opponent was tired. In any case, his playstyle led to openings. And whenever an opening appeared, Xu Bin's offensive would be like a thunderstorm.

Knight's Spirit!

The instant he saw the opportunity, Xu Bin immediately had Angelica activate his awakening skill. Along with a Heroic Charge and a Justice Leap, he instantly closed the distance between himself and Dancing Rain. Su Mucheng wanted Dancing Rain to retreat, but Angelica had used Sacrificial Roar, forcing Dancing Rain to continue attacking him. Before this, Angelica had activated an Honest Maelstrom Counterattack. Launcher attacks could also be returned by this skill...

In the end, Xu Bin won. The margin of victory wasn't large, and he wasn't particularly dominant, but all the matches he won seemed to be like this...

"Good job," Wang Jiexi said to Xu Bin. He appreciated Xu Bin's consistency very much.

Tiny Herb's third player for the individual competition started getting ready.

Zhou Yebai. Ghostblade, Rangoon Creeper.

Of the eight rounds this season, this was Zhou Yebai's third time appearing in the individual competition. To be sent out so many times was worthy of being excited about for a substitute player like Zhou Yebai. However, the individual competition? Zhou Yebai didn't really understand. He was a Ghostblade. It wasn't that he had no individual combat capabilities, but of the players in the team, Zhou Yebai really didn't think that he was better than any of the others in 1v1s, but their team captain didn't pick the others and picked him again and again in the individual competition. On the other hand, for the team competition, of the eight rounds, he had only appeared once, which truly confused him.

He had lost the last two times he went up. What about this time?

He didn't understand this arrangement, but he respected his team captain's wishes, so he upped his spirits and went onto the stage. On the way there, he lifted his head and looked up at the screen to see who his opponent would be.

Team Happy. Qiao Yifan. Ghostblade, One Inch Ash.

Qiao Yifan!

Zhou Yebai turned his head in astonishment and saw Qiao Yifan almost at Happy's player booth.

Zhou Yebai subconsciously glanced at his teammates. He saw that everyone was looking at Qiao Yifan too.

In the pro scene, players came and went. Teammates today, opponents tomorrow. It was very common. Those who had played for a few years all experienced this, but Qiao Yifan... Zhou Yebai had never really thought of him as a teammate. Qiao Yifan had been more like a busboy?

But right now, this busboy had found his home, and he had even changed classes to be a Ghostblade just like him. Qiao Yifan's position in Team Happy was more firm than his, and he had appeared on stage this season more times than Zhou Yebai had.

Zhou Yebai hadn't been interested in this individual competition at first, but now a sliver of fighting spirit rose.

Yes, just a sliver.

Qiao Yifan was just a lowly busboy. He even changed classes. How good could he be? He's probably the same as when he had been playing with a... a what? Zhou Yebai suddenly realized that he couldn't even remember what class Qiao Yifan played before in Tiny Herb.

He was probably so bad that he didn't leave an impression on me? Zhou Yebai thought to himself.

Do you think that just because of you've switched classes, you're an ugly duckling that turned into a swan? Today I'll definitely teach you a good lesson!

The characters loaded into the map and the match began...

"Yifan, long time no see!" Zhou Yebai had his Rangoon Creeper advance as he greeted Qiao Yifan in the public chat. In his heart, he was wondering how he should teach this Qiao Yifan how a Phantom Demon was played.

"Senior, long time no see," Qiao Yifan replied. Apart from Gao Yingjie, everyone else in Team Tiny Herb were his seniors.

"So you've switched to a Phantom Demon. Nice job!" Zhou Yebai said.

"Thank you senior for your praise," Qiao Yifan said.

"Is there anything that you don't understand, that you'd like me to show you in this match?" Zhou Yebai wasn't modest at all.

"Sure... I'm behind you," Qiao Yifan said.

Chapter 1189: Ghost Chaining

Behind?!

Zhou Yebai went pale with shock upon seeing this message, hurriedly having Rangoon Creeper turn around.

Unfortunately, Qiao Yifan was focused on the match, and not here to joke around. He had tactically managed to swerve around and get behind Rangoon Creeper. When he sent the message, One Inch Ash's sword was already on its way down.

Moonlight Slash!

Phantom Demons usually wouldn't put too many skill points into slash attacks, and Qiao Yifan didn't intend for damage to be the purpose of this strike. It was just a simple opening attack. Unless the other was under a Super Armor status, any attack would be enough to disrupt the target a little. Combos were built upon such a foundation.

It was definitely far too late for Zhou Yebai to dodge after seeing Qiao Yifan's message. Considering Qiao Yifan's caution, he naturally wouldn't expose himself without having an absolute grasp on the situation. Zhou Yebai's Rangoon Creeper had happily and brainlessly charged forward, while speaking with Qiao Yifan like a senior to his junior in the chat. Meanwhile, Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash had successfully and precisely gotten behind the other. The audience could see all of this with clarity. Zhou Yebai had become a joke at the very start of the match, one that didn't seem to understand his own place at all.

Now, moonlight arced downwards, not doing much damage, but still stunning Rangoon Creeper for a split second. One Inch Ash followed up with a Ghost Claw. A sliver of the Phantom Ghost's power drifted through the air, throwing Rangoon Creeper up. This was the Ghostblade's knockup skill.

Knockups were usually a good time to follow up with a combo, but for a Phantom Demon, they shouldn't hurry and deal as much damage with slashes as possible, but quickly set down as many Ghost Boundaries as possible.

Ice Boundary!

Plague Boundary!

Ghost Boundaries had cast times, so you couldn't instantly set a boundary. It was a struggle to finish casting these two Ghost Boundaries during Rangoon Creeper's knockup. However, Qiao Yifan very smoothly transitioned between the two Ghost Boundaries. After setting down an Ice Boundary first, he began chanting a Plague Boundary, carefully keeping an eye on Rangoon Creeper. Upon seeing the other land, Qiao Yifan was prepared to cancel the chant already, but the effects of Ice Boundary activated!

Rangoon Creeper, slowed by the Ice Boundary, definitely wouldn't be able to get to One Inch Ash's side in time. His blade trembled, and instead he sent forward a Spellblade skill: Earthquake Sword.

He could make it!

Qiao Yifan made an accurate judgement. Even as the Earthquake Sword came over, he continued his cast. The Plague Boundary was set before the Earthquake Sword swept at him, as expected. He wasn't interrupted. After that, he had One Inch Ash roll to the side and Earthquake Sword was dodged cleanly. Qiao Yifan was very familiar with the characteristics of these skills.

Plague Boundary lowered the defense of the characters inside the boundary. If he didn't attack, then there was no point to the Plague Boundary. Zhou Yebai was a Phantom Demon player, so how would he not understand this? Now, in two overlapping boundaries, he didn't ignore everything and try to run out of the two boundaries, but instead carefully observed One Inch Ash's movements. He couldn't predict what Qiao Yifan would do next. That was when he realized, despite living together for a year, seeing each other everyday for a year, he didn't understand Qiao Yifan at all. Perhaps, as a team member that he often had to train with, he knew a little of Qiao Yifan's style in Glory, but now, Qiao Yifan had switched classes to the class he was most familiar with: Phantom Demon.

What was Qiao Yifan's Phantom Demon like? Zhou Yebai didn't have a clue. However, he believed that he had more experience as a Phantom Demon than Qiao Yifan. He might've been caught off guard in the beginning, but, so long as he didn't panic, and kept a clear view of the situation, dealing with each action as it came, there was nothing to fear.

Ice Boundary, Plague Boundary, one focused on control, another focused on weakening. These two boundaries wouldn't deal any significant damage, he could slow down his pace and observe slowly. Bring it, Qiao Yifan!

Wait!

What was this?

On the screen, the blade in One Inch Ash's hand was spinning. It was less like an attack and more like some sort of spell being cast. As a Phantom Demon player, how could Zhou Yebai not know what this was?

The Ice and Plague Boundaries under Rangoon Creeper's feet seemed to be responding to come sort of summons, the Phantom Ghost's power pulsing, resonating! Zhou Yebai wanted to get his Rangoon Creeper out of the boundaries, but it was already too late.

Ghost Feast!

With only two Ghost Boundaries on the field, Qiao Yifan already had One Inch Ash use Ghost Feast.

The two pools of the Phantom Ghost's power, representing ice and plague erupted. Compared to a Ghost Feast with multiple overlaid boundaries, the power of the explosion of two boundaries had been reduced, but was also much clearer. Everyone could even see Rangoon Creeper struggling under the corrosive power of the Phantom Ghost's power.

The match had just started and Zhou Yebai had taken an ultimate to the face, but now his nervousness after being ambushed had disappeared along with it.

A Ghost Feast with just two Ghost Boundaries?

Zhou Yebai wanted to laugh. From his point of view, this was a display of Qiao Yifan's lack of experience and his stress from facing him. He couldn't figure out what to do next, so he just hurriedly made the Ghost Boundaries erupt. Every little bit of damage counted, after all.

How pitiful!

Zhou Yebai lamented to himself. Did the other really think that he'd become something great just by switching classes? How naive!

"Grow up already!" Zhou Yebai sent into the chat, admonishingly, as Rangoon Creeper charged out of the smoke and lights made by the opposing Phantom Ghost's power.

Moonlight Slash, then Full Moonlight Slash!

The two strikes were formed as one, arcing beautifully through the air, but, if there was nothing to hit, then the two arcs of light merely looked awkward!

Where was he?

Zhou Yebai was shocked.

He had seen One Inch Ash at this very spot just now. He was fast enough, so how could this happen? How was this possible?

What on earth happened?

Zhou Yebai was shocked, the audience was shocked and Pan Lin, in the middle of his commentary, was also shocked.

"What is Zhou Yebai doing?" Pan Lin wondered aloud. The audience, with their omniscient view, clearly saw Qiao Yifan's One Inch Ash standing just off to the side behind Rangoon Creeper, but Zhou Yebai had Rangoon Creeper strike the air with a beautiful two hit combo while yelling something like that. Was this some sort of... tactical trap?

"Er..." Li Yibo was very awkward. As a special guest and commentator, as Adviser Li, he had to give an answer in this sort of situation. However... what the hell was this guy doing? Li Yibo was very confused as well.

"Let's watch the match first!" Coach Li's commentary IQ was expert level. Knowing that the players on the field wouldn't give them time to analyze this one detail, he quickly suggested they watch first, analyze later.

One Inch Ash, stood behind Rangoon Creeper, had already struck. By the time Rangoon Creeper's two slashes were soaring through nothing, another Ghost Boundary had been placed. Dark Boundary! Another boundary that focused on inflicting a status effect. This time, Qiao Yifan wanted to take Zhou Yebai's sight.

The screen went dark...

Dark Boundary!

Zhou Yebai immediately realized what this meant.

Where was this guy? Where did this Ghost Boundary come from?

A chill ran through Zhou Yebai's heart as he stared at the dark screen that looked like it had shut down. He was finally feeling pressured. Qiao Yifan was no longer someone he could defeat with ease. Definitely not.

Zhou Yebai was so shocked that he forgot to move. One of the characteristics of Ghost Boundaries was that while inside, you'd definitely feel the effects, but as soon as you stepped out, then it'd all disappear. Characters in a Dark Boundary would be blinded, so no character would give up trying to make their character move out of it. They'd usually even use movement skills to help them move a large distance at once, just to escape this annoying effect.

However, Zhou Yebai, too lost in the shock over the trouble Qiao Yifan was giving him, forgot such a crucial thing as to move.

He was stunned, but Qiao Yifan wasn't. One Inch Ash closed in, sending out slash attacks and setting down ghost boundaries whenever given an opening.

One boundary...

Two boundaries...

Three boundaries...

The effects of Ghost Boundaries were stackable, but Qiao Yifan didn't let all the Ghost Boundaries he send out overlap completely. The boundaries overlapped, chained together across a larger area. The very center had several overlapping Ghost Boundaries, but as you got further away from the center, some areas only had one or two boundaries presiding over them. However, with this arrangement, the area under One Inch Ash's control had greatly increased. The Dark Boundary had disappeared by then and Zhou Yebai's sight returned, but he couldn't escape the control of the chained Ghost Boundaries at all.

This was...

Ghost Chaining!

Zhou Yebai recognized this playstyle and was once again filled with shock. Ghost Chaining required a player to have a very good awareness of the situation at large. Each boundary was set down individually, but needed to be placed so that it formed a whole with the other Ghost Boundaries. As a player did this, they also had to use slash attacks to fill in the gaps left by the Ghost Boundaries. The timing of these slashes, of these boundaries, what boundaries to place, where to place them, they all needed to be planned out. It wasn't something a person could achieve by mechanics alone.

This guy... can use Ghost Chaining, and so well... As for me...

Zhou Yebai didn't want to admit it, but had no choice. He was incapable of performing such a beautifully done Ghost Chaining.

How is this possible?

Zhou Yebai felt like he was going crazy. This was Qiao Yifan? That little nobody? Had he really already mastered something as high end as Ghost Chaining? Was his skill already above mine?

No! Impossible!

Zhou Yebai didn't believe it, or rather, he didn't want to believe it. How could that Qiao Yifan be so strong? How could he defeat me?

Of course he could!

Glory!

When the word flashed on the screen, Zhou Yebai's Rangoon Creeper had fallen with his denial and disbelief. When he walked out of the competition booth, his face was still set in an expression of disbelief. He returned to Tiny Herb's player stands, head down as he stood to the side.

He had lost to Qiao Yifan, that Qiao Yifan...

"Someone you never bothered to take notice of has grown to such an extent... Is it scary?" Wang Jiexi suddenly asked.

Zhou Yebai opened his mouth, but didn't know what to say. He suddenly realized, if Qiao Yifan hadn't left, if Qiao Yifan was still in Tiny Herb, both of them as Phantom Demons, would he still have a place in Tiny Herb?

Zhou Yebai suddenly felt a creeping sense of terror. He knew that Qiao Yifan was no longer in Tiny Herb and he wouldn't have to compete with the other for this place, but he still felt a formless pressure on his shoulders, trying to tell him something.

"You can't stagnate! In this Alliance, survival is swimming against the tide," Wang Jiexi said.

Chapter 1190: New Ghostblade Technique

With the three individual rounds over, Happy was in the lead 2 to 1. There would be a short break before the group arena, but the commentator and special guest still had much to do. Due to Qiao Yifan's beautiful Ghost Chaining, they still had a mystery to uncover! Li Yibo wanted to just leave this be, but Pan Lin, at a time like this, just simply refused to sync to his rhythm. After hurriedly going over the current progression and situation of the round, he immediately returned to the match that had just occurred, and immediately returned to the mystery they had left unsolved.

"Zhou Yebai's mistake really shouldn't have occurred. Isn't his judgment way off?" The broadcast cooperated with Pan Lin's commentary and was currently giving a playback of Rangoon Creeper's beautiful two strike combo. It was aimed at nothing, completely ignoring One Inch Ash behind him.

"Such a weird mistake wouldn't be without reason, right?" With Li Yibo refusing to cooperate, Pan Lin could only keep talking to himself, asking the program director to switch to Zhou Yebai's point of view at the same time.

"Wait!" The scene flashed by and Li Yibo suddenly yelled, seeming to have noticed something.

"What?" The scene paused.

"Go back, slow motion!" Li Yibo's voice had twisted a little.

Pan Lin didn't understand, but still had the broadcast director cooperate, rewinding the recording and replaying it.

"Stop!" Li Yibo suddenly cried out.

The prepared broadcast director stopped the scene. Li Yibo pointed at a point on the screen: look here!

In Zhou Yebai's point of view, there was the lighting effect of the explosion after the Ice and Plague Boundaries had been blown up by Ghost Feast, and right in front of him, there was the clear cut silhouette of a person.

"One Inch Ash!" Pan Lin yelled, "One Inch Ash really did appear there. There was nothing wrong with Zhou Yebai's judgment, but..."

"Keep this scene, switch the view," Li Yibo directly interrupted him.

Pan Lin was stunned, but still had the broadcast switch to an full view.

"Hey!" After switching, Pan Lin cried out, unable to control his surprise. In the full view, One Inch Ash wasn't there at all. He had already arrived behind Rangoon Creeper by then, about to get to the position he had launched his offense from.

"What on earth is happening?" Pan Lin was shocked, switching the shot back and seeing the silhouette of One Inch Ash once more.

"This..." Pan Lin stared, and stared some more, and suddenly gave a "ah!"

"Do you see it now?" Li Yibo asked.

"This... This..." Pan Lin grabbed the mouse, tracing the cursor over the image, over the edge of the silhouette of "One Inch Ash".

"This isn't One Inch Ash at all, but a silhouette formed by the lighting from the explosion of the two Ghost Boundaries," Li Yibo explained.

"This... Is this something created by the system?" Pan Lin suspected.

"Probably not." Li Yibo shook his head. He had never heard of anything like it.

"A coincidence?"

"We probably won't know until Qiao Yifan is interviewed," Li Yibo guessed.

The audience at the venue all saw the scene and commentary in the TV broadcast through the big screen, seeing the silhouette made in that moment by the two boundaries of Ghost Feast.

It wasn't just the crowd that was surprised. Even the pro players at their respective benches, including Gods like Ye Xiu and Wang Jiexi, were all dumbstruck.

This was something unique that they had never seen during their pro careers, such a lifelike silhouette... It was a coincidence, right?

Tiny Herb's members could only guess, but Happy's members could be more direct. They all turned their heads as one to face Qiao Yifan, using their gazes to prompt him to explain.

"Ah... This, is something I discovered by accident," Qiao Yifan said.

"You created it purposefully!" Ye Xiu's surprise didn't fade because he knew that, for something like this, noticing was one thing, but replication was something else entirely.

"Yeah... I tried to practice it, I'm just lucky that Luo Ji helped me with the calculations involved," Qiao Yifan said, pulling out Luo Ji to give him credit. Luo Ji was usually at school, but when it came to matchday Saturday, he would swiftly rush to the stadium to regroup with everyone else. It was tiring, but if he couldn't even make it to the matches, then there really was no point in being a pro player at all.

"Just a little," Luo Ji hurriedly added, having been pushed into the spotlight.

"Amazing!" Ye Xiu complimented. Setting aside the practicality of this technique for now, for such a young player to have such creativity and spirit to research a new technique was something praiseworthy. Ye Xiu dared to be certain that this was an unprecedented new technique, something that even the All-Star level Ghostblades of Void hadn't even discovered.

"Ah... It's alright! I just felt like it might be of some use." Qiao Yifan was at a loss in the face of such a compliment.

"When we get back, let's all discuss together," Ye Xiu decided with a smile.

"Yes!" Qiao Yifan was very happy too. This acknowledgement was something he'd never get tired of.

The break after the individual competition soon ended. The following group arena would be the focus of this match, of all the matches this round. The reason the TV broadcast would choose this match was also mainly because of this group arena.

The venue suddenly fell silent. The Happy fans at their home stadium felt way too conflicted about this match that would decide the the result of the 1v3 promise.

Tang Rou stood from her seat. Five rounds... She had already failed four rounds, but her gaze was as determined as ever. Even though her opponent was Tiny Herb, even though no one had ever achieved a 1v3 against this team, Tang Rou didn't feel a trace of hesitation or fear.

"I'm going."

She gave her teammates a simple goodbye and went onstage. Seeing her, the Happy fans continued to be at a loss, uncertain how to respond. Instead, it was Tiny Herb that erupted into cheering and support when their first player Liu Xiaobie stood up. Happy's home turf once again become useless. Tang Rou, who could once create an uproar, had become someone who brought a chill to the stadium atmosphere.

The match begun amidst this strange situation.

"I'm very honored to become your first opponent for your 1v3," Liu Xiaobie typed. As a Hand Speed Expert, Liu Xiaobie enjoyed warming up by typing as he moved into position. Liu Xiaobie wasn't trying to mock the other by choosing the topic of the 1v3. He truly admired this young woman for her 1v3 promise. Who didn't have this sort of ambition? However, someone who dared say it, and make such a promise, that really was powerful, fierce.

"However, can you get past me?"

Windy Pavilion was a simple map without much decor. The two characters approached one another, closing the distance between them rapidly, as they adjusted their positions to prepare to attack. Liu Xiaobie's Flying Sword leaned further and further forwards, his right hand creeping to his sword hilt with the cover from his body.

The two were only fifteen steps apart.

Fourteen steps...

Thirteen steps...

Liu Xiaobie was on guard for any attacks. The female Battle Mage in front of him often used Dragon Breaks the Ranks to increase speed and charge into an offense. With a mere ten something steps, it was just a blink of an eye for a Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

Twelve steps...

Eleven steps...

The closer they got, the clearer of a view Liu Xiaobie had. He carefully observed Soft Mist's form. Soft Mist kept her spear held backwards. A Dragon Breaks the Ranks start didn't look like that.

Was she not going to use Dragon Breaks the Ranks?

Then, take this!

Sword Draw!

At six steps away, Sword Draw had already been sent out.

Not close enough?

No, when the attack flew forwards, the two characters were still moving. Six steps was a short distance, so this attack was timed just right!

As expected, the flash of the sword created a shining line, linking the two characters together immediately. Soft Mist suddenly bent her knees in front of him.

That wasn't enough!

There were very few Hand Speed Experts who had slow reactions. Creating variations in their attacks were their best weapon and the sword's slash was immediately adjusted. Just bending down wasn't enough.

However, Soft Mist didn't just get down.

Sky Strike! Soft Mist's spear was launched upwards. Bending down had given her a miniscule chance to maneuver, letting her parry this attack perfectly with her Sky Strike.

Clang!

Their weapons clashed. Sky Strike didn't seem to be enough to completely parry Sword Draw, but Soft Mist had fully adjusted her form by then and used the momentum from that attack to increase her movement speed and the speed of her counterattack.

Dragon Tooth!

The attack sped towards his chest.

As fierce as expected! Liu Xiaobie exclaimed. Wanting to take the initiative to strike with just this attack, she really hasn't changed a bit!

Liu Xiaobie couldn't help but think to back in the beginning, when their captain had them go to the tenth server to train with Ye Xiu. This girl had been quite a pain to deal with. The her who couldn't even last a minute was already clearly showing her style. Never back down, attack whenever possible, from the first attack to when she fell, she was always on the offense. Though her abilities were unpolished back then and every member of Tiny Herb could defeat her, her burning spirit had left a deep impression on them.

And now, she was finally on the same stage as they were and shouldering a promise of 1v3 in five rounds.

You really have character, but we Tiny Herb aren't willing to be a background to that character!

Liu Xiaobie wasn't Huang Shaotian, and he didn't have the habit of chatting as he fought. Determined and resolute, Flying Sword darted out.

Triple Slash!

Liu Xiaobie didn't back down from Soft Mist's advance, but instead used this movement skill to meet her.

This sort of exchange was exactly what Tang Rou wanted.

Dragon Tooth stabbed forth, but hit air as Flying Sword slashed, his form swerving, and then swerving again.

Triangle Triple Slash!

With Liu Xiaobie's extremely fast hand speed, his direction changes with Triple Slash were dizzying. Flying Sword seemed to teleport, instantly dodging the Dragon Tooth and getting to Soft Mist's flank, the edge of his sword plummeting down!