

Avatar 1211

Chapter 1211: Strong Performances

Apart from the five perfect 10-0 wins, the other matches in Round 9 were very orderly, three 2-8 losses and two 7-3 wins.

The three 2-8 losses were the home teams Heavenly Swords, Parade, and Radiant losing to the visiting teams Misty Rain, Void, and Hundred Blossoms respectively. As for the two 7-3 wins, 301 and Royal Style took down Wind Howl and Thunderclap relying on their home field advantage.

In the end, the weaker teams weren't able to pull off any upsets in Round 9. However, 301 and Royal Style, the two mid-tier teams that were on the edge of making it into the playoffs last season, utilized their home field advantage to beat Wind Howl and Thunderclap, rather surprising victories.

After Round 8, Thunderclap had been in second place, but their lead over the lower ranked teams hadn't been that high. With this loss, they immediately slid down to fourth place, while Blue Rain and Tiny Herb with 69 points and 66 points took second and third. Samsara's consistency and dominance once again placed them in their own separate tier. Their point total was 77, 8 points ahead of the second place team. After Thunderclap was Misty Rain in fifth with 59 points, Tyranny in sixth with 57 points, Wind Howl in seventh with 57 points, and then Hundred Blossoms in eighth. After Happy took a huge win over Hundred Blossoms, beating them 9 to 1, Hundred Blossoms adjusted rapidly. After two rounds, they were back on their feet, quickly making their way back to the playoff zone.

After Hundred Blossoms was Void, 301, and Royal Style placed outside of the playoff zone. With Happy winning this round 10 to 0, they moved up one spot from fourteenth to thirteenth, but the distance between Happy and the eighth place Hundred Blossoms was 14 points. The teams in the relegations zone were Seaside and Bright Green. After Round 7, these two teams were locked into last and second to last. The gap between these two teams and the teams ahead of them were pulling farther and farther apart. It looked like there wouldn't be any suspense as for who would be relegated this season.

The post-match reports for Round 9 didn't focus on a single team or person but rather how weirdly orderly the point distribution was. The media really wanted to about the dominance of powerhouses because of the several 10 to 0s, but the problem was that of these five 10 to 0s, one of them just had to be Happy, a truly irksome presence. Happy was without a doubt unrelated to this topic, but they just had to show up at this moment. The issue of dealing with Happy gave the media huge headaches. In the end, it was still Esports Home with the talent. Samsara, Tiny Herb, Blue Rain, and Tyranny were used to describe the untouchable dominance of the powerhouses. On the other hand, Happy was singled out as the representative team of wildly inconsistent and incomprehensible team.

They could crush Hundred Blossoms 9 to 1, but also lose 3 to 7 to Radiant and Parade. Yet after those losses, they could achieve perfect 10 to 0 wins over Heavenly Swords and Miracle. Figure out a team's strength from their win records? In Happy's case, it seemed extremely unreliable.

In these nine rounds, Samsara had obtained the most 10 to 0s with three perfect wins. Next, with two perfect wins, was Tiny Herb and then Happy. But Happy was also among the teams who were annihilated 0 to 10. It was as though Happy just had to stick their nose in everything.

The Esports Home concluded with a serious reminder to all teams in the Alliance: Be wary of Happy.

This sort of spotlight onto them was quickly met with backlash by people such as the Esports Time's Ruan Cheng. The Esports Time was biweekly, so he had no way of immediately writing an article through the Esports Time and could only use his personal blog to express his opinions.

Tang Rou breaking her promise wasn't going to be forgiven so easily by him, but repeating the same thing again and again would tire out the readers. In fact, it might help her through reverse psychology. Ruan Cheng was a master though and had a subtle grasp of the pace. He wouldn't constantly stick in reminders, but he would never forget to raise the topic seemingly by accident at the appropriate time to avoid readers from forgetting about it. Because of Tang Rou, Ruan Cheng had turned into a through and through Happy hater. However, he was still a public figure and had to care about his reputation, so even if he had to paint Happy black, he had to back it up with logic, feigning reason and hiding his individual bias.

As a result, under Ruan Cheng's artful writing, Happy became a shit stick that harmed others without benefiting themselves, supported clearly and logically.

Why did his writing seem so reasonable? Because what Ruan Cheng wrote was really just a reiteration of the Esports Home's negative opinions of Happy in an uglier way. However, due to the influence of his writing style and the push from other journalists who were also unhappy with Tang Rou, Happy was generally viewed in a more negative light.

Two 10 to 0s?

One Heavenly Swords and one Miracle. Both these teams had certain ties with Happy. Snatching all ten points from them could also be considered quite vicious and merciless of Happy.

Some of the sillier comments even took those words "vicious and merciless" to describe Happy, seeming to have forgotten that any team wanted to win as many points as possible in a competition.

But despite these negative comments, Happy's pace became steadier and steadier.

In their tenth round home game versus Royal Style, a 9 to 1 victory.

In their eleventh round away game versus Seaside, Boundless Sea returned to the first time to his old home. The Seaside fans familiar with Boundless Sea saw their team's former symbol walk onto a path never to return under Happy's Fang Rui. Amidst the unrelenting boos from the crowd, Happy wasn't polite and sent away Seaside 10 to 0.

Two huge victories in two rounds. Happy had won 19 points, rising up two places on the rankings currently at eleventh place. Their distance to the playoff zone had shrunk to 10 points. Right now, Team Void was eighth. At the end of Round 9, the fifth place Team Misty Rain performed poorly in Round 10 and Round 11, falling out of the playoff zone at tenth place with 65 points. Even Team 301 was ahead of them.

Hundred Blossoms continued to perform consistently, winning 7 to 3 against the away team Blue Rain. Yu Feng's departure from Blue Rain had been quite controversial. Many fans thought he was being greedy. He had been one of the three core players of Team Blue Rain. Wanting an even higher position than that was endless greed.

This time, Yu Feng directly confronted Team Blue Rain, proving that he had the qualifications for an even higher position. Although his Berserker lost to Huang Shaotian's Blade Master in the final round of the group arena, Hundred Blossoms had opened poorly. By the time Yu Feng had to face Huang Shaotian, he was only at 30% health. But in the following team competition, Yu Feng became the most eye-catching player. His display of power pierced through the tactical net sown by Team Blue Rain. In the end, Hundred Blossoms won the team competition. Having won 7 points, they now had 71 points, rushing ahead to sixth place on the rankings, leading Tyranny by 1 point.

Blue Rain wasn't the only powerhouse that lost in the eleventh round. Tyranny lost their away game to Thunderclap 3 to 7, putting them at seventh place with 70 points. Thunderclap was third continuing on their radiant path this season. Apart from them, Tiny Herb lost to Void 2 to 8. Through this victory, Void broke into the playoff zone, while Tiny Herb was surpassed by Thunderclap, placing Tiny Herb at fourth.

In fifth place, Team Wind Howl won their away game 8 to 2 against Team Misty Rain, sending Team Misty Rain out of the playoff zone.

As for those outside of the playoff zone, Bright Green and Seaside were stuck in the relegation zone. Lightly, Miracle, Conquering Clouds, and the other low-tier teams had clearly become targets to snatch points from.

The weak teams were of no use to be looked at. Thus, the ups and downs of the rankings depended on the confrontations between the strong teams. Samsara led in first place with 94 points, 13 more points than Blue Rain. Their position this season was practically untouchable. Thunderclap had originally been this season's biggest surprise. After ten rounds, Thunderclap was still stuck in the second echelon teams outside of Samsara, running neck and neck with Tiny Herb and Blue Rain.

Team Wind Howl's momentum this season had been astonishing, but from their performance these eleven rounds, they were like loud thunder but small raindrops. Even though they weren't like Happy who would sweep a team and then get swept, their inconsistency was a reality. After Hundred Blossoms' first four rounds, they became more and more stable, beating Blue Rain this round. Yu Feng had proven himself. Hundred Blossoms also showed that they had the ability to beat a top team.

Afterwards was Tyranny. No one had any hope for them dominating like last season. Tyranny was determined to keep rotating in their subs to the extent that it was rare for all four heavenly kings to be on stage at the same time. Their win record was also fleeting. When they were facing weak teams, they weren't weak, but facing strong teams, they weren't too strong either. Many were disappointed in them, feeling helpless about the issues of age.

Void relied on their good performances these two rounds to return back to the playoff zone. Their victory over Tiny Herb had boosted their morale considerably. The air around them was very different from before in their post-match conference.

The teams ten points away from qualifying for playoffs were 301, Misty Rain, and Happy. Team 301 was always like this, pacing back and forth in and out of the playoff zone. When the end of the season came, if their luck was good, they would make it to playoffs. If their luck was bad, they wouldn't. As for Misty Rain and Happy, they would be fighting each other in Round 12. This match would determine who would be closer to the playoffs.

From the current trend, Misty Rain had performed poorly two rounds in a row, losing to 301 and Wind Howl. As for Happy? After losing to Tiny Herb in Round 8 and Tang Rou refuse to keep her promise, Happy started taking points like crazy. Over the ninth, tenth, and eleventh round, Happy had unexpectedly took 29 points in total, even beating Samsara in terms of points, who had obtained 27 points in these three rounds.

Happy had matched with Miracle and Seaside, who weren't strong teams, but Royal Style was a mid-tier team with an All-Star watching over. Royal Style even upset the roaring Thunderclap 7 to 3. But facing Happy, Royal Style was swept 9 to 1.

Happy is coming!

The Esports Home highlighted Happy's recent momentum. As for people like Ruan Cheng, who hated Happy, there was not much they could say. Happy's win after win was slap after slap to their faces. They were waiting, waiting for Happy to capsize. That way they would wantonly throw stones at them while they were down.

This upcoming match was looking to be a good opportunity. In Round 12, Happy would be facing Misty Rain, a team with the strength to make it to playoffs. If Happy couldn't pass this obstacle, let alone losing points to their direct competitor, Ruan Cheng's group could directly say that Happy were just paper tigers that could only topple pushovers.

Chapter 1212: The Number One Ninja

November 22nd, Glory Professional Alliance Season 10 Round 12. Happy played their home game against Misty Rain, and once again the television chose to live broadcast Happy's match.

In this round, there were many matches between powerful teams, such as Wind Howl versus Void, Tiny Herb versus Hundred Blossoms, Blue Rain versus Thunderclap and so on. But in the end, they chose to broadcast this match between two teams that currently weren't in the playoff zone. They took into consideration the current situations of these two teams.

After eleven rounds, Happy's claim of aiming for the championship was still treated as a joke, but with their current ranking, people had to notice the potential this team had to make it to the playoffs. With a performance stronger than Samsara's in three consecutive rounds, they finally met a strong team, and everyone was curious as to whether or not Happy could continue their strong performance. Misty Rain had performed poorly in the past two rounds, instantly sliding from fifth place out of the playoff zone, and they urgently needed to regroup. So, the collision of these two teams was a bit more exciting, and was therefore chosen to be broadcast.

The attendance rate at Happy's home games continued to rise. Because of Excellent Era's many years of operation in City H, there was already a strong Glory fanbase. The old Excellent Era shut down and New Excellent Era was in the Challenger League. Many fans continued to follow Excellent Era matches, but many who liked watching professional matches slowly began to watch Happy's home matches. Happy's strong performance in the past three rounds incited even more attention and excitement, and now that they were facing the relatively strong Misty Rain, there was quite a crowd that came to watch the match in-person.

The players were introduced as they came onstage. Misty Rain, on Happy's home turf, actually received a decent amount of applause.

After Misty Rain let go of their Sharpshooter Lu Yining, the twin flowers Shu Keyi and Shu Kexin became part of Misty Rain's main force. Half of Misty Rain's positions were now occupied by females, and they finally became a veritable woman's army. This unique scenery naturally inspired unique attention.

"Haha, the Shu twins are very popular right now! They can receive such a welcome even at an away game." Television commentator Pan Lin noted the current atmosphere of the stadium.

"Their skill is very high," Guest Li Yibo said.

After the away team, the home team players came onstage. In terms of female players, Happy only had one fewer! Su Mucheng and Tang Rou were both part of Happy's main force. Su Mucheng's popularity in City H really didn't need to be mentioned. Her appearance always caused the audience to reach a peak in energy. But Tang Rou... after the 1v3, her supporters drastically diminished. Never mind neutral audience members, even many of Happy's supporters didn't like to see her anymore. The applause after her introduction was always scattered and lacking, and the atmosphere was so cold that it was awkward.

"Ah, the welcome received by the home players is even less than what the away players received, this is really..." Pan Lin lamented.

"Tang Rou is very talented, but the way she dealt with this incident was really..." Li Yibo also gave a half-sentence lament.

After the introductions of the two teams, what came next were of course the polite greetings and interactions between the teams onstage.

"Welcome back." Even though she was Misty Rain's captain, Chu Yunxiu didn't follow the custom to shake hands with Happy's captain, Ye Xiu. Instead, she went to her close friend Su Mucheng and gave her a hug.

Ye Xiu was left hanging with his hand still extended, smiling awkwardly, but from the side someone suddenly appeared to shake his hand. "God Ye, it's been a while."

"It's been a while," Ye Xiu answered, smiling. This small and scrawny man before his eyes was Misty Rain's Li Hua, the current number one Ninja in Glory. He entered Misty Rain in Season 7, appearing on the main roster that year, and that season he and Sun Xiang were the most attention-grabbing rookies. But the styles of these two were exactly opposite, one was bright and eye-catching, charging at the frontlines of battle; the other preferred to lurk in unnoticed shadows, launching sudden attacks when the opponent was defenseless.

That season, Sun Xiang had snatched the title of Best Rookie, and the next year he joined the powerhouse Excellent Era, taking up One Autumn Leaf, a top account in Glory. And then his team was relegated, and failed to fight through the Challenger League, and only now in Samsara this season did he have a strong chance of winning. Sun Xiang's pro career could be said to be extremely unfortunate and frustrating.

And Li Hua, who debuted the same year, had spent all his time working hard in Misty Rain. After his abilities were recognized, the team began working hard to build a character for him. The Ninja Dark Forest was voted into the All-Stars along with Li Hua in Season 8, and again in Season 9. And in this season, Misty Rain's strategic style changed, and experts could all tell that it now revolved around Li Hua. This skinny little man played an extremely major role in Misty Rain. But after shaking hands with Ye Xiu, he backed away and quietly stood to the side. If no one introduced him, it would be hard to imagine that this person was also an all-powerful top player in Glory.

Chu Yunxiu finally broke apart from her hug with Su Mucheng. She turned to look at Ye Xiu and casually slapped the right palm he was extending. "What, you want a hug too?"

"I don't dare," Ye Xiu grinned.

"If you want a hug, then hug!" And Chu Yunxiu really came over to give Ye Xiu a hug, just like that.

"Welcome back!" she said, patting Ye Xiu's back.

"Haha, in a while you won't be so welcoming," Ye Xiu laughed.

"Give it a try," Chu Yunxiu laughed coldly and pushed him away.

To the side, Fang Rui also opened his two arms. "Come! The embrace of love," he called.

"Get out. The player is as dirty as his playing." Chu Yunxiu ignored Fang Rui.

The players continued to move, shaking hands with each other down the line. When the Shu twins came to shake Ye Xiu's hand, their feelings were a bit complex. Last year during the Christmas event, they really wanted to tear out the heart of this person in front of them. For this round against Happy, the two were already secretly planning to give this God a proper retaliation.

"How about it, do you regret joining Misty Rain? You should've come to our Happy!" Ye Xiu said as he shook their hands.

"We're ahead of you in ranking," Shu Keyi said.

"Not for long," Ye Xiu smirked.

"Just wait and see!" The sisters glared at Ye Xiu, not at all afraid.

The greetings were quickly completed. The first players in the individual round stayed onstage while everyone else returned to their player areas.

Happy, Ye Xiu, Lord Grim.

Misty Rain, Li Hua, Dark Forest.

"What a coincidence, Senior." The easily-overlooked Li Hua was set up with Ye Xiu again.

"It is!"

"I hope to learn from you in this match," Li Hua said politely.

"Likewise."

After this exchange of meaningless words, Li Hua paused. He clearly still wanted to say something, but he couldn't find the right words. After silently thinking for a while, the judge already declaring that they could enter their player booths, Li Hua finally said a third pointless sentence. "Good luck, Senior."

"Good luck."

The two headed toward their respective competitor booths.

"Ye Xiu, Happy once again sends out Ye Xiu for the individual competition... So far he has almost always appeared in the individual competition. He already has ten consecutive wins, this is the twelfth round," Pan Lin said.

"In other words, this season, he hasn't lost a single 1v1," Li Yibo said. Right now was Round 12, and Ye Xiu was heading toward his eleventh straight win in his eleventh individual appearance, the answer was clear.

"With such a powerful 1v1 ability, why doesn't he anchor the group arena?" Pan Lin didn't understand, since that was how most teams set it up.

"Probably to lessen his burden, Ye Xiu isn't young anymore. Tyranny's already rotating their players," Li Yibo said. In a question of age, Tyranny always had to be mentioned.

"Then if Ye Xiu continues with this pattern and rhythm, this season's King of Dueling award will be uncontested," Pan Lin said.

"Uh... For now, his unspecialized class gives him too great of an advantage. We'll see everyone's professional ability!" Li Yibo said.

"Even if everyone is able to adjust, that doesn't necessarily mean they can beat Ye Xiu if they meet! With his current win streak, even if he loses the next few rounds, there's a good chance that no one can surpass his 1v1 record," Pan Lin said.

"We need someone to hurry and break his consecutive win record first!" Li Yibo laughed.

"Alright, let's watch Li Hua."

The two characters loaded onto the map. This was Happy's home game, so of course Ye Xiu was the one choosing the map. He had already chosen all of the maps with nothing on them, so this time he had to pick one with some terrain features.

This time, Ye Xiu chose the Hillside map. It was still flat with no barriers or obstacles, but the flat surface was slightly tilted, which of course would cause some changes.

The two characters spawned at the two ends of the map, at the same height. Since this was a map with no barriers, the two of course wouldn't try any strategic maneuvers. They both charged straight ahead, at the same time staring at the opponent's position. There was much strategy involved in choosing a position to stand on the Hillside map. Because there was a slope, this would affect many skills and movements like jumping and rolling. To seize the high or the low ground, this was a question that had to be considered.

The two players were both paying attention to this, so they both stayed at the same elevation, neither one gaining an advantage. Ye Xiu didn't launch an attack as soon as he was in range. Lord Grim continued to rush forward all the way until he was in the Ninja's attack range, but even then, Li Hua didn't control Dark Forest to attack, either.

Shining Cut!

Lord Grim suddenly swept forward with his blade, instantly springing forward and greatly reducing the distance between the two.

Li Hua was no longer quiet. Dark Forest waved his hand and a Shuriken was sent flying toward Lord Grim. Next, his two hands were already rapidly forming seals, preparing the next step of attack.

Ninjutsu - Shadow Dance!

This powerful Level 70 attack saw increasing direct use among Ninjas. It could be used as a main attack, or to hide movements and confuse the opponent. In any case, with a Shadow Dance, a Ninja suddenly had many options available. It didn't necessarily have to be used as a pure attack skill.

Immediately, over a dozen Dark Forests charged at Lord Grim together. As the number one Ninja in Glory, his mastery over this powerful Ninja skill didn't need to be mentioned. The live broadcast cut to Li Hua's camera view, which was constantly switching. It was clear the Li Hua was jumping nonstop between clones to achieve the best possible control over them. The fourteen shadow clones formed an impressive array to surround Lord Grim.

Chapter 1213: A Continuously Updating Record

Pu!

A cloud of purple smoke exploded, and Lord Grim disappeared into it. Facing Dark Forest's Shadow Dance, Ye Xiu had Lord Grim surprisingly throw down the Ninja skill, Smoke Bomb, to counter it.

However, the purple smoke was only a cover; it didn't allow him to turn invisible. Dark Forest's shadow clones charged into the smoke. Li Hua switched his viewpoint around even faster. The purple smoke only lowered his visibility, it didn't make him blind. With so many shadow clones and so many eyes, Li Hua kept on switching between clones until he found Lord Grim soon afterwards.

Li Hua was calm. All of his shadow clones gathered into one spot and marched forward together.

Numerous ninja blades stabbed towards Lord Grim.

Hit!

Surrounded on all sides, Lord Grim had no way of dodging, and the numerous blades pierced into Lord Grim. However, Lord Grim poofed into smoke and became one with the surrounding purple fog.

Shadow Clone Technique!

Li Hua reacted. If not for the Smoke Bomb affecting his vision, with his skill as the Number One Ninja, he could easily distinguish between a fake and a real body. However, he had fallen for it. All of his clones had gathered into one spot, but their attacks only hit a clone.

Where's his real body?

A purple shadow flashed out from the purple smoke. Because of the closeness in color, the shadow could only be seen by relying on the disturbances in the flow of the smoke.

Witch Skill: Night Cloak.

The group of Dark Forest clones were bound together by the Night Cloak.

Earthquake Sword!

The earth tumbled in the smoke, and a Spellblade Earthquake Sword swept over the bundled together Dark Forest shadow clones, rocking them wildly. A grenade rolled over.

Boom!

The grenade exploded and the shadow clones poofed one after the other. These clones didn't have much health. After taking heavy damage, they faded away. Lord Grim could finally be seen. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella extended outwards, curving at the top - an Exorcist's scythe.

Rising Emblem!

A blue ring of light floated above the ground, and the remaining shadow clones rose into the air. Lord Grim rushed forward, sweeping at them with his scythe. The frail shadow clones instantly disappeared. The only one remaining was Dark Forest's real body.

Collapsing Mountain!

The attacks didn't stop as Lord Grim swung his blade.

Li Hua didn't dare fight head on. Dark Forest quickly formed a hand seal and then disappeared.

There was no substitute straw nor a shadow clone left behind, yet to suddenly disappear could only mean...

With a Collapsing Mountain to quickly drop to the ground, Ye Xiu didn't pause, immediately having Lord Grim leap backwards.

Dark Forest drilled out of the ground, Underground Tunneling Technique.

Lord Grim had leapt backwards, but it didn't seem to be enough. However, the sword in his hands suddenly pointed in front of him.

Falling Light Blade!

Lord Grim didn't dodge. When he jumped back, he readied this skill, timing it so that it would clash with Dark Forest's ninja blade.

Ding!

Dark Forest tumbled back, while Lord Grim was left hanging in the air.

Storm Shuriken!

Dark Forest didn't wait to stand up and threw a Storm Shuriken at Lord Grim.

A sword light flashed. A Sword Draw accurately connected with the Storm Shuriken.

However, the word Storm indicated this shuriken's might. It wasn't something a Sword Draw outprioritized. Storm Shuriken broke through the Sword Draw and stubborn continued onwards.

Moonlight, Full Moonlight Slash.

Two beautiful arcs and two clear rings. Lord Grim quickly used the Ghostblade's two combo slash, and with these three consecutive skills, he was able to knock down the Storm Shuriken.

Lord Grim was still in the air. Dark Forest stood up and attacked.

Ninjutsu - Flickering Pursuit.

The difficult-to-see shadow arrived in front of Lord Grim in the blink of an eye. One attack, hit. His shadow flickered, and he appeared behind Lord Grim. Another attack...

Third hit!

Dark Forest's Silver weapon, Sixteen Dark Nights, stabbed silently without light. But this time, the blade didn't strike the body. Lord Grim had grabbed it.

It wasn't possible to do such fine movements through normal inputs, which meant it was a skill.

Back Throw!

Dark Forest's head crashed into the ground. Li Hua was dumbstruck. He was in disbelief. To be able to grab someone in the middle of Body Pathway Derangement, what type of judgement and mechanical skill did he have?

After falling to the ground, Dark Forest was stepped on by Lord Grim, who fired at his head repeatedly, Punisher!

Dark Forest immediately rolled in an attempt to get up and Lord Grim also jumped back, but Lord Grim was prepared for his roll.

Long ranged attacks used at close range were too fast to dodge.

Dark Forest, who was in mid-roll, was unable to dodge Lord Grim's bullet and was hit.

The damage wasn't high, but... it stunned. This was a Spitfire's Stun Bullet. Lord Grim calmly chased after him and started attacking.

"Tsk..." the commentator Pan Lin sighed, shaking his head.

"The unspecialized's skill options really make it difficult to defend against!" Li Yibo said. "He has too many similar skills at his disposal. For example, knockup skills, knockback skills, charge skills, skills that every class possesses. However, these classes usually just have one or two of these skills, but he has

access to all of them. Just take knockup skills. Every class can get 4 low-leveled ones, but he gets 24. The available options that he has is too much. For the average player, just these 24 knockup skills is enough to juggle them in the air endlessly until death."

"But I've never seen him play like that." Pan Lin said.

"Of course, he's playing against pro players, after all. They shouldn't be getting juggled to death. I didn't raise this example to talk about this though. I'm pointing out that with so many options, he has practically no cooldowns because most of the time, he can find a similar skill to substitute what he wants. Low-level skills have short cooldowns too. This one's on cooldown, but that one is off cooldown," Li Yibo said.

"Mm, we understand Coach Li's reasoning. In reality, it isn't his class that's crucial, but the weapon in his hands. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella eliminates the cooldown required for switching weapons, allowing him to freely use whatever class skills he wants," Pan Li said.

"Yes... without the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, it's not possible to play in this way." Li Yibo said.

The discussion going on between these two wasn't anything new. Ye Xiu already had eleven consecutive wins. These problems could be seen in each of his wins. Fortunately, Happy's matches weren't always the broadcasted highlight matches. If not, this discussion would be repeated so many times that the viewers would have insects crawling out of their ears.

The Stun Bullet into comboed Li Hua found an opening and used Substitution Technique to escape. But right when he turned around, he saw that Lord Grim was already in front of him.

"See," Li Yibo yelled, "Charge, Shining Cut, and then Colliding Stab, what class can use so many movement skills in a row! The distance gained by Dark Forest using Substitution Technique should have completely safe against any class, but Lord Grim was able to use three high-speed movement skills to instantly close the gap."

Pu!

While Li Yibo was chattering, Dark Forest was pierced through by Lord Grim's Colliding Stab and then with a fling, Dark Forest crashed into the mountain wall.

"Sigh, there's no suspense!"

"This map indeed isn't very suitable for Ninjas."

"Ye Xiu is also very cunning. All the maps that he chooses force the other side to have a direct fight with him, however, none of his opponents can defend against the unspecialized's offensive."

"But he hasn't met another God yet."

"That's true, the Gods are always the anchors in the group arena..."

Pan Lin were already declaring this as Ye Xiu's victory ahead of time. Reality proved their predictions true. In the end, Li Hua was unable to stop Ye Xiu from continuing with his record.

"12 consecutive wins..." Pan Lin said.

"Yeah..."

Happy won the first round of the individual competition. Ye Xiu's 12 consecutive wins was added to Glory's history books. Not only was he setting this record, he was continuously updating it. Just like what Pan Lin sighed, "How many consecutive wins is he going to stop at?"

After Ye Xiu, Happy's Ninja, Mo Fan, went on stage. The map that he chose was incomparably complex. Deception appeared and disappeared like the gods and devils, eventually grinding down the opponent to death. His victory wasn't easy though. In two of his ambushes, the other side was the one who controlled the flow, especially the second time. He was almost burst to death. At this moment, Mo Fan's reason for choosing a Ninja showed. Smoke Bomb, Substitution Technique, Shadow Clone Technique, Ninjas had quite a few escape skills.

After Mo Fan was Su Mucheng. Her artillery fire helped Happy win another match, completing the individual competition with a clean 3 to 0. The strong team Misty Rain seemed unable to stop Happy's recent momentum, which annoyed those like Ruan Cheng who wanted to ridicule Happy.

"You guys are playing well!" Boss Chen Guo led the applause, celebrating their three wins in the individual competition.

"Good, next up, watch us!" Fang Rui stood up and shouted. He often went on stage in the group arena appearing as the lead of the group arena.

Under Fang Rui's lead, Happy won another 2 points in the group arena.

The crowd cheered. Happy was on its way to a 10-0! The map chosen for the team competition was more important, which also meant that the home team had a greater advantage. As Happy improved, their teamwork was becoming better and better. With the individual competition and group arena won, the fans were very confident for the team competition.

The players going up for the team competition were all actively preparing for it, whether that be calming their emotions or stretching their shoulders and fingers.

"Nervous?" Ye Xiu suddenly asked the person next to him.

"What are you joking?" Wei Chen turned his head as if he had heard the greatest joke of the century.

"That's good," Ye Xiu chuckled.

"Got any cigarettes? Hand me one," Wei Chen said.

"Smoking is prohibited..." Ye Xiu said.

"Sigh, back then was the best... now we can't even smoke." Wei Chen looked up at the spacious stadium. When he had been competing, there hadn't been such beautiful stadiums nor had there been so many rules.

"Let's go!" Ye Xiu patted his back.

"With this old man, this match will be a piece of cake!" Wei Chen said, standing.

Chapter 1214: Observer Wei Chen

The players sent up for the team competition walked onto the stage.

Happy - Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Tang Rou, Wei Chen, Fang Rui.

Misty Rain - Chu Yunxiu, Li Hua, Shu Kexin, Shu Keyi, Feng Xiangming, Bai Qi.

Misty Rain's lineup for the team competition was rather unusual. Their team composition consisted of an Elementalist, Ninja, two Sharpshooters, and a Cleric.

Over the course of Glory history, all sorts of systematic analysis and experimentation had been done. In the early days, there had even been five Blade Master team comps, but these types of team comps quickly faded away. According to the current Glory meta, a team composition should have at least a melee class, a long-ranged class, and a healer with two other classes to build on this base.

But in Misty Rain's team comp, their melee classes weren't pure melee. Whether it was Taijutsu Sharpshooters or a both long and close ranged Ninja, none of these classes were true melee classes, yet this unconventional team composition was Misty Rain's main force. Their tactics revolved around this team comp.

According to past data, Misty Rain's team comp didn't seem to be reliable. Facing strong teams, their team had yet to win a single match. They had even lost their home game against Team 301, a team considered weaker than them.

even those who won, never expressed their disapproval of Misty Rain's innovative tactics. The one with the most persuasiveness was Team Tyranny's Master Tactician, Zhang Xinjie. In their 6-4 match against Misty Rain, Tyranny had lost their points in the individual competition and group arena, but in the post-match press conference, Zhang Xinjie focused more on Misty Rain's performance in the team competition.

"Very flexible with lots of variations."

This was Zhang Xinjie's evaluation of Misty Rain's team comp and playstyle. It was very simple, only six words, but was just how Zhang Xinjie spoke. Everyone knew that Zhang Xinjie would never talk about anything without reason. He might not say that something was nine, but if he said it, then it was definitely nine, and not eight or ten.

As a result, Misty Rain's team comp and playstyle led to quite a bit of discussion.

Tactics were never secrets because you had to use them on stage for everyone to see. Thus, many tactics were common among everyone. The difference between strong teams and weak teams was an issue of a team's execution.

The analysis and discussion towards Misty Rain's tactics leaned towards the positive side, which meant their rather poor win record was because of their execution. After all, this was the first season Misty Rain started running this playstyle. They needed time to practice and familiarize themselves with it.

Every opponent each round was a sharpening stone for Misty Rain. However, no team was willing to become their stepping stone. Happy wasn't willing either.

Happy had carefully discussed and analyzed Misty Rain's playstyle in their prepwork. In the end, they arranged this team lineup to counter it. Wei Chen would be appearing for his first time in the team competition in Round 12. His Warlock was undoubtedly a crucial part to Happy's strategy.

Wei Chen, who was sitting in the player booth, wasn't calm. The stadium and the seats, none of these were the same as when he had played competitively back then. Even though he was an experienced old general, in reality, he was new to the modern Glory competition. The seat under his butt felt uncomfortable and the sealed player booth felt stuffy.

A cigarette would be great... Wei Chen thought to himself, but when he looked around the interior of the player booth, he could clearly see a sign prohibiting smoking. Fuck, this senior won't smoke, but just dangling a cigarette in my mouth is fine, right? Wei Chen felt indignant. He felt out a cigarette from his pocket and put it in his mouth.

The five second countdown passed, and the two teams loaded into the map.

The map was Mud River Peninsula and was split into four sections, linked together by a narrow piece of land. The separation between these four sections could be crossed; they were just a collection of small or large swamps. The center of the map also had a circular swamp. Characters could go into the swamps and not receive damage, but their movement speed would be slowed by 70%. This map was clearly a restrictive map. Apart from the swamps, there were lots of trees that could be used for protection. Happy had clearly chosen this map to restrict Misty Rain's long-ranged classes.

Happy loaded into the northwest corner of the peninsula, while Misty Rain loaded into the southeast corner.

Wei Chen sucked in a deep breath and had Windward Formation set out according to the strategy the team had prepared.

Team Happy's five players split up into three groups as they moved forward. Tang Rou, Su Mucheng, and An Wenji went straight ahead, while Ye Xiu and Wei Chen circled around from the left and right.

The middle group moved more slowly to match the pace of the two circling from the left and right. The three groups were constantly updating each other with their positions as they advanced.

The team competition maps were much larger than the 1v1 maps, but that didn't mean the two sides would take a long time to find each other. The middle group were gradually starting to see the circular swamps in the central region appearing within their sight, but they were intentionally slowing their pace, so since they had yet to see Misty Rain, they knew that Misty Rain took a roundabout path.

The middle group informed Ye Xiu and Wei Chen, the two on their left and right.

"I know, they're on my side..." Wei Chen had been just about to notify them!

Windward Formation was hiding in a shrub on the side. Misty Rain's five characters hadn't scattered and were concentrated in one place, preparing to traverse through the swamps to directly cut across to the southwest region. If they moved along the swamp line, they would get to the rear of Happy.

Too bad they've been found by this senior.

Wei Chen peeped at them, while delightedly plotting what he should do next. If Happy had been together, then ambushing them while Misty Rain was traversing through the swamps would be the most optimal choice, but since he was alone...

Wei Chen hesitated.

Even though his Windward Formation had an abnormally long range, that was only relative to his class. Misty Rain had two Sharpshooters, whose natural attack ranges were above Mages. Even with Windward Formation's increased cast range from his weapon Death's Hand, he had no advantage over these two Sharpshooters.

"Misty Rain is forcefully traversing through the swamps. Do you guys think I should attack or not..." Unsure of what to do, Wei Chen asked for the opinion of his teammates.

"They have two Sharpshooters. You won't be able to suppress them!" Ye Xiu replied.

"Stealthily place a Death's Door to their side?" Wei Chen said.

"Windy Rain's spells will instantly blow it up," Ye Xiu said.

Stealthily placing a Death's Door was a concept that only existed among the normal players. Death's Door made a huge disturbance when cast and required the caster to control it. Pro players could easily deduce the enemy Warlock's position.

"Then what do I do?"

"We'll prepare an ambush at the Half Moon Rock in the 9 o'clock position, while you go back on your original path and cut to their rear," Ye Xiu replied.

"They're probably... about a minute away from the Half Moon Rock, assuming that they directly move in that direction," Wei Chen calculated from Misty Rain's movement speed.

"Good, that's enough time. Are you fine?" Ye Xiu said.

"No problems here," Wei Chen replied.

"Don't appear in front of them too early," Ye Xiu said.

"Hahaha, hilarious," Wei Chen replied. He didn't hurry to move his Windward Formation into position. He continued to crouch inside the bush, watching as Misty Rain's five players moved through the swamp towards the southwest corner.

"They've passed through." After Wei Chen sent the message, Windward Formation finally left the brush.

Half Moon Rock.

Situated at the link between the northwest and southwest region, Tang Rou's Soft Mist leaned on the outer edge of the rock with her spear propped up. In just one step, she could launch an attack on any passing characters. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain leaped to a spot three-quarters of the way up the Half Moon Rock. In one jump, she would be able to reach the top of the rock, letting her suppress the enemies with her firepower from the high ground. An Wenyi's Little Cold Hands didn't need to find an attacking position. He just moved into a position between the two characters to support them.

"In position."

"In position."

"In position."

The three players each confirmed that they had reached their chosen positions.

Would they succeed in ambushing Misty Rain?

The suspense was unfolding before them. The live crowd and the viewers watching the broadcast waited for the moment to happen.

After Team Misty Rain crossed through the swamp, their movement speed returned to normal, and they quickly advanced forward. Soon, the Half Moon Rock was within their sights. Wei Chen's Windward Formation reached this area one step ahead of them. He once again found an ambush spot in a shrub by the road and observed Team Misty Rain's movements.

"They've arrived."

"They've slowed down. They're probably wary of the Half Moon Rock."

"They've changed direction. They're not heading towards Half Moon Rock."

"Fuck, they're coming my way."

"Then you're the bait! Go lure them into our ambush!" Ye Xiu made a firm decision.

"How evil." Wei Chen cursed, but he also approved of this decision. Windward Formation suddenly scurried out of the bush.

Bang!

Lower Your Head, None Dare Attack!

Having changed from male to female characters through a backdoor, the Shu sisters immediately fired at Windward Formation.

Windward Formation rolled and crawled frantically, moving in a beautiful S path.

Bang!

An incomparably powerful sounding gunshot sounded.

Lower Your Head directly mounted Thunder Snipe and fired a heavy shot amidst None Dare Attack's rain of bullets.

Windward Formation wasn't able to avoid the snipe. Blood spurted from his wound. Both person and blood tumbled forward.

"How fierce..." Wei Chen didn't forget to give a remark when he was hit.

"Keep up the good work," Ye Xiu encouraged him.

"Where the fuck are you?" Wei Chen asked. Ye Xiu wasn't among the ones who confirmed they were in position.

"I'm ready to help you at any moment," Ye Xiu said.

Wei Chen turned around to look. Misty Rain had started speeding up, looking as if they wouldn't rest until he died. The two Sharpshooters shot a hail of bullets, putting Wei Chen's reactions to the test. Windward Formation was instantly hit by several bullets.

Fuck, if this was ten years ago...

Wei Chen's reaction speed and mechanical skill weren't able to keep up. He suddenly realized that he might not be able to complete his mission as bait.

"Help!" Wei Chen immediately called for help.

Dancing Rain leaped onto the top of Half Moon Rock, propped up her heavy cannon, and started firing!

Chapter 1215: Suppression From Map and Skill

Explosive artillery fire headed straight towards the center of Misty Rain's formation. The AoE covered by her attacks could not be ignored. The five Misty Rain players immediately had their characters dodge, instantly pulling their formation apart. They weren't planning on giving Su Mucheng an opportunity to burst them all at once.

As the Misty Rain players avoided the artillery fire, they didn't loosen their attacks towards Windward Formation. They seemed to have no intention of firing back at Dancing Rain.

As a result, Su Mucheng also switched targets. Her dazzling artillery barrage fired towards Windward Formation.

Everyone was struck dumb.

Windward Formation wouldn't take damage from his ally's attacks, and the light from the artillery fire made his figure flicker, appearing and disappearing intermittently. This was Zhang Jiale's famous Hundred Blossoms style.

Team Misty Rain was suddenly unable to effectively locate and attack Windward Formation. The Shu sisters immediately switched targets, and their bullets fired towards Dancing Rain at the top of the Half Moon Rock.

Su Mucheng didn't retreat. Dancing Rain only dodged the necessary incoming attacks, while taking the attacks that wouldn't affect her much. At the same time, a white light glowed around her. Little Cold Hands, who was hiding behind the Half Moon Rock, had started doing his work.

Without any danger of being attacked and only needing to focus his healing on Dancing Rain, An Wenyi's weaknesses were completely covered up. Under these conditions, An Wenyi's healing displayed an extremely high level of skill. Dancing Rain's health was maintained at a steady state.

Dancing Rain continued to provide cover for Windward Formation.

Chu Yunxiu realized that something wasn't right.

With the Shu sisters switching targets, Windward Formation was no longer under any pressure. Thus, Su Mucheng could easily switch targets too, yet why was she still protecting Windward Formation?

Absolute Focus!

Chu Yunxiu immediately had her Windy Rain activate a skill. Just when she was about to cast a high-level spell, Windy Rain was suddenly entrapped by an array of light. All of her skill icons turned gray, meaning they could not be used.

Spell Shackle!

Chu Yunxiu was startled. This was an Elementalist skill. If it had come from the enemy team, then it could only have been from their unspecialized, Lord Grim, and his Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's mage form.

Where was Lord Grim?

Spell Shackle was a silence. It did not stop her character from moving. Chu Yunxiu whirled around, but she couldn't see any signs of Lord Grim.

There's only one possibility...

Chu Yunxiu's gaze locked onto the dazzling light created by Dancing Rain.

The flickering of the light created a facade, falsely making it seem like the covered target was moving. In reality, Windward Formation might not be moving and might actually be casting some sort of powerful spell. Lord Grim had entered the light cover as well and sealed her attacks with a Spell Shackle. His intentions were obviously to protect Windward Formation...

Chu Yunxiu instantly read and understood Happy's strategic intentions.

"Focus your fire onto Windward Formation!" Unable to attack, she immediately sent down a command in their team channel.

The Shu sisters didn't really understand why they should, but they followed their captain's orders. The two Sharpshooters switched fire back to Windward Formation, but where was he positioned at? The two weren't able to accurately grasp his location.

Chu Yunxiu felt a bad premonition in her heart. Although the Sharpshooters attacked fast, their coverage was small since they didn't have any AoE skills.

"Scatter!" At this moment, she could only take precautionary measures. Windward Formation was most likely casting a spell such as Death's Door.

Chu Yunxiu's prediction was absolutely correct. At this moment, an evil aura condensed into Death's Door right in the center of Misty Rain's formation.

The light screen from Dancing Rain's Hundred Blossoms style suddenly dimmed. Misty Rain's players could now see that inside this light screen, Lord Grim had his Myriad Manifestations Umbrella open, shielding Windward Formation.

How did he suddenly get there? It had to be from some instant movement skill like Shadow Clone Technique. But the issue wasn't the process, but rather the result.

Death's Door had been summoned, and it was now starting its work. Black tendrils extended out of the door, grabbing towards Misty Rain's five players.

Yes, five!

Chu Yunxiu's "Scatter!" had been too late. Everyone in Misty Rain was still inside Death's Door's range.

Some were still closer than others though.

Shu Keyi's Lower Your Head stepped back a few times and reached the safe zone. She was the farthest away, being able to escape from the Death's Door with just a few steps. The closest was Li Hua's Dark Forest. However, Ninjas had the most escape skills out of any class! Substitution Technique into Shadow Clone Technique into the Assassin's high speed dash, Shining Cut, Dark Forest was the second to escape.

The remaining three were in a more difficult situation. Being farther away from the safe area than Shu Keyi, their characters weren't able to escape so quickly. All of them were running away and dodging for their lives!

Interrupt Death's Door!

This was the first thing that popped into Shu Keyi's mind. However, Lord Grim's Myriad Manifestation Umbrella being wide open like that was rather discouraging. Shu Keyi tried moving around to adjust Lower Your Head's attack angle, but unfortunately, this wasn't something that could be done in an instant. If she moved left, she would be blocked by the Half Moon Rock. If she moved right, she would be inside Death's Door's range, and she obviously couldn't force her way into there. And if she circled around, by the time she got into position, Death's Door would already be over.

Helpless, Shu Keyi discovered that while she had escaped, there was nothing she could do.

This...

This had to be planned!

Being able to escape so easily yet unable to attack Windward Formation, Shu Keyi felt like this wasn't luck. This was the enemy team fully utilizing the map and their skills to meticulously squeeze the amount of space available to maneuver.

Li Hua, the second to escape from Death's Door, was in an even more awkward position. He wanted to hurry and break Windward Formation's spell, but he was suddenly in the same predicament as Shu Keyi.

They could only watch as their teammates struggled to escape from Death's Door, while they seemed to be stuck in a crack, unable to move even a single step.

Even if I can't interrupt him, I can't just do nothing!

Li Hua's Dark Forest shot to the left and leapt onto Half Moon Rock.

The Number One Ninja's ninjato skills were undoubtedly extremely high. Watching Dark Forest's agility, quickness, and fluidity was a sight to enjoy. The crowd couldn't help but wish that there was no top to reach.

Happy wished for that too, but unfortunately, that wasn't reality. Dark Forest quickly scaled Half Moon Rock, heading towards Dancing Rain.

Facing melee attacks, Dancing Rain could not forcefully take the hits like before. After all, she was a Launcher, a long-ranged class. If the harassment was enough to mess up her aim, then it was equivalent to her being suppressed.

Su Mucheng immediately used Aerial Fire, and Dancing Rain jumped off of Half Moon Rock. Li Hua didn't stop to rest. Dark Forest jumped in midair, attacking Dancing Rain with Flickering Pursuit. But just before he did this, he threw a Shuriken. His target, Windward Formation!

Jumping over the Half Moon Rock, Li Hua found an angle at which he could avoid the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella's shield and directly attack Windward Formation.

"Beautiful! Too beautiful!" the commentator, Pan Lin, yelled in admiration.

"Yes, outstanding," Li Yibo followed up. Of course, he had to expound on it. "Happy's tactical formation is quite remarkable. The two who escaped from Death's Door were stuck between Half Moon Rock and Death's Door, unable to interrupt Windward Formation's cast. Unfortunately, they ignored a point. For Li Hua's Dark Forest, Half Moon Rock can't be considered a cover. Even though it required a bit more time, Li Hua was able to successfully break through!"

"A brilliant play," Pan Lin continued to give praise.

As the two praised, the Body Pathway Derangement struck Dancing Rain multiple times, and that Shuriken was more than enough. While it's true that Lord Grim could turn his umbrella around and block it, an opening at the front would appear, and the three escaping from Death's Door definitely wouldn't miss such an opportunity.

Death's Door, interrupted!

Fortunately, this was Happy's home stadium. If not, the cheers and applause from the crowd would have shaken the stadium. The commentators, Pan Lin and Li Yibo, continued to praise Li Hua. As for Li Hua, he discovered that below, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was running back, waiting for him. Soft Mist, who was hiding behind Half Moon Rock, suddenly charged out, not towards his Dark Forest, but away from the Half Moon Rock.

Li Hua turned around. To Dark Forest's back was Half Moon Rock. He was completely cut off. He had no idea what the situation behind him was.

Li Hua was startled. Seeing Lord Grim, who had been ready for him, he realized that he had made a mistake.

He had been lured away from his team, and with how the enemy team was prepared for him, they didn't seem to be planning on letting him go back so easily.

This was the enemy team's true goal.

Li Hua understood now. He knew that the effect of him leaving the group was extremely large. Misty Rain's tactics revolved around him. Their team composition consisted of mainly long-ranged classes. Without him filling in the gap, their tactics were useless.

Shit...

Li Hua looked at Lord Grim, who didn't wait for Dark Forest to land before starting his attacks.

I have to hurry up and get away. Li Hua thought to himself. Then, he heard a crackle as Dark Forest was suddenly lit on fire.

Sacred Fire?

Li Hua watched in astonishment as his skill icons turned gray.

He hadn't seen any indication of the fire. This meant that the other side had precisely calculated Dark Forest's fall speed. The instant Sacred Fire burned, Dark Forest would land directly into it.

What type of calculative ability and mastery of timing is this?

Li Hua turned his gaze toward the rear of Half Moon Rock at the Cleric, who had always been viewed as weak.

Chapter 1216: Dark Forest Rock Climbing

This Sacred Fire sealed all of Dark Forest's skills, while simultaneously gluing the mouths of Pan Lin and Li Yibo shut.

Just a second ago, they had been wantonly praising Li Hua's brilliant play, and now the two suddenly stopped talking.

If the two failed to realize Happy's tactical arrangements by now, the two weren't qualified to be professionals. Their awareness towards the situation was more sensitive than the vast majority of people, but they got it wrong and were now in a difficult position.

The two looked at each other in the eye, too embarrassed to say anything.

Li Hua might have been the key to victory, but... he was the key to Happy's victory, not Misty Rain's. He had fallen into Happy's trap.

The effects of this trap quickly emerged.

Tang Rou's Soft Mist entered the fray and charged towards Team Misty Rain. Wei Chen's Windward Formation didn't flee either, attacking from the sides. Su Mucheng's Dancing Rain bombarded them as well. These two were both using Screen Cannon tactics, coordinating with both sides, attacking here while also helping Ye Xiu over there.

Without Li Hua, the rest of Team Misty Rain was thrown into disorder. Although the three long-ranged classes had fierce offensive prowess, facing Soft Mist's unwavering push, their formation was forced to scatter. Their teamwork was having trouble flowing.

"The weaknesses in Misty Rain's tactics have been exposed..." Li Yibo began commentating. He directly jumped to the current situation as if his previous mistake in praising Li Hua weren't his words.

"Yeah..." Pan Lin followed along with Li Yibo's pace.

"Li Hua needs to hurry and get back to the others," Li Yibo said.

"But he's being pressed hard by Ye Xiu," Pan Lin said.

"Yes, he just lost to Ye Xiu in the individual competition. He doesn't have the mental advantage in a 1v1. What's more, Ye Xiu is also receiving assistance from Su Mucheng and Wei Chen," Li Yibo said.

"However, Ninjas have the advantage, if they're only looking to escape," Pan Lin said.

"That's true. However, since Happy had this planned out beforehand, then they should have countermeasures prepared. I think Ye Xiu is quite confident that he can force Li Hua to stay here," Li Yibo gradually started waving his banner towards Happy, stealthily reconstructing his image of having acute foresight.

As the two spoke, the Sacred Fire on Dark Forest wore off, but it hadn't been very long since he escaped from Death's Door. The Assassin skill, Shining Cut, could be used again, but his other escape skills such as Substitution Technique and Shadow Clone Technique were still on cooldown, and Li Hua didn't know whether he had the time to wait for them to refresh.

Lord Grim's offensive was ferocious. Su Mucheng and Wei Chen would also help from time to time. In fact, most of their attention was focused on this side. They were only coordinating with Tang Rou to help harass and restrain the other side.

I can't wait!

Li Hua quickly came to a conclusion.

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Li Hua used this skill regardless of the timing. In response, Lord Grim jumped away and blasted the ground.

Dark Forest tunneled to below Half Moon Rock. He had used this skill as an underground movement technique. Although the distance he moved wasn't far, it was enough for him to reach Half Moon Rock.

Li Hua leaped up and stabbed his ninjato into the rock. Dark Forest began quickly scaling Half Moon rock.

Bang bang bang! Boom boom boom!

The gunfire behind him echoed. Lord Grim chased after him with long-ranged attacks, and Dancing Rain had shifted her attention over too.

Li Hua could not just simply move upwards. His movements would be too predictable. As a result, Dark Forest leapt left and right on Half Moon Rock, adding in many irregular horizontal movements as he climbed to make it harder for the enemy side to catch him.

Li Hua prayed that he played well. At this moment, Lord Grim dashed to below Half Moon Rock and jumped up.

"Wah..."

"Ooh.."

"Woah..."

The crowd made all sorts of astonished noises.

Lord Grim leaped up and took out a knife... the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella also had a ninjato form. Their skilled climbing made the crowd curious: Li Hua or Ye Xiu, who was faster?

In this situation, Ye Xiu was obviously faster because he had no obstructions. He could simply move upwards in a straight line. On the other hand, Li Hua needed to dodge attacks and add in horizontal movements. And because Dancing Rain's attacks were AoE, his horizontal movements had to be fairly large, further increasing the amount of distance Dark Forest needed to move.

In practically the blink of an eye, Ye Xiu's Lord Grim reached Dark Forest's height.

Li Hua's heart froze. Today, his heart kept freezing. His heart was going to be frozen stiff at this rate.

He could only clench his teeth and persevere through. He started moving horizontally even more, but because he had to dodge Lord Grim, his movements were much easier to predict for Su Mucheng. As a result, Li Hua had no choice but to start making circular movements. He clearly wanted to get over Half Moon Rock as fast as possible, but in order to do so, he needed to climb downwards from time to time.

Li Hua wanted to cry, but a short moment later, he suddenly realized that at this rate, he could just circle over the Half Moon Rock from the side...

Being forced to do this was quite tragic, but it was a feasible solution!

Li Hua continued to work hard at it. Suddenly, he heard a motor sound from behind him. He turned around to look and saw Lord Grim flying over with Rotor Wings.

"Fuck!"

The usually gentle and quiet Li Hua cursed loudly. He was truly under a lot of pressure.

Lord Grim flew in front of him and stabbed a ninjato into the Half Moon Rock.

Attack him!!!

A loud voice called out to him in his heart. It wanted him to attack this nearby, irksome presence, but his reason stopped him.

Go reunite with your teammates, an even stronger voice called out to him.

It was like there was a devil and an angel in his mind scuffling**! But the winner was quickly decided.

Dark Forest climbed up, but Lord Grim also leapt up, directly towards Dark Forest.

Dark Forest spun around his ninjato, dodging Lord Grim. He stepped on his ninjato and was just about to jump up, when Lord Grim's umbrella turned into a spear. Lord Grim dropped down as his evil spear stabbed upwards...

In the end, Dark Forest was unable to escape from the spear. All sorts of applause, laughs, and butt related words poured out from the crowd.

Circle Swing!

Lord Grim threw Dark Forest in a circle, smashing him into Half Moon Rock. Then, because of his position, Lord Grim stepped on Dark Forest, forcing him down as he moved up.

"Does that do damage?" The crowd was curious to why Lord Grim stepped on him.

"He's still attacking!" Someone discovered that as Lord Grim stepped on Dark Forest, he was also jabbing jabbing jabbing with his spear. His target was, of course, Dark Forest's head.

Dark Forest dropped to the ground with a face covered in blood.

Beaten up... Dark Forest failed to make it over the wall and was now being beat up violently. However, this tussle helped win him some time. Li Hua was now confident that he could wait for his escape skills to come off cooldown.

The east side darkens, the west side brightens, close a door, another door opens, Li Hua heard comforting thoughts from his heart.

Rock climbing really is a good way to stay alive! Li Hua thought to himself. He even wanted to climb some more, but Ye Xiu wasn't going to give him the same opportunity twice. This time, he attacked even tighter.

Li Hua kept trying. Chu Yunxiu and the others obviously weren't going to wait for Li Hua and do nothing. They were also trying to rush over, but Soft Mist was standing in their way. It really was difficult for these long-ranged classes to break through. After several unsuccessful attempts, Chu Yunxiu decided to have everyone split up and take a roundabout route.

The four from Misty Rain started spreading out and circled around Soft Mist. Tang Rou could only bite onto one person.

However, Tang Rou didn't target anyone. Her Soft Mist suddenly retreated.

"Not good..." Chu Yunxiu suddenly had a realization - she had made a mistake. By circling around, if they went too far away and Happy couldn't chase them, then...

Too late. Soft Mist's retreat was a signal. When Misty Rain shrunk back, Happy didn't pressure them. They also withdrew and then focused their efforts onto Dark Forest.

With Soft Mist returning, waving a spear in her hands, and Dancing Rain and Windward Formation pulling back to behind the Half Moon Rock, Li Hua's heart wasn't merely frozen. It was dead.

So those were the enemy's original intentions... I was too naive!

After wearing him down, they suddenly focused their attention onto him.

Ninjas weren't high-health high-defense classes to begin with. Once Dark Forest was caught up in their wave of attacks, he was quickly washed away. Chu Yunxiu and the others were hurrying over, and at this moment, they had just gotten past the Half Moon Rock.

Everything had been calculated perfectly.

Lord Grim and Soft Mist, the two melee characters, cut straight into Misty Rain's ranks and picked off their healer.

No matter how fierce the three ranged characters attacked, they had no way of forcing the two melee enemies apart. This was their weakness. Compared to melee classes, they lacked knockback and knockdown type skills.

Ye Xiu and Tang Rou ignored the attacks from the three ranged characters.

This... they're planning on trading!

Those with the knowledge could see it.

Happy had the numbers advantage, so they planned on sacrificing one of their characters for Misty Rain's healer. When one side had the numbers advantage, it was difficult for the other side to do anything about this type of trade.

Misty Rain was helpless...

By the time their sixth player arrived, this trade had already been completed. Lord Grim and Misty Rain's healer died.

Why Lord Grim?

If a trade was being forced to happen, then Misty Rain would obviously choose to trade for the bigger threat. In the entire Alliance, all nineteen teams would most likely choose Lord Grim in this situation.

But Happy's determination could be seen from this. If they were even willing to trade their strongest player, then they must be extremely confident towards what followed next.

In the end, Team Happy won the team competition.

10-0. Another 10-0. This was Happy's fourth 10-0 this season.

This was an achievement for a top powerhouse. However, top powerhouses being 10-0ed by other teams was very illogical.

Happy...

Chapter 1217: Voice Chat Rules

10 to 0, this result silenced all those who were hoping to see Happy capsize. Ruan Cheng of Esports Time had come to watch this match in person, but upon seeing this result, he skipped the post-match press conference entirely.

Happy's performance this match was indisputable. Their strategy in the team competition had been tailored to fight Misty Rain, and they were able to build their strategy around the unique features of the map in a beautiful manner. No matter how aggressive a reporter was, they couldn't find anything to criticize Happy with in this match. In the end, reporters had to follow logic. As of now, no one hated Happy enough to attack them out of nowhere.

The press conference ended with a host of congratulations. With these ten points, Happy rose two places on the leaderboard. After twelve rounds, they were now in ninth place, only one step away from the playoff zone, and it was a step that couldn't be smaller, only one point.

Happy was closing in on the eighth place Void, who currently had 71 points. In the eleventh round, they had used their home advantage to defeat Tiny Herb 8 to 2, but in this round's away game they lost to Wind Howl 1 to 9..

A number of people were already looking forward to next round's match.

Round 13, Happy would play their away game against Conquering Clouds, which wasn't any unbeatable team. And Void, meanwhile, would be playing their home game against the team which Happy had just swept, Misty Rain.

If Void wanted to maintain their lead over Happy in the rankings, they needed to have a showing just as strong as Happy's was this round. And the just-finished Happy versus Misty Rain match had been a clear tactical guide in fighting Misty Rain. BOX-1, trapping Li Hua outside of Misty Rain's tactical maneuvers would cripple the team. But strategy was something that everyone knew. The important part was execution. Comparing Happy and Void's next respective opponents on paper, most people anticipated that Happy would surpass Void next round.

But Misty Rain wasn't the only team that Happy had managed to surpass.

After twelve rounds, the seventh place team was the team that had previously been swept by Happy, Hundred Blossoms. They now led Happy by only 3 points. If these two teams had the same points score, Happy would rank above them by virtue of their prior victory. In round 13, Hundred Blossoms would be facing a strong team too, Wind Howl. If they didn't make good use of their home field advantage, it was likely that Happy would surpass both them and Wind Howl. Right now, Happy was accumulating points in a frightening manner.

In round 12, Samsara defeated Radiant 10 to 0, preventing Happy from having the honor of being the only team to have four 10-0 wins. Samsara's performance was as strong as ever.

In addition, Tiny Herb, Tyranny, and Wind Howl all earned high-point victories. But Blue Rain, who had played their home game against Thunderclap this round, had earned a powerful 5 points in the individual competition and group arena, only to lose the team competition. In the battle between two Master Tacticians, this time Xiao Shiqin took the lead.

In the post-match press conference, Blue Rain's Yu Wenzhou took responsibility, but the reporters didn't give him too much blame. Because Yu Wenzhou hadn't made any mistake, he... it was only because his hand speed wasn't enough, he couldn't issue directions and battle at the same time. After all, against a team with a Master Tactician like Xiao Shiqin, the battle strategies were constantly evolving in complex ways. It wasn't enough to solely rely on team cohesiveness and strategic habits. There needed to be

someone directing the team members so that they knew the tactical intentions. Yu Wenzhou's hand speed in the pro circle was indeed subpar, and in this match that required a high hand speed to give directions, he was truly powerless.

And in the post-match press conference, Yu Wenzhou could only helplessly offer these words: "The opponent was very smart, accurately pinpointing my weakness."

Typically, for the post-match press conference, the losing team would go first, followed by the winning team. But in this round, both teams tied with 5 points, so the away team went first, then the home team.

When Yu Wenzhou made this statement, Thunderclap was already preparing to leave, but later there was still a reporter who managed to chase down Thunderclap's Captain Xiao Shiqin. Xiao Shiqin personally confirmed that in this round, Thunderclap's strategy was to increase the variability of their fighting, with the intent of forcing Blue Rain into making adjustments. Thunderclap would attack the flaws that appeared when Blue Rain couldn't adjust fast enough, or the flaws revealed by individual people...

Use complex and variable tactics and put greater pressure on Yu Wenzhou's slow hand speed.

Xiao Shiqin's targeted strategy sparked some controversy. Some people felt that this was just another way of attacking the opponent's weaknesses, and there was nothing wrong with that. But others felt that using tactics to create this effect was low-level and uninteresting. Strategy should display intellect and cleverness, and this sort of method changed that.

Thus, this reignited the calls to allow voice chat in matches. But as soon as those arguments surfaced, there were quickly others who said that if that happened, then trash talk would be spewed nonstop...

Immediately, everyone's first thought was of a certain other person on Team Blue Rain. His trash talk wasn't especially hurtful, but unrestricted voice chat would be ideal for him.

Once this person was mentioned, this person who had forced the Alliance to specially modify the rules of battle, those calls to open voice chat were weakened. But quickly, other people proposed, what if voice chat was opened just for members of the same team?

A team voice chat could only be used to give directions. There would be no way to launch trash talk attacks.

But there was no way to present this kind of voice chat in a broadcast. The sound of each team chat couldn't be simultaneously broadcast, and cutting back and forth between the two would be unpleasant to listen to. The Alliance had always used text chat up until now so that they could show the teams' communications to the audience, and this was also a reason why they never used voice chat in competition.

However, typing instead of focusing solely on putting in combat inputs weakened the intensity of the competition.

At this point, these arguments started surfacing as well. After all, the debate over voice chat had been ongoing for a very long time now. This Blue Rain versus Thunderclap match just showed another problem caused by the lack of voice chat.

Yu Wenzhou was able to survive in the Glory Alliance through his unique methods. The Alliance, for its part, hoped to see competitors of all types. But now, the existence of players like Yu Wenzhou was being strangled.

With Thunderclap's battle results, did that mean that in the future, all teams would use these complex, changing battle strategies to face Blue Rain? After all, this wasn't something that only a Master Tactician could do. Even tactical duels were becoming competitions of hand speed. Was there any intelligence in pro matches anymore?

There were more and more angles of questioning, and the issue rose from just Yu Wenzhou to extend to all of the various teams' shot callers. Without voice chat, they were forced to input extra keyboard controls. This wasn't like trash talking, where if you didn't want to say anything you could just not say anything. Issuing orders was a matter of victory or defeat, something that absolutely had to be done. Because of the rule preventing voice chat, they bore a greater burden upon their hands. It was unfair to these players.

The players that directed strategies needed intelligence. But because of the competition rules, hand speed became a factor, even though it shouldn't have anything to do with tactics. It was completely unreasonable!

The voices of doubt became stronger and stronger, and so the Alliance finally made an official response, saying that they would begin discussion and investigation into the issue of voice chat.

Hearing the Alliance's solemn recognition, many people calmed down. With the calm, the sounds of complaints and mockery quickly came as well. It wasn't long before many people pointed out that, if the Alliance changed the rules again because of this, then Blue Rain would have two people who forced the Alliance to change the rules. Blue Rain didn't acknowledge this interesting fact, but regarding the opening of strategic voice chat, Team Blue Rain was in clear support.

The Alliance needed to do research, so there was no way for a result to appear in a short period of time.

Soon, it was November 29th, Round 13.

Happy played their away game at Conquering Clouds, and didn't disappoint their supporters.

9 to 1, Happy won, Ye Xiu's individual win streak was now up to 12. The 1 point they lost this round was from Su Mucheng's mistake in the individual competition.

And after this round, Happy finally stepped into the playoff zone. Void, who had previously been one place above them, had also done quite well this round, defeating Misty Rain in their home game 8 to 2. It was clear that they had learned from Happy's strategy against Misty Rain in the team competition, causing Misty Rain to eat a big loss in their two consecutive away games.

Happy earned 9 points, Void earned 8, so the one point difference between the two teams was erased. As it happened, both Happy (Xingxin) and Void (Xukong) started with the letter X in their pinyin names, so the next step was to compare order of appearance in the dictionary, in which Happy took the lead.

But at this point people had already realized, in the upcoming Round 14, Happy and Void would be directly facing off against each other.

Hundred Blossoms, who were within range of catching up to Happy, had also done fairly well this round, winning 7 to 3 in their home game against Wind Howl. For now, they still led Happy by one point. And Wind Howl continued their path of ups and downs, some people even summarizing their performance as "home game dragons, away game bears."

But for now, this conclusion was a bit reckless. People mostly paid attention to Wind Howl's away game loss to 301, but 301 wasn't any weak team, and it shouldn't be shocking that they could win their own home game. Right now, 301 was in tenth place with 76 points, only 3 points behind Happy and Void. Next round was Happy and Void's battle, so it was very possible that it would be 301 who would surpass them both and make it to the playoff zone.

Wind Howl wasn't so terrible, but their current slippage was undeniable truth. They had now fallen to sixth place, surpassed by Tyranny.

Tyranny, Samsara, and Happy were the three teams that had won 9 to 1 this round. Blue Rain and Tiny Herb had lost their away games 4 to 6.

Blue Rain had lost to Royal Style, and their loss in the team competition once again caused people to pay attention to the issue of voice chat. This battle, Royal Style had definitely learned from Thunderclap and used lively and variable strategies. But over the course of the battle, Blue Rain's loss this time wasn't because of Yu Wenzhou's hand speed. Blue Rain's players didn't need their captain's reminders to respond every time they encountered the slightest change. Master Tacticians were known as such because even if they followed the same general rules for strategies, their tactics would be more complete and effective.

Blue Rain lost to Royal Style, but Tiny Herb lost to Thunderclap.

After losing many points in the individual battles, Thunderclap once again made a comeback in the team competition. Their record in the team battles was as tyrannical as Ye Xiu's in the individual battles. Right now, they had 12 wins and 1 loss; the only difference from Ye Xiu was that their wins weren't consecutive.

Chapter 1218: All-Star Voting

Thunderclap's strength in the team competition guaranteed their strong showing on the rankings. Right now, they were tied with Blue Rain with 90 points. Because the two had tied in their match against each other, their ranking was determined by alphabet, with Blue Rain (Lanyu) in second place and Thunderclap (Leiting) in third.

Samsara led the pack with 113 points, a score so high that people had already lost the desire to try and catch up.

After 13 rounds of competition, they entered the month of December. The yearly voting for All-Stars began with the new season and ended in December.

The earliest votes cast were based on the players' performances last season; the strong players in last season's playoffs would gain favor. Then, after entering the rhythm of the new season, one or two stunning plays could invite a lot of votes. Tang Rou was a perfect example of this.

A rookie who had just entered the Alliance, after an exciting 1v2 in the second round, was swiftly pushed into the ranks of the All-Stars. Of course, her beautiful appearance contributed to this as well.

However, after the 1v3 incident and her clear revocation of her word, Tang Rou's popularity instantly died down. Even many of the team's fans couldn't look at her anymore, how much support would she have left from everyone else? Instantly, Tang Rou's name went from daily rising in the All-Star voting to complete erasure.

And right now, the highest-ranked player was still Zhou Zekai. Last season, the team had won in the playoffs, this season they maintained a powerful lead, and Zhou Zekai's performance was indispensable. He led the rankings with no competition.

And compared to last year, the biggest change on the leaderboard was the return of a few names, the most significant of which were the ones who had gone to Excellent Era last season. These three all had their dedicated fans and were immediately pushed onto the leaderboard. Aside from the unwavering support of their loyal fans, there was the effect of their performances this season.

Xiao Shiqin was the most eye-catching of these three. Everyone knew Xiao Shiqin's major contributions to Thunderclap's shocking accomplishments this season. Although Xiao Shiqin wasn't like Zhou Zekai or Sun Xiang, who were core players based on their technical skill, Thunderclap's outstanding performance allowed Xiao Shiqin's tactical skill to shine and draw attention, attracting scores of fans. Right now, on the All-Star voting leaderboard, Xiao Shiqin was in third place, much better than his rankings in previous seasons.

Su Mucheng and Sun Xiang were both ranked around tenth. With their fanbase support and their performance, they hadn't seen any big ups or downs.

But if you wanted to name someone who was only rising more and more rapidly, you'd have to say another returning name - no, strictly speaking, the name wasn't returning. What was returning was the person.

Ye Xiu. Never mind his accumulated popularity from previous years, just looking at his ongoing twelve consecutive individual win record, this kind of player would gain enough attention to be pushed onto the rankings. As he achieved wins round after round, the ballots cast for Ye Xiu only increased. Happy's recent strong performance gave him a boost as well. Right now, Ye Xiu was at number 6 and was still in the process of beautifully rushing upward.

One could see how influential he was just from the recent in-game interest in unspecialized. It got to the point where the Glory developers added a strong reminder in-game, notifying the players who didn't choose a class at level 20 just how difficult their existence thereafter would be. Without naming names, they reminded everyone not to try and imitate a certain person because this certain person was an exceptional player with exceptional talent and an exceptional self-made weapon.

Despite this, the enthusiasm of the players couldn't be stopped. Quite a few players started playing with the equipment editor to try and make a Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, which suddenly caused the prices of level 5 equipment materials to rise.

With some people returning to the leaderboard, others would of course be pushed down.

There was one such person in Happy. Fang Rui changed classes, which his former Thief supporters couldn't accept. The players of his new class, Qi Master, even though they saw that Fang Rui held the All-Star Qi Master Boundless Sea, his Qi Master performance... to be honest, up through now there was still nothing very convincing about it. As for his recent crawling and rolling Qi Master style, a number of Qi Master players felt that it was disgusting, and it didn't inspire any imitations.

Also kicked off the leaderboard was Hundred Blossoms' Zou Yuan. He had been pushed onto the All-Star leaderboard through nostalgia for two years in a row. But now that he was finally gradually bringing out a new character, he was shoved downward by the fierceness of the competition. Unfortunately, he was helpless about this.

Another player squeezed off the rankings was Royal Style's Tian Sen.

Peaceful Hermit, this former pinnacle God-level character. Ever since the All-Stars began, this character had made it to the leaderboard no matter the controller. But finally, because of the team's slipping performance through the years, he vanished for the first time from the top 20.

Regarding this, Peaceful Hermit's current user Tian Sen was extremely helpless. Year after year of hard work, but the team still saw no improvement and hovered at the middle. Now that there were more and more challengers, they were finally kicked off the altar.

Tian Sen and Peaceful Hermit's fall conjured many sighs.

There was another old general pushed off the leaderboard, Tyranny's Lin Jingyan. This old, long-time All-Star finally had his position stolen away.

Tyranny's near-miss of the championship last season had originally garnered much sympathy, and at the start of this season, the ballots for Tyranny's players surged upward. But, after that wave passed, their performance in this new season was factored in. Tyranny was rotating their roster for these matches, and the old veterans, no longer having regular appearances, began to slow in the rankings. The position of Tyranny's Captain Han Wenqing was still relatively stable, while Lin Jingyan had dropped off the rankings. There was Zhang Jiale too, currently at a precarious 23rd place, at high risk of being replaced over the course of December. Just off of the votes, the rankings for many players were very close. A single explosive performance could bring enough ballots to surpass him.

But overall, the changes to the rankings couldn't be called large.

Xiao Shiqin, Su Mucheng, Sun Xiang, and Ye Xiu's returns weren't any surprise. Compared to last year's Lu Hanwen and Gao Yingjie entering the rankings as rookies, this season, there was no such entirely new blood breaking into the rankings. Tang Rou originally had this potential with her explosive performance in the second round and her steadiness thereafter. She was a very strong rookie. But unfortunately, after that 1v3 incident destroyed her reputation, she naturally didn't have much chance in this kind of popularity voting.

Right now, the one who was in more of a dilemma was the Alliance. The All-Star voting was just for excitement; a good performance onstage could increase votes, but in the end, that wasn't the only determining factor. However, the Alliance's yearly awards were entirely based on the players' real performance onstage, based on numbers and statistics.

And from the statistics, among this season's rookies, Tang Rou faced no competition. But when they thought about giving the "Best Newcomer" award to this player with a ruined reputation, the Alliance felt the pressure would be extremely large. Right now, there was still over half a season to go before these awards were given, but there were already people worrying about this issue, which was a sign of just how outstanding Tang Rou was right now among the rookies.

December was the last month for voting the All-Stars, and looking at the current ballot counts, no final judgment could be made based off the rankings as they entered December. Because more and more players would save all of their tickets until December, waiting until the voting was just about to close so that they could see the entirety of the players' performances before casting their votes.

Would December see any player powerfully slaughtering their way onto the leaderboard? This was something to watch when the league reached December. Before, there was also something else to watch in December, the winter transfer window. At that time, the Alliance didn't have as many teams, so when they began in September, the season would be halfway over the time it was December. That was the original reason for why they set the winter transfers in December. But now, the season often wasn't even half over by January. After discussing this for several seasons, in Season 10, the Alliance finally decided to move the winter transfer window to January.

In comparison, the Glory new server opening now had almost no effect on the pro teams. The only ones who were busy were the guild workers of the various large clubs, who before December would have to prepare their strength to enter the new server to compete for resources and advertise for the club.

Happy now already had its own official guild department. After half a year of development, the personnel organization was already finalized. And to a new guild like Happy, the opening of this new server was beyond important. In the old servers or in the Heavenly Domain, Happy was constantly playing catch-up, but in a new server, everyone was starting at zero, so they had a greater chance at achieving an advantage.

After Wu Chen organized the work for the new server, he solemnly gave Chen Guo the list of people who would be expanding in the new server. Boss Chen was generous, knowing how crucial the work in the new server was, gave the new server employees additional bonuses with a flourish of her pen.

As of now, the guild department was relatively well-developed, and Happy's R&D department had expanded slightly. Finding technical researchers was difficult, but didn't all of the big teams have to deal with this? The R&D would sometimes experience changes of personnel, and sometimes people would leave their jobs.

When Chen Guo failed to find enough suitable R&D candidates, she started paying particularly close attention to this area, and her efforts weren't wasted. In November, there was a small adjustment at Thunderclap, and an R&D researcher left his job for personal reasons. Chen Guo instantly pounced on him, but this person's personal reason was that he wanted to return to his home city to work, and his home city unfortunately was not City H. Chen Guo had no way of satisfying that requirement, and so she could only watch with her eyes wide open as this rather skilled R&D researcher returned to his home City K and entered Hundred Blossoms.

The second time, it was Royal Style whose personnel was changing, with two R&D researchers leaving one after the other. Chen Guo made some inquiries, and after confirming that it wasn't for a reason like "returning home" that they had no way of satisfying, she approached them in-person in City B.

This time, Chen Guo's actions were truly swift and fierce. Heavenly Swords was in the same city as Royal Style, but by the time they began to approach them, one of them had already reached an agreement and signed with Chen Guo. With one of them already taken, Lou Guanning of course couldn't try and pull some evil trickery, but the remaining one didn't want to live modestly with Happy and cleanly slammed down a checkbook. After Chen Guo knew, she didn't have any words. Being able to get one researcher was good enough, and she could only hope that the person they got wouldn't have any regrets after learning that he'd missed the opportunity to enjoy the riches of Heavenly Swords.

Although from the looks of it, this new R&D researcher who had now been at Happy for ten days, Wang Sen, seemed quite at ease.

Chapter 1219: Lord Grim's Counter

December 6th. Glory Professional Alliance Season 10 Round 14. Team Happy greeting the visiting challengers Team Void.

This was a confrontation between two direct competitors. In Round 12, it was because of this reason that the Happy versus Misty Rain match had been chosen to be broadcast. However, this time, the broadcast chose Wind Howl versus Thunderclap. Reportedly, when the internal esports broadcast team had their meeting, the commentator Pan Lin expressed his opposition towards broadcasting Happy's match. Pan Lin's partner, Li Yibo, also had the same opinion.

This reasoning was very pompous, but even though Pan Lin hadn't explicitly stated the true reason, everyone knew what it was. Wasn't it because they were afraid of being slapped in the faces again after misreading the situation in another Happy match?

But then again, Team Thunderclap's tactics were top-tier too! Just take that round where the complex and changing tactics forced Yu Wenzhou to make such a statement. Could these two partners see through that? In the post-match interviews, those experienced Glory reporters hadn't noticed it. They hadn't noticed it until Yu Wenzhou's grudging comment. Only then did they ask Xiao Shiqin for verification.

The level of the commentators need to improve...

Constantly getting slapped in the face was embarrassing for the broadcast team too, but there was no one better to choose. After all, to be a commentator and guest duo, just having knowledge wasn't enough, the two needed to be compatible. Commentating required speaking eloquently at an appropriate pace. Zhou Zekai and Huang Shaotian were extremely skilled players with far more knowledge of the game than Pan Lin and Li Yibo, but could those two become a commentator duo? Could they? Could they?

Compatibility was the most important.

Right now, Pan Lin and Li Yibo formed their best commentator duo.

As a result, the Happy versus Void match was not chosen to be broadcast.

Team Void's core still revolved around their Ghostblade duo. Their new rookie last season, the Exorcist Ge Caijie, cemented his position even further, becoming the two Ghostblades' most reliable partner. As for Team Void, the team put in great efforts to upgrade Ge Caijie's Exorcist character, Blue Exorcist.

When Team Void heard that Team Royal Style was shifting around their characters and that people from their R&D department had left, Team Void had been very excited. Team Royal Style may have only been a mid-tier team, but their R&D department was at the forefront of all things related to Exorcists. Their Peaceful Hermit did not have the votes to make it into this season's All-Stars at the moment, but his lack of votes was mainly because of the team's poor win record. In terms of raw stats, Peaceful Hermit still stood as the King of Exorcists.

Team Void wasn't heroic enough to directly purchase Peaceful Hermit, but hiring two experienced members from their R&D team would be excellent too.

But when Void made their move, they were stunned when they learned that one of the two R&D team members had already gone to Happy and the other to Heavenly Swords. Void had been just one beat too slow, missing this opportunity for two long-awaited helpers. With their cheeks streaked with tears, they could only rely on their current R&D team to continue developing their Exorcist.

Their Blue Exorcist was a bit weak, but their player Ge Caijie didn't complain. In the current state of the Alliance, where rookies nowadays were fickle and demanding, this was a rare sight. Ge Caijie had a maturity and composure that exceeded his young age.

In the first round of the individual competition, Void sent out this second-year rookie. His win record this season in the individual competition was exceptional. Out of 12 matches, he had 10 wins and 2 losses.

If it weren't for Ye Xiu's 12 consecutive wins, Ge Caijie would have been the player with the highest win rate. In this match, the number one and number two in 1v1s would be clashing. The match was filled with topics to talk about as soon as it began. In comparison, the opening for the Thunderclap versus Wind Howl game was very ordinary and dull. Team Thunderclap didn't have anyone too noteworthy for their individual competitions.

"Senior, I hope to learn from you." The respectful Ge Caijie didn't forget his manners.

"Mm, let's see who'll be the one to change up our win rates," Ye Xiu replied. It could be seen from his words that he had paid quite a bit of attention to this rookie. He at least knew that in 1v1s, Ge Caijie was second only to himself.

The countdown finished, and the two characters loaded into the map.

Happy's home game. Ye Xiu's choice of maps was in the same style as always. The two characters didn't dally around and directly headed towards the center of the map.

Lord Grim used long-ranged attacks to initiate. Ge Caijie's Blue Exorcist evaded them, while swinging his arms, throwing the scythe in his hands.

It was just an ordinary Spirit Guidance without any additional talismans, clearly meant as a probing attack. Ge Caijie didn't let down those who praised his steadiness. He didn't immediately rush in to take

the initiative. Although it was unanimously held that the Exorcist was the counter of the unspecialized, what happened when Royal Style faced Happy? Tian Sen impatiently had Peaceful Hermit set out to fulfill his mission as Lord Grim's counter, and the match ended with Royal Style losing to Happy 1 to 9. The two didn't face each other in the individual competition, and in the team competition, Peaceful Hermit seemed to be the ill-fated one and was the first to be killed.

Exorcists were only counters in theory. To prove this theory, real results were necessary. Ge Caijie believed that Ye Xiu was more familiar than anyone else about why Exorcists were considered Lord Grim's bane. There was no way Ye Xiu would not be on guard. Before Ge Caijie began, as the one widely considered as a counter to his opponent, he had to be ready to face an opponent who was at his 120%.

Lord Grim easily dodged the Spirit Guidance scythe, but Ge Caijie immediately used Spirit Guidance again, having the scythe return to him and attack Lord Grim from behind. Lord Grim didn't even look back before being sliced into smoke.

Shadow Clone Technique!

The real body flickered to a position several units forward. Along with an arc of cold light, Lord Grim instantly arrived in front of him with a Shining Cut.

Blue Exorcist had just thrown out the weapon in his hands with Spirit Guidance, so he couldn't even parry it with an attack of his own. However, Exorcists were a class that didn't need their weapon to utilize their skills. He pinched with his hands, and a talisman appeared, letting out thin strands of cold qi. Blue Exorcist jumped back while pressing the talisman towards Lord Grim.

Ice Talisman was an ice element skill with freeze effects. This skill could not be ignored. Lord Grim, who had been pressing forward fiercely, had no choice but to retreat.

The Ice Talisman failed to hit its target and shattered into fine pieces. Blue Exorcist pinched his hands again, and a new talisman appeared.

Fire Talisman!

Fire after ice. Blue Exorcist didn't leave any gaps between his two talisman attacks. His rhythm and skill linking was immaculate.

Retreat again?

Impossible. Ye Xiu hadn't forgotten about the scythe flying back. Dodging to left seemed to be the most logical course of action, but... if he did that, Blue Exorcist would simply conjure another talisman and throw it there, forcing him into a position with nowhere to run.

As a result, Ye Xiu chose to continue pressing forward!

Colliding Stab!

Lord Grim used a Berserker skill to quickly cover some distance. The Fire Talisman wasn't like the Ice Talisman. Forcefully taking the hit was bearable. Ge Caijie clearly wasn't prepared for Ye Xiu's choice of action. Lord Grim stabbed Blue Exorcist and continued forward, pushing them away from the returning scythe. Then, he rolled to the right.

Boom!

Lord Grim was struck by the Fire Talisman and his body was set ablaze, taking damage over time.

The scythe returned to Blue Exorcist's hands. All Ye Xiu got was damage from Colliding Stab, which wasn't as heavy as the damage from Fire Talisman. It was better than nothing though.

Sky Strike!

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella changed forms and slashed upwards.

Ge Caijie's heart jumped, but not much. He placed the scythe in front of him and blocked the Sky Strike. Then, he pushed out and threw a Lightning Talisman.

Lord Grim jumped back to dodge it. Blue Exorcist swiped with his scythe, and a blue light rose from the ground. A Rising Emblem threw Lord Grim into the air.

Boom!

Lord Grim quickly adjusted himself while in the air and fired an Anti-Tank Missile at Blue Exorcist. Blue Exorcist was just about to follow up, but was forced to back away. Lord Grim relied on the recoil from it to shoot back and threw a grenade at the same time.

After several quick exchanges, neither side had lost much health or won any big advantages. Compared to normal, being able to fight evenly with Ye Xiu's Lord Grim was very rare. But now, many people had higher expectations of Ge Caijie.

Exorcists were considered to be counters to Lord Grim because of their new Level 75 skill. However, Ge Caijie had yet to use it.

Was he waiting for a more opportune moment?

Everyone understood the logic, but they weren't as patient as Ge Caijie. They wanted Blue Exorcist to hurry up and use it.

How could finding an opportunity be so easy though? A careless usage wouldn't get the desired effects. It would just be wasting the skill, and Ge Caijie would no longer have the threat of it anymore. And Ge Caijie could clearly sense that Ye Xiu was being very wary of this skill. Some of his decisions carried this sort of vigilance. The might of a counter could already be seen! It wasn't just as simple as using a powerful skill to make the opponent kneel.

"You really have patience!" Even Ye Xiu couldn't help but sigh.

"I'm looking for an opportunity." It seemed like Ge Caijie also couldn't resist chatting.

"There won't be any," Ye Xiu said.

"No one can be certain of that," Ge Caijie said.

When he said these words, Blue Exorcist's scythe swept up and then down, while his other hand readied another talisman. Not to Ge Caijie's surprise, Ye Xiu didn't dare use something as simple as parrying to defend. Lord Grim jumped back.

Spirit Guidance!

The scythe that was swinging down suddenly flew out from his hands. Lord Grim hadn't jumped far back enough.

But Ye Xiu was able to pull some distance away. At this moment, he seemed quite relaxed. His Myriad Manifestations Umbrella opened up, ready to shield against the attack. The instant the two weapons were about to clash, Ye Xiu noticed Blue Exorcist's left hand quickly touching the scythe.

Not good!

Ye Xiu knew the situation wasn't good, but it was too late to make a different move. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella and the scythe collided. Talisman energy swiftly moved up the scythe handle, linking the two weapons together. The energy moved through the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. When the light suddenly blossomed, a faint "封" (Seal) character could be seen.

Exorcist Level 75 skill: Seal Talisman.

Effect: Seal the targeted equipment for one minute.

Chapter 1220: Title is Spoiler

The Seal Talisman had no damaging effect, but it brought this one minute of status effect.

What did one minute mean in Glory?

A 1v1 duel where one side was much stronger than the other would generally end within one minute. When the two sides were relatively evenly matched, then it would depend on the players' individual habits and styles, so time duration wasn't a good statistic to keep track of. Still, assuming the characters met in direct confrontation, it would usually take over 3 minutes to determine victory.

Ye Xiu, in his individual matches, typically played with this kind of rhythm, and this match with Ge Caijie was the same. After they had each tested the waters, the two of them began fierce combat.

Talismans were the Exorcist's unique method of combat. They either directly used the talisman to attack, or they would attach the talisman onto their weapon, causing the weapon to have certain damage bonuses or effects based on the talisman. In fact, they could attach the talisman to the weapon and then use Spirit Guidance to throw away their weapon, turning it into a long-range talisman attack.

Just now, Ge Caijie had, at the very last moment, suddenly slapped a talisman onto his scythe, causing his attack to have a talisman effect. But whether it was ice or fire, Lord Grim had successfully parried and the attack hadn't landed, so the talisman couldn't have dealt any damage. But the talisman that Ge Caijie had used was the Seal Talisman.

The Seal Talisman was used on equipment. With this attack, Lord Grim's parry actually sent to Ge Caijie the target he wished to attack.

It all sounded very simple.

However, when the Spirit Guided scythe shot out toward the opponent's parry, he had to activate the talisman in the instant just before they made contact. The difficulty of such control was extraordinary.

Ye Xiu was hit. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was sealed and was now unusable.

It was unusable, which meant that the equipment stats would be temporarily deducted from the character, as though the character hadn't equipped this equipment at all. And for the equipment that had special additional effects, these effects would also all be eliminated.

For now, sealing the weapon or sealing the shoes were viewed as the most worthwhile ways of using this skill.

Most of a character's attack power came from the weapon, and most of a character's movement speed came from the shoes. These two equipments, from ordinary players to the professional circle, were always prioritized, because they each decided a character's advantage in one particular attribute.

Sealing the weapon was like pulling out the opponent's fangs; sealing the shoes was like breaking the opponent's legs.

And now, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was sealed. For Lord Grim, it wasn't just a matter of pulling out his fangs. The shapeshifting ability of the umbrella, after being hit by the Seal Talisman, was also eliminated.

The Exorcist was said to be the counter to Lord Grim exactly because of this reason. The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella's greatest characteristic could be eliminated by the Exorcist.

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was the true source of the headache that the professional circle felt toward Ye Xiu and Lord Grim. And now, in front of Ge Caijie, this problem was eliminated. During this one minute, Lord Grim held in his hand an unchanging weapon that had no bonus attributes at all.

"Beautifully done!" Even Ye Xiu couldn't help but express his admiration of Ge Caijie's exciting action.

"Thank you," Ge Caijie answered, but his playing wasn't polite at all. He had to use this one minute properly. The Seal Talisman had a cooldown of 7 minutes, there was no way it could be used a second time in an individual battle. This was also why Ge Caijie had been so cautious in the beginning. He couldn't afford to waste this skill.

The scythe was swiftly swung down again, and his other hand was already preparing another talisman at the same time. This was the technique that any high-level Exorcist player should have; putting the talisman on the weapon first and then attacking was what an ordinary player would do. Pro players needed to begin their attack first, and only when they felt their attack was a sure hit would they suddenly attach a talisman. This way, they could conserve their talismans and also allow variation in their attacks.

The scythe flashed down, but there was already another flash before his eyes.

Sword Draw?

Ge Caijie had seen very clearly, when he had applied the seal, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella was in sword form, and now it could only use sword-type skills.

However, without weapon attributes and just relying on the skill itself, whether the damage or the speed or the priority or so on, they would all decrease drastically. A skill like this could be completely ignored.

Shatter!

Blue Exorcist didn't even dodge. This Sword Draw, whether it hit another attack or it hit himself, it would break into shattered fragments of swordlight. It wasn't even worth defending against - without weapon attributes, it was too small and weak.

Ge Caijie was sure of this. But when the light of the sword hit his body, significantly faster than his own attack, Ge Caijie realized that something was wrong.

A sealed weapon essentially had an attack speed of zero. Even the famously quick Sword Draw shouldn't have this kind of speed now...

Ge Caijie had no time to think of anything - Blue Exorcist's body was already inadvertently thrust backward.

This was the momentum from the Sword Draw! But by Ge Caijie's calculations, in this situation, there was no way for the Sword Draw to have this kind of power...

Did he...

There was only one possibility!

Ge Caijie watched, eyes wide, as Lord Grim waved his hand and that Myriad Manifestations Umbrella smoothly shifted into spear form and a Dragon Tooth chased toward him.

How could this be?

Ge Caijie was utterly stunned. Unable to dodge this Dragon Tooth, he was hit.

"You don't need to be that surprised, do you?" Ye Xiu said. A Sky Strike leapt out, sending Blue Exorcist into the air.

But as expected of the most stable and calm player of the new generation, even when he was shocked, he quickly steadied his heart. The midair Blue Exorcist swiftly used a talisman and swung his scythe with Spirit Guidance.

Lightning Talisman!

When the scythe hit the ground carrying this talisman, lightning instantly flared around the scythe. Lord Grim had no way of continuing to attack Blue Exorcist from this position, he could only dodge first.

Blue Exorcist hit the ground, the Spirit Guided scythe had already returned to his hand. He turned and stared at Lord Grim over there, and more accurately, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella that was in Lord Grim's hand.

Myriad Manifestations Umbrella, spear form.

"This... isn't the one from before..." Ge Caijie saw through what had happened.

"Yup. You guys throw around the word "counter" so much, if I didn't make any preparation, wouldn't that just be too dumb?" Ye Xiu chuckled.

"Two Myriad Manifestations Umbrellas..." Ge Caijie was a bit speechless. It wasn't that he hadn't thought of such a possibility before, but wasn't Happy relatively poor? This Silver weapon, even though the R&D departments of the various teams hadn't figured out how it was made, they all understood that this was definitely a high-cost item. A Silver weapon like this, with Happy's conditions and grassroots background, there was no way they could make a backup copy, was there? If they only made one to counter the Exorcist's Seal Talisman, that was rather wasteful. But on the other hand, even if the Seal Talisman hadn't managed to stop him, wouldn't this at least greatly increase the burden on Happy? To make an extra copy of such a high-cost weapon, who knew how many fewer Silver equipments the other characters now had? In that regard, this at least had some use in suppressing Happy.

Just as Ge Caijie was thinking all of this, he heard Ye Xiu speak. "Yup, two Myriad Manifestations Umbrellas, one level 70, one level 5."

Ge Caijie froze.

"Using a level 5 weapon to fight is really a struggle! So I was very anxious seeing you holding back for so long. Next time be more bold, come up and directly use a Seal Talisman, I'll let you stick it right on," Ye Xiu said.

With that, Ge Caijie could only laugh bitterly.

So this guy had just casually used a level 5 weapon to play around with him, this was really...

But was Ye Xiu always using the level 5 weapon earlier? Ge Caijie didn't believe it. A level 5 weapon, he definitely would have noticed that something was wrong with the damage dealt. So Ye Xiu, in reality, had secretly switched his equipment at some point, just like how later when he swapped back the real umbrella after the false one was sealed, which Ge Caijie hadn't noticed at all.

"It looks like this Seal Talisman being able to hit you was also an opening you purposely left," Ge Caijie said.

"Selling you an opening was just as difficult as finding an opening on you," Ye Xiu admitted.

"Since that's the case, then why..." Ge Caijie said.

"You'll know soon enough," Ye Xiu said, as Lord Grim charged forward.

Indeed, Ge Caijie knew soon enough.

He now knew just how much Ye Xiu had restrained himself when playing earlier, all because of the existence of the Seal Talisman. Ge Caijie now had regrets. If he just hadn't used the Seal Talisman and saved this threat as a deterrent, this battle might have been much easier! And no? The Seal Talisman was tossed out without achieving its effect, and an unrestrained Ye Xiu was truly too terrifying...

Ge Caijie parried for his life, but before him, even God-level players had fallen one after another to Ye Xiu's Lord Grim. Ge Caijie found that he couldn't do any better than them. He had only lasted earlier because of his class, because his class had a skill that the opponent feared.

The Exorcist was truly Lord Grim's counter, but in order to serve as a true counter, the skill had to be effective! When the skill didn't achieve its effect, the counter melted into scattered clouds. After all, this was an ultimate move that could only be used once in seven minutes.

"See, if I didn't make you use up that Seal Talisman, fighting you would've been so tiring!" As Ye Xiu spoke, Lord Grim had already sent the final attack.

"I understand..." Gai Caijie answered. Blue Exorcist, under an attack that couldn't be resisted, fell.

First battle of the individual round, Happy won. Ye Xiu had now won 13 consecutive individual battles.

Was he using this sort of method to announce his powerful return? Some people discussed this possibility.

But that was too cheap, wasn't it? What sort of top core player would play in the individual competition instead of the group arena? Some people thought this way.

It was true. Every team's best player, like Zhou Zekai, like Huang Shaotian, like Wang Jiexi, they all appeared in the group arena to try and win those greater 2 points. They might occasionally appear in the individual competition, but none of them would treat the individual competition as their main battleground like Ye Xiu did.

And so, just like this, he continued his win streak.

"This is the strong bullying the weak!" someone sighed, indignant.

The feelings were complex. Was this person a fan or a hater? If it was the strong bullying the weak, what did that make those powerful veterans whom Ye Xiu had defeated?