

Avatar 1201

Chapter 1201: An Ace That Isn't Cool at All

Wang Ze hadn't been a senior player during his time at Excellent Era. When Ye Xiu was still there, he had been a rookie, appearing a few times as a sub starting season 8, before following Excellent Era to relegations.

Team Excellent Era's players were rather sought after, but at that time, the relegated Excellent Era hadn't given up yet. Drawing in Thunderclap's Xiao Shiqin steadied their hearts, and as a result, the vast majority of Team Excellent Era's players chose to stay.

Wang Ze was one of them. However, unlike his other teammates who had the choice to accept an invite or stay with the team, he had no choices because no one had showed any interest in him.

To Wang Ze, this was a slap to his face. Even though he didn't feel like he was particularly amazing, he still had confidence in his own skill, yet no one was interested in him?

Wang Ze cared quite a lot about this issue. At that time, he had been in the competitive scene for two years, but he failed to attract enough attention in his few appearances on stage. He very much wanted to be acknowledged.

But in the third season of his professional career, what made him even more depressed was that the powerhouse Excellent Era had actually lost to the Internet cafe team Happy in the Challenger League.

That moment had been a dark one for everyone in Team Excellent Era. After Excellent Era disbanded and the team members parted ways, Wang Ze had been quite terrified because he hadn't received any invites when Excellent Era had been relegated the previous season. And in their last season, Excellent Era had been playing in the Challenger League. The attention towards them had been limited, and he had truly feared that no one would be interested in him.

Wang Ze had hoped for an invite, but none came. He had watched as his teammates left him one after the other, watched as Excellent Era collapsed, and watched as someone took over.

At that time, the players who had yet to leave all received invites from the new boss, who called for them to hang on for one more year and return to the Pro League anew.

Wang Ze remembered clearly that Qiu Fei, who had just been promoted from the training camp, decisively chose to stay.

Idiot...

Wang Ze had thought to himself. That season, if there was one person who was particularly eye-catching in Excellent Era, it would be the new rookie Qiu Fei. He was a youth with a bright future ahead of him. He didn't need to worry that he would have nowhere to go. However, Qiu Fei had actually believed in the new investor's plans and chose to stay.

But what did the new Excellent Era have?

Su Mucheng had left along with her Dancing Rain. Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf had left. Xiao Shiqin and Life Extinguisher had returned to their mother team.

The remaining Excellent Era was no longer a powerhouse. How could breezing through the Challenger League be so easy?

Wang Ze had already wasted a year. He had no intentions of wasting away in the Challenger League. Unfortunately, he still hadn't received any invites. Staying was at least one path that would let him continue as a pro player.

Wang Ze wasn't willing, but he also didn't want to resort to this last straw. Luckily, Team Miracle came around and showed interest in him. Wang Ze didn't hesitate to pick his new team. In his eyes, being able to remain in the Pro League was better than anything else.

Thus, Wang Ze joined Team Miracle. Afterwards, Shen Jian joined too, cursing and swearing after wandering around in a circle. Shen Jian's situation had been better than his. He had received invites from the start, but he wasn't able to negotiate well enough with any of them, leaving Team Miracle as his only choice left. Along with feelings of helplessness for not getting recognized for his talents, he and Wang Ze were packaged together and sent to Team Miracle. Over there, He Ming was waiting for them with his status as the core player, after being traded away for Xiao Shiqin when Excellent Era relegated and fighting in the Pro League for a year.

The three were former teammates, who had gathered together again at Team Miracle. No one had been delighted at that. Instead, a feeling of being cheated had sprung up in their hearts.

But they had already fallen into the hole. If they wanted to get out, they'd have to rely upon themselves. Each carrying their own thoughts and hopes, the three began their journey with Team Miracle. Wang Ze hoped that he would be able to get recognition for his skill this season. Even if Team Miracle was relegated in the end, he would at least have invites waiting for him.

His opponent this round was Su Mucheng, an All-Star. If he could beat her, it would be definitive proof of his skill. And towards this former teammate of his, he felt like he knew the key to winning.

After the five second countdown, the match began.

Map: Desolate Town 7.

Desolate Town was a series of maps. If all 17 maps were put together, the map would be a complete town. But in reality, especially in a 1v1, the complete town was too big, so it was split into 17 parts. These 17 parts were of different sizes. Desolate Town 7 was the smallest among them, suitable for a 1v1.

As former teammates, the three from Miracle knew which maps Su Mucheng favored. Wang Ze mainly wanted to bump into Su Mucheng today, so he had prepared a map specifically for her. Desolate Town 7 was a map that Su Mucheng was good at, and as her former teammate, he knew how Su Mucheng liked to play in this map. This was why Wang Ze had chosen it. He wasn't hoping his opponent was unfamiliar with the map, but rather familiar with it. That way he would have a greater understanding of his opponent.

The two characters headed towards each other from their spawn corners. Wang Ze's Sharpshooter was called Kashiben, a character provided by Team Miracle. It was worse than his former Team Excellent Era character, and he had spent a lot of effort to adjust it to his preferences and habits.

Kashiben moved forward quickly, looking far into the distance onto the clock tower in the town.

The clock tower was this map's highest point. By seizing the high ground, one would have nearly complete coverage of the map. Desolate Town 7 was the desolate map with the most narrow and winding alleys, which wasn't too favorable for long-ranged gunners. Su Mucheng had been forced to be good at this map because too many opponents wanted to utilize this map to restrict the Alliance's Number One Launcher. As a result, Su Mucheng had to specifically practice and study this map until it actually became one of her best maps.

The clock tower was a location that Su Mucheng frequently occupied. She had the high ground there, allowing her to easily catch her opponent's position. Then, she could utilize her long-ranged capabilities to attack from afar. It was one of her most used tactics.

But... not today!

Wang Ze thought to himself. Their relationship as teammates was mutual. Since he had chosen this map, Su Mucheng wouldn't be so stupid as to go to it. She would intentionally avoid the spot she liked the most because her teammate knew about it.

Once she gave up on her usual plan, what would she do?

According to her habits and preferences, Wang Ze bravely made a prediction. He was currently heading over to verify it. He believed that his prediction should be correct. As a gunner class too, Wang Ze trusted that his understanding of Su Mucheng's thought process was very thorough.

Kashiben traveled through the small alleyway. Wang Ze's strategy was very clear. But from time to time, he would still take a glance at the clock tower. After all, it was possible that Su Mucheng would be stubborn. However, Wang Ze would be even happier if that were the case. The route he chose was a dead spot for the clock tower. If Su Mucheng went to the clock tower, he would give her a big surprise.

A flawless plan! Wang Ze felt satisfied with himself.

But at this moment, Su Mucheng appeared.

Utilizing Aerial Launcher, with a few ups and downs, she landed on the clock tower. Thinking that she wouldn't go over there, Wang Ze nearly exposed himself. Luckily, Wang Ze noticed her actions in time and hastily rolled to a dead angle in the clock tower's view.

So she actually went there.

Wang Ze calculated the time. For Dancing Rain to make it onto the clock tower right now, she had to have taken a straight line to there, not wasting any time.

Was she not afraid that he would take advantage of that location?

Wang Ze was confident, but he didn't think Su Mucheng was stupid. As a result, when he saw Su Mucheng suddenly make what seemed to be a brainless move, Wang Ze stopped to think about it.

If Su Mucheng understood his intentions for picking this map but still made this choice, what was she plotting?

There were two possibilities.

First, she didn't think much of Wang Ze's strength, so she did as she always did.

Second, she guessed how Wang Ze would respond, so she had set up a trap and was intentionally luring the snake out of its hole.

Su Mucheng wasn't stupid nor was she an arrogant person, so it was most likely the second possibility.

Setting up a trap and luring him out.

Wang Ze smirked. This was the Su Mucheng that he knew.

It was just that this time, he wouldn't fall for it.

Su Mucheng perhaps knew where the dead angles were from this clock tower, but did she know which of these dead angles allowed for direct attacks to the clock tower?

Wang Ze didn't think Su Mucheng knew.

Because only long-ranged classes had the range to reach her from those spots, and very few long-ranged players would choose this map. As for Su Mucheng, she had never encountered a long-ranged opponent on this map. This wasn't Wang Ze guessing. He had looked through all of Su Mucheng's data on this map.

Detailed and thorough analysis, understanding, and preparation. These were Wang Ze's trump cards. Perhaps they weren't very cool, but they were practical.

Dancing Rain was still looking around from up on the clock tower, or perhaps she was guessing where Wang Ze would attack from.

No need!

Wang Ze smiled. He swiped his mouse, and Kashiben readied for a Thunder Snipe.

Sharpshooters had lower range than Launchers. Only Thunder Snipe was the exception. However, Wang Ze didn't want to attack from too far away in this situation, otherwise Su Mucheng would have time to react and dodge it.

The sniping spot he had chosen was the perfect distance.

At this range, if she didn't know ahead of time, by the time she heard the sound of the trigger, it would be too late to dodge. Even more so in a situation where Su Mucheng couldn't even see where it was coming from. Trying to react just based on sound was even more impossible.

Dancing Rain's forehead and long hair could be seen clearly through the ten-fold magnified sniper scope.

Gunshot!

A spurt of fresh blood flowed out from that forehead, instantly covering his scoped view with red.

"Tsk tsk, this type of attack should just instant kill her." Wang Ze sighed. After using the skill, he retracted his sniper rifle.

"Huh? What's that?" Wang Ze saw a bright flame in the sky spiraling towards him.

Chapter 1202: Familiar Rhythm

This is?

Wang Ze panicked for a moment, but he quickly calmed down again. Judging from the flight path of this whirling flame, it couldn't hit his position no matter what.

At this moment, a gunshot sounded.

Bang!

After a gunshot, there was the sound of an impact. The spinning flame in the air vibrated, but it wasn't extinguished. It now flew forward at a higher speed, and after this collision, there was a clear change in the flame's trajectory. Originally, it had been unable to reach Kashiben's position, but now, it was enough.

Boom!

There was a sudden roar in the sky. Wang Ze had long figured out what this was, but he hadn't thought that Su Mucheng would have such an outrageous technique.

After being hit by the Thunder Snipe, she instantly predicted Kashiben's position.

And then right after being sniped, while her body still wasn't stable, she was able to immediately launch a Heat-Seeking Missile, and then because this missile wasn't able to fly a far enough distance, she accurately fired another shot to support and extend the range of this missile. There was another important point here: Dancing Rain normally used a hand cannon, which launched powerful cannon shots that were impossible to aim with such precision. This meant that after firing the missile, she must have switched Dancing Rain to use a gun...

How was Su Mucheng this strong?

As her former teammate, Wang Ze thought that he had studied Su Mucheng enough, but he had no idea that Su Mucheng's technique was even more terrifying than he imagined.

The howling Heat-Seeking Missile fell toward him. Although Wang Ze was already frantically controlling Kashisen to dodge, the shockwaves from the mushroom cloud created by the missile's impact had a wide range. Kashisen was unable to avoid the explosion and was sent flying against a wall.

Boom boom boom!

The attacks of Launcher Dancing Rain came flying from the clock tower.

Occupy the high ground, capture the opponent's position, fire from an extremely long distance.

All of this was Su Mucheng's familiar rhythm, and it was a rhythm that Wang Ze had specifically studied, but now, he still fell into it.

Dodge!

Wang Ze desperately controlled his character, entering one of the Clock Tower's dead angles.

It's no use!

Even though it was a dead angle, Su Mucheng used all sorts of methods to send her firepower there. The AoE skills of a Launcher allowed her to somewhat disregard the precision of her attacks, as long as they landed close enough, they could deal a lot of damage and restrict the target.

I can't hide in a dead angle, I have to move and shake her off...

But isn't this the rhythm that every one of Su Mucheng's victims on this map would fall into?

Amidst the roaring cannonfire, Wang Ze hesitated.

What to do?

He had no plan.

He hadn't prepared for any events deviating from the script he had imagined. He had been completely caught off-guard by how Su Mucheng had instantly determined his position from his sneak attack.

For this match, Wang Ze's original plan was to use accurate sneak attacks to snipe Dancing Rain shot after shot. But now, after only one shot, his position was exposed. All he heard were cannon shots, all he saw was fire.

Where could he go?

Wang Ze originally thought he knew this map very well, but now it was all fuzzy in his mind, the various routes all tangling together, preventing him from finding the exit path among them.

But if he just let his character stand here, he could only watch his health bar steadily exploding away.

Wang Ze had Kashisen charge out, but should he continue to figure out a way to hide and dodge, or should he turn and fight directly? Wang Ze still wasn't certain, and he didn't have the time to reason things out. On this map, Su Mucheng's attack rhythm was extremely skilled. Whether Wang Ze ran or counterattacked, she had enough experience and technique to respond.

Ace card?

Did Su Mucheng not have one on this map?

And it was the exact same as Wang Ze's, the most simple: familiarity.

Familiar map, familiar attack rhythm.

Wang Ze's response didn't pose any difficulty for her at all. With all her skill at her fingertips, she bombarded him.

And Wang Ze seemed to have fallen into a battle for survival. He wasn't acting like he was trying to achieve victory, he was just trying to survive under the cannonfire.

The match had already lost its suspense from the moment Wang Ze revealed the position of Kashisen.

Individual competition round 2, Happy won.

"Beautiful!" Chen Guo energetically welcomed Su Mucheng as she came offstage.

"Who knows what the opponent thinking, picking one of your best and most familiar maps, how stupid." The fruits of victory were in hand, and Chen Guo wanted to make it known. As Su Mucheng's super fan, Chen Guo knew which maps she was good at, and she recognized Desolate Town 7. She'd even tried to imitate Su Mucheng's playstyle on this map.

"He's not stupid, it's just that I'm not stupid either," Su Mucheng laughed.

"In any case, we won." Chen Guo was proud.

Wang Ze, coming offstage, was in extremely low spirits. He had prepared thoroughly for this match, he had been confident, but it ended up like this? His strategy was still only on the first step when it received a headache-inducing attack, and he had been attacked from there until the end, blasted upon the ground.

He Ming and Shen Jian knew the hard work Wang Ze had put into preparing for this match. Seeing his disappointment now, they too were upset. But this was competition. Everyone worked hard, but in the end, there was always one side that would fail.

"I was still too overconfident," Wang Ze said with a bitter smile. "I thought I understood the opponent's strength, that I had a trump card that could get me victory. But I never thought that, under circumstances I don't understand, the opponent improved even further..."

"This is why Glory is limitless!" The unfortunate trio lamented, in a heavy atmosphere.

"Captain, I'm going up!" Right then, Miracle's third individual player had already stood up, Miracle's Launcher, Guo Shao.

Yes, Guo Shao, a name that sounded arrogant. Before the arrival of these players from old Excellent Era, he had been the core player of this new team.

An arrogant name, a position as core player, but Guo Shao wasn't that kind of person.

When experienced players joined, he happily gave up his position as core and captain. Passionate, with energy and ideals, Guo Shao was a Glory youth that had longed to play in the professional scene. And now, he had finally raised his sails to set forth on this journey.

"I wonder who my opponent is?" Guo Shao lifted his head to look at the projection screen. He carried this kind of excitement for every match.

The screen quickly displayed the names for the third battle of the individual round.

Happy, Ye Xiu, Lord Grim.

"Excellent!" Guo Shao was even more excited.

He Ming and the others exchanged looks, smiling bitterly.

What an innocent youth, he really has no idea of the terror and cruelty of the pro scene!

"Good luck!" The three still said some encouraging words, but in their hearts they already had no hopes for this match.

"Don't worry, seniors!" Guo Shao gave the three of them a thumbs-up.

"Go, go! You have to win!" Against their true thoughts, the three cheered him on.

Guo Shao went onstage, and on the other end Ye Xiu was already ready.

Log on, enter map.

"This is great, I actually have the chance to fight Senior Ye Xiu!" As soon as the characters finished loading, Guo Shao couldn't wait any longer and began expressing his feelings.

"Then do your best!" Ye Xiu never refused to interact with anyone onstage.

"Don't worry, senior!" Guo Shao shouted.

Offstage, He Ming and the other two facepalmed. Why are you telling the opponent not to worry!

Ye Xiu sent a smiley face emoji, and Lord Grim rushed forward.

The map was Desolate Town 28. In a 1v1, there was some amount of cover, but not many twists and turns, which made it rather suitable for a Launcher. Guo Shao's map choice wasn't out of the ordinary.

Ye Xiu didn't sidestep, he directly charged forth, and quickly saw that the opponent was doing the same.

Boom boom!!!

With the sounds of cannonfire, Guo Shao's Launcher Berk took the lead in attacking. Ye Xiu controlled Lord Grim to dodge, having no way to retaliate.

Guo Shao fired his attacks at the very limit of his attack range. Although Lord Grim could use a Launcher's low-level skills, that didn't mean he had the full long range of a Launcher.

The extremely long attack range of a Launcher was something they got only after switching classes. Their special skill learned when changing class at level 20, "Artillery Mastery," increased the range of all of the attacks and skills of this class, as well as the area they could damage.

"Haha, Senior's class doesn't have the range of a Launcher!" Guo Shao actually had the time to type a message, but Berk's attacks never stopped.

"You want to lock me outside of this range?" Ye Xiu replied.

"Seen through so quickly by senior."

"It's a very obvious plan. But it's not that easy!"

After sending the message, Lord Grim begin to charge forward.

Guo Shao immediately had Berk jump backwards while simultaneously covering a large area with his firepower, stopping Lord Grim from reaching him.

"Hit!" Lord Grim was covered by the large area of firepower, and Guo Shao was excited.

"But I'm closer..." Ye Xiu replied as Lord Grim ducked through the cannonfire. Although he suffered some damage, the distance between the two was pulled closer.

"That's not good." Guo Shao's Berk used Aerial Cannon to increase their distance.

"You can't run!" Under Ye Xiu's controls, Lord Grim used a Slide Kick, dodging the cannon shots coming right at him, and once he got up, he used a Shining Cut. His character sprung forward amidst cold light, and then he followed with a Charge, forcing his way through the Stingers falling from the sky.

Three skills used in an instant, all attacks with high-speed movement. The distance between the two characters was instantly squeezed so that they were almost right next to each other.

"Senior is really tough!" Guo Shao cried, his character changing direction to get away.

Lord Grim suddenly used another skill.

"Ah!" Against his controls, Berk started rushing toward Lord Grim.

"He can even use Taunt!" Guo Shao shouted.

The Taunt status forced the target to charge toward and attack only the taunter. Although it couldn't interrupt an attack, it was a powerful move to disrupt the opponent's rhythm, especially during a team competition when coordination was required.

Right now neither side had a team, so there wasn't that effect, but Guo Shao's Berk in this bit of time had no way to leave with his free will.

Collapsing Mountain!

Lord Grim swung his blades down, Guo Shao saw that he had no way to retreat, so he simply aimed his cannon at Lord Grim.

The cannonball flew out, but Lord Grim's Collapsing Mountain suddenly changed to a Falling Light Blade, and he plunged downward.

After dodging the cannon shot, the Falling Light Blade landed right upon Berk. Guo Shao hurriedly tried to Quick Recover, as the Taunt status finally wore off, but Lord Grim was already right next to him.

Slide Kick!

Guo Shao's reaction was very fast, he actually had Berk use a Sharpshooter's skill Slide Click. Even if he couldn't hit Lord Grim, at least he could slide past and start pulling apart the distance again.

But he hadn't expected Lord Grim to step to the side. Before he started fully sliding, Lord Grim stomped down in place, and at that moment, Berk slide right there.

After Lord Grim stepped on his opponent, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella shifted forms and sent a flurry of shots to his face.

Sharpshooter skill: Punisher.

"You're about to lose!" Ye Xiu said.

Chapter 1203: The Winery on Wuchuan Path

Ye Xiu's prediction was of course made with reason.

Out of the 24 classes, Launchers were ranked at the bottom in close combat ability. They were never absent in the voting for "which class is weakest in close combat," and their votes were never low, at about the same rank as Summoners.

Now that he was being stepped on by Lord Grim, an unspecialized with an immense number of low level skills and an extremely fast rhythm, no one thought Ye Xiu's words were unreasonable.

"Not necessarily!" But Guo Shao didn't agree.

Once Punisher was over, Lord Grim had only just moved his foot away when Berk immediately rolled and stood. However, the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella had already transformed into a spear, striking forth like a viper.

Clang!

Yet, what everyone heard was the clash of metal on metal. This sound was most commonly heard when parrying.

And, for Launchers, there was only one move they could use in parrying, if nothing unexpected happened.

Swing!

Each of the 24 classes had a knockup skill, which could be learned from the beginning. What Launchers used was this hand cannon swinging skill, Swing. Using this skill, Guo Shao managed to parry Lord Grim's Dragon Tooth.

Berk had already jumped up, cannon shots flying, aimed downwards and propelling him backwards.

However, Lord Grim truly had too many low level skills. Even if the movement skills he had used before were all still in cooldown, he had other choices.

Berserker skill: Colliding Stab!

Lord Grim dashed forth with his sword. Berk, even with the help of Aerial Cannon, couldn't match up to the speed of this dashing stab. He was immediately impaled on the blade and a combo followed after.

The unspecialized's fast paced close combat capabilities wiped the floor with Zhang Jiale and crushed Sun Zheping. Now, the one facing this was a rookie, using a Launcher, who was weak in close combat.

There was no suspense to this anymore.

However...

"Nothing is certain yet!" The rookie Guo Shao still didn't give up.

"Your spirit is admirable!" Ye Xiu praised, "If so, then I'll have to be more careful..."

The Myriad Manifestations Umbrella changed forms rapidly, skill after skill pushed onto Berk. Guo Shao was trying to find an opening, but there was none to be found. Every possibility of escape had been completely sealed off.

"How terrifying," he was still lamenting, his morale seeming to be completely unaffected, but at a time like this, his Berk had already fallen.

Guo Shao didn't give up, but he didn't find a single opportunity either...

Walking out of the competitor booths, Guo Shao looked at Ye Xiu on the other side.

"Senior is so strong!" Guo Shao called out loudly, giving a thumbs up.

"Is he crazy, praising his opponent like that?!" He Ming and co were close to jumping up, nervously looking at the audience. As expected, the audience had exploded into commotion. As for Ye Xiu, he just waved and went off stage.

In the individual competition, Happy won with a flawless 3 to 0.

However, Guo Shao, who had just returned to the player bench, didn't seem at all affected by this gap.

"Let's all do our best!" Despite just having lost, he was here encouraging his teammates.

"You little!" He Ming's face was dark. As the captain, he had to say something.

"How could you compliment your opponent like that? Aren't you boosting their morale? Ruining ours?" He Ming scolded.

"Because he really is strong, so I didn't really think much of it," Guo Shao said.

"..." Guo Shao's forthright reason made He Ming incapable of scolding him further.

"Just don't do it next time..." he could only reply, deflating.

They lost all three rounds of the individual competition...

He Ming exchanged glances with his two old teammates. If everything had gone according to their original plan, then they would've given the first match to Ye Xiu, Wang Ze would strike down Su Mucheng in the second match, and then the third match would be given to Guo Shao, who was rather skilled. If he did well, they might've even ended things with a lead of 2 to 1, but now, reality seemed very far from their expectations.

"We're counting on you for the group arena," Wang Ze said.

He Ming and Shen Jian were going to be a part of the group arena.

"How come I feel that Happy doesn't seem affected by the magazine?" Shen Jian gazed towards Happy's bench. Did they not look at those magazines after getting them?

"Wei Chen, Su Mucheng and Ye Xiu are all experienced and mature players. Being able to adjust their emotions isn't unexpected from them," He Ming analyzed, feigning calm. "In the group arena, Tang Rou will definitely come up. She'll be affected by it."

"What if she's not participating today?" Shen Jian asked.

"Er, then the other younger players would definitely be affected," He Ming said.

"There's also that Fang Rui," Shen Jian reminded him.

"Fang Rui isn't all that used to the Qi Master yet, so his strength will be reduced," He Ming assured.

"Yeah..." Shen Jian nodded. In reality, they had gone over these things who knows how many times before the match.

"I'll be going first, Jia Xing will take the middle and you'll be our last line of defense," He Ming announced the lineup at the end. Jia Xing was Miracle's Battle Mage player, his character was called Proudful Sorcery.

The short break between the individual competition and group arena passed quickly. Under the signal given by the big screen, He Ming stood, bracing himself and walking towards the stage. On Happy's side, the first player to go up wasn't Tang Rou who used to always lead the charge, but Fang Rui.

After seeing Fang Rui, He Ming felt a little more pressure. The other was an All-Star level player, after all.

Relax, he's still getting used to the class switch. Focus yourself, don't get anxious, you have plenty of chances.

He Ming recited to himself in his heart as he walked onto the stage and into Miracle's Competition Booth. On the other side, Fang Rui also entered his booth. The projection began to display images of the map that would be used for this match.

Wuchuan Path, a small map with a Wuxia style, was a map that didn't have many obstacles for the three pro players of Miracle. That was usually how group arena maps were chosen.

The two characters soon spawned at the two ends of Wuchuan Path. In the center of the map, there was a winery with a large flagpole outside the door. A golden character meaning "alcohol" was stitched into the accompanying red flag, fluttering in the wind, very eye catching. The winery proved its worth of having such a flag, though. The winery had three large courtyards, proudly taking up the center of the map. In terms of area, it made 90 percent of the map. Desolate muddy earth surrounds the winery, and when the winds blew, the sand and dust kicked up could turn the sky yellow.

With the winery in the center, the two characters would meet directly. The winery became a place that could be used to execute ambushes and sneak attacks. Knowing that his opponent was the Master of Dirty Play, Fang Rui, He Ming instantly felt like the winery was filled with danger. However, Miracle's three wouldn't be unfamiliar with a map they chose. And for this map, the focus of it was the structure of the winery. He Ming had his Elementalist, Rullo, approach the winery, but didn't charge inside. Though the two characters were the same distance apart from the winery, their movement speeds were different. If a Qi Master wanted to take this advantage, they could activate Qi Flowing Cloud and increase their speed, getting into the winery before an Elementalist.

Fang Rui would definitely use the terrain to his advantage. He Ming knew this with certainty. Thus, before he stepped into the winery, he stopped for moment and went over the entire structure of the winery clearly and completely. After making an organized judgement, He Ming's Elementalist, Rullo, walked into the winery from the side door.

Immediately inside was a massive courtyard with both square and long tables. The were cluttered with many small taverns. However, no NPCs would be in an arena map. A place that should've been bustling was devoid of life, giving an eerie feel.

He Ming didn't stay in the courtyard long, intending to have Rullo go further inside, when he suddenly heard a popping noise.

What was that?

He Ming's had very precise judgement, and he turned his view to the place the noise came from. All that was there was a wall, so the sound must've come from behind that wall.

Was it an accident? Or a trap?

The gears in He Ming's head turned quickly. Rullo walked over, but didn't immediately go through to the other side, but stuck close to the wall.

This doorway led to a rather narrow corridor. Thinking of this terrain, He Ming had an idea.

Rullo flashed into the doorway, staff waving and then, with a point, an Ice Wall appeared in the corridor. Only then did He Ming have Rullo dart inside.

"How cautious!" Fang Rui's taunt appeared in the channel. As expected, Fang Rui's Boundless Sea was inside the corridor. However, he had been trapped at the other end by the Ice Wall.

"If this is how it's going to be, you can't hit me either!" Fang Rui sent a rofl emoji, as if He Ming's Ice Wall was a really stupid decision.

He Ming remained unruffled by the other's trash talk. He was glad he was so careful. If not, then he might've already been ambushed by Fang Rui's Boundless Sea.

"If neither of us can hit the other, then I'm leaving!" Fang Rui said as Boundless Sea turned to leave.

How could He Ming let this dirty playing opponent go so easily after catching him? Ice Wall could block movement and attacks, but it couldn't block an Elementalist's control over the elements.

Rullo raised a hand and elemental power began to gather in the air, curling up from the ground, eventually gathering in Rullo's mind. Skill: Absolute Focus. After activation, it would turn the next skill into an instant cast.

After that, he pointed his staff and the level 70 Elementalist ultimate, Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire, was activated through the Ice Wall. Fang Rui, who was in the middle of his escape, realized something was wrong, and hurriedly had Boundless Sea roll backwards, taking a small amount of damage. When he looked again, the lightning and fire had completely blocked off his escape route. Charging through wasn't a good idea. Under the player's control, if a target tried to simply charge through Heavenly

Thunder Earthen Lightning, then it wouldn't just be damage they'd take, but they'd also be rooted, so in the end they still couldn't go anywhere.

"How shameless! Take this!" Fang Rui sent as Boundless Sea turned and dashed forwards, his palm striking the Ice Wall.

If Ice Wall wasn't destroyed by an attack, then it would remain for quite a long time, even longer than Heaven Lightning Earthen Fire. However, Fang Rui didn't want Boundless Sea to stay here and admire the scenery, waiting for time to pass. If he were trapped in this small space and let He Ming chant a few more AoE spells, then he wouldn't have a chance at dodging.

Fang Rui didn't mind using this powerful skill to immediately shatter the Ice Wall.

Chapter 1204: Fang Rui, Figured Out

Pa pa pa pa!

Boundless Sea's Flash Burst smashed into the ice. Spider-web like cracks instantly spread, and in the next second, the ice wall shattered into tiny bits of ice.

But by this time, He Ming's Rullo had finished casting another spell.

Thunder Apocalypse!

Lightning crashed down from above, one bolt after the other. He Ming had calculated Fang Rui's options and positioned Thunder Apocalypse such that Boundless Sea was perfectly centered inside.

Dodge?

With the denseness and speed of the lightning bolts, dodging was extremely difficult.

Reinforced Iron Bones?

It would increase his defences and give him Super Armor, but lightning bolts produced a short paralysis effect, completely different from the hit stun from physical attacks. Reinforced Iron Bone's Super Armor would not be enough to move freely inside Thunder Apocalypse.

Qi Guard!

Fang Rui chose to use this Qi Master defensive skill. Boundless Sea's two hands traced an arc from the top of his head to his sides, forming a defensive qi barrier.

However, with Thunder Apocalypse striking the shield, the Qi Guard wouldn't last long. It was unable to ward off the destructive might of Thunder Apocalypse. Moreover, this purely defensive position gave He Ming time to cast another spell.

Blizzard!

It wasn't enough time to cast a powerful spell. He Ming had good judgement and cast a relatively fast spell, layering Blizzard on top of Thunder Apocalypse.

Boundless Sea's Qi Guard shattered in an instant.

Piercing Lightning!

He Ming didn't hesitate and threw out an instant-cast. The distance between Rullo and Boundless Sea was extremely close. For an Elementalist with weak close combat abilities, it could be considered a very dangerous distance, but it was because of this short distance that Fang Rui could do nothing about this Piercing Lightning. Lightning element spells were the fastest spells.

A bolt of lightning pierced through Boundless Sea. The knockback from magic attacks should not be looked down upon. Piercing Lightning pushed Boundless Sea back a step, and Thunder Apocalypse and Blizzard had yet to fade away. The elemental spell formation set down by He Ming was giving Fang Rui an extremely difficult time.

He Ming activated Mobile Cast. In the end, Elementalists needed to maintain a distance away from their opponents. Before the two DoT spells completely dissipated, Rullo retreated while casting his next spell.

And Boundless Sea? Paralyzed by Thunder Apocalypse and slowed by Blizzard, Fang Rui didn't have any good ways to escape from his predicament. However, he couldn't let He Ming continue casting spells. Forcefully eating the damage and seizing the gap between DoT ticks was one way.

Qi Blade!

He Ming hadn't expected Fang Rui to be able to find an opening to let out an attack while under the barrage of two DoT skills. Even though he had yet to fully switch classes, his ability to grasp openings showed why Fang Rui was an All-Star.

Having activated Mobile Cast and in the middle of a cast, Rullo's movement speed was very slow. Qi Blade was a rather difficult skill to dodge too, so He Ming immediately canceled his skill and cast a Teleport.

Rullo suddenly disappeared. However, Fang Rui's reaction speed was quick. As the master of playing dirty, his first thought was that the opponent was behind him.

Boundless Sea turned around. Sure enough, Rullo was behind his back and had thrown a Fireball at him.

At this point, Thunder Apocalypse had ended, but Blizzard still remained. Although Blizzard's damage could not be compared to Thunder Apocalypse, the slow effect was a headache. Boundless Sea's movements were slowed, and He Ming had boldly teleported to a short distance between them and attacked. No matter how fast Fang Rui reacted, with his character unable to respond, he had no way of dodging.

Bang bang bang!

The Fireball struck Boundless Sea and exploded. Fire element spells dealt the most damage out of all four elements. Fireball was only a low-level skill, but its explosiveness couldn't be ignored.

Rullo wasn't close to being done yet. He Ming was extremely focused, carefully and attentively watching Boundless Sea's situation, planning every step of his offensive.

After Fireball was a Dark Missile.

It was a low-level dark element spell. Dark element spells were neither fast nor strong, but they had strange effects.

Dark Missile followed closely behind Fireball and stabbed into Boundless Sea.

The dark element wasn't Rullo's main element. This Dark Missile was only at level one, so its damage was limited. However, its effect still came into effect. After being struck by Dark Missile, Boundless Sea spun 180 degrees.

It was just a turn of the body, but in a high-level match, it was an exploitable detail.

Having your back turned to the opponent could be considered as a short Blind as you wouldn't be able to know the opponent's next action.

No matter how fast you turned, you would always be a half beat behind. Fang Rui was an experienced veteran though. He wouldn't make such a rookie mistake. It didn't matter what was going on behind him; he immediately had Boundless Sea roll forward.

Unfortunately, this sort of experienced response wasn't outside of He Ming's expectations.

Elemental Power!

During this tight window, He Ming had Rullo cast the lowest-leveled Elementalist skill.

It was the slowest of all 24 knock up skills because it required a cast time. However, of the 24 knock ups, it was one of two long-ranged knock ups. As long as it was cast and the target was within its range, there was no way of defending against it.

In exchange for the downside of needing to cast the spell, this Elementalist knock up was given a powerful upside. Boundless Sea was inside Elemental Power's range. As soon as he finished rolling, he was lifted into the air.

Raging Flames!

A pillar of fire erupted from beneath Boundless Sea, swallowing him whole. Rullo continued to wave his staff. From the light gathering on his staff, the next spell had to be a powerful one. Rays of light burst forth, radiating waves of red fire. The magic condensed onto the tip of the staff and then ignited fiercely. The flames danced and swayed, letting out the cry of a bird.

New Elementalist Level 75 skill: Fire Bird!

Bang!

A blazing fire bird flew towards Boundless Sea, who was falling down after being knocked high into the air by Raging Flames, and engulfed him.

Boundless Sea burned as he flew backwards and crashed into a wall behind him. His health fell at a visible rate. The Fireball left an imprint on the wall, slowly dissipating from the burning Boundless Sea. Fire element spells didn't have much else other than overwhelming damage.

This fight was truly surprising.

Even though Fang Rui had switched classes, he had a shining All-Star title on him. No one would dare to underestimate him. During this period of adjustment, his Qi Master had been doing quite well too. Even though there were comments about his problems here and there, Fang Rui's win rate during these past eight rounds was quite good.

And now it looked like his honeymoon period was over!

After eight rounds of observation, Happy's rookies had yet to crash into a wall, but Fang Rui had already been completely seen through. Fang Rui wasn't able to display his dirtiness this fight and after being caught by He Ming, he was being beaten senselessly. At this rate, He Ming would achieve a perfect win.

The applause from the crowd was thunderous. After losing three individual competition rounds, there was finally a show worth seeing.

I really am a useless dim sum!

Fang Rui was sullen. In the previous press conference, Ye Xiu had given him a snide remark calling him a useless dim sum. He knew that Ye Xiu was just joking, but starting from the previous round, Fang Rui knew that his rhythm had been completely seen through. In face of Wang Jiexi, he wasn't able to find even a chance of winning. And in this match, He Ming, who was clearly a level lower than Wang Jiexi, was completely crushing him too.

Fang Rui was the master of playing dirty, but just because he was dirty didn't mean he had no pride. Right now, he was feeling wounded. Switching classes could be a reasonable excuse, but he didn't want to lower his expectations for himself because of this excuse. If he lost his heart, he would only lose again and again.

"You really have some skill..."

After being roasted into a half-dead state by the Fire Bird, Boundless Sea had dropped to the bottom of the wall, but Fang Rui still typed these words in chat.

He Ming ignored them. After Fire Bird, Rullo drew an Ice Line, trapping Boundless Sea in the center. Afterwards, he calmly started casting a new spell. There was still some distance between his Elementalist and Fang Rui's Qi Master. Rullo was sitting comfortably outside Boundless Sea's attack range. If Ice Line wasn't triggered, it would last for 12 seconds. 12 seconds was more than enough time for any spell, so just obediently sit there in prison!

He Ming felt pleased with himself. He was very satisfied with his playing this fight. This is the way to victory, right?

Bright light gathered onto his staff again, clearly another large spell.

"Are you addicted to high-level skills?" Fang Rui chattered.

"Take a look at this move!" Fang Rui sent a shouting emoji.

What move? He Ming's mind rapidly turned. He was at a completely safe distance. No Qi Master skill could reach him. Qi Masters had no such skill, nor did any of Fighter classes. He Ming had very carefully considered everything beforehand.

"QIGONG BLAST!!!" Fang Rui shouted the skill he used for morale support. Boundless Sea flipped over his palm and placed it on the wall behind him.

The imprint burned onto the wall by the Fire Bird crumbled. With a boom, an ugly dog hole was split open.

"Come at me!"

Fang Rui shouted in the chat as he had Boundless Sea run through the dog hole.

Chapter 1205: The Labor Pains of Class Transition

He Ming was dumbstruck.

Rullo's fearless chanting of powerful spells instantly became purposeless. That ugly doghole seemed to split the entire world into two.

Boundless Sea had vanished. That doghole didn't seem that big, yet he had very precisely darted right through. Fang Rui's mechanics were extremely precise, but how he got so good at worming through holes was a mystery. He Ming didn't know of any training with this sort of content, and he believed that Wind Howl wouldn't have something like that either.

His wonderful lead, broken, by this doghole? He Ming couldn't accept that. He immediately cancelled the high-level skill he was casting and hastily adjusted his character's position. Though the hole wasn't big, an Elementalist could utilize their elemental power so long as they could see.

But when he got there and looked at that hole...

Complete darkness. He couldn't see anything on the other side.

He Ming's face clouded over. That bastard had blocked the hole? What sort of technique was this! That was way too low, wasn't it!?

The structure of the map quickly flashed through He Ming's mind, and he immediately brought up what the terrain was on the other side in his mind. If he went around through this corridor, then that would be too far. He'd have no idea where Fang Rui would stash his Boundless Sea by the time he got there. The fastest way was still to retrace his steps out of the corridor and climb over the wall!

He Ming immediately came to a decision. Rullo hastily retreated backwards. Just looking at the hole made him irritated. Swiftly, Rullo's staff raised and he chanted a Fireball.

Boom....

The Fireball accurately flew through the doghole, sending waves of fire inside and smashing against whatever was blocking it.

He Ming didn't want to waste time here. He had randomly flung a skill just to vent a little before Rullo hastily dashed away. But suddenly, his character seemed to slip from his control and was flung towards the doghole.

Cloud Grasping Fist!

He Ming immediately realized what it was, but apart from seething about this dirty play, he couldn't do anything about it.

Rullo was flung horizontally towards the doghole, but naturally wouldn't be able to fly right through. In the end, he crashed against the entrance, his health even slipping a little.

Pulse Break: Break Intelligence.

Flash Burst!

Boundless Sea's hand came through the hole and these two skills were consecutively blasted onto Rullo. With this Qi attack, even the walls were shaking. Then, both of Boundless Sea's hands came through, grabbing onto Rullo. With a yank, the parts of the wall around the doghole shifted out, almost to the point of shattering. The enlarged doghole was enough for Rullo to get through, and he was immediately thrown to the ground by a Back Throw from Boundless Sea.

The crowd was dumbstruck. The big screen wasn't even sure which shot to show this from, so it just ended up replaying this moment from several different angles at once.

Rullo, having clambered to his feet, had already been completely closed in on by Boundless Sea. Teleport was still on cooldown, so he couldn't pull away. Qi Master's had the weakest close combat ability out of the four Fighter classes, but it was better than Elementalists. Now, Fang Rui didn't bother with any tricks and had Boundless Sea teach Rullo a lesson with his fists.

No, it wasn't exactly with his fists. Qi Master skills were primarily palm strikes and jabs, very rarely punches. When they connected, it seemed light, without much strength, but they played with the inside of the body. Those light strikes injected internal energy, and the damage it dealt wasn't second to any physical punch.

With the slaps and hits, He Ming's Rullo didn't look like he was losing in a very ugly way. On the contrary, all the dust that had gotten on him when he was thrown to the ground had been struck clean. At the same time, his health bar was also being cleaned.

He Ming didn't want to be slapped to death by Boundless Sea like this. Fang Rui's Qi Master was still riddled with holes because he wasn't familiar enough with his class, and he was hindered by the habits he had spent years cultivating as a Thief player. Now, when he was attacking, he'd show a lot of openings when comboing. This was no secret. It even appeared in the news!

And what He Ming had to do was to not miss the opportunity when it came!

Rullo swung his staff. Even Elementalists could swing their staffs for normal attacks. He Ming fought back as much as he could. He couldn't just stand there against Fang Rui's palm strikes like a sitting duck!

His efforts weren't for nothing. When the dust on his robes had mostly been slapped clean, Boundless Sea finally stumbled.

Piercing Lightning!

This instant cast spell blasted forth. At such a close distance, Fang Rui wouldn't have time to dodge no matter how quickly he reacted. Boundless Sea, struck by Piercing Lightning, went numb.

In that short time, Rullo once again activated Absolute Focus and then followed up with a cast-free level 75 ice element ultimate: Absolute Zero.

They were simply too close. Although Piercing Lightning's short paralysis had passed, Fang Rui didn't have the time to escape Absolute Zero's range. Instantly, Boundless Sea became an ice statue. One of his legs was still in midair, suspended in his fleeing position.

He Ming let out a breath of relief.

Absolute Zero had the longest freezing time out of all ice element skills of the 24 classes. When maxed out, it would freeze for up to 8 seconds.

He Ming didn't rush, having Rullo pull away. In 8 seconds, he didn't rush to attack, because attacks would reduce the freeze time of Absolute Zero. In a one on one, it was best to use these 8 seconds to prepare to launch an offense.

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea maintained that rather silly pose, forced to watch as He Ming's Rullo escaped to a position and distance suited for an Elementalist's attacks.

Fang Rui was helpless.

Like a rookie that met the Rookie Block, he had met the labor pains of transitioning between classes. He had met it last round and hit it this round too. Even after using his masterful dirty play to save himself from the torrent of attacks and complete a counterattack, he still revealed an opening that the opponent was able to grasp.

He had been too greedy...

Fang Rui criticized himself. With how well he was settling in, it was better for him to just use simple and fast methods to stall his opponents and chip away at them, like with Zhou Guangyi. The problem was that such simple methods would be easily seen through by pro players. Fang Rui didn't have an infinite amount of tricks like that to use. The current him was at his wit's end.

Fuck, if only I were still a Thief...

No, he had already come this far, how could he still have thought like that? Having these thoughts meant that his determination and will weren't enough! Now that he had switched classes, he had to completely become a Qi Master. The tricks he had as a Thief couldn't be employed anymore.

Couldn't be employed?

After confirming this to himself, he suddenly had a doubt.

Could they really not be employed anymore?

A second doubt rose from his heart.

What a joke. Thief and Qi Master, two completely different classes that had no similarities whatsoever.

The classes might not have similarities, but... what about the thought process? Could the Thief's playstyle and strategies not be used by a Qi Master at all?

Imagine if he were a Thief, who had acquired the skills of a Qi Master.

Thinking from this angle, Fang Rui's eyes suddenly lit up.

What if he were still a Thief, but had a bunch of Qi Master skills?

These thoughts boiled in his head, a movement of ideas that not even Absolute Zero could freeze.

"It's about time." He Ming, advantage back in his hands, typed in the chat. It felt pretty good to have this sort of advantage against an All-Star level player. He took note of Absolute Zero's timing and, without wasting any time at all, a rather long chant was finished and a skill flew out!

Fire Storm!

Elementalists had ice, fire, light and dark element spells, but because they only had a limited number of skill points, they couldn't learn all the skills of all the elements. Usually they would choose two elements to focus on and spent their leftover points on some helpful skills from the other two elements.

He Ming's Elementalist focused on light and fire. The fastest light and the fiercest fire. Fire and light could be called the most offense oriented combination for Elementalists. Rullo's equipment naturally would prioritize buffing light and fire. As for Ice and Darkness, He Ming mostly used them for their effects.

Now that Boundless Sea had been frozen by Absolute Zero, he was about to receive the fiercest attack.

It was unfortunate that the strongest of his skills, Fire Bird, was still on cooldown. He Ming didn't have many options.

The Fire Storm whirled in and Boundless Sea quickly got out of Absolute Zero's effect, but at the same time, Lightning Hell fell from the skies.

For a fire and light Elementalist like Rullo, how could he lack the level 75 spell, Lightning Hell?

And this ultimate of light element spells had inherited the most distinct characteristic of its element: a quick attack with a short chant.

Lightning Hell had to be chanted, but the chant went by like a weak, low level spell.

The time it took for Fire Storm to devour the effects of Absolute Zero was enough to finish Lightning Hell's chant. A bolt of lightning fell just as Absolute Zero faded. Boundless Sea had no way of dodging.

One bolt, two bolts, three bolts, four bolts...

A full six bolts of lightning struck. The lightning bolts actually didn't strike soon after one another, but, for Lightning Hell, so long as one struck, the target would be locked on, and the rest would be directed towards the target by the system.

Boundless Sea, after taking the first strike, had then taken all five other strikes.

After two ultimates, Boundless Sea had once again taken heavy damage. The damage from the attacks he sent at Rullo, almost like he was patting the dust from him, was easily returned full force.

"Want to run?"

Seeing Boundless Sea darting through after escaping from Lightning Hell, Rullo pointed his staff and a Fireball sped out.

Boundless Sea practically lunged forwards to dodge the Fireball, then coming to a roll, jump, crouch, then roll. Boundless Sea rapidly moved forth using this weird method.

He Ming was stunned.

This was quite an unusual way of movement, but you couldn't call it weird. This was actually rather common.

Thieves liked to move in this way. Since traps were the main skills of Thieves, they had to crouch to set the traps, so the character would use crouching movements and maintain low set movements like rolling. Staying close to the ground allowed Thieves to maintain the form they needed to set traps. It was both convenient and discrete.

But this set of movements for these skills had appeared on a Qi Master?

"Hahahaha, are you going crazy from longing for your Thief?" He Ming sent a rofl emoji, yet that was when he suddenly realized that something was pulsing in the air.

Qi Blade!

Chapter 1206: The Thieving Qi Master

Qi Blade!

One could easily imagine how blurry a cluster of qi without light effects could be when it streaked across the air. One needed to observe the character's movements to predict and dodge this skill, otherwise, it would be difficult to get a grasp of the distance.

However, He Ming failed to notice Boundless Sea's Qi Blade movement, so the cluster of qi arrived before Rullo's face.

It's too late to dodge!

Rullo was struck by this silent Qi Blade and stumbled. Most of the crowd wasn't observant enough to discover the Qi Blade and thought Rullo's shiver was some kind of starting action to cast a spell.

Boundless Sea, still rolling on the ground, leapt up into the air almost around the same time as the attack hit. By the time he pushed both of his palms forward, a portion of the gathered qi had already shot out.

Sky Piercing Strike!

The powerful qi attack billowed the dust on the ground and blasted right into Rullo's head. It wasn't as if He Ming didn't react. He had tried to dodge it, but he was too late. He thought the distance between him and Boundless Sea had been pretty safe, and he felt confident in handling any Qi Master attacks with ease. However, he soon realized his mistake when the Qi Blade was right in front of his face. Even a powerful skill like the Sky Piercing Strike was covering another attack?

What sort of fighting style was this? Was it related to the movement style he used as a Thief?

He Ming was an experienced pro player; even though he didn't have a complete understanding of what Fang Rui was doing, he was able to find the key idea. All of this rooted from the movement style of a Thief.

This particular movement method not only allowed the Thief to plant their traps quicker, but also to conceal them better. Otherwise, any idiot would be able to figure out that a Thief was planting a trap when they suddenly bobbed down from running to dig up a hole. What use was a trap if its location was known?

Fang Rui's Boundless Sea was using this exact same movement method. Even though he had no traps to plant, he achieved the effect that Thieves wanted: his attack was like a trap; it would stay hidden until it suddenly popped up.

This was Fang Rui's strength.

The former Number One Thief, Fang Rui, had impeccable control over this sort of rhythm.

He was now applying this to the Qi Master. Despite having only used two skills, he felt that they were effortless.

Stupid! Why didn't I think of this earlier?

Among all the long ranged attacks, were there any attacks that were as easy to conceal as the Qi Master's qi attacks? They had no sound and the visual effects weren't flashy. This was just like a moving trap. The Qi Master was truly dirty! Such secretive methods were too satisfying!

After being enlightened and changing his perspective, Fang Rui interpreted the honorable and righteous Qi Master class in this dirty way. No Qi Master through the course of Glory had interpreted their class in such a way.

After the Sky Piercing Strike, Boundless Sea followed it up with a leap backwards. However, this leap was towards Rullo's direction.

"What is he doing?" Rullo nearly flipped over from the blast of Sky Piercing Strike. After he finally straightened up again with difficulty, He Ming saw Boundless Sea jump backwards towards him. Is that his back?

Whenever Boundless Sea landed, he squatted, and it seemed like Boundless Sea's hand was hitting the ground?

Shit!

His camera shook. Although He Ming didn't do anything, Rullo was tossed into the air.

Seismic Throw! Fang Rui had hid it with his back, why was he so dirty!

The target within Seismic Throw's range wouldn't simply bounce around like one would in a trampoline. Qi was involved in this quake, so all the targets within range would be overturned.

When Rullo fell, He Ming immediately performed a Quick Recover. After landing on the ground, Boundless Sea rolled. As he turned around and got up, he pushed both of his hands out. The Qi Drill rushed towards Rullo, who was still getting up.

I can only Teleport!

He Ming's mind was clear and knew that only this skill could help him avoid this attack. He immediately cast it, but he was still too slow. The spiralling qi drilled through Rullo, whose body spun with it. With a boom, he was pinned to the wall behind him. Fang Rui finally took revenge for the Fire Bird that had blasted him against the wall.

This guy!

He Ming was getting a little nervous. Fang Rui's fighting style suddenly changed from the style that he had observed for the previous eight rounds. It was rather common to take the advantage to attack while transitioning between rolls and jumps. However, no one was as thorough as Fang Rui when it came to using all of these postures just to hide his attacks.

When he finally noticed the Qi Blade, it was already in front of him.

When he noticed the Sky Piercing Strike, a portion of the qi had already come out.

When Fang Rui launched Seismic Throw, Fang Rui's back was facing him to conceal his attack.

As for Qi Drill, the concealing jumps for the Seismic Throw also became a method to close up the distance for this skill. Furthermore, he could complete the inputs for the skill while rolling, so he could launch it when he got up. Even if the Elementalist had Teleport, he couldn't use it because he couldn't make his move in time.

How were these attacks of a Qi Master? These were literally traps a Thief would set down one after another for the opponent. The only difference was that the traps weren't waiting for the opponent to trigger it because the current "traps" were more proactive.

Boundless Sea was moving around once again. Those rolls and jumps of a Thief made him seem like a hound as he leapt towards Rullo.

Ice Walls!

He Ming immediately controlled Rullo, who just fell from the wall, to launch this skill among the remaining skills he had left with the ice element. He needed this to block the opponent because he... needed time to think!

He Ming had never seen this Qi Master's fighting style before, so he couldn't interpret and counter it immediately. He needed more time to observe and analyze Fang Rui's attacking methods.

The Ice Walls cut off Boundless Sea, who couldn't attack Rullo directly. Take a detour? Then this would only turn into a childish game where two people surrounded a table and ran in circles.

Last time, the person who was in panic was him, but this time, it was the opponent, right?

Don't panic, I still have the advantage.

He Ming looked at both of the characters' health and recovered his confidence. In terms of health, he still had the advantage.

But what should I do next?

Boundless Sea was nearly done smashing his Ice Walls into pieces, but He Ming didn't have his character do anything.

"You can't run." Fang Rui sent a smirking emoji. The Ice Wall shattered at this instant, but Rullo also happened to have disappeared.

"I predicted this much!" Boundless Sea continued to jump backwards. His back became the defense to concentrate his Qi once again. However, without waiting for him to turn around, a bolt of lightning shot through his back.

Boundless Sea, who was still jumping backwards, froze in midair and fell.

The audiences were stupefied.

Frankly speaking, they didn't really understand what was going on this fight.

That was because normal players who watched from the bird's eye view without enough skills weren't able to experience what sort of effect Fang Rui's changed style had made. For them, He Ming should be able to dodge all of these attacks, but he was still hit.

This was like Vanishing Step, dead angle strategy, or false combos. Only players who were placed in the situation would know the difficulties that they were facing.

He Ming was like this right now.

However, this was soon followed by raising the Ice Walls, Boundless Sea charging ahead, and Rullo moving with Teleport. Boundless Sea then held up his back and sent himself towards Rullo's direction without bothering to look back.

Was he looking for death?

Everyone thought in such manner.

Boundless Sea was indeed struck down by Rullo's spells.

"Sigh, it seems that I've committed a lowly mistake..." Fang Rui turned around. He was so deeply absorbed in figuring out ways he could secretly launch his attacks that he forgot that since he was sneaking around, he needed to ensure that he wasn't attacked by the opponent.

His backward jumps this time was too careless and predictable.

The audience thought Fang Rui was seeking death, but at that instant, He Ming was very nervous. Although he had Rullo immediately launch a Piercing Lightning, he truly feared that Boundless Sea had been hiding another skill, so before Piercing Lightning was released, that skill would have struck him first.

However, that didn't happen!

The Piercing Lightning shot Boundless Sea down, and He Ming's heart was at peace. He started to make use of this opportunity at once. Spells were set up on a grand scale, and Boundless Sea was stuck in it once again.

"Die!"

As he watched Boundless Sea's decreasing health, He Ming felt some sort of urge he never had before. It was as if he would lose if he failed to finish off his opponent in this wave of attacks. Even if his character's health was still that much ahead, but the thick sense of danger still enveloped around him tightly.

Glory!

The two large letters finally popped up onto the screen. He Ming felt as if he was released from great burden. No matter what happened, he still managed to take this round with a decent outcome. Rullo still had over half of his health.

Fang Rui, who lost, left the stage, but he wasn't dispirited. Although he lost, he saw a miraculous future ahead. If this weren't a formal match, he would definitely continue to shamelessly squat at the computer for another round with the opponent. He wanted to quickly confirm whether this future was possible.

After seeing Fang Rui's face flushed with pride, his teammates saved their thoughts of comforting him.

"It seems that you've discovered something?" Ye Xiu asked. The others weren't surprised at Fang Rui's attitude despite his loss since they had listened to Ye Xiu's interpretation of Fang Rui's sudden adjustment in middle of the match.

"Yup, do you think it has any future?" Fang Rui humbly consulted him. The person before him was the master of all classes. He was proficient in both the Qi Master and Thief, so he should be able to give out pertinent suggestions.

"Seems pretty good, you just have to avoid those sort of disgusting mistakes," Ye Xiu said.

"That was only an accident." Fang Rui took that matter as an exception. At the time, he was so deeply enthralled by his new discovery that he allowed such a careless mistake to occur. Such mistakes wouldn't occur again, so after receiving Ye Xiu's approval, Fang Rui became even more excited.

"I really want to investigate it now, who's the next one? Quickly finish the match! I'm in a hurry." Fang Rui yelled.

Mo Fan stood up, but didn't show any reaction towards Fang Rui's shouts. He only walked quietly towards the stage.

"Walk faster!" Fang Rui yelled at his back.

Mo Fan's figure distinctly froze, but then, in a very awkward manner, he actually started to walk faster...

Chapter 1207: Charging Ninja

He Ming, having defeated Fang Rui, let out a breath of relief. It wasn't just relief for this matchup, but the overall situation of the group arena.

Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, Fang Rui, the three All-Star level players had all come up already. That meant that the rest of the group arena only consisted of the rookies they had picked up.

He Ming wasn't underestimating these rookies, but he definitely doubted that they would be harder to deal with than those three All-Stars. He had sent off Fang Rui with quite the lead. With only two rookies left for Happy, Miracle was already on their way to victory, right?

Just as he was basking in his triumph, the opponent's character had appeared on screen.

Deception... that Ninja that got a red card?

This was the deepest impression Mo Fan had left on people after eight rounds. Apart from that, he hadn't won a single match, so, naturally, people wouldn't pay that much attention to him.

As for He Ming, he had met Deception quite long ago. In the online game, when they were fighting Ye Xiu, Deception had been one of Ye Xiu's helpers.

Yes, helper, that's what He Ming thought. He didn't know all the specifics of what had happened between Deception and Happy.

He remembered this guy. He Ming's impression of Deception stopped there though.

Apart from that, he knew that getting a red card meant he didn't understand the rules of pro matches. Glory wasn't football or basketball. It was very, very rare that someone would manage to violate the rules, never mind get a red card. He had yet to win a match too, so he wasn't all that strong.

A helper of Ye Xiu's who didn't know the rules very well and was average in strength.

That was He Ming's full understanding of Mo Fan, and in this week of preparations, Mo Fan wasn't their main focus. If he had to be categorized into important and unimportant, then he'd be thrown to the unimportant side.

Now, this unimportant guy was coming onstage.

He Ming readied himself with his spirits high. From a basic overview, he could tell that Mo Fan was a very patient player, who often relied on ambushes.

Yes... That's Happy for you.

He Ming couldn't help but think.

The match soon began. The map was still Wuchuan Path. There was no point in comparing his speed to a Ninja's, it would definitely be Deception who got there first. This time, He Ming decided not to bother rushing. His Rullo walked over slowly. Wasn't his opponent a very patient player? Then let him wait some more! He Ming was very relaxed.

But soon enough, when he still had some distance to go from the winery in the center of Wuchuan Path, He Ming saw Deception.

What on earth?

He Ming was surprised for a moment. Shouldn't this person have stashed himself in a corner of the winery to observe in silence and wait for a chance to ambush? That's what he had always done before, so how come he's changed his strategy today?

So what if he did?

He Ming didn't look too much into it. Mo Fan truly wasn't a name that could make him feel pressured.

Deception charged and Rullo met him.

Electric Ring.

He Ming first had Rullo put this skill on himself. Ninjas were very likely to close in with a skill like Shadow Clone. The presence of this skill was often worrying. Afterwards, Rullo fired off a Fireball. Starting with low level skills was practically a universal traditional starting strategy.

Deception quickly changed directions, dodging the Fireball, and his hands then began rapidly moving in front of his chest, forming hand seals. He Ming was stunned for a moment and couldn't help but think of the last match. A Ninja's hand seals were a very exposed way of activating skills because every Ninja skill was triggered through a different set of hand seals. One could figure out the skill through looking at the hand seals. However, since the speed of the hand seals was directly related to mechanical skill and hand speed, if a player was fast enough, then the hand seals would be nothing more than a blur. It'd be impossible to tell if they had bent one finger or two and therefore impossible to accurately determine the skill. They could only guess from there.

With a pro player's hand speed, they could all reach that standard. Mo Fan's mechanics were pretty good too. His hands blurred, leaving a few afterimages, then the seals were completed. Instantly, over ten copies of Deception appeared.

Ninjutsu: Shadow Dance.

His first move was a level 70 skill. If this were the All-Star level player Li Hua, He Ming would feel surprised, but this player was just a rookie who not only failed to earn a single victory in the past eight rounds, he also didn't even know the rules clearly. To He Ming, there was only one way to describe this: childish.

A bunch of shadow clones charged at Rullo. He Ming didn't give ground, and elemental power immediately gathered in Rullo's mind with an Absolute Focus, before instantly casting the level 70 high-level skill: Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire.

The bunch of Deceptions were immediately enveloped in an array of lightning and fire. He Ming let go and went wild, directly having Rullo use a high-level skill to neutralize Deception's high-level skill.

The shadow clones were destroyed one by one under Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire, disappearing into smoke.

Five, four, three...

He Ming silently counted. Shadow Dance wasn't like Shadow Steps with real and fake forms. It could be said that they were all real forms. When the skill ended or when the shadow clones were killed one by one, the last one left would be the Ninja's real body.

One!

He Ming locked onto the last Deception and stopped controlling the Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire. He was preparing to follow up with some new skills, throwing forth a new wave of attacks. Who would have expected that before Rullo even finished casting, the last Deception would be killed just like that too.

How!

He Ming was really shocked this time. If this one was killed too, then that meant there were still clones present. Where were they? Why didn't he see them?

Rullo whirled around, turning his head. After looking at his surroundings, he didn't see anything.

He Ming then realized something, but, too late...

Underground Tunneling Technique!

Deception shot right out of the ground, his ninjato striking Rullo's chin, yet very unrealistically it did not cut his face off, but threw him into the air.

Ninjutsu: Bird Fall!

Deception curled up in midair, darting higher. When he stretched out his legs again, he directly kicked off of Rullo's shoulders. After using the jump, he then executed a Neck Bind. The rope attached to the hilt of the ninjato had already wrapped itself around Rullo's neck. Deception landed lightly, his arms crossed in front of his chest, binding Rullo behind him and dragging him to the ground.

He Ming, who hadn't thought much of Deception, panicked. These three skills, like a falcon swooping on a rising hare, didn't leave any openings whatsoever. In the previous second he was being ambushed and in the next, he had been bound and thrown to the ground. His character hadn't been killed yet, but the abruptness of the Ninja's assassin-like skills made He Ming's heart leap into his throat.

After falling to the ground, he turned his head and saw Deception rapidly forming hand seals. He didn't have the time to look closely, hurriedly having Rullo roll sideways to a stand. Several streams of water shot out, a Hundred Streams just missing He Ming.

He Ming was just starting to feel relieved when Deception struck with a Flame Cut, ninjato ablaze.

Jump back, back, back!

A skill like Teleportation required too many inputs, so He Ming could only jump backwards. The Flame Cut swept down, almost striking. Rullo jumped thrice before finally stopping.

"How excessive," Ye Xiu exclaimed from the sidelines. To dodge that skill, one jump was enough. He Ming had panicked and made unnecessary actions. The extra two jumps didn't do anything to get him to a safer distance. On the contrary, because of the excessive nature of these actions, he was unable to dodge the next attack.

By the time the extra two jumps were over, Deception's Storm Shuriken had already arrived in front of him. No matter how fast he jumped, he couldn't beat the speed of a skill.

It was too late for He Ming to take back those two jumps. Rullo was sent flying by the Storm Shuriken. Deception charged forwards in pursuit, and threw another Shuriken before using Shadow Clone technique, sending his real body right next to Rullo. Then came a Cicada Shell Double Slash, the force of the two karate chops successively struck Rullo. Rullo hadn't even flown the full distance he was meant to when he got struck down by Deception halfway.

What is going on?

He Ming was rather confused. Against Fang Rui, he had met a style Fang Rui had never used; against Mo Fan, he also met a fury that had never been displayed by this player in the past eight rounds. Wasn't this person meant to be a player who played dirty, hiding in the shadows, waiting for a chance to strike? How come he had become so fierce when it came to him?

Rullo was once again knocked flat on his back. He hurriedly rolled to a stand, but Deception's attack came once again.

Teleport!

He Ming didn't think too much, getting his character to pull away first. However, Teleportation didn't actually take the user very far. Just as Rullo landed, he turned to look and saw Deception's hand seals forming constantly, taking one step out and somehow managing to immediately close their distance.

Ninjutsu: Ground Shrinking Technique!

Ninjutsu: Moon-Slaying Sakura!

With one step forward, before even entering attack range, Deception activated the Level 75 high-level skill Moon-Slaying Sakura. Deception's ninjato transformed into broken cherry blossoms, swirling forth. He Ming didn't know what to do. Run? Not possible. Dodge? He had just used his dodge skill.

Ice Wall!

Seeing that the other still had some distance to go, He Ming hurriedly summoned a wall of ice in front of himself. Deception had already arrived by then, and the thin petals imbedded themselves into the wall. Instantly, a crack could be heard, and a hole was made in the Ice Wall.

Though it was just a hole, the Ice Wall counted as having been broken through by the system. Deception didn't avoid it, directly charging forward and shattering the rest of the Ice Wall. His ninjato had stabbed Rullo already and broken cherry blossoms flew by, slashing open flowers of blood. In that moment, it seemed that Rullo was being torn apart.

What on earth was this?

He Ming really, truly, didn't understand. How come, when it came to him, none of the opponents were like what he researched? Against Fang Rui, he was in the lead, he had the advantage, then since Fang Rui didn't use all those new tricks at first, He Ming won.

This time, Mo Fan was different from the very start. Fiercely attacking, relentlessly attacking, not giving a single chance for retaliation. He Ming was an Elementalist. What Elementalist were most afraid of was someone closing in and not giving them any chance to pull away. This time, he couldn't shake the other off at all. What suspense was there left?

Mo Fan finally gained a win. A complete and straightforward win.

Chapter 1208: The Issue of Communication

"Hey! This kid's really playing this match with spirit!" In Happy's player area, everyone was overjoyed.

Mo Fan was still that silent, still that uncommunicative, so even though they chose him to go onstage, no one knew how he planned to fight. But this match, he won beautifully. Seeing He Ming's cold face as he came offstage on Miracle's side, it was clear how depressing that match had been for him.

"Not bad at all." Happy's players showered him with praise, but sadly this was the group arena, so for now the victorious Mo Fan had no way of receiving everyone's congratulations. As for how the next battle would play out, no one knew.

Looking at Miracle's player area, they saw their second player standing up.

Jia Xing, Battle Mage, character Proudful Mage.

"What a villain-like name, as soon as you hear it you know he's going to lose!" As Fang Rui expressed this, Jia Xing walked onstage.

The map was still Wuchuan Path, and if nothing out of the ordinary happened, the two characters would still meet at the winery at the center of the map. Because, as of right now, neither of them had taken a roundabout route or slowed their, they both rushed right toward the center.

However, as he approached the winery, Jia Xing still hesitated for a moment.

He had seen that in Mo Fan's fight with He Ming last round, he had fought a bit differently from his previous appearances. But would he regain his normal style in this battle?

After a moment of thinking, Jia Xing still controlled Proudful Mage to enter the winery more cautiously.

He constantly turned his camera from left to right, treating every corner of shadows as a place where the enemy could be waiting to ambush him.

Where was the opponent?

The crowd knew better than Jia Xing did.

Mo Fan didn't control Deception to hide in one corner. After he arrived at the winery, he first took a circle around outside, and after failing to discover the opponent's character, only then did he enter the winery. He was still moving around, evidently looking for the opponent.

He took an extremely active attitude. Clearly, for this battle, he was using the same new playstyle he had used in the previous battle, preparing to find the opponent and face them head-on. But because this map had this winery at its center, with twisting paths, the two didn't meet so easily.

"This kid, what's up with him today?" Fang Rui asked, slightly confused.

Ye Xiu shook his head. He wasn't clear either.

Last round, Mo Fan changed his normal playstyle. It was unexpected, but looking at the battle situation as a whole, the change he made was very reasonable, because last round his opponent was an Elementalist. Using this sort of active, aggressive, close-up style to attack fit the typical logic.

But in this round, the opponent was a Battle Mage, a class that was very good at direct confrontation, yet Mo Fan still used the same method he had last round. This led people to feel that his adjustment last round wasn't a decision made after seeing the class of his opponent, was it?

The two characters were playing hide and seek in the winery, and the crowd, with their omniscient view, were the most anxious. Especially one time when they were one wall apart, but one went left and the other went right, passing each other by so closely, provoking all sorts of sighs from the audience.

Finally, the two characters met in the lane formed by the gap between two courtyard walls.

Mo Fan was calm, but Jia Xing jumped. He thought that the opponent had been hiding somewhere, only for him to just boldly appear before him like this.

What was going on, Jia Xing already had a general guess. Since we've met like this, let's just fight!

The lane wasn't very wide. The two characters met, were stunned for a second, and suddenly charged forward.

Whoosh!

The Ninja had some long-range skills. As Deception rushed forward, he had already thrown out a Shuriken.

Prideful Mage twisted his body to dodge. His movement didn't slow, and his spear was already lifted.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

Happy's Tang Rou often used this as a powerful opening move, and Jia Xing felt that it was a suitable move for this current terrain, and so he directly used this powerful skill as he sprinted forward.

Surrounded by a rippling magic aura, Prideful Mage rushed forward with his spear. The sound of his footsteps against the limestone-paved path rang in the air.

In the narrow channel, the magic flow from the Dragon Breaks the Ranks filled the space, and it looked like there was no place for Deception to hide.

But...

Mo Fan turned his camera, and Deception instantly ran toward one of the walls at the side. Jump up, stab ninjato into the wall, use that to jump up again, and Deception was already flying in the air. The Dragon Breaks the Ranks passed below him, and the aura was enough to send his clothes flapping, but it didn't affect his body. Here, he was outside of the attack range of Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

As Deception twisted in the air, his two hands were flying to form seals.

Ninjutsu: Shadow Dance!

Mo Fan didn't hold back, directly using a powerful attack against the opponent. Dozens of Deception's shadow clones chased the silhouette of Proudful Mage behind the Dragon Breaks the Ranks.

But Proudful Mage suddenly jumped up, turning in midair.

Seeing Deception dodge the Dragon Breaks the Ranks so nimbly, Jia Xing immediately stopped the attack. He anticipated that the opponent would immediately try and attack him, so he borrowed his lingering momentum and jumped up, twisted. Magic fluctuated around his spear, and he swung it down.

Shattering Heaven and Earth!

Powerful attack, another powerful attack, Jia Xing also retaliated with a powerful attack.

The shadow clones of the Shadow Dance hadn't had the chance to all attack Proudful Mage when this powerful attack enveloped all of them.

Shadow clones, how much life could they have? They definitely couldn't resist this bold level 75 Battle Mage attack, which produced waves of magic enough to stir a mountain. In an instant, these clones were dissipated into light, leaving not a single one.

Not a single one?

This situation was very similar to when He Ming earlier used Heavenly Lightning Earthen Fire to blast away all of the shadow clones. Not a single one remaining meant that Deception had already hidden somewhere that was out of sight.

Underground?

Proudful Mage's spear already thrust downward, but no, he wasn't there...

Everyone saw, Deception was coming at him from behind, using skills like Shadow Clone Technique to instantly send himself to this position.

The ambush of a Ninja was of course silent and stealthy. As soon as Proudful Mage's spear hit nothing, Jia Xing knew that something was wrong, but it was already too late to react, Deception had gotten behind him.

Annihilation!

The Ninja's knock up skill sent Proudful Mage into the air.

And then, Ninjutsu: Flickering Charge!

The rapidly moving silhouette seemed to flash in the air, chasing Proudful Mage with attack after attack. As Flickering Charge was executed, Proudful Mage's body was still floating in the air. He hadn't had the time to fall back down, but he suddenly waved the hand that wasn't holding his spear.

A purple shadow flew forth.

This Battle Mage had the Witch's low-level skill Night Cloak.

Night Cloak's Grab effect was extremely good, but Mo Fan's reaction was fast. Deception swiftly jumped backward, and this Night Cloak hit air. But immediately afterward, a burst of something that looked like stardust scattered in front of them, and Deception was unable to dodge it cleanly.

Disperse Powder, another Witch skill.

Using these two instant Witch skills, Jia Xing won back the initiative. The speed-lowering effect of Disperse Powder had a significant impact on the Ninja, who relied on agility.

Jia Xing easily controlled to dodge Deception's follow-up attack, and then he began his counterattack.

Just in this narrow alleyway, the Battle Mage and the Ninja began a fierce confrontation.

The two competed in observation, reaction, hand speed.

Neither of them thought to use some opening to retreat and adjust before coming back. It was as though the entire map were limited to just this little area and leaving would be dying. The two traded blows, both refusing to back down.

But the Ninja class, in terms of style, wasn't entirely suited for this sort of hard, direct battle. Compared to the opponent, he was at a disadvantage.

But the battle was still that intense. The disadvantage was only evident in the speed at which the health of the two characters decreased. But no one dared to confidently say right now who would win and who would lose. In this sort of confrontation, one slip-up could be seized by the opponent to reach a new high. An advantage right now could be completely turned around by such a high.

This was Miracle's home game, and so there were more supporters of Miracle and Jia Xing.

Right now Proudful Mage had the slight upper hand, but no one dared to relax. They worried, their hearts raced, every clash made them jump.

"At a time like this, wouldn't it be better for him to adjust his rhythm a bit?" At Happy's player area, the players were discussing the situation at hand.

"From the way he's acting, it looks like he's prepared to fight like this until the end," Ye Xiu said.

"This Battle Mage seems quite tough, Mo Fan really should've used his normal playstyle to wear him down," Fang Rui said.

"Yeah..." Ye Xiu agreed, but the problem was, no one knew what Mo Fan was thinking. Worse, even after he came offstage they still might not get an answer. Lack of communication was always Mo Fan's biggest problem.

At last, this battle ended with Jia Xing's victory. Proudful Mage still had just under a third of his health left, not a bad situation.

Over at Happy, they were sighing. For this battle, Mo Fan's health had lagged behind at the start, but if he had used his normal style for this battle instead of the direct confrontation, he might have had a greater chance.

Watching Mo Fan walk back step by step, Happy's members maintained their silence, all the way until he returned to the player room.

"Not bad," Ye Xiu put simply.

Mo Fan looked at him, didn't say anything and headed back toward his own seat.

Ye Xiu gave Su Mucheng a meaningful look. At Happy, the only one who could have any bit of communication with Mo Fan was Su Mucheng.

Su Mucheng smiled. She twisted her head to look back at where Mo Fan heading back to his seat and called, "It's a bit sad that you lost, how come you played in such a rush?"

Mo Fan stopped and looked back, but his gaze landed not upon Su Mucheng, but upon Fang Rui.

"In a hurry," Mo Fan said.

Everyone was stunned.

"You useless dim sum! Are you looking for death! Hurry up and kneel!" Ye Xiu hit Fang Rui on the head.

"My mistake, my mistake!" Fang Rui was weeping and crying. The others didn't know whether to be angry or amused. This communication issue was really a big problem!

Chapter 1209: Who's Under Pressure

In the group arena, two of Happy's people were down, and Miracle's second player still had a little under a third of his health left. This was a relatively common situation in a group arena. This around 30% health lead wasn't enough to let Miracle relax or have confidence in their victory. They all couldn't help but look at Happy's players, observing their movements.

Happy's third player, Tang Rou, had already stood up. She turned back to place on her seat the copy of Esports Time that the Miracle players had harassed them to take.

Starting from the first player Wei Chen, all the way to Mo Fan, Happy had already sent out five players. What effect did the Esports Time have on their spirits? To be honest, if they hadn't seen Tang Rou putting the magazine down just now, Miracle almost forgot about this whole thing. From those five players, they really hadn't seen any effect at all...

Was it that Fang Rui and Mo Fan's unusual performances today were provoked by the Esports Time? That possibility would really be a slap in their face.

But no matter what, the next player from Happy was the one at the center of the whole controversy, Tang Rou. There was no way she was entirely unaffected by this? The attacks from Ruan Cheng's article in Esports Time were extremely aggressive.

"There's no way a rookie can take that kind of pressure," He Ming said.

"But... she seems very calm," Shen Jian said.

"She wouldn't be so nervous that she can't even walk?" As He Ming spoke, he followed Tang Rou with his eyes as she entered the competitor booth.

The group arena continued, same map, the characters loaded and entered.

"Don't wander around inside, let's just meet outside. We're in a hurry." Tang Rou actually first sent a message in the chat.

"What's that all about? What 'in a hurry'? Tang Rou never has the habit of chatting during a match, does she?" He Ming said with some confusion, only to hear a rattling crash from Happy's player area. Everyone immediately looked over, and saw Fang Rui fallen upon the ground, covered in dust with a depressed expression.

"This this... this is just too mean, this..." Fang Rui was saying. Miracle couldn't hear clearly, but Happy's players were all laughing. Tang Rou's "in a hurry" was of course a very pointed comment. No one thought that she would actually tease Fang Rui in such a way! Fang Rui felt overwhelming pressure, these guys were all "in a hurry" to deliberately push the responsibility of loss onto him!

While Happy was all joyful, Miracle became even more stunned.

What was going on?

A 30% health lead wasn't considered much, but it couldn't be completely ignored? Happy was clearly in a bad situation right now, but they really seemed to be quite happy, this... did they have some ace up their sleeve? In a hurry? In a hurry for what?

Miracle's members exchanged looks, no one understood what this was about. Meanwhile, the two Battle Mages onstage had almost arrived at the center of the map.

Tang Rou sent an invitation for a direct fight, but her opponent Jia Xing ignored her. In a situation where a player had the health advantage, they generally wouldn't go to fight the opponent directly, they would prefer to play some tricks, and Jia Xing followed this normal thought process as well.

Tang Rou's Soft Mist, like Deception last round, first took a circle around the winery. Upon failing to discover Proudful Mage, she had no choice but to enter the winery.

A large courtyard with three entrances and exits. Jia Xing was relatively active, not waiting in one place. The two wandered around, and before long they met. Tang Rou's Soft Mist rushed forward without any hesitation, but Jia Xing's Proudful Mage decisively retreated, swiftly finding a shadowy position he had passed earlier from which he could launch an ambush.

One step, two steps, three steps...

Jia Xing silently counted the rhythm of Soft Mist's approach, his eyes focused on the spot where Soft Mist would appear.

Boom!

A thunderous sound. The walls of the winery courtyard weren't particularly sturdy. If even a Qi Master's qi could break it, how could it pose any difficulty for the powerful magic aura of a Battle Mage?

Soft Mist directly blasted a large hole in the wall, and from her pose, it was clear that she wanted to cut off the path and intercept Proudful Mage. A lucky hit, for as soon as she came through, she saw Proudful Mage holding his spear, staring intently at the other opening and sneakily hiding.

Happy had so many experts at playing dirty, skilled at waiting, ambushing, and laying traps. Tang Rou, growing up in this sort of team environment, of course, understood these tactics. Seeing Proudful Mage's position, she immediately guessed his intentions.

But would Tang Rou care that much? We meet, so let's fight!

Soft Mist, Dragon Breaks the Ranks, charged toward Proudful Mage.

At this point, Jia Xing had seen Soft Mist breaking through the wall, turning, and rushing toward him without hesitation. He immediately controlled Proudful Mage to dodge. If this little shadowy corner were hit by that Dragon Breaks the Ranks, it would likely collapse.

Tang Rou's rhythm was of course very fast, Soft Mist's spear twisted and chased Proudful Mage, continuing to batter him. Jia Xing wanted to avoid the spear, but he couldn't find the space and could only harden his skin and meet her attacks.

The two Battle Mages were immediately tangled together. Confrontations between players of the same class were both monotonous and fierce, but this time, Jia Xing didn't have the chance to feel any boredom, he only felt the ferocity. Because this was too familiar, he needed to make more calculations. He didn't even have to time to think about too many problems, as Soft Mist attacked too rapidly, too ferociously, he had no chance to plan anything. He could only input controls nonstop, almost unconsciously, all the way until his Proudful Mage fell.

He lost?

Jia Xing finally regained his wits. The battle just now seemed like an empty fog, as though his brain completely stopped turning, and only his hands kept working.

And now, he had already fallen. The word "GLORY" would not be sent to his screen.

Jia Xing walked out of the player booth. How long had this battle taken? He felt lost. He only had one feeling: fast, very fast, extremely fast.

How did it turn out like this? Shouldn't she be...

Only now did Jia Xing think about how stress-ridden Tang Rou should be. Her performance should have been subpar. But he hadn't felt that at all; Tang Rou's attack rhythm was still as determined as ever.

Jia Xing didn't feel it, and the Miracle members offstage didn't see it either.

The unfortunate trio exchanged looks. If even Tang Rou hadn't been affected by this whole affair, then there was no point in mentioning any of the other players in Happy. The situation they had been relying on to win this match didn't exist at all?

"No matter what, let's get these two points first!" He Ming said.

Shen Jian nodded. He was Miracle's third player for the group arena, the anchor of the team.

"Be careful." He Ming added, unable to relax.

"Yeah..." Shen Jian nodded. He couldn't relax either, and so he didn't have the confidence to say any bold words to settle their hearts. Seeing Jia Xing's dazed expression as he came offstage, Shen Jian's heart started beating more rapidly.

"How was it?" Shen Jian told himself that the opponent was a rookie, that there was nothing to panic about, and at the same time, he tried to get some report from Jia Xing.

Jia Xing, who had been beaten so pathetically that his mind was empty, of course had nothing to talk about. His face showed only an expression of loss, and Shen Jian could only carry his various emotions of suspicion and alarm as he went onstage.

The battle began.

The blank-minded Jia Xing had still made some contribution, knocking away 10% of Soft Mist's health. With that sort of direct fighting earlier, it was inevitable that both sides take some damage.

And so Miracle's advantage in the group arena, starting from the 50% that He Ming had, was now whittled down to only 10%.

10%...

Staring at this advantage, Shen Jian didn't have much confidence. His Striker walked forward, but his heart was jumping. He wasn't a rookie. He had experience in professional battles, but to put all of the pressure of the group arena on him, Shen Jian discovered that he wasn't as strong as he thought he was.

The opponent is a rookie. The opponent has already lost 10% health. The opponent is suffering the heavy pressure of public opinion. None of these reasons were enough to boost Shen Jian's confidence.

A core player was a position, but it was also a responsibility. Every pro player anticipated having this kind of position, but not everyone could take on this kind of responsibility. Sometimes, it was because they didn't have enough ability, such as in old Excellent Era, Shen Jian never had enough ability to become the core player. And now, in Miracle, as an experienced player born in Excellent Era, Shen Jian became a core player for this team alongside He Ming and Wang Ze. but now, with the weight of the group arena upon his shoulders, Shen Jian found that he couldn't calm down. His main thoughts were not about how to achieve victory, but... what if he lost?

His mental state was a mess, but it wasn't so bad that it affected his basic movement ability. Shen Jian's Striker Lethe quickly arrived at the winery at the center of the map. He didn't directly find Tang Rou to battle. After tumbling into the winery courtyard, he found a place to crouch and wait.

"What is he doing?" Offstage, He Ming was scowling.

Playing dirty? That wasn't Shen Jian's strong point! Before the match, he had never expressed wanting to use such a playstyle.

He Ming was stunned, Wang Ze didn't understand either. These two teammates had no way of knowing the jittery feelings Shen Jian was experiencing onstage, they could only exchange glances.

In the match, Shen Jian sent a message in the chat. "Where are you? Come out and let's decide this!"

Confuse the enemy, hide your true intentions, this was what Shen Jian was thinking. But for those in this field, this sort of dirty playing was really a bit out of place?

"124, 131" Clean and direct, Tang Rou sent out the coordinates of Soft Mist's position, not dirty at all.

Then, what would Shen Jian do?

The viewers looked over, only to see Shen Jian's Striker Lethe sneak out of his corner, looking like he was really about to run over to the position Tang Rou indicated.

If that was the case... then what was the point in crouching at the beginning?

Those who had some understanding were all confused by Shen Jian's actions.

"What's this guy playing at?" Fang Rui asked, mouth agape. After all, this was one of Ye Xiu's former teammates!

"He's probably... playing dirty?" Ye Xiu said.

"Are you trying to insult me?" Fang Rui was unhappy. Dirty playing wasn't this low-level! He refused to recognize this as dirty play.

Chapter 1210: Title is Spoiler

124, 131.

Shen Jian's Striker Lethe headed towards the coordinates mentioned by Tang Rou, but he wasn't moving fast or slow. His wading in the mud and water showed the uncertainty in his heart. When he was almost at the destination, he didn't directly show his face. He searched his surroundings as if he were looking for a good spot to set up an ambush.

His opponent had justly and honorably declared her position, but he was stealthily creeping forward preparing for an ambush. Most people usually despised this sort of dirtiness. Luckily, this was Team Miracle's home ground, so the boos from the crowd were more subdued.

Shen Jian looked around for awhile before finally finding a position that he liked and then sprinted towards it.

No one?

His gaze moved towards the coordinates 124, 131, but there were no signs of Soft Mist.

"You liar!" Shen Jian was furious. He felt like he had fallen for a trick. This had to be a trap, yes, a trap. As he lashed out in chat, he immediately had Lethe quickly leave.

"What, you've arrived?" Tang Rou replied back in chat.

Shen Jian ignored her. Don't even think about using words to distract me, Shen Jian thought, forgetting that he was the one who had started this conversation.

"You're too slow. If I didn't walk around for a bit, the referee would punish me," Tang Rou said.

Shen Jian didn't believe her, but the crowd knew she was telling the truth. After Tang Rou announced her location, Soft Mist stood there waiting the entire time. However, Shen Jian's Lethe kept dilly-dallying. When he had almost reached her location, he started looking for an ambush spot. Tang Rou had waited for quite a while before she had Soft Mist start moving around.

"I'm on my way back. Just wait there." Tang Rou said.

Shen Jian was suddenly in a panic. Lethe spun around, his gaze sweeping over his surroundings, searching for Tang Rou's location. The crowd stared blankly at him. Wasn't this supposed to be a fight between two players? From the looks of it, why did it feel like he was playing hide and seek!

Shen Jian didn't just stand there like an honest person. After spinning around twice, he felt like there were too many places for his opponent to come out from. There weren't any ambush spots nearby, which meant that she had run away...

The home crowd was Team Miracle's, so they endured it once more.

Quite a few people were looking forward to how the show would continue forward though because the escape route chosen by Shen Jian just happened to be Soft Mist's return route. The crowd had a bird's eye view of the situation, so they could see it very clearly.

The two sides finally met face to face. This surprise encounter once again made Shen Jian panic, but Tang Rou didn't even greet him before attacking.

Dragon Breaks the Ranks!

A dragon instantly appeared in front of him.

Shen Jian's Lethe moved backwards to dodge and evaded it. His character glanced around. It seemed like he was searching for an escape route.

The match has already reached this point, and you're still thinking about running away?

How is he planning on playing this match?

This time, the crowd had no answer and boos gradually started coming out. It wasn't that the those who played dirty couldn't accept running away, but those who played dirty weren't this gutless in a direct confrontation either. Running away needed to have a clear tactical intent, but Shen Jian? The crowd couldn't see even a glimpse of a plan. From the start, he had appeared overcautious the entire time. He was now faced with his opponent's spear, yet he was still like this.

Can you win with this sort of attitude?

Bang!

A Falling Flower Palm pushed forward. Shen Jian wasn't able to react in time, and Lethe shot backwards. However, Lethe was surrounded by walls on three sides. Lethe slammed into a wall and then rebounded back. Soft Mist's Furious Dragon Strikes the Heart welcomed him and pinned him back to the wall.

"What is he doing?"

The crowd wasn't just booing. Angry curses were starting to be thrown out.

Even He Ming and Wang Ze, Shen Jian's former teammates, his two pals after coming to Team Miracle, were also having trouble watching.

"What's wrong with him?" He Ming asked Wang Ze. Who could Wang Ze ask? It looked like Shen Jian was the player being pointed at by everyone, fearful and nervous from the pressure. As for Tang Rou's Soft Mist? Her temperament, playstyle, and drive were no different than before. Shen Jian's gaze shifted towards Happy's player area. An Esports Time was quietly sitting where Tang Rou had been sitting at before.

What's going on? Did I give her the wrong one?

He Ming didn't dare to believe it. The other players on Happy might not be affected, but he had trouble believing that a rookie like Tang Rou would feel nothing from the pressure of the public.

"Little Tang is playing quite relaxed," Ye Xiu commented on Happy's side.

Would Tang Rou be affected by this pressure? It wasn't just Team Miracle who cared, Happy cared even more. And from this match, it couldn't be said that Tang Rou was completely unaffected because there truly had been some changes.

For example, in the dialogue in this match, the previous Tang Rou wouldn't have bothered with topics unrelated to the match. But now, she could mischievously tease Fang Rui and chat a few words with Shen Jian. This was a change in attitude. She wasn't impatient to prove the public opinion wrong, but rather player in a more relaxed way. With her personality, she might not be able to excite her full potential, but controlling and adjusting her emotions purposefully was a more mature transformation.

Shen Jian's cowardice put him in a stifled position. His ten percent health instantly disappeared and then he started falling behind, losing to panic. Under this vicious cycle, he suffered a crushing defeat to Tang Rou.

"What were you doing?" He Ming ruthlessly berated Shen Jian. It wasn't like they couldn't afford losing, but in the end, Shen Jian had only been able to take away 20 percent of Tang Rou's health. This sort of trash performance was practically the same as giving away the point. He Ming couldn't understand what had happened to Shen Jian. Why did his playing suddenly take a dive? Their Team Miracle had prepared amply for this match, and seeing that their opponents were at the sharp end of the public's stick, their mentality going into the match had been quite solid. The rookies that joined the Alliance along with Team Miracle might have lost, but they performed very well. On the other hand, it was Shen Jian, their anchor for the group arena, that had lost in such an embarrassing manner.

Shen Jian didn't know how to explain himself. He had been given such a heavy responsibility, but it turned out that he had no confidence with this heavy responsibility. It was truly very shameful. In Team Miracle, he had acted quite arrogant as a capable senior. He didn't want his lofty image to crumble this easily.

"We can't lose this team competition! We can't be shaven clean by them, can we?" He Ming saw that Shen Jian hadn't responded. He didn't say anything more and started encouraging the team for the following team competition.

However... they had been quite confident about this match, but in the group arena and individual competition, Happy annihilated their forces. The psychological advantage held previously by Team Miracle had disappeared long ago. In particular, each of them hiding a copy of the Esports Time and then giving the copy to their opponents wasn't exactly a good-looking move, yet their method was completely ineffective and might end up being laughed at later. In this round, everyone in Team Miracle felt like they were clowns.

"Happy's team strength is much worse than their individual strength. Their teamwork isn't good. This is our chance." He Ming said.

However, everyone already knew this. He Ming repeating it didn't do anything.

He Ming didn't know what to do with their downed spirits. In reality, his confidence had been killed too. It was just that he was the team captain, so he kept reminding himself not to show weakness.

"What's there to be afraid of! At worst, we lose! We're just a new team with new players. Go in with a learning attitude!" At this moment, the punk Guo Shao jumped out and yelled. He was still bursting with life, filled with hope towards this following team competition. He actually dared to say something like "At worst, we lose!" Perhaps no team captain would ever say these words, but that was the truth, and it actually eased the players up quite a bit. Even Shen Jian seemed to have relaxed. He didn't belong to the "new players" category!

"We can do this!" Guo Shao might as well just jump into the crowd and start cheering for his teammates. He attracted quite the attention from the crowd.

The team competition began shortly afterwards. Guo Shao's words had been quite effective. With the attitude of "At worst, we lose," Team Miracle's players let loose. But the problem was that once they let loose, they couldn't keep it together. In the end, they were a new team too. They had problems with teamwork because of their lack of experience. He Ming, Shen Jian, and Wang Ze were experienced players, but they weren't experienced as core players. Their ability to keep things together clearly couldn't compare to Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Fang Rui, who had all once been top core players in their teams.

Their home map advantage wasn't able to help them. In the end, Team Happy won the team competition, sweeping Team Miracle 10 to 0.

The other matches taking place that same day ended in succession. In the ninth round, an extremely unusual scene appeared. There were unexpectedly 5 perfect wins this round, and all of them were away game victories.

Team Happy versus Team Miracle: 10 to 0.

Team Blue Rain versus Team Conquering Clouds: 10 to 0.

Team Tyranny versus Team Lightly: 10 to 0.

Team Samsara versus Team Bright Green: 10 to 0.

Team Tiny Herb versus Team Seaside: 10 to 0.

Apart from Team Happy and Team Miracle, the other four matches were all strong versus weak team matchups. However, the weak teams had the home game advantage. Not being able to win even a single point was very surprising. The public opinion believed that as the league developed, the disparity between the top teams and weak teams was growing larger and larger. The powerhouses prospered in the current scene, receiving more resources than weak teams and then using these greater resources to further strengthen their team. Under this cycle, the strong teams became stronger, while the weak teams became weaker. The new teams without any strong financial backers seemed to have difficulty breaking through these strong teams. Team Heavenly Swords had initially been looked at highly because of their strong backing, but who would have thought that their boss would be personally taking up the banner. Their expectations for Team Heavenly Swords would have to wait until after this boss lost his interest in playing.