

# Super Gene II : Evolution

## - Chapter 21 - 21: The Contract

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When Lin Shen had touched it earlier, he had felt that this thing wasn't quite like a snake. Looking at it now, it was even less so.

Snakes have snake heads, but the head of this thing wasn't very obvious—upon a quick glance, it looked more like an earthworm with just a barely visible tiny hole at the top, which must have been its mouth.

Its body wasn't like an earthworm's either, somewhat resembling a snake skin rope made from dark red metallic threads.

All in all, if you didn't look closely, this thing just seemed like a piece of rope.

Lin Shen couldn't be sure what it exactly was, and he didn't have the time to figure it out either.

Seemingly sensing Lin Shen awakening, the creature's body suddenly swelled, with its originally about three-centimeter-thick body inflating to the thickness of a bucket in an instant.

The previously needle-like mouth also expanded, becoming large enough to easily swallow a human head.

Inside the mouth were rings of blood-colored, crystal sawteeth, resembling gears, slowly spinning inside its body, flickering with a dim then bright blood light, like a Blood Crystal Crusher starting up.

If one's head were to be swallowed by it, it would most likely be shredded into bloody residue in just an instant.

As the monstrous mouthpiece was about to swallow Lin Shen, he struggled desperately. Since the front half of the creature had inflated while the latter half had not yet done so, Lin Shen found a slight gap from what had been a tight bind.

In the instant before the creature's mouth came crashing down, a hand fiercely pulled free.

Without caring for the consequences, Lin Shen punched the creature's head below a red spot he had seen on its body, which was an acupoint.

Because of the creature's inflation, that red spot had also grown much larger.

Bang!

Just as the creature's mouth was about to engulf Lin Shen's head, his fist heavily struck the red spot.

Lin Shen felt a severe pain in his knuckles; presumably, his finger bones were either broken or fractured.

The creature's body didn't halt completely but slowed down, still engulfing Lin Shen's head.

Acupoint Sealing seemed not to have fully worked; with only strength alone, Lin Shen's force wasn't enough to even break through the creature's defenses.

Lin Shen's head frantically dodged to one side, avoiding the creature's ingestion, while his fist madly hammered the red spots on the creature's body.

Heart-wrenching pain shot through his fingers, but Lin Shen couldn't care less about that—having all the bones broken was still better than losing his life here.

Blood splattered on the creature's body, which all came from the flesh on Lin Shen's fist bursting open—it caused no harm to the monster.

The creature was still moving slowly, not completely immobilized by the Acupoint Sealing, just its movements had become very sluggish, and the force binding Lin Shen's body was gradually weakening.

Lin Shen's other hand finally broke free, pushed against the inflated front end of the creature, and pulled his body out.

At this point, the hand Lin Shen had used before couldn't even form a fist anymore, the fingers hanging unnaturally bent, the burst flesh blurred, with blood continuously dripping out.

The creature's body was also shaking violently; with each shake, it writhed in motions as if about to break free from the constraints of the Acupoint Sealing.

Lin Shen knew it wasn't that the ability of Acupoint Sealing was ineffective, but rather his own strength wasn't enough to fully seal the creature's acupoints.

It was like someone was wearing armor—knowing where the acupoints were was one thing, but not being able to penetrate the armor with one's strength meant there was no way to affect the acupoints through it.

The ability of the impact to transmit the shock into the creature and have some effect was already a stroke of luck.

Lin Shen reached for his clothes at the bedside with his good hand, trying to find the Pet Capsules of the Supersonic Gunman and the Steel Tail Scorpion.

But upon touching, he could not find the capsule for the Steel Tail Scorpion, only coming across the capsule for the Supersonic Gunman.

At this moment, he had no time to think more about it—he grabbed the key concealed on him and immediately opened the Pet Capsule.

The Pet Capsule transformed rapidly, and the Supersonic Gunman appeared before Lin Shen. At his command, the gunman drew and shot at the monster.

The bullet that struck the red spot actually deflected, sliding to the side and leaving only a faint white mark; the monster's body wriggled even faster.

Lin Shen's heart skipped a beat, realizing that the Fire Seed's ability only worked when he used it himself; external forces, even if they could hit the acupoints, had no effect of Acupoint Sealing.

This only further proved that the power of the Fire Seed was truly unscientific.

The Supersonic Gunman fired at other parts of the monster's body, but the results were worse. The shots at the red spot might leave a trace equivalent to nothing, whereas other areas couldn't retain any marks at all.

Bullets that entered the monster's mouth and struck its blood crystal-like serrated teeth were outright shattered to pieces.

Those blood crystals were harder than the monster's body, which reminded Lin Shen of what Cang had said: the creature had an accident during its advancement to Crystal Base Level and had already acquired a partial crystal-like body.

As the monster was about to break free from the binding of Acupoint Sealing, Lin Shen had no choice but to rush forward, wrap a bedsheet around his hand, and punch the red spot with his uninjured fist.

After several punches, traces of blood began to seep through the sheet on his hand, and the monster's body once again became extremely sluggish, almost immobilized.

But Lin Shen knew this was no solution. If he continued like this, his hands would be ruined sooner or later. Once the monster was no longer constrained by the power of Acupoint Sealing, it wasn't just him, Lin Shen, but the entire Lin Family estate that would likely be ravaged by the monster.

This was a Base Variant Creature with Crystal Base Level strength. If his third and fourth brothers were here, there might be a way to deal with it, but currently, there was no one in the Lin Family capable of contending with such a base variant creature—it would be a death sentence to call for help.

Thus, from the beginning, Lin Shen had no chance to activate the alarm to call for help, and now, there was no need to call anyone.

Their houses were specially designed, with strong defenses and good sound insulation. Despite the commotion that had unfolded for so long, no one outside heard anything and came to investigate.

Lin Shen's first thought was to escape, to preserve his usefulness so that he might rise again in the future.

If he lost his life, the family fortune would be of no use.

As he thought about turning to flee, Lin Shen's heart stirred, recalling the "Boundless Strength Contract" Fire Seed he had acquired earlier.

The Boundless Strength Contract required signing a blood covenant with a creature, but it didn't specify that it had to be with a newly-born creature.

However, since adult creatures don't grow anymore, signing a contract with them is useless under normal circumstances; it is definitely better to sign with a juvenile.

Yet, there was another benefit to the Boundless Strength Contract – once a creature is bound by the contract, it becomes akin to a pet, hardly able to defy its master's commands.

Of course, this contract wasn't simply completed by dripping blood on it; one had to draw the Blood Covenant on the creature's body with their blood, and during the process, the creature could not resist. If it resisted, the Blood Covenant would fail.

Given the choice, Lin Shen would certainly prefer to sign the Boundless Strength Contract with a base variant creature with sufficient growth potential.

Now, though, for his own life, the safety of the Lin Family members, and the estate, he had to attempt to sign the Boundless Strength Contract with this creature.

Of course, there was also a benefit: the creature was high-level. Even though it might not help increase his strength, it would be a powerful pet and a significant aid for the trip to Gourd Mountain.

As for whether the creature was willing or would resist, Lin Shen had no intention of asking for its consent; he planned to forcibly control its body with Acupoint Sealing and complete the Boundless Strength Contract.

Having come to this conclusion, Lin Shen no longer hesitated. Withstanding the intense pain coming from his finger bones, he punched the monster's red spot once again. [Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

Activating the Boundless Strength Contract with one hand, he shakily began to draw the Blood Covenant on the creature, his hand already covered in blood, skipping even the step of biting his finger.

Strangely, once the Boundless Strength Contract was activated, Lin Shen's blood, when it touched the creature's skin that was harder than steel, seemed to sear into it like a branding iron onto flesh.

Even under the forceful control of Acupoint Sealing, Lin Shen could still see the creature's body visibly twitch as if it were scalded.

Unfortunately for the monster, it could not move an inch under Lin Shen's relentless pounding, which left no room for disrupting the formation of the Blood Covenant.

Just when Lin Shen's hand was nearly numb from striking the red spot, the Blood Covenant was finally completed.

In the moment the Blood Covenant was finished, the originally dull blood patterns suddenly burst into a magma-like glare.

The next second, both the blood glyphs and the blazing light seeped under the skin and became invisible; the violently trembling monster stilled.

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## **Chapter 22 - 22 Sacrifice to Heaven**

Chapter 22: Chapter 22 Sacrifice to Heaven

Lin Shen slumped into the chair, his hands still trembling uncontrollably with pain. He tried to pick up the water glass on the desk to take a sip and calm his nerves, but his hands couldn't grasp the glass, and just touching it made him wince and cry out in pain.

In contrast, once the monster calmed down after Lin Shen had stopped hitting its pressure points, it quickly regained its mobility.

The swollen front end slowly returned to its original state, resembling a dark red snake-skin rope, and it made its way over to Lin Shen. It gradually raised its head and opened its mouthpiece.

This time, the mouthpiece did not enlarge, but it opened slightly, revealing what looked like countless blood crystal gears spinning inside. Then it lowered its head and spat out a small key that resembled a ruby.

Ignoring the pain, Lin Shen reached out with fingers coated in blood, trembling as if he had Parkinson's, and picked up the ruby key.

Now that he had the key, Lin Shen finally let go of his worries. With this key, the strange Base Variant Creature could no longer pose any threat to him.

Looking at the key, and then at its mouthpiece, Lin Shen was wondering where exactly the keyhole might be, contemplating whether he would need to reach his arm inside to find it, when the Base Variant Creature's body began rapidly transforming. Its several-meter-long body soon shrank into a dark red pet capsule the size of a peanut.

"The intelligence of this thing is much higher than that of a typical Base Variant Creature, huh? It can actually enter a pet capsule stance on its own. I wonder if it can transform back into a creature without the need for a key?" Lin Shen muttered to himself, somewhat doubtful whether the Pet Key still had absolute control over it.

Mutant Death Shredder: Alloy Variant Creature (Evolvable).

Strength: 21.

Speed: 21.

Hardness: 21.

Toughness: 21.

Base Mutation Talents: Mutant Devouring, Mutant Evolution, Strengthened Armor-Piercing Spikes, Strengthened Instant Speed, Strengthened Hundred Refinements.

After looking at its information, Lin Shen was completely dumbfounded, and shock could no longer capture the feelings he had at the moment.

Lin Shen had only heard of the term “Alloy Variant Creature.” Although there were rumors that someone had obtained one, he had never seen one, nor were there any confirmed reports about who had a mutant pet.

Moreover, this thing was still an Alloy Creature, so why did it have 21 points in its attributes? The attribute limit for Alloy Creatures should be 20. Even if it was a mutant, he had never heard of any attributes exceeding 20.

What made Lin Shen feel even more extraordinary was that this guy had five Base Mutation Talents, and some of them seemed familiar.

At that moment, Lin Shen didn’t have the luxury of thinking too deeply. He went to the cabinet, took out several vials of medicine, and poured them into a basin.

The purple-red liquid filled half the basin, and Lin Shen submerged his hands in it, immediately feeling an excruciating pain emanating from his hands, a sensation that wasn’t much different from deep-frying them in a pot of oil.

He endured the pain without pulling his hands out of the liquid. This medicine was something his elder sister had spent a great deal of money on to buy for him—it was truly meant to save his life.

It was said to be made from the Base Mutation Fluid of several special Base Variant Creatures. The manufacturing process and formula were top secrets of the Sea Corn Base. No one but Sea Corn Base could produce such a medicine, and it was priced in the five-figure range.

Lin Shen poured five bottles, which meant tens of thousands were gone.

However, the steep price indeed had its reasons; after the initial agony, Lin Shen felt the wound on his hand healing at an astonishing rate—the bleeding had already stopped.

Continuing this treatment, he estimated that it would only take a few days for his fractured bones to heal completely.

“Not right!” Lin Shen suddenly thought of something, went to check, and indeed, the Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion’s Pet Capsule, as well as the Dark Iron Swallow and Hundred-Refined Steel Beast’s Base Mutation Eggs, had all disappeared.

After carefully reviewing the Death Shredder’s information, Lin Shen roughly guessed that those items had probably been devoured by it.

“Death Powder’s mutative devouring and evolutionary theft abilities should possess the capability to plunder other creatures’ Base Change Talents; those three other enhanced skills must have been stolen by it,” Lin Shen quickly pieced together the causes and consequences.

Because the name of the mutated Death Shredder was too long, Lin Shen simply abbreviated it, referring to it as Death Powder.

What Lin Shen couldn’t understand was why, when the Supersonic Gunman’s capsule and the Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion’s capsule were together, Death Powder hadn’t devoured the Supersonic Gunman’s capsule as well?

“Is it because the Supersonic Gunman is of a higher level, and its devouring ability isn’t so easily applied to it, or does it only target creatures that have been imbued with the Fire Seed?” For the time being, Lin Shen couldn’t quite grasp which reason it was.

“Losing three exceptional pets with potential for evolution is somewhat of a loss; however, having it directly transformed into Death Powder’s combat strength, considering my current predicament, is actually more useful,” Lin Shen thought as he restored Death Powder to its creature form and carefully studied its various abilities.

The enhanced Armor-Piercing Sting bestowed its tail, similar to a spike, with formidable penetrative and armor-piercing capabilities; coupled with its abnormal Attribute, it posed a threat even to Crystal-based Creatures. As for Alloy Creatures, it could strike them down with precision.

Enhanced Instant Speed was an ability to briefly boost speed, also an extremely practical Talent ability.

Lin Shen still hadn’t figured out what the Enhanced Hundred Refinements skill was; it seemed to be a passive ability, and Death Powder was unable to demonstrate it.

The Mutative Devouring and Evolutionary Theft also couldn’t be demonstrated—knowing only that they were devouring and evolutionary abilities, Lin Shen could only roughly guess they were key in pillaging Base Change Talents; as for any other effects, they would be discovered in future combat.

Even without these three Talent abilities, relying solely on the enhanced Armor-Piercing Sting and Enhanced Instant Speed, combined with Death Powder’s freakish Attribute, was enough to place it at the apex of Alloy Creatures’ combat strength.

Only with Death Powder’s new power did Lin Shen feel that his forthcoming journey to Gourd Mountain might still hold a sliver of a chance for a turnaround.

The reason he believed in this slim possibility was because both the Qi and Wang families had Crystal Base Level combat capabilities, and Death Powder was only a



pseudo-Crystal Base creature. When facing real Crystal Base Creatures, it might not have the advantage. .

A sliver of possibility was still a possibility, which was better than none at all. Trapped in a desperate situation, Lin Shen was quite optimistic.

He continued to soak his hands in the medicinal solution, aware that time was not on his side. If his hands didn't recover before heading to Gourd Mountain, it would be a great inconvenience.

Only now did Lin Shen have the time to pay attention to the Fire Seed information that had appeared in his mind.

Lin Shen was also very curious about what kind of Fire Seed Death Powder might carry.

[Imperfect Super-Base Evolutionary Seed—Sacrifice to Heaven: Teammates sacrifice to Heaven, mana boundless, the more who die, the firmer the battle power, amidst a Sea of Blood, spinning deities head over heels.]

For a moment, Lin Shen's mouth hung open, unable to react.

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## Chapter 23 - 23 Flower Path

Chapter 23: Chapter 23 Flower Path

“So, aside from the failed Fire Seeds, there are also imperfect ones. If there are imperfect Fire Seeds, could there be perfect Fire Seeds as well? And what exactly does this ‘Sacrifice to Heaven’ mean? Surely it can't be that all my teammates have to die for my strength to be enhanced—that would be too much of a loss. And how exactly should a ‘teammate’ be defined? If whoever I consider a teammate is a teammate, then can I consider enemies as teammates? Kill an ‘enemy teammate’ and get stronger by one point...” Lin Shen thought greedily.

He studied it for a while but couldn't figure out exactly how to use ‘Sacrifice to Heaven.’ It didn't seem like an ability he could actively use; he'd only know the effects when it came into play later.

For the remaining time, Lin Shen stayed at home to heal, hoping to have his hands recover before departure.

Every 12 hours, he had to change the medicinal solution, with five bottles required each time to completely soak his hands, which cost him a six-figure sum just for the medicine.

Fortunately, the medications were indeed effective. Although they didn't completely heal Lin Shen's hands before departure, there weren't any major issues left. He could carry heavy objects without a problem. High-intensity fighting was still not feasible for fear that his not fully healed bones might crack again.

Lin Shen brought the medication with him, applying it every now and then, and he should be fully healed in a few days.

During the healing period, Lin Shen fed some low-level Base Mutation Eggs to Death Powder, and it accepted them all, eating twenty to thirty Steel Mutant Eggs provided by Lin Shen.

Thinking that with so many Base Mutation Eggs consumed, it should manifest another talent, yet there was not even a fart—no talent, and not even the slightest change in body size.

Lin Shen began to wonder if Death Powder could only rob talents from creatures that consumed Fire Seed Base Variant Creatures.

By the agreed departure time, Ye brought a Alloy-Level Pet Capsule to Lin Shen, which contained a White Gold Beast.

The White Gold Beast wasn't a particularly rare Alloy pet, mainly praised for its speed and commonly used as a mount.

Many people liked using White Gold Beasts as mounts, not only for their speed, but the creatures were aesthetically pleasing with their snow-white bodies and the single horn on their head, resembling the sanctified unicorns of legend, making them the preferred mount for many beauty enthusiasts.

Lin Xiangdong himself was a beauty enthusiast, and he had a White Gold Beast among his mounts. Ye sourced this particular White Gold Beast for Lin Shen to continue impersonating Lin Xiangdong.

The two White Gold Beasts looked identical, yet Lin Xiangdong's was a 20-speed top-tier mount, while the one Ye found had a speed of 18.4. Although it was slightly slower, it sufficed for the impersonation.

Clad in an Alloy Carapace and bearing a ghostly visage, the White Beast wouldn't be discerned as anyone but Lin Xiangdong without direct confrontation.

When the two of them were about to leave, Wei Wufu followed quietly, not uttering a word, just silently trailing behind Lin Shen.

Ye glanced at Wei Wufu, about to say something, but Lin Shen stopped him.

The trio went to the agreed-upon meeting place together. The Qi and Wang families had already arrived, with Qi Shuheng and Wang Tian'er leading the discussions with Bai Shenfei.

"Is the Lin Family only sending the three of you?" Wang Tian'er asked, frowning at the trio.

"For a mere Gourd Mountain, isn't three enough?" Lin Shen sat atop the White Gold Beast, showing no intention of dismounting.

Wang Tian'er's face darkened, seemingly about to respond when Qi Shuheng gave him a meaningful glance to stop him.

Qi Shuheng said with a smile, "Each family has its own situation. It doesn't matter how many people want to go as long as everyone cooperates."

"Since everyone is here, let's set out," Bai Shenfei said, glancing at Wei Wufu who was following Lin Shen, and chose not to comment further.

She flung a white Pet Capsule, which transformed into a snowy white, jade-like creature resembling both a cow and a Triceratops as it touched the ground.

The crowd looked at her mount with different expressions, clearly recognizing it as a Crystal-based Creature.

"People from Sea Corn Base really are extraordinary; even their mounts are of the Crystal Base Level," Lin Shen inwardly exclaimed.

No more words were exchanged as everyone summoned their mounts, embarking on their journey from the Base in a grand and mighty procession.

Lin Shen curiously surveyed his surroundings. Since he was born, the number of times he had left the Base could be counted on one hand. The world outside was still very novel and interesting to him.

Most places along the road were covered with green vegetation, interspersed with a variety of flowers and undulating "hills." However, on closer inspection, one would realize these "hills" weren't natural hills at all, but buildings covered in greenery.

Over two hundred years ago, this used to be a modern city, but now, it was hard to tell. The occasional visible roads and buildings were dilapidated, many collapsed and overrun or buried by vegetation.

Among the greenery, there were occasionally strange plants with metallic branches and leaves.

Lin Shen knew that these were not metal crafted artworks but real, living metal vegetation.

These were also Base Variant Creatures, but the Base Mutation Fluid within them was extremely scarce and difficult to extract, so they were often cut down and used as materials instead.

The group didn't seem to have much interest in chatting and urged their mounts to gallop across the fields, following Bai Shenfei.

On the way, they encountered some low-level Base Variant Creatures, which all scattered in fright, and they were too lazy to give chase.

After many twists and turns that lasted more than half the day, by three in the afternoon, they had covered only seventy to eighty miles. Suddenly, a colorful thoroughfare appeared in the mountains ahead. Bai Shenfei stopped at the entrance of this colored avenue.

Everyone else also stopped. Lin Shen looked carefully, only to realize that it wasn't any sort of colorful avenue at all. Rather, it was covered with colorful metal flowers stretching far into the distance, its full length unknown.

"I came here a few years ago. Back then, these colored steel flowers were only scattered sporadically among the greenery, with only a few clusters visible from time to time. In just a few years, so many have grown that they look like a long river," Ye said beside Lin Shen, mainly for his benefit, fearing that Lin Shen might unwittingly reveal himself by not recognizing the flowers.

"Where there are colored steel flowers, there are sure to be Steel Tail Scorpions. With so many flowers here, there must be a significant number of them hidden. We should go ahead and scout it out," Wang Tian'er said to Bai Shenfei.

"That sounds good," Bai Shenfei said, nodding slightly without showing any emotion.

Wang Tian'er, seemingly eager to show off in front of Bai Shenfei, didn't ask for opinions from Qi Shuheng or Lin Shen, and instead sent a Mutator riding a unicorn to scout the way ahead.

After the Mutator's transformation, a steel carapace appeared on his body. Only then did he carefully urge his mount to proceed. The unicorn moved very slowly, its hooves making an uncomfortable screeching sound as they stepped on the colored steel flowers.

He advanced about twenty to thirty meters and still no Steel Tail Scorpions appeared, emboldening him to increase his speed slightly.

After galloping for over a hundred meters and still seeing no sign of Steel Tail Scorpions, the Mutator stopped, turned his mount around, and shouted back, "Boss, there's no sign of Steel Tail Scorpions here."

"Strange, with so many colored steel flowers, there's not even a single Steel Tail Scorpion. Something's off," Wang Tian'er mused.

"Steel Tail Scorpions love the fluid inside the colored steel flowers. While it's not definite that these flowers would have them, the likelihood is very high. Now that there are no scorpions here, there are two possibilities. One, these might not be colored steel flowers but just look similar. The second possibility is that something strange has happened here, preventing us from seeing any Steel Tail Scorpions," said Qi Shuheng. After finishing, he looked at Bai Shenfei and asked, "Miss Bai, is there any way to circumvent this Flower Path?"

Bai Shenfei took out a notebook from her bag, looked at it, and said, "No, we have to go through here."

Everyone turned their attention to the notebook in her hand, including Lin Shen and Ye.

Lin Shen thought, "Does she truly know the way to Gourd Mountain? Could that notebook contain a map?"

"Since we can't bypass it, then we should scout the path more meticulously," Qi Shuheng said, looking towards Wang Tian'er.

Wang Tian'er gave a shout to the man on the Flower Path, and he turned his mount to continue scouting ahead, soon disappearing into the depths of the Flower Path.

They waited for half an hour before the man came riding back at a gallop.

"Boss Wang, this Flower Path stretches over ten miles and ends at a canyon. Beyond that, there are no colored steel flowers," the man reported upon his return to Wang Tian'er.

"Did you see any Steel Tail Scorpions?" asked Wang Tian'er.

"None," the man shook his head.

Wang Tian'er looked at Qi Shuheng, who then instructed one of the Mutators at his side, "You go and scout it as well, but take the other side of the Flower Path."

The Qi Family's Mutator employed his Base Mutation powers, covering most of his body with a steel carapace, and rode an Iron-horned Horse into the sea of flowers.

Since someone from the Wang Family had already scouted the path, the Qi Family's Mutator moved much faster, returning in less than half an hour.

"The Flower Path is over ten miles long, ending in a canyon indeed. Inside the canyon, there are no colored steel flowers. On the way, I encountered no Steel Tail Scorpions nor any other Base Variant Creatures," the man reported succinctly.

"What do you think, Miss Bai?" Qi Shuheng asked, turning to Bai Shenfei.

"The place we want to reach is that canyon. We have no choice but to go through here," Bai Shenfei stated.

"Well then, let's head to the canyon first and see from there. What do you all think?" Qi Shuheng asked, looking toward Wang Tian'er and Lin Shen.

"We have no other choice," Wang Tian'er and Lin Shen had no objections.

The group resumed their journey on the Flower Path. Lin Shen observed the path beneath them. The colored steel flowers were extremely vibrant, each blossom about the size of a fingernail, and the petals were shaped like seashells. The edges were razor-thin, sharp as blades.

Pets with steel bodies could tread upon them without issue, but for creatures of flesh and blood, stepping on them would likely result in immediate injury.

Everyone was on high alert, cautious of any potential problems. Fortunately, having traveled seven to eight miles without incident, it seemed just as the two scouts had reported: there was not a single steel scorpion in the Flower Path, nor other Base Variant Creatures.

They couldn't help but quicken their pace, planning to rush to the valley. Suddenly, they saw the entire Flower Path begin to sway, startling everyone, who quickly halted their mounts' advance.

"Steel Tail Scorpions... so many Steel Tail Scorpions..." someone cried out in horror.

On closer inspection, Lin Shen realized that it wasn't the colored steel flowers swaying at all; rather, countless palm-sized Steel Tail Scorpions had emerged from beneath them, in dense clusters like a river of scorpions—even under their feet.

## Chapter 24 - 24 Dark Bird

Chapter 24: Chapter 24 Dark Bird

Screams of alarm erupted as Steel Tail Scorpions crowded around the legs of the mounts, their pointed tails flashing coldly as they struck at the hooves and legs.

The Alloy Mounts could still withstand the piercing stings of the scorpion tails, but the legs and hooves of those iron pets were not so fortunate. Struck by who knows how many tails, they panicked, lashing out and leaping about, nearly dislodging several Mutators.

“Rescue them, charge through!” Wang Tian’er made a snap decision and charged forward on his mount, pulling a Wang Family Mutator who was about to be thrown off directly onto his mount to ride together.

The others followed suit, pulling those Mutators without Alloy Mounts onto their own mounts, and then they sped towards the front.

By now they had ventured seven or eight miles into the Flower Path, and it was even further to retreat, so they decided to charge straight ahead.

Fortunately, the scorpion tails of the Steel Tail Scorpions hardly damaged the Alloy Creatures. The group charged wildly, trampling who knows how many Steel Tail Scorpions to death.

After a mad dash of four or five miles, the road was teeming with Steel Tail Scorpions; no one knew how many there were.

Far off, they saw a canyon appearing ahead, connected to the Flower Path. There was only a line separating them, yet not a single Color Steel Flower grew in the canyon, and the dense swarm of Steel Tail Scorpions seemed to be held back by a mysterious force, unable to pour into the canyon no matter how they crowded.

Lifting their spirits, everyone accelerated toward the canyon.

Just as the person in the lead was about to reach the mouth of the canyon, a colorful shadow suddenly burst from the ground, and the Mutator at the front, along with his mount, was impaled in an instant.

The man looked down at the bloody hole in his chest and the huge, multicolored scorpion tail protruding at an angle, his face filled with terror. He opened his mouth to say something, but could not utter a sound, only blood gushed forth.

In the shocked gaze of the onlookers, the man's body was lifted into the air along with his mount, behind them the immense, multicolored scorpion tail swayed slowly, causing both man and mount to wobble ceaselessly in the air. .

Fear filled everyone's eyes. That Mutator and his mount were of Alloy Level, yet they were so easily pierced; the hardness of that scorpion tail was astonishing.

A few riders were unable to stop in time and tried to rush by the side, but two more colorful scorpion tails shot up from the ground, instantly impaling their mounts.

Fortunately, these two Alloy Mutators reacted quickly, jumping off their mounts to land amidst the dense wave of scorpions.

The scorpion tails of the Steel Tail Scorpions struck their bodies, clinking ceaselessly, but fortunately, they were not enough to pierce through their Alloy Carapace.

After sweeping the Steel Tail Scorpions off themselves, the two quickly jumped up, landing on the mounts of other Mutators who came to their aid.

The ground split open, and the Color Steel Flowers were scattered in all directions as a scorpion as big as an elephant with a colorful body emerged from underground, with three tails waving eerily, carrying corpses behind it.

"That's an Alloy Level Demon Armor Scorpion King... No... the Demon Armor Scorpion King should only have one tail... How does it have three..." Ye stepped in front of Lin Shen, saying with a hint of terror.

With a fierce shake of its three tails, the hanging corpses were flung away like artillery shells, crashing hard into the ground, creating a large crater, and were immediately engulfed by the surging Steel Tail Scorpions. There was no chance they could survive.

The Scorpion King swung its tail again, aiming to pierce other Mutators. One Alloy Mutator couldn't dodge in time and had to block the scorpion tail with his alloy-wrapped arm.

But the force behind the scorpion tail was tremendous. The Alloy Mutator, along with his mount, was knocked to the ground, and cracks appeared on the alloy carapace of his arm.

Seeing this, the other Mutators swiftly dodged to the side. With the Demon Armor Scorpion King with three fearsome tails blocking the way to the canyon, no one dared to charge past for a moment.



“Damn it, courting death.” Seeing two of his own Alloy Mutators killed, Wang Tian’er furiously threw out a pet capsule resembling a black crystal.

The pet capsule turned into a pitch-black Black Crystal Great Bird midair, its wings spanning four or five meters, and it charged at the Three-tailed Demon Armor Scorpion King like a bolt of black lightning.

The Three-tailed Demon Armor Scorpion King swung its terrifying tails at the incoming Black Crystal Great Bird, only to see the bird extending its claws, each gripping one of the tails.

The third tail aimed at the bird’s chest, but with a peck of its head, the bird actually broke the hard, multicolored alloy scorpion tail in two.

The bird’s fierce, hook-like claws forcefully tore, and the other two tails snapped off immediately.

The bird let out a strange cry, flinging the severed tail, tossing the massive body of the scorpion king into the air.

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The great bird flapped its wings mightily, ascending against the grain like a crescent blade severing the heavens, and in an instant it cleaved the Scorpion King’s exceptionally hard body into two halves, which crashed heavily to the ground, pounding two large pits into the surface.

The big bird then let out another long cry, returning to circle above Wang Tian’er’s head.

“Is that the Dark Bird?” Lin Shen scrutinized the Black Crystal Great Bird, which resembled a phoenix without feathers and a crow yet its cry sounded like that of a phoenix.

The reason why Dark Bird Base got its name was that, originally, a nest of Crystal Base Level Dark Bird eggs was discovered nearby, and the Lin, Qi, and Wang Families had all risen to power because of the Dark Bird.

It was said that the ancestors of the Lin, Qi, and Wang Families found the nest of the Dark Bird together and each obtained a Dark Bird egg, on the strength of which they established the Dark Bird Base.

Later, the Lin Family lost their Dark Bird and declined to the verge of being expelled from the alliance of the three families; fortunately, Mr. Lin Yin emerged from the Lin Family to stabilize the situation.

Up to today, the Dark Bird still remained the most powerful pet of Dark Bird Base, even though later the three families were able to acquire Crystal Base Level pets through other means, they still found it hard to compare with the Dark Bird. It was rumored that the Dark Bird might be one of the top-tier Crystal-based Creatures encompassing all aspects.

Since the Lin Family no longer had a Dark Bird, Lin Shen had never seen one in person; his knowledge of it was all from what he had heard from his family.

The Dark Birds of the Qi and Wang Families had been passed down and rarely showed themselves. Now, Qi Shuheng and Wang Tian'er represented the faces of their families, so it was no surprise that the Dark Birds were with them.

No one knew if it was the intimidating might of the Dark Bird or the death of the Scorpion King that caused the waves of Steel Tail Scorpions to stop attacking everyone; they started burrowing into the ground, retreating completely within moments.

“Lin wasn't lying to me; the Dark Bird truly is a top-level Crystal Base Creature,” Bai Shenfei remarked as she gazed at the Dark Bird.

“Just a Dark Bird, here in our little place, it's considered pretty good. But at a place like Sea Corn Base, it wouldn't be worth much,” said Wang Tian'er, as he instructed his people to collect the Base Mutation Fluid from inside the Scorpion King.

Everyone could see his intentions; using the Dark Bird to slay the Scorpion King was not only for avenging his own people—more likely, it was his wish to claim the Scorpion King for himself.

The Scorpion King was clearly not an ordinary Alloy Creature, with both its body materials and the Base Mutation Fluid being rare and valuable commodities.

Since Wang Tian'er had killed the Scorpion King himself, naturally no one would dispute him over it, and he was allowed to collect the Base Mutation Fluid unchallenged.

They couldn't leave the Scorpion King's body there, so Wang Tian'er directly ordered two Mutators with pets to drag the corpse back to the base.

After everyone entered the canyon, it was almost dark, so the families consulted and decided to rest here for the night and continue their journey in the early morning.

Lin Shen and Ye stayed together inside the tent, while Wei Wufu kept watch outside the tent.

Lin Shen asked Ye for the tent, but Wei Wufu refused to use one, simply sitting outside Lin Shen's tent, resting with his eyes closed against his backpack.

“Fourth Master, there was something fishy about the Flower Path today,” Ye said in a hushed tone inside the tent to Lin Shen.

“What was fishy?” Lin Shen inquired.

“On the first two scouting attempts, we didn’t find any Steel Tail Scorpions. It wasn’t until we reached a point of no return inside that those Steel Tail Scorpions abruptly attacked. It clearly was premeditated; normal Base Variant Creatures don’t possess such intelligence. Besides, that Demon Armor Scorpion King with three tails seemed much more formidable than any we had encountered before. The Base Variant Creatures around here are quite unusual,” Ye explained.

“The Base Variant Creatures indeed seem a bit strange,” Lin Shen nodded slightly.

“That’s not the main problem. What’s truly peculiar is that Dark Bird,” Ye said, his eyes flickering.

“Are you suggesting the Dark Bird is too strong?” Lin Shen asked, puzzled.

Ye shook his head, “The Dark Bird has always been strong, there’s no doubt about it, or else the three families wouldn’t have been able to establish their base with it.”

After a pause, Ye’s voice dropped even lower, “Didn’t you notice? Those Steel Tail Scorpions were very afraid of the Dark Bird. Not just them; even the Three-tailed Demon Armor Scorpion King seemed afraid of the Dark Bird. When it saw the Dark Bird, its movements became somewhat stiff, which is why it was killed so quickly.”

“Maybe it was just because the Dark Bird is indeed very strong, after all, there’s a level difference,” Lin Shen speculated.

Ye neither agreed nor disagreed, mysteriously adding, “Lin Shen, I seem to remember the Fourth Master mentioning that the place where our ancestors originally discovered the Dark Bird eggs is near this canyon.”

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## **Chapter 25 - 25: The 4th Dark Bird**

Chapter 25: Chapter 25: The 4th Dark Bird

“Are you suggesting that the Dark Bird is connected to the Gourd Mountain we’re heading to?” Lin Shen understood what Ye meant.

“Think about it, although Bai Shenfei comes from the Sea Corn Base, she only studied and trained there. What her family background truly is, even we don’t know, let alone the Qi and Wang Families. So why do they trust Bai Shenfei so much and take such a big risk to come here? Throughout our journey, they have almost been obedient to every word Bai Shenfei says, without a single complaint about the loss of their Alloy Mutators, just because Bai Shenfei claimed she knew where Gourd Mountain was? We are even questioning why the Qi and Wang Families trust her so much—this is too abnormal,” Ye said.

“What do you think?” Lin Shen didn’t show any intention to guess and signaled Ye to continue.

“I’ve been pondering, and there might be a possibility that Bai Shenfei indeed knows where Gourd Mountain is, but she can’t enter it by herself. She must need some special items or strength to get inside,” Ye spoke in a voice so low that Lin Shen, who was close at hand, could barely hear him. .

“Dark Bird?” Lin Shen realized what Ye was referring to.

“Correct, the Dark Bird. If she told the truth that our fourth uncle ordered her to take you into Gourd Mountain, then she would only need to take you. Even if she needed help, she could have brought members from our Lin Family. Why insist on bringing the Qi and Wang Families?”

Ye sneered and continued, “I couldn’t figure it out earlier, but today when I saw Wang Tian’er use the Dark Bird, I suddenly understood something. The only common point among our three families is that we all owned Dark Birds, which were obtained near this ravine. Maybe the key to entering Gourd Mountain lies with the Dark Bird. That’s why she intended to have all three families come here. To gain the trust of the Qi and Wang Families, she probably told them that the Dark Bird is the key to entering Gourd Mountain. That’s why Qi Shuheng and Wang Tian’er are so obedient to her—to find Gourd Mountain. Once they find Gourd Mountain, they can completely leave us behind and enjoy everything within, as they all have a Dark Bird. They are just using each other for their own calculations.”

“Since Bai Shenfei knows the location of Gourd Mountain and the Qi and Wang Families have the Dark Bird, why would they want us to come along? We neither know where Gourd Mountain is nor have a Dark Bird,” Lin Shen pondered.

“Maybe they’re afraid that the third and fourth elders didn’t die inside Gourd Mountain and something might go wrong, so they could use you as a hostage,” Ye said, looking up into Lin Shen’s eyes with a complex expression, before adding, “And there might be another possibility.”

“What possibility?” Lin Shen felt that since Ye was looking at him in that way, what he was about to say must be related to him.

“They might suspect that you have a Dark Bird,” Ye said, his gaze intensely fixed on Lin Shen, speaking slowly and deliberately.

Lin Shen was startled, “How could I possibly have a Dark Bird? Not to mention that the Lin Family’s Dark Bird pet was lost a long time ago, even if it wasn’t, it should have been passed on to my second brother. If he was ineligible, then it would be my third or fourth brothers, not me.”

“It’s true that the Lin Family’s Dark Bird was lost, but that doesn’t mean the Lin Family doesn’t have a Dark Bird,” Ye said in a low voice.

“Your words are very strange. If it’s already lost, then it’s definitely gone,” Lin Shen fixed his gaze on Ye, not understanding what he was trying to say.

“Mr. Lin Shen, you might not be aware of this, but the Dark Bird eggs found back then weren’t three but four. The ancestors of the Qi and Wang Families each got a Dark Bird egg, while the ancestor of the Lin Family got two Dark Bird eggs,” Ye spoke.

“What?” Lin Shen couldn’t believe it and his eyes widened in shock, his voice involuntarily raised a notch.

Ye quickly put his hand over Lin Shen’s mouth, “Keep your voice down, the walls have ears.”

“How come I’ve never heard about our Lin Family getting two Dark Bird eggs?” Lin Shen lowered his voice again after Ye released his hand.

“I heard about it from the old master before. Once, the old master asked Cang Yun and me to drink with him. In a moment of high spirits, he somehow brought up the topic of the Dark Birds,” Ye reminisced. “The old master said that the ancestral Lin had discovered the Dark Bird nest and had made the most effort in acquiring the Dark Birds. So, when it was found that there were a total of four Dark Bird eggs in the nest, the Qi and Wang Families each took one, and the Lin ancestor took two for himself.”

“Then why have I never heard about our family having two Dark Birds? Don’t tell me both Dark Birds went missing together?” Lin Shen asked doubtfully.

“No, only one Dark Bird went missing. The other egg, after being brought back by the Lin ancestor, was never seen again because the Lin ancestor said that it did not hatch successfully and became a dead egg.”

Lin Shen was momentarily stunned. "Then our Lin ancestor really had bad luck. Out of four Dark Bird eggs, three hatched into Dark Birds, and just that one became a dead egg."

"You don't believe it either, right? The Qi and Wang Families didn't quite believe it too. They always suspected that the other Dark Bird egg from the Lin Family wasn't a dead egg but was hidden as a secret weapon. That's why, even during the Lin Family's most difficult times, the Qi and Wang Families didn't completely destroy the Lin Family. They were afraid that the Lin Family still had another Dark Bird hidden, which gave Mr. Lin Zongzheng the opportunity to rise and secure the current status of the Lin Family," Ye said.

Continuing his recollection, Ye said, "During that time, the Qi and Wang Families were constantly probing the Lin Family, wanting to find out if the Lin Family was hiding another Dark Bird. If not, the best outcome for the Lin Family was to lose all interests in the Dark Bird Base, and it might even lead to the family's ruin. However, they did not expect Mr. Lin Zongzheng to be so formidable. Before they could uncover the truth, they realized that even without the Dark Bird, it would cost them dearly to deal with Mr. Lin Zongzheng, and by then, their chance was gone."

"Later, the growth of Mr. Lin Zongzheng became so fearsome to them that, along with the rise of Mr. Lin Shen and his brothers, they were as scared as grandchildren. They probably couldn't even sleep peacefully. A Lin Family without the Dark Bird, but with those three masters, was even more frightening to them than one with a Dark Bird." Ye chuckled smugly at this point.

"If it weren't for the disappearance of Mr. Lin Zongzheng, the Dark Bird Base would probably have been dominated by the Lin name by now," Ye said, his gaze once again fixed on Lin Shen's eyes. "Lin Shen, you ought to know the best, just what kind of people those three masters are. In a place like the Dark Bird Base, there is no need for a Dark Bird. If the Lin Family really still has one..."

"Then it could only be with me, the most useless fifth brother, right?" It wasn't that Lin Shen was a fool; he naturally understood what Ye meant and sighed helplessly. "Ye, I truly haven't seen any Dark Bird. When my second and third brothers were around, I could walk around the Dark Bird Base as I pleased, always protected by Alloy Mutators. I never needed that thing. Besides, do you think with my strength, even if I had a Dark Bird, I could survive under the hands of Qi Shuheng and Wang Tian'er? I'm afraid I would have been done for by them before I could even summon the Dark Bird."

"Lin Shen, I definitely believe you. But it's no use that I believe you. The Qi and Wang Families don't believe you, Bai Shenfei doesn't believe you, and that Wei Wufu, I reckon he is here for the Dark Bird too; otherwise, why would he cling to you," Ye said coldly.

"They don't believe me, and there's nothing I can do about it. I truly don't have it," Lin Shen thought for a moment and then added, "Moreover, no matter how powerful the

Dark Bird is, it's just a Crystal-based Creature. Whether it's truly that useful is still debatable."

Ye wanted to say more but was interrupted by a commotion from outside, followed by screams.

Both of them felt a chill in their hearts and quickly crawled out of the tent to see what was happening.

Wufu, who was standing guard outside the tent, had already stood up, looking up at the night sky, and the others in the camp did the same, each of them gazing upward.

Lin Shen looked up in the direction everyone else was looking, and could not help but exclaim in amazement, "Ah!"

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## **Chapter 26 - 26 Gourd Mountain**

Chapter 26: Chapter 26 Gourd Mountain

The night sky at eight or nine o'clock had already become very clear, perhaps because of the decline of human technological civilization, the stars visible to the naked eye in the night sky seemed much more numerous than before, and they were especially bright.

But at this moment, the brilliant stars in the sky seemed unusually dim.

The night sky was taken over by an orange hue, as if the dawn had spread across the sky or the twilight had set the horizon ablaze.

The source of that orange color did not seem to be a real presence; it was difficult to describe exactly what kind of existence it was.

It was as if it existed and yet did not exist; it was seen, yet it seemed not to have been fully seen.

The orange light was like the outline in a painting, while the main body was empty and distorted. To say there was nothing there seemed untrue as the starry sky seen through the void was warped; to say something was there, yet nothing could be seen.

Only the eerie light of the orange outline recolored the starry sky, and the left void resembled a distorted bird that covered the heavens, flapping its wings in flight.

The hollow distortion slowly flew over the heads of Lin Shen and his companions. Whether intentionally or not, it went straight to the other end of the canyon, the orange light brightening the long, dark chasm as it moved away into the distance.

Taking advantage of the bright light, the group saw a strange mountain peak standing among the clouds at the far end of the canyon, though they had no idea how far away it was.

The mountain peak stood proudly among the hills, making the smaller surrounding peaks look like mere mounds, diminishing their majestic aura.

What was even stranger was the shape of the mountain—it was quite peculiar.

Lin Shen had not seen much of the world; the mountains he had seen today already surpassed the total of what he had seen in the previous twenty years.

But among the others, there were those who had traveled widely and had broad knowledge.

Yet, not one of them had ever seen a mountain like this. Its shape resembled a giant gourd, slanting amidst the mountains.

A mountain shaped like a gourd—such a thing was hard to imagine. What kind of geological changes and natural erosion could have shaped it into its current form?

“Gourd Mountain... That must be Gourd Mountain...” A trembling voice arose, not trembling from fear but rather from surprise and excitement.

Lin Shen also felt that the mountain must be Gourd Mountain, it was just too lifelike. He supposed that must be why his second brother had casually named it Gourd Mountain back then.

What puzzled Lin Shen was, given the enormous size of Gourd Mountain and its proximity to the Dark Bird Base, it should have been easy to find. Why then had only the Lin brothers known of its existence?

Such a majestic and strange mountain would surely be unforgettable with even a single glance. There should have been many who had seen it, and it would have been easy to connect it with the name Gourd Mountain. Had nobody thought of this before?

“That’s not right!” Lin Shen suddenly realized something.



When they arrived at the canyon, it was still daylight, and visibility was good. If there had been such a strangely shaped large mountain in the distance, they could not have missed it.

Why hadn't anyone seen it during the day, yet now, suddenly, a mountain had appeared?

"Could it really be one of those legendary mountains that can hide from the world?" Lin Shen pondered in his heart.

The orange light gradually receded, slowly disappearing behind the massive Gourd Mountain until the last glimmer of light vanished, and the majestic and mysterious Gourd Mountain could no longer be seen.

In the vast night, it was unknown whether it still stood there.

The atmosphere suddenly became somewhat delicate, as both the Qi and Wang families looked towards Bai Shenfei.

As Ye had analyzed, they needed the Goddess Consort because they did not know where Gourd Mountain was.

The unexpected appearance of the orange light had pointed them in the direction of Gourd Mountain, and having the Dark Bird with them, they no longer needed the Goddess Consort.

Lin Shen could not see what expression Bai Shenfei was wearing now, but he imagined it was not a good one.

"Miss Bai, it seems we must renegotiate our cooperation," Qi Shuheng said with a smile.

"Indeed, indeed, cooperation requires fairness. You reap what you sow. If there's no investment, even if we were willing to give, a person like Miss Bai would not condescend to accept it, right?" Wang Tian'er also said, smiling.

"How do you want to renegotiate?" the Goddess Consort asked indifferently.

"To sit at the table and play the game, you need chips. Miss Bai, you're out of chips now, but don't worry. Follow us, and I'll make sure you get a tenth. Tian'er, you have no objections, right?" Qi Shuheng said.

"With Miss Bai's exceptional ability, a ten percent share is reasonable," Wang Tian'er added.

"What if I don't agree?" the Goddess Consort said coldly.

“If you don’t agree, that’s okay too. Business is business, and we won’t make things difficult for Miss Bai. But, ‘those who do not share the same values cannot work together.’ If Miss Bai has the capabilities, feel free to go to Gourd Mountain on your own. We won’t stand in your way. With your abilities, Miss Bai, you are bound to return loaded with treasures. No matter how much you take, we certainly won’t be envious,” Wang Tian’er said with certainty.

He was confident that the Goddess Consort had no choice but to cooperate with them. Without the Dark Bird, it was questionable whether she could even reach Gourd Mountain, let alone enter it. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

“Since that’s the case, let’s go our separate ways,” the Goddess Consort said before turning to Lin Shen and asking, “Will you come with me?”

Before Lin Shen could answer, Wang Tian’er had already begun speaking, “Miss Bai, please do as you wish. Our three families’ affairs do not require your concern.”

“Are you willing or not?” Bai Shenfei didn’t pay any attention to Wang Tian’er; she didn’t even glance at him but continued to look at Lin Shen and asked.

“You are my junior sister, of course, I should take care of you.” Lin Shen said as he walked over to Bai Shenfei.

Lin Shen had thought it through clearly, even if Bai Shenfei had ulterior motives for coming, his own needs far outweighed those of the Qi and Wang families.

Of course, what Lin Shen most wanted to see was Bai Shenfei engaging with the Qi and Wang families first, as that would be the most advantageous situation for him.

“You’re going to leave with an outsider. Is the Lin Family ready to disregard the past camaraderie between our three families?” Qi Shuheng said with a cold face and an indifferent tone.

The people from the Qi and Wang families had already positioned themselves between Lin Shen and Bai Shenfei; they couldn’t possibly let Bai Shenfei take Lin Shen with her. If the Lin Family had another Dark Bird, that would be troublesome.

“Wang Tian’er, you’d better think this through. If my junior sister and I join forces, do you really think you stand a chance?” Lin Shen said unaffectedly.

Wang Tian’er said with disdain, “If you really were that bastard Lin Xiangdong, I wouldn’t dare to stop you. Unfortunately, you are only Lin Shen from the Lin Family, who only knows how to eat, drink, and be merry... Don’t hesitate to take him down...”

Lin Shen knew something was wrong when he heard this, and quickly turned to look at Ye.

Only Ye could be hundred percent certain that the person here was Lin Shen and not Lin Xiangdong. If Wang Tian'er could be so sure that he was Lin Shen, then there was a nine out of ten chance that the problem lay with Ye.

Of course, it might also be Wei Wufu; he must have guessed that Lin Xiangdong was actually Lin Shen in disguise, but Lin Shen still felt it was more likely to be Ye.

The moment Lin Shen turned to look at Ye, Ye suddenly drew a knife and held it to Lin Shen's neck, sighing, "Lin Shen... I'm sorry... I had no choice..."

He hadn't finished speaking when he suddenly saw a flash of cold light before his eyes, which made him retreat in shock.

Ye's speed of retreat was incredibly fast; even Lin Shen was a bit surprised, as Ye's aged body was able to move so quickly, not inferior to those of top alloy creatures.

But even though he retreated so fast, there was still a slash mark diagonally across his cheek, which, though not deep, looked extremely fierce and terrifying.

Wei Wufu, holding a jade Tang Sword in his hand, stood in front of Lin Shen. Blood was still dripping from the chilling blade of the sword.

"You go first; I'll hold them off here." As Wei Wufu spoke, a mysterious substance surged within his body, and in a blink, he was clad in purple armor that covered his robust and tall figure as if he were a Purple Armor War God.

Lin Shen hadn't expected Wei Wufu would really make a move to help him. Without time to think more, he flipped onto the White Gold Beast and ran wildly toward the outside of the canyon.

A Mutator from the Qi Family, who was nearest to Lin Shen, attempted to intercept him but suddenly saw a flash of cold light. The Mutator's head soared into the air while his body fell to the ground, blood spraying out.

The jade-like Tang Sword in Wei Wufu's hand was pointed obliquely at the ground, with blood flowing down the blade.

Wei Wufu was a man of few words but ruthless actions; a man who would chop at someone without hesitation. Even Lin Shen felt a chill watching him.

"Brother Tian'er, it seems our Dark Bird Base has been taken lightly by others, as if anyone dares to defecate and urinate on our heads. I can't tolerate this; can you?" Qi Shuheng's eyes flashed coldly.

“I can’t tolerate it either,” Wang Tian’er said with a cold voice.

“Then let’s kill him,” Qi Shuheng said darkly as he flicked out a Pet Capsule.

Almost at the same time, Wang Tian’er also threw out a Pet Capsule.

But before their Pet Capsules could transform into living creatures, a sapphire-like rapier pierced through the two capsules, skewering them.

“Didn’t the one who taught you cultivation ever tell you? That is not how you use Pet Capsules.” Bai Shenfei held the longsword and with a flick, the two pierced Alloy Pet Capsules instantly shattered to pieces on the ground.

Qi Shuheng and Wang Tian’er looked at each other and, without another word, drew out another Pet Capsule each, but this time they didn’t dare to toss them carelessly as before and instead held them up above their heads.

The others from the Qi and Wang families also surrounded them, trapping Wei Wufu and Bai Shenfei.

“Leave Bai Shenfei to us. As for that bastard Wei Wufu, scrape him off for me,” Wang Tian’er commanded, staring coldly at Bai Shenfei.

Two cries of phoenixes sounded simultaneously as two Dark Birds sprang forth from the palms that Qi Shuheng and Wang Tian’er held aloft. They shot toward Bai Shenfei like two dark blades of light.

They harbored wariness against Bai Shenfei and unleashed their strongest Dark Birds right from the start.

On the other side, Wei Wufu was surrounded by the Mutators from both families, and the sounds of battle were unceasing.

Lin Shen had intended to escape a bit further and then assess the situation, but when he turned his head, he saw a figure chasing after him.

He was riding a White Gold Beast with a speed of 18.4, but the figure wasn’t riding anything and was even faster than the White Gold Beast, quickly closing the distance between them.

Lin Shen saw that the figure was covered in black, scale-like metallic armor, with an extremely emaciated body that looked terrifying, like a monstrous hybrid of man and snake.

“Stop running, Lin Shen. You can’t escape. Let’s talk properly. As long as you cooperate, even at the risk of offending Qi Shuheng and Wang Tian’er, I’ll ensure your

safe departure from here,” Ye said as he suddenly flashed past Lin Shen, blocking the path of the White Gold Beast.

## Chapter 27 - 27: Cutting Bullets

Chapter 27: Chapter 27: Cutting Bullets

“Ye, do you really think I’m a fool?” Lin Shen asked coldly as he looked at Ye.

“Lin Shen, I truly see you as my own child...” Ye’s words were cut off before he could finish.

“And you think you’re worthy?” Disgust filled Lin Shen’s face.

“You are still young and haven’t reached my age, so you don’t understand,” Ye sighed.

“Ye, if you had admitted to the betrayal openly, I would have respected you a little. Don’t play the saint and the sinner, don’t disgust me,” Lin Shen continued with a cold face, “Enough with the nonsense, what do you really want from me?”

“I only want the Dark Bird, nothing else,” Ye said.

“I’ve said it many times, I don’t have the Dark Bird,” Lin Shen already knew that all of Ye’s previous probes were to find out whether he had the Dark Bird.

“Little Brother Shen, there’s no need to deceive me. The Lin Family must still have a Dark Bird, and it must be with you,” Ye, holding a short blade, slowly advanced towards Lin Shen as he spoke, “If it truly were a dead egg, why wouldn’t the Lin Family show it to relieve the doubts of the Qi and Wang families? All it would take is to display the dead egg, but the Lin Family never thought to do so, not even at critical moments of life and death. Therefore, it must not be a dead egg, but the fourth Dark Bird. Having inherited the Dark Bird, I’m well aware of the temperament of the three older Lin brothers; if there were a Dark Bird, they would have certainly given it to you. You have always been so confident because you have the Dark Bird as your trump card, right?”

“So that’s what you’ve been thinking?” Lin Shen realized why Ye was so convinced he had the Dark Bird.

It turned out that Lin Shen's self-confidence had given Ye the wrong impression, but Lin Shen's confidence didn't come from the Dark Bird—it came from the Fire Seed and the Death Powder he had found by chance.

“Little Brother Shen, you've never experienced hardship and don't understand the sufferings of life. Some things aren't as simple as you think, and I'm not as simple as you think. The Dark Bird is powerful, but it depends on who holds it. Do you believe that if you had the Dark Bird, and if it really came to a fight with me, you wouldn't even have the chance to strike?” Ye's tone was sincere, “You're someone I've watched grow up. Leave the Dark Bird, and I promise not to harm a hair on your head. If I can gain some benefits in Gourd Mountain, I'll share some with you in the future. Don't force me to take action; I don't wish to do that.”

“Ye, let's skip the nonsense; it only makes me feel sick. I don't have the Dark Bird. If you don't believe me, kill me and search my body,” Lin Shen said coldly, sitting on the back of the White Gold Beast.

“Little Brother Shen, are you really pushing me to this point? If I take action, I can't spare your life. Both Mr. Lin Zongzheng and the Fourth Lin Brother's tempers are clear to both of us. If I strike you, there's no turning back, so I would have to silence you,” Ye's voice also turned cold as he gripped the short blade tightly in his hand.

It was an Alloy weapon, fashioned like a short sword, not a dagger. The body of the sword was like brass, but the edge was a frosty white color.

“Why are you afraid of my third and fourth brothers?” Lin Shen suddenly asked.

Ye was slightly taken aback, not expecting Lin Shen to ask such a question suddenly. After a moment of thought, he responded, “Because Mr. Lin Zongzheng and the Fourth Lin Brother are both very strong, strong to the extent that anyone who has seen their strength can't help but feel fear. How should I put it, 'strong' isn't quite accurate; while they don't have absolute overpowering strength, if someone of the same level, or even a level higher, were to fight them to the death, I believe they would be the ones to survive. If the Second Brother were still here, he'd be even more fearsome. The Lin Family is indeed fortunate to have such children; if any survive, the Lin Family will surely become a major force in the future.”

“Ye, have you forgotten that I'm also a Lin? I'm their brother too,” Lin Shen said calmly.

Ye laughed, “Indeed, you're a Lin as well. I believe you might be as formidable as Mr. Lin Zongzheng and the Fourth Brother in the future, but you're not there yet. If you were an Alloy-Level Mutator now, I wouldn't dare oppose you. But it's a pity you haven't completed the Base Mutation, and even with the Dark Bird, it's no use. I could kill you before the Dark Bird even touches me; you wouldn't stand a chance.”

“Killing you doesn't require Base Mutation,” Lin Shen said indifferently.

Ye's eyes turned icy as he said, "Since that's the case, I'll give you the chance to summon the Dark Bird."

Lin Shen took out a Pet Capsule and transformed it into a Supersonic Gunman positioned by his side.

"It seems you're still holding onto hope," Ye, seeing that Lin Shen had summoned not the Dark Bird but the Supersonic Gunman won from Wang Tian'er, narrowed his eyes and said.

Lin Shen paid him no heed, directly ordering the Supersonic Gunman to attack.

The Supersonic Gunman quickly drew his gun and pulled the trigger at Ye.

The muzzle spat out sparks, and the bullet flew out at a speed hard for the naked eye to catch.

"Clang!" Ye stood motionless, his short blade flashed, and the bullet aiming for his face astonishingly split in two, whizzing past both sides of Ye's body and falling to the ground. .

Ye, short blade in hand, walked expressionlessly towards Lin Shen.

"Clang, clang, clang!" The Supersonic Gunman kept firing, but he couldn't halt Ye's advance at all. The bullets aimed at him were all deflected by his short blade.

Lin Shen frowned slightly. The Ye he remembered wasn't this strong. The speed of the Supersonic Gunman was top-notch among Alloy Creatures, yet Ye's speed was even faster, and he could precisely slice bullets, something not within the capabilities Ye had shown before.

His speed was no slower than that time when Lin Shen used Acupoint Sealing on the Supersonic Gunman.

"It's better to summon the Dark Bird now, this is your last chance." Ye had already reached the front of the White Gold Beast, swinging his blade to slash a deep gash in its neck.

Despite the White Gold Beast's speed, it had no chance to dodge and immediately collapsed to one side.

Lin Shen had no choice but to jump down from the White Gold Beast's back, standing in front of Ye.

Ye continued to walk towards Lin Shen, the short blade in his hand like the tongue of a venomous snake, seemingly ready to strike at any moment with a kiss of death for Lin Shen.

Bang!

Lin Shen didn't wait for Ye to make a move, but had the Supersonic Gunman shoot again.

However, as the Supersonic Gunman fired, Lin Shen also made his move.

Seven Steps of Conflict could give Lin Shen a speed faster than a bullet, but there was no rule saying he had to use that speed to attack the shooter.

Lin Shen moved like lightning, his finger aiming for the acupoint below Ye's throat, a spot he could see.

"As expected." It seemed Ye had long anticipated Lin Shen's move; as Lin Shen made his move, Ye's short blade struck as well, slicing towards Lin Shen's arm.

Ye's speed was actually faster than Lin Shen's strike. No wonder he was so confident. Such speed was no longer within the Alloy Level.

Clang!

Ye's short blade had already struck Lin Shen's arm, and Lin Shen's finger was still some distance from Ye.

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## **Chapter 28 - 28 The Secret of Gourd Mountain**

Chapter 28: Chapter 28 The Secret of Gourd Mountain

Ye had thought his blade would sever Lin Shen's arm but when it struck, it felt as if it landed on a steel wire rope of unmatched toughness. Not only did it fail to cut through, but the impact also sent a stinging pain through his wrist.

Just as Ye realized something was amiss and intended to withdraw his hand, a dark red shadow tore through the sleeve on Lin Shen's arm. Like a snake, it coiled around Ye's arm.



The blade Ye had brought down had sliced into the Death Powder wrapped around Lin Shen's arm. Lin Shen had known all along that his own attack couldn't possibly be faster than Ye.

Ye's reaction was lightning-fast. The very moment the Death Powder wound around his hand, his other hand shot out like a bolt of lightning, grabbing the Death Powder's head to pull it off.

Unfortunately, he underestimated the Death Powder. The moment he seized its head, the Death Powder's tail stabbed into his palm like a scorpion's strike and coiled around too, binding both his arms in an instant.

"What the hell is this thing!" Ye's expression shifted slightly. With that, he suddenly lashed out at Lin Shen, disregarding the Death Powder wrapped around his hands. Balancing on one leg, he lashed out with the other like an illusion, aiming a kick at Lin Shen's head.

If he could just kill Lin Shen and obtain the key to this bizarre pet, he could immediately turn the tide.

Lin Shen had anticipated this move well in advance. Before Ye could even kick, Lin Shen had already started to retreat, ordering the Supersonic Gunman to fire at almost the same moment.

As Ye kicked, Lin Shen's speed surpassed that of the bullet; he narrowly retreated, dodging the kick while the wind from it sent his hair flying in all directions.

The bullet from the Supersonic Gunman struck Ye, and although the gunman's hardness was slightly lacking, since it was Alloy Level, when the bullet hit Ye's strange scale-like carapace, it only sparked a few times before being deflected.

Both Ye and Lin Shen were startled—Ye at Lin Shen's ability to execute such speed repeatedly, having thought that such a life-saving maneuver couldn't be used more than twice, would be extraordinary. Lin Shen, on the other hand, was shocked that not only was Ye's speed impressive but the hardness of his Alloy Carapace was so high that the bullets from the Supersonic Gunman had almost no effect on him.

Ye exerted force in pursuit of Lin Shen, intending to kick again, but before his leg could lift, the Death Powder had already coiled around it. .

Ye attempted to lift his other leg—only to have it bound by the Death Powder mid-rise, causing him to fall straight back like a mummy.

As Ye fell, another gunshot rang out. Lying on the ground, Ye saw Lin Shen's fingertip pointing to a spot just below his throat.

A flash of joy crossed Ye's eyes—no matter what life-saving methods Lin Shen had, it would be impossible to break through his Alloy Carapace with such little force.

But Lin Shen's approach gave Ye a chance to kill him directly.

As expected, when Lin Shen's finger made contact, it couldn't damage Ye's metallic carapace and felt like just a nudge from a stick.

Ye wanted to use his trump card, but suddenly found his mouth immobilized.

In fact, his entire body was paralyzed.

Eyes widened in horror, Ye now understood the real reason why the Supersonic Gunman had been subdued by a single poke from Lin Shen.

He had initially thought the gunman couldn't move because he was hit in a vital point, but now it seemed that wasn't the case.

"Open his mouth," Lin Shen commanded Death Powder.

Death Powder's tail violently penetrated Ye's mouth, shattering his teeth before prying it open and extracting a thin, willow leaf-like sliver from inside.

The sliver, like a phantom green, was transparent and clearly made of Crystal Base material, thinner than the blade of a razor.

Lin Shen took the Green Leaf Blade and pressed a finger onto Ye's body again.

With several teeth shattered and his mouth full of blood, Ye instantly regained the ability to speak, "Lin Shen... no... Mr. Lin Shen... I should not have underestimated you... I should not have underestimated a member of the Lin Family..."

"Ye, has my Lin Family wronged you in any way?" Lin Shen asked coldly.

"No, the Lin Family has not wronged me," Ye said with a wry smile.

"If the Lin Family has done nothing to wrong you, and you are already so old, what use is obtaining the treasure inside Gourd Mountain to you? How many more years can you live?" Lin Shen tried to extract information about Gourd Mountain from Ye, who must have known something to be so desperate.

"It's precisely because I don't have many years left that I want to enter Gourd Mountain. Only by getting in can I continue to live. I haven't had enough of life, I don't want to die yet," Ye explained.

“What do you mean?” Lin Shen’s eyes narrowed slightly, surprised by the information Ye was revealing.

“Lin Shen, I can tell you everything I know, just please spare my life,” Ye pleaded.

“Speak,” Lin Shen said, expressionless as he watched Ye.

“It was by chance that I overheard Mr. Lin Zongzheng and Fourth Brother talking about some secrets of Gourd Mountain. They were discussing Second Brother’s affairs, saying that a long time ago, after Second Brother had been away for a very long time, he returned very excited. He told them that inside Gourd Mountain there was something that granted eternal life. When they were powerful enough, he would take them and Elder Sister to Gourd Mountain, so that the siblings could live forever in eternal youth...” Ye recalled.

“Do you really believe that there is something in this world that can grant eternal life?” Lin Shen asked with a frown.

“Second Brother would not lie, if he said it’s there, then it must be,” Ye said, his eyes filled with longing.

“Just for that sentence, you would stop at nothing to enter Gourd Mountain?” Lin Shen asked thoughtfully.

“The older one gets, the more one fears death. I really just don’t want to die. In the future, I will serve you wholeheartedly, daring not to harbor any other thoughts,” Ye said.

“You have no future,” Lin Shen stated dispassionately.

Hearing this, Ye’s face changed drastically, and he struggled to shout, “Mr. Lin Shen... you are a member of the Lin Family... you can’t go back on your word...”

Before he could finish, the tail of the Death Powder fiercely pierced his forehead, penetrating through his head.

Ye was killed instantly, his eyes widening to an unimaginable extent, dying with his eyes wide open.

Ye never expected the usually jovial and pleasure-seeking Lin Shen to be so ruthless; nor did he expect a member of the Lin Family to break their promise.

“I never agreed not to kill you, and even if I had, I wouldn’t have let you live. You pose too great a threat to me. If it weren’t for the element of surprise, I would have had no confidence in defeating you. Giving you a chance would have been sending myself to

die, and I don't want to die," Lin Shen said as he bent over to search Ye's corpse, taking everything he had on him.

He felt extremely disgusted in his heart, but surviving was more important than anything at that moment.

Before long, Lin Shen had taken everything from Ye.

An Alloy Short Blade, a Crystal Base Green Leaf Blade, two Alloy Pet Capsules, and three Capsule Keys.

Two of the keys were clearly meant to be used with the Pet Capsules, while the third key was of Crystal Base Level, clear and transparent like citrine, with a heart-shaped handle.

"Strange, why is there only a key but no capsule?" Lin Shen wondered, taking another look at Ye's corpse.

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## **Chapter 29 - 29: Out of Luck**

Chapter 29: Chapter 29: Out of Luck

Lin Shen flipped over the body a couple of times, even carefully feeling the inside of the clothing hems, but he didn't find any hidden Pet Capsules.

Ye indeed did not possess a Crystal Base Pet Capsule on his body, and it wasn't because he didn't have time to use it.

"Generally, people would hide the key and only take their pets out, avoiding the risk of their pets being snatched away. What's the use of just carrying the key without the capsule?" Lin Shen frowned and pondered.

Unable to figure it out for the moment, he simply put the key away for later.

Ye's two Alloy Pets included the Heavy Armor Beast he rode and the Gale Meteor Iron Swallow.

Heavy Armor Beast: Alloy Creature.

Strength: 18.5.

Speed: 12.7.

Hardness: 16.7.

Toughness: 11.6.

Base Change Talent: Defense Enhancement. .

Gale Meteor Iron Swallow: Alloy Creature.

Strength: 10.9.

Speed: 19.1.

Hardness: 17.6.

Toughness: 18.7.

Base Change Talent: Swift Slash, Swallow Return.

The Heavy Armor Beast wasn't fast enough to catch up with the White Gold Beast, so Ye retracted it when he was pursuing Lin Shen. This creature was all about thick skin and brute strength, good for acting as a strong shield or for scouting ahead.

Although the Gale Meteor Iron Swallow wasn't that strong, its other attributes were quite decent. Furthermore, its dual talents were impressive. Swift Slash allowed it to convert speed into destructive power, somewhat compensating for its lack of strength. Swallow Return enabled the Meteoric Iron Swallow to make a sudden turn during high-speed flight, catching adversaries by surprise.

With the White Gold Beast killed by Ye, the Heavy Armor Beast would be a suitable mount, and the Gale Meteor Iron Swallow a decent assistant.

Boom!

A sudden loud noise came from the direction of the canyon, like something had exploded.

After a brief moment of thought, Lin Shen collected his things and stealthily approached the battlefield.

He still kept the Death Powder within his clothes, wrapping it around himself.

When Lin Shen stealthily returned to the mouth of the canyon and peeked inside, he discovered no one was left, only some tents remained in place, and the lit bonfires had not been extinguished.

At the site of the recent fight, there was now a large crater over ten meters in diameter, with several bodies strewn haphazardly nearby.

Lin Shen observed for a while and then summoned the Meteoric Iron Swallow to scout ahead, finding the tents empty and everyone else's whereabouts unknown.

Seeing no danger, Lin Shen carefully approached and checked the bodies, among which were neither Bai Shenfei nor Wei Wufu, only Base Mutators from the Qi and Wang families.

"What has happened? Why has everyone disappeared? And what's with this big crater?" Lin Shen wondered.

Inside the tents were many supplies and belongings, showing that their departure was very hasty; many things were left behind uncollected.

On the ground leading to the deeper parts of the canyon, one could see disordered footprints and hoof marks, indicating they had headed further into the canyon.

"Did they go chasing someone, or were they drawn deeper inside by something?" Lin Shen pondered for a moment, then decided to follow and see for himself.

He summoned the Heavy Armor Beast, placing the Supersonic Gunman in front, with the Meteoric Iron Swallow scouting far ahead.

He didn't dare to move too quickly, to avoid nearby Base Variant Creatures lying in wait in the shadows.

It wasn't long before he saw several Base Variant Creature corpses on the ground, with their Base Mutation Fluid not harvested.

Lin Shen checked the wounds on those bodies and then continued to pursue.

Every so often, one could see the corpses of Base Variant Creatures, yet not a single person was to be seen, nor were there any signs of living Base Variant Creatures.

The canyon was very long and it wasn't until the sky began to brighten that he reached the end of the canyon, but still, there was no sign of Bai Shenfei and the others.

As the sky gradually lightened, Lin Shen looked off into the distance where a continuous mountain range loomed, but the majestic and mysterious Gourd Mountain was nowhere to be seen.

"Gourd Mountain is so imposing that it can be clearly seen from the canyon's entrance, so why can't I see it here?" Lin Shen's confusion deepened.

There were many paths among the mountain range, but thankfully, there were hoof prints on the ground, and Lin Shen followed the tracks.

In the mountains, there were many metal plants, and even towering trees that seemed to be forged from steel, resembling a forest of steel.

The most common were trees similar to red maples, with leaves the color of red copper that covered the seven or eight-meter-tall trees.

Following the hoof prints through the twists and turns of the mountain range, Lin Shen was startled to find that after two to three hours, he had circled back to the canyon.

“How strange!” Lin Shen grew more puzzled. He was certain he had followed the hoof prints without seeing Bai Shenfei and the others double back, so how had he ended up back at the beginning?

“Perhaps Gourd Mountain should be here, only I can’t see it. They have the Dark Bird with them, so they might have already entered Gourd Mountain,” Lin Shen reasoned, concluding that this was the only possibility.

Unfortunately, without a Dark Bird, even if he wanted to enter Gourd Mountain, he could not find the way.

“How exactly is such a colossal mountain concealed? It truly is incomprehensible.” Lin Shen tried once more to search the mountain range for them but, finding nothing, he ended up back at the canyon again.

What was even stranger was that not a trace of Base Variant Creatures could be found within the mountains. Theoretically, the area near a Mutation Point should be teeming with Base Variant Creatures. Everything here seemed rather eerie.

“Forget it, my strength is limited. Even if I did enter Gourd Mountain, I’m afraid I wouldn’t be much help but might instead become a burden to my third and fourth brothers,” Lin Shen decided, after some thought, to head back to the base instead.

He must complete his Base Mutation as soon as possible, for his own strength was too weak; even with powerful pets in tow, he wouldn’t be safe.

Just as Lin Shen was preparing to head back, he suddenly saw a figure stumbling along a distant mountain path, heading back.

Because it was too far away, Lin Shen could only tell it was a person, he couldn’t see clearly who it was. With a thought, he took his Pet Capsule and hid in the woods, quietly observing the figure from afar.

The figure seemed as though drunk, staggering from side to side and taking a long while to make it down the mountain path.

But as the distance closed, Lin Shen could finally see clearly who it was and was taken aback.

The metallic armor on the person's body was covered in tiny cracks like shattered tempered glass, with blood seeping out from every fissure, dripping with blood all over, presenting a horrifying sight.

That he was still alive was a miracle. No wonder he stumbled and faltered his way, hardly able to walk.

Lin Shen faintly remembered that this person was from the Qi Family, an Alloy Base Mutator with considerable skill, ranked among the notable figures of both the Qi Family and Dark Bird Base. His name seemed to be Qi Guan, a direct descendant of the Qi Family.

Seeing no one else was following on the mountain path behind, Lin Shen quickly emerged from the woods and briskly approached Qi Guan.

"Qi Guan, what happened to you? Who did this to you, and where are the others?" Lin Shen shouted from a distance.

When Qi Guan saw Lin Shen, he tried to rush over but stumbled and fell to the ground. He struggled to get up several times but failed to rise.

"Save... save me... I'm... gonna... die... gonna... die..." Qi Guan lay on the ground, stretching out his hand towards Lin Shen with all his might, his eyes brimming with a desperate longing for life.

Unfortunately, he didn't finish his words before he was gone, his face planted on the ground and his hand limply falling, unmoving and silent.

"What do you mean 'gonna die'... Qi Guan... Qi Guan..." Lin Shen called out a few times, but there was no response from him.

He let the Supersonic Gunman turn the body over, blood had stained the ground with a blood-colored human-shaped mark; it looked like he really wasn't going to make it.

Lin Shen went over and checked for a pulse and respiration, but he was already dead.

Lin Shen examined the metal carapace covering his body closely, the countless cracks were like glass that had been crushed while still alive. He wondered what kind of force could have caused such damage to him.



Suddenly, Lin Shen noticed in his other hand, he seemed to be clutching something. Even in death, his fingers were still tightly gripped around it.

Lin Shen squatted down and tried to pry the hand open, but couldn't budge it.

He took out Ye's short blade, and after prying and breaking the fingers, he finally saw what was in the hand.

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## Chapter 30 - 30 Battle of the Five Scrubs

Chapter 30: Chapter 30 Battle of the Five Scrubs

"A watch?" Lin Shen was somewhat surprised.

He had thought that whatever Qi Guan had clutched to in death would be something precious. He hadn't expected it to be a watch, and it looked like a cheap digital one at that.

The strap, the case, and the dial were all black, with only white numbers displayed on the dial.

"Could it be that this watch holds special sentimental value to Qi Guan? If I get the chance, I might return it to his family," Lin Shen picked up the watch and noticed that the time displayed was off.

"00:00:07, is this watch broken?" Lin Shen looked at the sky, it wasn't dark yet, so how could it possibly be midnight?

As Lin Shen observed, the time on the watch continued to tick.

6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... 0...

Soon the time on the watch reset to zero, and suddenly a voice came from inside the watch: "Confirming user's death... New user detected... Binding successful... Teleport countdown beginning 10... 9... 8..."

The time on the watch changed to 00:00:10, and it began counting down by the second.

"What the hell!" Lin Shen hastily threw the watch away.

The watch that hit the ground continued the countdown, and Lin Shen instinctively retreated, distancing himself from it.

But the moment the countdown on the watch hit zero, Lin Shen felt the scenery before his eyes suddenly distort.

The sky, the mountains, the trees, the flowers, the earth—all twisted together in Lin Shen's vision, spinning rapidly, and after a dizzy spell, he felt a sudden heaviness in his body, as if he was bearing the weight of a thousand pounds and uncontrollably fell to the ground.

Lin Shen pressed his hands against the ground and, with great effort, slowly stood up. The sensation of weight made it difficult for him even to stand; the trembling muscles in his legs made him feel as if they would give out at any moment and send him crashing to the ground once again.

"What the hell is this situation?" Lin Shen's gaze froze where it lay.

Where were the mountains and gorges before him? Instead, he was greeted by a white sandy beach and a blue ocean.

On the surrounding beach, there lay dozens of white Steel Body creatures with steel thorns all over their bodies and sizes comparable to grindstones, just lying there on the beach doing who knows what.

The sudden appearance of Lin Shen caused hundreds of Steel Thorn Turtles to turn their heads to look at him, their gazes uniformly focusing on his person.

Lin Shen swallowed hard, instinctively wanting to lift his hand to rub his eyes to make sure he wasn't hallucinating.

But the act of lifting his hand had become many times more difficult than before, and there was a delay between his movement and his thoughts.

Before his hand even touched his eyes, Lin Shen realized that he was wearing that black digital watch on his left wrist.

Lin Shen's first reaction was to reach out to remove the watch. Just as his fingers touched the strap, he heard the cold electronic synthesized voice from the watch again.

"Teleport cooldown not complete. Forcibly removing the teleporter will reactivate the teleportation, and the user will incur irreversible damage during the process."

Lin Shen's hand stopped in an instant, his mind flashing back to the horrific wounds on Qi Guan's body.

“Could Qi Guan’s injuries have been caused by this sort of damage?” Fearing similar wounds, Lin Shen dared not touch the watch again.

If an Alloy Level Mutator could be injured like that, what would happen to him, a non-Base Mutator? Would he simply turn into a pile of minced meat?

The time displayed on the watch read 71:59:54, and it was still decreasing.

“Does this mean I’ll have to wait 72 hours before I can use this teleportation gear again?” Lin Shen reasoned.

He had no time to think further because the Steel Thorn Turtles, after a moment of stunned hesitation, started crawling angrily towards him. Their demeanors suggested they would tear Lin Shen to pieces, as if he had desecrated their ancestral graves.

Lin Shen wanted to run, but after taking just one step, he stopped; his whole body felt weighed down, and he simply couldn’t move.

Lin Shen fumbled for the Pet Key and Pet Capsule on his body, managing to summon the Heavy Armor Beast before the Steel Thorn Turtles charged at him.

Under Lin Shen’s control, the Heavy Armor Beast bit into his chain armor, lifted him up, and flung him onto its back.

Lin Shen lay atop the Heavy Armor Beast, clutching its neck for dear life.

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The Heavy Armor Beast let out a roar, its alloy thighs, thicker than an elephant’s legs, directly stomped down on the Steel Thorn Turtle that was charging at it.

Crack! Crunch!

The sound of steel fracturing echoed as the Steel Thorn Turtle’s steel spikes and shell were directly crushed underfoot, with a liquid resembling mercury splashing out.

Lin Shen could clearly feel that the Heavy Armor Beast was much slower than before, and those Steel Thorn Turtles seemed to also not be as fast as the steel creatures Lin Shen had seen in the past.

“Is it a gravity issue?” Lin Shen guessed, but then he felt his watch vibrating on his wrist.

Glancing at his watch, he noticed that it no longer displayed the time but flowing text instead.

“Killed Steel Creature Steel Thorn Turtle... Killed Steel Creature Steel Thorn Turtle...”

As the Heavy Armor Beast continued to stampede, streaks of information kept flowing across the watch face.

Within a group of Steel Level Steel Thorn Turtles, the Alloy Level Heavy Armor Beast was like a tiger entering a flock of sheep, embarking on a one-sided slaughter.

Knowing they were no match, those Steel Thorn Turtles still desperately charged at the Heavy Armor Beast, each one fearlessly rushing to its death as if in a hurry to be reborn, getting stomped to death one by one by the Heavy Armor Beast—within a short while, twenty or thirty were dead.

Lin Shen was initially puzzled as to why these Steel Thorn Turtles didn't run away. Base Variant Creatures weren't stupid; even normal animals knew to flee, and the intelligence of Base Variant Creatures was no less than that of normal animals, some were even smarter. It seemed impossible that they would not know to escape.

But when his gaze fell upon the ground where the Steel Thorn Turtles had been prostrating, he instantly understood.

There were pits in the sand, and in the partly exposed pits, Lin Shen saw eggs the size of ping-pong balls.

"So these Steel Thorn Turtles were laying eggs! I've stumbled into a communal nesting ground!" Lin Shen realized.

Looking at the Base Mutation Eggs in those sand pits, Lin Shen suddenly thought that if he could take all these eggs back with him, that would be quite a significant income.

The egg-laying capability of the Steel Thorn Turtles seemed very strong; just from a quick glance, there were at least seven or eight Base Mutation Eggs per pit. With so many pits, there could be over a thousand eggs, couldn't there?

It was uncertain whether the teleporter could take them all back, and there were also materials from the bodies of these Steel Thorn Turtles. Although they were not tremendously valuable, the sheer quantity meant they could still make some money.

As Lin Shen was thinking this, he suddenly heard the Heavy Armor Beast let out a dreadful scream.

Looking down, Lin Shen was shocked to see one of the Heavy Armor Beast's feet had been impaled by a spike on the back of a Steel Thorn Turtle. Unlike the others, this particular Steel Thorn Turtle hadn't been crushed at all; instead, it was the Heavy Armor Beast's foot that had been pierced by the turtle's steel spike.

“What’s going on?” Lin Shen looked at the trapped Steel Thorn Turtle, which in size and appearance seemed no different from the ordinary ones, appearing to be just another normal turtle.

But how could a steel creature’s spike possibly pierce through an alloy creature?

Lin Shen involuntarily checked his watch, hoping to see information about this particular Steel Thorn Turtle, but he didn’t find any. Instead, he saw other information.

User: Unmutated lower life form.

Strength: 5.

Speed: 5.

Hardness: 5.

Toughness: 5.

Theoretical lifespan limit of the living entity: 100 years.

Base Change Talent: None.

Lin Shen couldn’t help but stare blankly. “This unmutated lower life form, could it be referring to me?”

But on second thought, it made sense; all fives, truly a quintessential weakling.

Even such a weakling was already at the human limit, achieved through years of consuming a large amount of Base Mutation Fluid to enhance physical attributes.

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