No matter what kind of mutation his body had undergone, he was undeniably weak and listless.

Out of the five people, the others could be set aside for now.

But the most reckless one—the Butcher—with his massive bulk, his strength probably surpassed even that of a world boxing champion.

If it had been his former self, he would likely have been killed with just one punch.

The others were probably just as dangerous.

While his mutated body appeared formidable, it was in an undeniably fragile state, apparently due to some unknown reason.

What's more, he was still bound by iron chains and mummy cloth.

"First, I need to figure out what's going on, recover the strength of this body, and avoid being mistaken for a boss and taken down. Secondly, I need to find a way back..."

Gu Jianlin clearly felt his claws gradually receding, and the Dragon Scale on his skin softening and shedding.

It seemed it wouldn't be long before he reverted to his previous state.

And beneath the shedding scales, he glimpsed the mole on his wrist.

A mole he had been born with.

At this moment, he was certain this was still his original body—it had merely mutated due to the Qilin Mask.

He surveyed his surroundings: the tomb chamber was pitch black, rendering him unable to see anything. He was trapped inside the coffin, unable to move.

When Gu Jianlin tried to struggle against the Chains, he realized it was utterly impossible.

Setting aside the sheer physical impossibility—

The moment he had the thought, an excruciating pain like his mind being crushed surged through his head, forcing him to stifle a groan. His entire body convulsed and trembled violently, drenched in sweat.

The Chains didn't seem to confine merely his flesh, but to imprison his very soul!

Simultaneously, a torrent of hallucinations flooded his vision. A pitch-black Qilin pierced by countless Chains spewed thick, metallic blood like magma, its furious roar of defiance reverberating in the silence.

No—those weren't Chains.

They were countless black Dragon Bones, entwined like thorns around his body, ripping through his flesh and boring into his bones.

The enraged Dragon Roar exploded like thunder, shattering his resolve and making his heart feel like it was being torn apart.

The binding of the Candle Dragon Venerable...

In the last moment, a fleeting thought crossed Gu Jianlin's mind, just before the pain obliterated his consciousness.

.

.

When Gu Jianlin woke up again, what lay before him was a familiar ceiling and an old chandelier.

He was lying on his most familiar bed, gasping for breath.

Outside, the storm had passed. The gloomy sky had been pierced by radiant sunlight, brightening the city once more. The rustling wind raced through the leaves, occasionally accompanied by the barking of dogs downstairs.

Everything was so idyllic.

Gu Jianlin's head throbbed intensely. His entire body felt weak and sore, as if someone had beaten him senseless—bringing to mind the day he had awakened after a car accident.

"So this is the aftermath of using that sound syllable? It feels like I've been run over by a car multiple times."

He forced himself to pick up his phone and glanced at the time. It was noon, twelve o'clock.

Setting the phone aside, he collapsed back onto the bed, his head feeling empty and dry, as though his brain had been completely drained.

Gu Jianlin rested with his eyes closed for a while until the pain in his head gradually subsided. Only then did he manage to sit up with effort.

That's when he realized something.

The Qilin Mask on his face was gone!

Gu Jianlin hurriedly felt all over his body. The horns on his head had vanished, the scales had completely disappeared, and his fingernails had returned to their normal length.

It was as though the mutation in the Ancient Tomb had never occurred.

Truly uncanny.

"Forget it. Better to get home first, or Youzhu will think I've headed to the police station for Dad's matters again." In his new home, Gu Jianlin was essentially treated like an infant who required close supervision.

He summoned his frail body, quickly tidied up his belongings, carefully packing up items of sentimental value. Finally, he took one last look at his old laptop—the game walkthrough thread had already been deleted, as if it had never existed.

It was as if everything had been a hallucination.

Yet those recent experiences were so profoundly real.

They had even overturned an entire worldview that he had upheld for over a decade.

Gu Jianlin hesitated for a moment, then decided to pack the laptop into his suitcase too before heading to the restroom to wash his face.

The splash of cold water on his face mitigated the headache slightly and helped soothe the lingering confusion and fear in his heart.

However, the moment Gu Jianlin raised his head and looked into the mirror above the sink, his entire body froze, his brain shutting down.

His pupils shook violently, uncontrollably trembling.

At that moment, he saw himself in the mirror.

But in the flash of a second, his own reflection vanished like an illusion, replaced by the image of a pitch-black, fearsome Qilin.

What was even more shocking was that this Qilin appeared extremely weakened—it looked gaunt and lifeless. Yet within those mysterious, ancient eyes, there was unmistakable disbelief and absurdity.

Strikingly lifelike, vivid to the extreme.

It perfectly mirrored his own expression.