

Super Gene II : Evolution - Chapter 16 - Chapter 16: Chapter 16 Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion

Lin Shen's heart leaped with joy as he hurried to the incubation chamber and looked through the glass lid. He saw a crack appear on the Steel Tail Scorpion's Base Mutation Egg.

Crack!

Another crisp sound, and several more cracks appeared on the steel-hard Base Mutation Egg, all radiating outwards from a central point.

Crack!

The center of the cracks was suddenly pierced through, and a slightly curved pitch-black stinger emerged, its sharp tip flashing with a frightening chill.

Before Lin Shen could get a clear look at the pitch-black stinger, it suddenly retracted back in the next second.

Crack!

Almost in the instant it retracted, the pitch-black stinger lanced out again, and under the continuous piercing, the eggshell could not withstand and broke apart completely. A palm-sized black metallic scorpion crawled out, its body entirely pitch-black.

"Is this a Steel Tail Scorpion?" Lin Shen stared at the Steel Tail Scorpion that was gnawing on the eggshell, feeling a bit surprised in his heart.

Steel Tail Scorpions, these Base Variant Creatures, were abundant near the Dark Bird Base and bred very quickly. The price of Base Mutation Eggs was not high; in fact, they could be bought for about the price of a meal.

Many Mutators who owned Steel Tail Scorpion pets were common, and even ordinary people without Base Mutation had their share of Steel Tail Scorpion pets.

Lin Shen had seen many wild and pet Steel Tail Scorpions, but he had never seen one like this.

Ordinary Steel Tail Scorpions had steel-colored carapaces, with most displaying some rust-like spots and dots.

Yet this Steel Tail Scorpion was completely pitch-black, as if forged from dark iron, and even slightly larger than the newly hatched ones.

Without the time to ponder, Lin Shen quickly made his move, removing some of the larger pieces of eggshell, which infuriated the Steel Tail Scorpion. It waved its claws and tail violently, trying to attack Lin Shen and take back the eggshell.

After several attempts, finding that it couldn't touch Lin Shen at all, it could only huffily consume the remaining smaller pieces of the eggshell first.

After finishing its meal, the Steel Tail Scorpion turned a few circles and then leaped up, charging towards Lin Shen's face like a cannonball firing out of a barrel.

Lin Shen was prepared, raising a metal shield he had already readied before him.

With a clang, the Steel Tail Scorpion's tail struck the metal shield, actually piercing a small hole in it. If not for the shortness of its stinger, it might have even penetrated the shield entirely.

Lin Shen was both shocked and elated. The shield in his hands was cast from Alloy Creature materials, which usually wasn't penetrable by regular steel creatures.

The strength and hardness of a Steel Tail Scorpion should not be enough to damage such a shield, not even an adult one, let alone one that had just hatched.

This Steel Tail Scorpion could pierce through the alloy shield—this meant its strength and hardness far exceeded those of a typical Steel Tail Scorpion.

“Base Mutation Eggs with a Fire Seed truly are different,” Lin Shen thought as he blocked the Steel Tail Scorpion's attacks repeatedly until it gradually became exhausted.

Base Variant Creatures needed to consume their own eggshell just after birth to replenish the energy expended in breaking out, ensuring they had the strength to go on.

This Steel Tail Scorpion had only eaten a little bit of the eggshell—hardly enough to replenish its energy—and before long, it became worn out.

Without the strength to attack Lin Shen any longer, the Steel Tail Scorpion turned a few circles, and suddenly arched its tail forward as much as possible, exposing its underside.

The belly also shone with the cold light of dark iron armor; one area suddenly sprang out, transforming into a tiny dark iron key that flew toward Lin Shen.

Lin Shen caught the key in his hand, let out a sigh of relief, put down the shield, and placed the remaining eggshell pieces in front of the Steel Tail Scorpion.

A Base Variant Creature that had just emerged from the egg was in a confused state and weakened; thus, using the eggshell to lure it presented the easiest opportunity to tame it. Missing this chance would make any future attempts to tame it far more troublesome.

The Steel Tail Scorpion quickly devoured all the eggshells. Its body turned even blacker and colder, and a speck of cold light flickered on its tail.

With the Base Mutation key in hand, the Steel Tail Scorpion seemed to sense Lin Shen's thoughts, crawling in front of him and turning its body to raise its tail, aligning the keyhole underneath it with Lin Shen.

Lin Shen inserted the key and gave it a light twist, and the Steel Tail Scorpion's body began to undergo unbelievable transformations.

The various parts of the Steel Tail Scorpion's body started to rotate and contract, and in a short amount of time, it transformed into a black metal capsule the size of a quail egg.

Lin Shen caught the Pet Capsule, effortlessly pulled out the key, and his gaze fell on the information displayed on the side of the capsule.

Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion: Steel Biological Creature (Evolvable)

Strength: 10.

Speed: 9.9.

Hardness: 10.

Tenacity: 10.

Base Mutation Talent: Strengthened Armor-Piercing Stinger.

Seeing the attributes of the Steel Tail Scorpion, Lin Shen couldn't help but be overjoyed.

The nearly Steel Level maximum values all around, and a Base Mutation talent that could enhance its armor-piercing capability—an enhanced armor-piercing stinger no less. While the Armor-Piercing Stinger talent was common, the powerful variant seemed to be exclusive to some special Base Variant Creatures. This Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion was undoubtedly an exceptional attack-type pet.

These attributes weren't the only things that excited Lin Shen so much; what really surprised him was that the Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion possessed the evolvable attribute.

This meant that the Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion had the potential to advance to Alloy or even Crystal Base Level, making its value incomparable to ordinary Steel pets.

Although the Supersonic Gunman was Alloy Level, its potential had peaked and there was no possibility for further advancement. It was a strong asset to Lin Shen now, but it was destined to be phased out in the future.

If this Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion was cultivated properly, its future role could far exceed that of the Supersonic Gunman.

“The Fire Seed Base Mutation Egg is indeed extraordinary,” Lin Shen murmured as he put away the Mutant Steel Tail Scorpion capsule, and his gaze moved to the other two Base Mutation Eggs that had not yet hatched.

“It’s just a pity... I don’t have the time now,” Lin Shen said with a wry smile and a shake of his head.

Base Mutation took time—it wasn’t a matter of a day or two. If it weren’t for the trip to Gourd Mountain, Lin Shen could definitely choose one from the remaining two Base Mutation Eggs to complete the Base Mutation to Steel Level.

But now it was too late, as the Qi and Wang families wouldn’t wait for him to complete his Base Mutation before going to Gourd Mountain.

Up to this point, the intentions of Bai Shenfei were still unclear, as her actions had many contradictions, making it difficult to predict her moves.

The Super-Base Evolutionary Seed on her made her origins even more mysterious, leaving Lin Shen truly unable to judge.

Moreover, there was certainly a spy within the Lin Family, indicating internal and external troubles abound.

Lin Shen found a backpack and placed the remaining two Base Mutation Eggs inside, intending to take them to Gourd Mountain. Perhaps he would have a chance to complete the Base Mutation there.

“These things are not yet a part of my true combat force. The powers bestowed by the Fire Seed are more tangible, but where to find a Fire Seed? Where are there a large number of Base Mutation Eggs that I haven’t seen before?” After pondering for a moment, Lin Shen’s eyes brightened; he had an idea of where he could find a large number of unfamiliar Base Mutation Eggs.

The Base Mutation Eggs at that location were not normal ones—they were failed hatching, dead eggs.

Those Base Mutation Eggs had neither hatched into Base Variant Creatures nor could they be used to extract Base Mutation Fluid due to complete solidification during the hatching process. The vast majority were melted down and used as industrial materials.

Though they were dead eggs, they were still Base Mutation Eggs, and Lin Shen still intended to try his luck.

The three major families had special warehouses for storing dead eggs. For Lin Shen to access the warehouses of the other two families, he would need to think of some methods, but there was no need to hesitate about visiting his own family's warehouse.

"I hope that the latest batch of dead eggs hasn't been sent to the factory yet." Lin Shen didn't want to wait for even a moment and set off toward the warehouse where his family stored the dead eggs.

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"Lin Shen, what brings you here?" Cang Yun, the warehouse guard, seemed very surprised to see Lin Shen.

Cang Yun was one of the Lin Family's old retainers and was said to be over eighty years old now. He had been guarding the warehouse gate since Lin Shen's parents were alive.

Even after the eldest sister took over, it was still Cang Yun guarding the warehouse entrance.

The eldest sister told him that when his parents were still around, Cang Yun used to visit their home frequently, sharing a couple of drinks with Lin Shen's father and bragging about this and that—they had quite a good relationship.

After his parents passed away, Cang Yun didn't come to their house for meals as much.

"Uncle Cang, are there any dead eggs left in the warehouse? I want to take a few back with me," Lin Shen stated his purpose directly.

"Miss Lin hasn't been back for several months, and without her signature, the dead eggs haven't been transported to the factory to be melted down. There's still a fair quantity," Cang Yun paused, his expression changing slightly as he continued, "But Lin Shen, the Lin Family has always conducted business with sincerity for so many years, and we've never cheated anyone. Even if there are difficulties, they are only temporary. If we damage the Lin Family's golden signboard, it would be difficult to restore it later on."

Lin Shen was taken aback for a moment and then realized Cang Yun had misunderstood.

Cang Yun must have thought he wanted to take the dead eggs back to the mutation egg shop to pass off inferior goods as high-quality ones to compete with Qi Tianfu.

"Uncle Cang, you're too concerned. I just want to take a few dead eggs to make some trinkets," Lin Shen explained casually.

“That’s fine, but you can’t take too many, and you need to sign for them. Otherwise, Miss Lin won’t be able to account for them when she returns,” Cang Yun said as he pulled out a bunch of keys, fumbling for a while before picking one out to unlock the warehouse door and ushering Lin Shen inside.

Generally speaking, dead eggs are weighed according to their level and then piled together by grade—after all, they can only be used as materials.

But Cang Yun was very meticulous— even the Steel Level dead eggs were neatly arranged, each with a label indicating its type and storage date, among other details.

Lin Shen could see that there were close to a thousand Steel Level dead eggs, but not as many Alloy Level ones—just over a hundred.

Unfortunately, there were no mosaics on these dead eggs, which left Lin Shen somewhat disappointed.

“Is this all there is?” Lin Shen asked Cang Yun.

“All the Steel Level ones are here. There’s also a portion of the Alloy Level ones in the smaller storeroom, and there’s even a single Crystal Base Level in there. But that thing’s material value is also very high. Without Miss Lin’s signature, even Mr. Lin Zongzheng couldn’t take it,” Cang Yun said.

“Take me to see the remaining Alloy Level dead eggs,” Lin Shen said noncommittally.

Without saying much more, Cang Yun took Lin Shen to a special small storeroom inside the main warehouse. The small storeroom looked almost like a vault made of alloys. Cang Yun unlocked several locks before he could open the heavy alloy door.

The metal used to build the small storeroom wasn’t ordinary alloy but rather had Base Mutation materials from Alloy Level creatures mixed in. Though it wasn’t pure Base Mutation alloy, its thickness was indeed very imposing—ordinary Alloy Level contenders couldn’t break through the small storeroom’s door in a short amount of time.

“These Alloy Level dead eggs have top-tier hardness and toughness, all above eighteen. They can be used to craft armor that would give Steel Level Mutators a chance to defend themselves or retaliate when facing Alloy Creatures. Miss Lin even wanted to make you a set of scale armor before, but we couldn’t find a suitable craftsperson, so it got delayed,” Cang Yun said, pointing to a row of shelves against the wall.

On the shelves sat Base Mutation Eggs of various sizes and colors, differences that ordinary people might not distinguish between dead and living eggs.

“Is everyone here?” Lin Shen glanced around, only to be greatly disappointed, as he didn’t see any mosaic at all.

“All the Alloy Level ones are here, and that Crystal Base Level one is over there,” Cang Yun pointed to another place, then continued, “However, you can’t take that one now.”

Lin Shen turned his head to look and saw only a Base Mutation Egg that looked like a sapphire, emitting a mesmerizing glow under the light, placed on a special stand covered with a glass dome.

Though it was a dead egg, it was still so beautiful that it was beyond description, as if there were countless blue facets inside, shedding a faint light.

Regrettably, there was no mosaic on it either.

Lin Shen shook his head and sighed, feeling somewhat disappointed, but then he figured it was to be expected, as a Fire Seed Base Mutation Egg was not so easily found.

In Lin Shen’s understanding, a Fire Seed was like a BUG of this world; the abilities of those Fire Seeds were pseudoscientific or even antiscientific.

Any Fire Seed ability could be considered a BUG-like existence. If they were really so easy to find, he wouldn’t need to rely on Base Mutation at all; he would be invincible just by using the Fire Seed abilities.

Just as Lin Shen was about to give up and randomly pick a couple of dead eggs to take back, his gaze inadvertently swept over a corner of the small storehouse, and his heart suddenly skipped a beat.

“What’s that?” Lin Shen suppressed the excitement in his heart and asked Cang Yun, pointing at the thing in the corner.

Lin Shen really couldn’t make out what it was, as it was obscured by mosaic and was completely unrecognizable.

One thing was certain, though—it wasn’t a Base Mutation Egg. No Base Mutation Egg was shaped like a long bar, and that thing was at least three to four meters long, definitely not a Base Mutation Egg.

“Oh, that thing,” Cang Yun looked in the direction Lin Shen was pointing and, after reminiscing for a moment, continued, “That’s a snake-like Base Variant Creature. Mr. Lin Zongzheng brought it back. He said it was supposed to be an Alloy Creature with the ability to evolve. It had some kind of failure during its promotion to Crystal Base and died.”

“When Mr. Lin Zongzheng found it, it was already lying straight, wrapped in a kind of armor with only its head exposed, the body completely solidified. Mr. Lin Zongzheng broke the armor and brought it back. He originally wanted to melt it down to craft something, but after several attempts, he couldn’t melt it. It was completely unusable, so it was left here.”

“Mr. Lin Zongzheng said that it must have been close to completing its Base Mutation and advancing to Crystal Base. It’s unknown why it failed, but its body might have partially crystallized already, so its hardness and toughness could be comparable to a Crystal Base Level. However, for some unknown reason, it’s difficult to melt. Maybe later, if we get the chance to go to those bases with ultra-high-temperature furnaces, we could try to see if it can be used to forge something...”

While listening to Cang Yun, Lin Shen walked over to the side of that object and reached out to touch the dead Base Variant Creature.

As soon as his fingertips touched it, he immediately felt a hint of coolness, but it wasn’t exactly cold.

He grasped it with his hand and found that although it was long, it wasn’t very thick; with the length of Lin Shen’s fingers, he could easily wrap them around it.

His fingers slowly ran over its body, which was smooth with fine lines, reminiscent of a metal that had been mirror-polished and then etched with intricate patterns.

Cang Yun mentioned it looked like a snake, but Lin Shen felt it didn’t quite resemble one; a snake’s body is normally thicker in the middle and tapers towards the ends, but this thing’s body was of nearly the same thickness throughout, except for the very pointed tail end.

Moreover, a snake of this length couldn’t possibly be so thin. As a Base Variant Creature, its length and thickness seemed disproportionate, more like a crudely made, elongated throwing javelin.

Lin Shen grasped it in the middle and exerted a little force to lift it.

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Lin Shen’s estimate was just about right: the item was over three meters but under four in length, and it felt great to hold. Swinging it a couple of times, he was surprised at how well it handled, indeed resembling a spear with a peculiar design. Unexpectedly, it wasn’t very heavy at all, weighing only about fifteen pounds, which was astonishingly light.

For the average person, swinging something that weighed fifteen pounds would be quite strenuous, but luckily, Lin Shen had consistently used Base Mutation Fluid to strengthen himself. Although he had not undergone Base Mutation, his strength was not something average humans could match, so swinging it posed no problem for him.

“Cang, let me borrow this thing,” Lin Shen said, looking at Cang Yun.

“Sure, just sign and take it,” Cang Yun replied surprisingly breezily.

“You’re really just letting me take it?” Lin Shen asked in disbelief, needing confirmation once more. After all, this was a half-Crystal Base material, quite valuable.

Cang Yun chuckled, “Our base doesn’t even have the equipment to smelt this kind of material. It’s useless for you to take it, and you’ll have to bring it back eventually.”

“Alright, then I’m taking it,” Lin Shen said after signing his name and borrowing the item.

On the way back, Lin Shen still pondered whether to visit the Qi and Wang families’ warehouses but ultimately couldn’t find a suitable excuse. They were unlikely to allow someone from the Lin Family into their storage.

“Having such a find is already a stroke of incredible luck. I wonder what kind of Fire Seed it can bring me?” Lin Shen wished he could rush home right away and lie in bed hugging it for a sleep.

Passing by his family’s shop, he noticed a crowd gathered around an open space next to Qi Tianfu’s Lottery Egg Shop, curious about what they were doing.

Lin Shen didn’t want to meddle and intended to hurry home, but then he saw Qi Tianfu amidst the crowd, cursing and looking extremely annoyed.

“What’s going on over there?” Lin Shen asked Zhao Li, who was standing in the doorway of their shop, craning her neck to see the commotion.

“Lin, someone set up a ring toss booth next to the lottery egg shop and has snatched a lot of Qi Fatty’s business. He’s about to explode in anger,” Zhao Li said with a laugh.

“Ring toss?” Lin Shen was slightly surprised.

He was, of course, aware of the street game ring toss; find a spot, lay out various prizes, and people pay to throw plastic rings from a line marked by the vendor. If the ring landed around a prize, they could take it.

This kind of street game was not unusual, with many fairs featuring it, and some vendors even used Base Mutation Eggs as prizes. None of this was surprising to Lin Shen.

What really surprised Lin Shen was that someone dared to set up a booth right next to Qi Tianfu’s shop, and the vendor must have been quite bold.

Strangely, with Qi Tianfu’s typically brazen disposition, he hadn’t smashed the other’s stall.

Moreover, how could a simple ring toss booth attract so many people? It wasn't as if no one had played ring toss before.

Curious, Lin Shen placed the Base Variant Creature's corpse into storage and then went outside to squeeze through the crowd for a look.

What he saw next truly surprised him.

It was indeed a ring toss booth, but there was only one prize.

A person sat on a chair, a Base Mutation Egg balanced on top of their head—the sole prize of this ring toss game.

Many people who bought plastic rings stood outside the rope the vendor had drawn, extending their arms to throw rings at the egg on top of the person's head, hoping to loop it.

At least seven or eight people were continuously throwing rings, and despite the distance being only four or five meters, not a single one managed to land a ring on the Base Mutation Egg atop the person's head.

After one man had used all his rings, he immediately took out more money, deposited it into a box provided by the vendor, and nonchalantly grabbed more rings to keep playing.

Lin Shen saw that the box was labeled ten yuan per ring, which was not cheap.

The reason so many people were willing to spend money to play was that the Base Mutation Egg sitting above the shopkeeper's head was an Alloy Base Mutation Egg.

Even an Alloy Base Mutation Egg with less desirable attributes could sell for a five-figure sum, so naturally, this little expense was nothing in comparison.

Among those continuously throwing rings was Qi Tianfu, muttering curses under his breath as he threw, yet he never managed to land one, always missing by just a bit.

What truly astonished Lin Shen wasn't this, but the fact that the shopkeeper sitting beneath the Base Mutation Egg was none other than Wei Wufu, who had made a very noticeable appearance at the recruitment meeting.

For an Alloy Mutator, earning a bit of money should be easy. Just hunting some steel creatures would be less risky and more profitable than running this small stall.

Furthermore, by simply joining any power faction, he could easily make a five-figure sum each month.

Yet here he was, running a street stall, and Lin Shen wondered what he was thinking.

Qi Tianfu, who didn't attend the recruitment meeting, obviously did not recognize Wei Wufu and kept on casting rings while swearing.

If he knew that Wei Wufu was an Alloy Mutator, he'd probably behave more graciously.

The more Lin Shen watched, the stranger he found it. Tossing rings did have its difficulty.

It wasn't easy to throw a twenty-centimeter diameter ring onto a target from four or five meters away, but it wasn't too hard either.

Precision is not greatly affected by strength. It's one part practice—after extensive repetition, one becomes more skilled and more accurate—and one part innate talent.

For a short-distance ring toss like this, one doesn't need exceptional precision; a bit of practice, a few more tries, and one could hit the target by chance.

However, as Lin Shen stood there for a short while, those people had thrown at least a hundred rings and not a single one landed by chance, always missing by just a bit.

Qi Tianfu alone had thrown at least twenty rings in this short time, with some even hitting the Base Mutation Egg before bouncing off, infuriating him to the point where he smashed his rings onto the ground.

When Lin Yin used to take Lin Shen to the market, Lin Shen often spent money at the ring toss stalls but rarely won.

Later, he had his second brother buy him some rings, and after practicing non-stop at home, he soon could land eight or nine out of ten.

When he next went to the market, the stall owner was almost in tears.

After mastering the game, Lin Shen found it less interesting and rarely played afterward.

As a veteran himself, Lin Shen watched for a while and became sure there was a trick involved. Under normal circumstances, someone should have won by now; it was impossible for them to keep missing.

“Wei Wufu is quite the character. He could have simply stolen the money, yet he chooses to put on this whole act,” Lin Shen thought to himself.

“Damn you, you're cheating, aren't you?” After Qi Tianfu picked up another twenty rings and missed with each one, with several that looked like they hit being bounced off, he finally lost his temper and burst out cursing at Wei Wufu.

“When you're that clumsy and unlucky, it really shows your lack of character,” Lin Shen wouldn't miss the chance to mock Qi Tianfu.

When Qi Tianfu turned and saw it was Lin Shen, he opened his mouth to curse but seemed to remember something and swallowed his words, glaring and sneering, “If you, Mr. Lin Shen, are so skilled and lucky, why don’t you land one and show me? If you can do it, I’ll call you ‘boss’ every day from now on.”

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“Forget it, I don’t have such a disgraceful grandson like you,” Lin Shen said with feigned disdain.

He knew what trick Wei Wufu had used, but couldn’t figure out exactly what it was, and pressing on would be futile; it was impossible to succeed, so there was no point in making a fool of himself.

“Cut the crap with me. If you’re capable, try to hoop it. Hoop it, and you can even call me your grandson, I’ll acknowledge it. If you can’t, stop babbling crap here,” Qi Tianfu cursed, pointing at Lin Shen’s nose.

Lin Shen was about to retort when suddenly, Wei Wufu, who had been sitting there as still as a Buddha, suddenly spoke up, “Whether it’s possible to loop it or not, why not give it a try and find out?”

Qi Tianfu and Lin Shen couldn’t help but look at Wei Wufu; Qi Tianfu furrowed his brows, and Lin Shen also felt it was strange.

“What does Wei Wufu mean by suddenly saying that? Others might not see, but I’m very clear that he definitely cheated. But from his tone, is he not planning to cheat anymore? That doesn’t make sense!” Lin Shen felt there was something fishy going on.

He didn’t think that just because he had made a remark earlier to help him out of a tight spot, Wei Wufu would suddenly be grateful and let him hoop the Alloy Egg.

With Wei Wufu’s strength, even if Lin Shen hadn’t stepped in, Qi Tianfu wouldn’t have been able to do anything to him. Should it come to a head, it was definitely Qi Tianfu who would be at a disadvantage.

Lin Shen couldn’t figure out for a while whether there was a deeper meaning behind Wei Wufu’s words, or if he simply wanted to con some money out of him.

“Just now I said you were cheating, and you said it was because my skills, character, and luck were poor. Now that he’s inviting you to try, why don’t you show me by looping it yourself? If you’re scared to try, that’s fine too, just admit that everything you said before was bullshit, call me Lord Fu, and I’ll let bygones be bygones, letting you off the hook today,” Qi Tianfu taunted Lin Shen with his words.

He felt that the reason Wei Wufu said that was definitely to trick Lin Shen out of his money, so he added fuel to the fire.

Qi Tianfu was upset that he’d been conned and couldn’t sleep over it. If Lin Shen got conned too, he would instantly feel the world was a brighter place, and his entire life would seem more enlightened. Money was not the important thing; the key was that Lin Shen should not have it easy.

“It’s just looping rings, let’s do it,” Lin Shen said as he walked to the box, put in a hundred bucks, and picked out ten rings for himself.

Lin Shen wasn’t falling for Qi Tianfu’s provocation; he just found Wei Wufu really odd. Setting up a stall here today was probably not just for making money; it seemed he was targeting either him or Qi Tianfu specifically. Lin Shen wanted to see what Wei Wufu was really up to.

“Ten rings, that’s so few. Not enough? If you’re short on cash, just say so, and I, Lord Fu, will cover you,” Qi Tianfu mocked with a sneer.

“Enough or not, hoop it and we’ll know,” Lin Shen said as he casually threw a ring towards the top of Wei Wufu’s head.

Having not done it for many years, his technique was clearly rusty, resulting in a complete miss.

“Little Lin, I won’t comment on your character, but your skills are truly lacking,” Qi Tianfu said, unable to hide his glee.

“I’m just sparing your feelings. Didn’t you just throw at least a hundred rings? If I nailed it with one shot, wouldn’t that make you look incompetent?” Lin Shen said while tossing another two rings, which still resulted in a miss.

“I don’t need anyone to spare my feelings. If you’re capable, just loop it; whoever can’t is the grandson,” Qi Tianfu snorted.

“Fu, you really are ruthless, so ruthless you’ll curse even yourself,” Lin Shen laughed at Qi Tianfu’s words, casually tossing another ring without looking, planning to say something but then pausing.

The ring landed on the Alloy Egg. The hoop hit the shell of the egg, bounced off, and then fell down, snugly landing on Wei Wufu’s head, enclosing the Alloy Egg.

Qi Tianfu's face turned dark with anger, his cheek trembling, he jumped three feet high, shaking with fury, pointing at Lin Shen and Wei Wufu he cursed, "You shameless Lin Shen, this is another trap you set for me, isn't it? This guy must be someone you brought in to con me, right?"

Before Lin Shen could respond, Wei Wufu had already stood up, took the Alloy Egg off his head and tossed it to Lin Shen, while packing up his things he said, "It's hooped, the Alloy Egg is yours, I'm coming with you."

"Great, so you two are really in cahoots. Little Lin, Little Lin, you're getting more and more shameless. You actually dare to use such underhanded tactics?" Qi Tianfu's expression was extremely ugly, looking like he was about to fight Lin Shen.

Lin Shen was completely baffled, not understanding what Wei Wufu intended. Why would Wei Wufu follow him just because he had looped an Alloy Egg?

"Hold on, Brother Wei, what do you mean by this? If you really can't part with the Alloy Egg, I can give it back to you," Lin Shen said.

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Wei Wufu packed up his things, hoisted a large bag on his back, and said with an expressionless face, "The prize is me and the Alloy Egg. You've won it, and naturally, I will have to follow you."

Lin Shen understood and, furrowing his brow, said nothing.

Looking at it now, it seemed like Wei Wufu had set up his stall specifically for him.

"Leaving won't be so easy," Qi Tianfu's muscles trembled, and a steel-like mysterious substance seeped out from his skin all over his body, quickly turning into a thick Steel Carapace that wrapped around his entire body, bursting his clothes in the process.

The steel-tank-like Qi Tianfu blocked Wei Wufu's path, his fist encapsulated in steel smashed directly towards Wei Wufu's chest while he cursed angrily, "Playing with skills, if Lord Fu loses, I admit defeat. But underhanded tricks, Lord Fu will kill you."

The steel giant fist reached Wei Wufu in an instant, but Wei Wufu didn't seem to see it at all, and with his chest out, he collided with it.

The onlookers gasped; Qi Tianfu's fist of steel was likely to punch a huge hole through Wei Wufu's chest.

The next second, something unexpected happened.

Qi Tianfu's fist of steel slammed heavily onto Wei Wufu's chest, but couldn't shatter it, nor did it stop Wei Wufu's advance.

There was only a loud clang of metal clashing, and Qi Tianfu screamed, retreating while covering the hand that struck Wei Wufu. He took several steps back and finally sat down on the ground with a thump.

The steel carapace on that fist cracked, and blood oozed incessantly from it. His five fingers were still trembling uncontrollably, unable to even grip, likely having broken or fractured bones.

“Lin Shen, kudos to you for bringing an Alloy Level to deal with me. My Qi Family won’t let this go,” Qi Tianfu climbed up enduring the pain in his hand and glared fiercely at Lin Shen.

“He’s not from the Lin Family, and I didn’t have him come after you. Believe it or not, it’s up to you.” Lin Shen explained briefly and turned to leave.

Wei Wufu, carrying the large bag, followed. As he passed Qi Tianfu, he added, “My name is Wei Wufu. If you’ve got a problem, come find me.”

Having said that, Wei Wufu left without looking back.

“Wei Wufu?” Qi Tianfu couldn’t help but be stunned.

Although he didn’t recognize Wei Wufu, he had heard about an Alloy Base Mutator appearing at the recruitment conference. What he never expected was that the one running the street stall would be the Alloy Base Mutator Wei Wufu from the recruitment conference.

Just yesterday, Qi Tianfu had heard that someone from his family had specifically sought out Wei Wufu, hoping he would join the Qi Family, but they were rejected.

Before the Qi Family, the Wang Family had already visited him and were similarly turned away.

It was said that the people from the Wang Family even fought with Wei Wufu, hoping to subdue him with their strength. However, it only took one punch for the Wang Family’s Alloy Base Mutator to have his Alloy Carapace shattered, not daring to make another move and fleeing in disgrace.

The people from the Qi Family originally had some plans, but seeing the Wang Family’s disgraceful retreat, they only invited Wei Wufu to join and, after being rejected, left without daring to fight.

The Qi Family estimated that Wei Wufu must be a top-tier Alloy Base Mutator, with the hardness of his Alloy Body at least above nineteen.

What Mutators compete against is whose body is hardest; anything less is trash, and even within the Alloy Level, the differences can be vast.

Such a person had no need to cooperate with Lin Shen to set a trap for Qi Tianfu. Self-aware, Qi Tianfu knew a top-tier Alloy Base Mutator wouldn't need such a convoluted plan to deal with him.

“Could it be... that Wei Wufu... was really lured away by Lin Shen...” Qi Tianfu felt a hint of regret. If he hadn't insisted on making Lin Shen try, if he had persevered, perhaps it would be him, Qi Tianfu, who would have lured Wei Wufu away instead!

The surrounding onlookers were even more amazed by Lin Shen's good luck, having spent only forty pieces to secure an Alloy Egg plus an Alloy Base Mutator.

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If Lin Shen knew what Qi Tianfu was thinking, he'd definitely think his mind had been befuddled by lard.

On the way back, Lin Shen had already persuaded Wei Wufu to return the Alloy Egg to him and to go wherever he was supposed to.

Wei Wufu had only one response, saying that since Lin Shen had caught him, he was Lin Shen's man, and would follow wherever Lin Shen went.

Lin Shen didn't say much more, as it was clear Wei Wufu had targeted him, and even if he hadn't been caught, Wei Wufu would surely have found some other way to stick to him.

“It seems that Wei Wufu has also come for Gourd Mountain. What could be inside Gourd Mountain that could attract powerhouses like Bai Shenfei and Wei Wufu?” Lin Shen stopped trying to chase Wei Wufu away and settled him in the guest room of the Lin Family compound, ordering people to secretly watch him.

“Lin Shen, I heard that you've brought Wei Wufu back?” Ye quickly arrived.

“That's right,” Lin Shen nodded slightly.

“There must be something wrong with that Wei Wufu. Before, both the Qi and Wang Families sent people to invite him to join, but he refused them all. The Wang Family's Alloy Base Mutator Wang Chuan tried to give him a lesson, but ended up having his Alloy Carapace broken by just one punch,” Ye sighed. “Lin Shen, you shouldn't have brought this trouble back.”

“If I didn’t bring him back, you think he wouldn’t have come?” Lin Shen said indifferently, “Let him come. Now there are many who harbor thoughts against our Lin Family. One more doesn’t make much difference.”

Ye wanted to say something else but was preempted by Lin Shen, “I have already promised Bai Shenfei that I will go to Gourd Mountain with her the day after tomorrow. People from both Qi and Wang Families will join us. Go back and get ready, you’ll come with me.”

At this, Ye’s expression suddenly changed, and he anxiously said, “Lin Shen, are you out of your mind? How can you bring outsiders to Gourd Mountain?”

“I’m not the one taking them to Gourd Mountain; it’s Bai Shenfei who’s taking us,” Lin Shen told him.

“She can’t possibly know where Gourd Mountain is. She must want to trick you into taking her there. Tell me exactly what she said,” Ye said with a somber expression.

“What use is it to trick me if I don’t know where Gourd Mountain is?” Lin Shen recounted the content of his conversation with Bai Shenfei, mostly truthful except for omitting the part about Ye.

“That can’t be. If it really was Mr. Lin Zongzheng who asked her to take you to Gourd Mountain, how could I not know about it?” Ye’s expression fluctuated unpredictably.

“Ye, I have no choice but to go this time. Where Gourd Mountain is and what’s there, you can tell me now, right? We need to prepare in advance,” Lin Shen urged, staring at Ye.

“Lin Shen, did Mr. Lin Zongzheng really not tell you anything about Gourd Mountain?” Ye asked, hesitating.

“No,” Lin Shen replied straightforwardly.

Ye looked at Lin Shen for quite some time before saying, “If Mr. Lin Zongzheng didn’t tell you, there must be a reason. If I tell you, I might accidentally mess things up for them.”

“Let’s do this: Since we’ve already agreed to go with Bai Shenfei, we’ll go to Gourd Mountain with her first and see what she’s really up to,” Ye pondered for a moment and then said, “We only have a few Alloy Base Mutators left at home. We need to think about who to take with us. We have to leave at least two Alloy Base Mutators to guard against the Qi and Wang Families exploiting any opportunities.”

“No need for that. With Mr. Lin Zongzheng and Mr. Lin Zongzheng not here, even if we took all the Alloy Base Mutators, we wouldn’t be a match for the Qi and Wang Families. So, I’m just planning to take you. If that Wei Wufu insists on following, then we’ll just bring him along,” said Lin Shen.

“This isn’t right...” Ye shook his head urgently.

“It’s best that they stay at the base to protect the Lin Family’s estate. With Mr. Lin Zongzheng and Mr. Lin Zongzheng at Gourd Mountain, we won’t suffer a loss,” Lin Shen interrupted again.

“What if Mr. Lin Zongzheng and Mr. Lin Zongzheng are trapped and can’t get away?” Ye continued to urge.

“If even they can’t protect themselves, what use would it be for us to bring a few Alloy Base Mutators?” Lin Shen said calmly, “Ye, it’s settled then. If you think it’s too dangerous, stay at the base and help me guard the home.”

“I have to be by your side, Lin Shen. Even if I risk this old life, I must ensure your safety. Otherwise, how could I face Mr. Lin Zongzheng?” Ye said fervently.

“Then it’s decided. Go back and get ready. We’ll leave early the day after tomorrow,” Lin Shen concluded.

“

“All right, I’ll go back and prepare,” Ye said, making a motion to leave, but in the moment he turned, he suddenly reached out to press against Lin Shen’s chest.

Ye’s speed was too fast. Without the enhancement of Seven Steps of Conflict, Lin Shen had no chance to react before Ye’s palm was pressed against his chest.

Lin Shen only felt an overwhelming force coming at him, causing him to stumble back several steps involuntarily, and that was with Ye forcibly holding back most of his strength in astonishment.

“Lin Shen, you...” Ye looked at Lin Shen with a mixture of surprise and doubt.

“That’s right, I’m not an Alloy Mutator, nor a Steel Mutator, I haven’t undergone Base Mutation,” Lin Shen said calmly.

“Then how did you...” Ye asked, still skeptical.

“Being able to subdue the Supersonic Gunman was purely because Mr. Lin Zongzheng had given me something to protect my life in the past. Unfortunately, it could only be used once. In that situation, I had no other choice but to use it,” Lin Shen explained.

“Lin Shen, you really haven’t undergone Base Mutation?” Ye still found it hard to believe.

“See for yourself.” Lin Shen rolled up his sleeves and extended his arm towards Ye.

Ye carefully felt Lin Shen's skin and bones. After Base Mutation, even without using any Mutator abilities, the body would have changes, especially the bones, which would be denser and harder than those of ordinary people; this was something that couldn't be faked. With one touch, Ye knew for sure that Lin Shen hadn't undergone Base Mutation.

"Lin Shen, it's far too dangerous for you to go to Gourd Mountain without undergoing Base Mutation," Ye said, looking at Lin Shen with a strange expression.

"Don't worry, you'll protect me, won't you? Besides, even if I say I won't go now, would the Qi and Wang families agree? Even if the Qi and Wang families agree, would Bai Shenfei accept it?" Lin Shen retracted his arm and let his sleeve fall back down.

"Lin Shen, rest assured, I, Ye, swear on my life that I will ensure your safety," Ye vowed solemnly.

"That will do. Go back and get ready. I'm relying on you for this journey." After sending off Ye, Lin Shen sank into deep thought.

He felt that the suspicious points about Ye were increasing, making him unreliable. With the Qi and Wang families looking on like hungry tigers, and the intentions of Bai Shenfei and Wei Wufu being hard to predict, this journey was likely fraught with peril.

Lin Shen had his doubts about trusting Bai Shenfei and Ye, because Mr. Lin Zongzheng and his second brother had always said that no matter what happened, they wouldn't let Lin Shen take risks.

So, the idea that they had sent Lin Shen to Gourd Mountain was something he was skeptical of.

If Lin Shen refused to go, it was likely that they would use force; not only would Lin Shen be forced to go to Gourd Mountain, but the Lin Family itself, which his elder brothers and sisters had painstakingly built up over many years, could also suffer a huge blow. Thus, he had no choice.

"I must gather some more chips for myself. I hope that this Fire Seed will be useful." Lin Shen placed the body of the Base Variant Creature, which resembled a javelin, beside his bed and lay down.

The Alloy Egg from Wei Wufu was in Lin Shen's possession, but hatching the egg would take time, maybe too long to be of any immediate use.

"The Supersonic Gunman could certainly be a useful ally, but one isn't enough to deal with such a complex and dangerous situation," Lin Shen regretted not having a few Alloy pets with him; now there really wasn't anywhere he could quickly acquire Alloy pets.

Lin Shen had seldom left the base before; people protected him within the base, and he had no use for such pets.

“It seems what I can truly rely on is only those BUG-like Fire Seeds.” As Lin Shen thought, he drifted off into a drowsy sleep.

He didn't know how long he had slept when Lin Shen felt something cool slithering on his body, its chill passing over his skin, causing his hair to stand involuntarily and bringing him to wakefulness.

Lin Shen opened his eyes and immediately his eyes widened, nearly jumping in fright from the bed.

It wasn't that he didn't want to jump, but his body was coiled by something serpent-like, binding him tight as a stick, leaving him unable to leap at all.

“That thing's alive!” Lin Shen, looking at the serpent-like creature raising its head and making eye contact with him, finally saw its true form.