

Chapter -28

“It’s definitely alive!” Panda yelled.

“Yeah, no shit,” I replied. “It’s a Mimic, obviously.”

“*Bonk it with me!!*”

I squeezed the rubbery grip of the Bonk Hammer in my hand, then strode towards the creepy treasure chest, preparing to utterly decimate it with my first smack.

Tihi, came the child-like voice from the Mimic again, sending a shiver down my back. It was similar enough to a Skinstealer that it was creeping me out.

“You really don’t like monsters pretending not to be monsters, huh?”

“Shut up,” I told him. “Besides, liking such monsters would be insane!”

Only ten more steps separated me from the Mimic, when it started to quiver, as though a dog knowing it was about to get a treat. I gritted my teeth and lunged forward with an overhead slam.

BONK!

A tinnitus whine like that following a flashbang going off in close proximity filled my ears, while I sailed backwards through the air, landing on my back on the floor and sliding a few yards, the friction burn tearing the fabric of my jacket even more.

I got up in a discombobulated state, looking down the hallway at the Treasure Chest Mimic, the top of which had become completely flat and smooth, as though a planer had been run over it, followed by a polishing brush.

“What the fuck just happened!?” I muttered.

“*Wheeeew!! Do it again!! That was sick as!!*”

“I also rather enjoyed that,” Panda remarked.

“The recoil on this Bonk Hammer is insane,” I muttered, looking at the purple balloon weapon in my hand.

“Maybe it wasn’t recoil, but some kind of reflective shell,” the plushie wondered.

I began striding towards the Mimic, but my strike seemed to have angered it. I’d hoped the attack would’ve killed it immediately, but clearly it was still alive, as the hinged top of the chest opened and

two massive crustacean claws emerged, while the box itself lifted off the ground on six pointed legs. With a *tip-tap* of its many feet, it began moving towards me, while more of its big claws emerged from within.

With a sudden burst of speed, it shot forward with its right pincer, trying to catch me by my midsection, but I ducked under it and casually slapped the hammer into the underside of its claw.

BONK!

The reflected impact smacked me down into the floor, but also punched its claw upwards with enough force to spin it around so it landed upside-down.

While I got back to my feet, the Mimic also quickly righted itself and spun back to face me.

“Its carapace and shell are both reflective somehow,” I said.

“Maybe if you had some kind of piercing attack,” Panda mused, but it was wishful thinking. My arsenal wasn’t that broad after all.

“This might be the moment you realize that your strategy of hitting things very hard isn’t going to work.”

I shook my head. “My dear Panda, don’t you know the saying: when in doubt, punch harder.”

With a leap, I flew forward with a double-handed grip on my balloon hammer, sending it down onto the flat top of the Mimic’s treasure-chest shell, yelling, just before impact, “*Punch.harder()*!”

ACTIVATING SCRIPT: *Punch.harder()*!

```
if(Punch != Kill){  
  Punch.harder();  
}
```

BONK²!

REACTIVATING SCRIPT: *Punch.harder()*!

```
if(Punch != Kill){  
  Punch.harder();  
}
```

BONK³!

ACTIVATING SCRIPT: *Math.multiply(Punch)*!

Math.multiply(Punch)

BONK⁶!

The hits followed in such a quick succession that the reflective impact didn’t affect me until the very last strike, which hit with such tremendous power that it sent a column of hyper-condensed air toward into the floor, turning the Mimic into pulverized fragments and viscera. But it didn’t stop there, as the shockwave continued down into the wooden boards, turning them to dust and obliterating the stone foundation, sending smoke, dust, and fine granulates everywhere, while a massive hole formed beneath me.

Then the reflected impact hit and I was sent backwards and into the ceiling, hitting with enough force to break several ribs and getting one bruise that ran from nape to butt-cheek, before I too started falling down into the hole I’d formed.

As gravity overtook me and my consciousness flickered, I managed to utter the words, “*Unequip All.*”

SKILL TRIGGER!

BIRTHDAY_SUIT is now in full effect!

I_CAN_FLY is now available!

“*I_CAN_FLY.*”

I glided down through the floor and to the layer below, naked as the day I was born, and landed in a heap next to a tall pillar in a room that looked kind of like an underground water reservoir, except for the lack of water. There were several bodies all around, but they seemed to have been dead for a while.

Only a few feet separated me from the edge of the massive hole I’d unintentionally created and debris was still falling from the ceiling above, as I tried to master my breathing, which was quite painful on account of my broken ribs. Sounds of continued destruction came from below, as well as muffled screams.

“Quite a mess you made,” Panda commented.

Before I could reply, an onslaught of messages appeared:

Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ^x
‘Mimicry’ Discovered and defeated your first Mimic.
<i>The odds of getting a Mimic instead of a Treasure Chest from the colored paths is only about a 1/8th chance, so you could say you got lucky.</i>
<i>Although there is no normal reward in this instance, a Mimic does count as a Mini Boss, and thus you receive a Boss reward.</i>
<i>That being said, we were really hoping you’d get eaten.</i>
Reward: ‘Mimic Meat’

Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ^x
‘Killateral Damage!’ Killed 6 Enemies/Players with a single attack.
<i>We 100% condone this sort of behavior. Good job on killing a lot of people unintentionally! The Broadcast Department is especially excited to have caught this live.</i>
<i>Though we are not happy to support blatant cheaters, the Broadcast Department has decided to give you a special reward as thanks.</i>
Reward: ‘Skill Fusion Gum’

Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ^x
‘Bring the Roof Down’ Killed a Player using the environment.
<i>That was pretty sick.</i>

You unlocked this achievement by turning a Player named ‘Pete Swartz’ into a paste by dropping the ceiling on him.

We’re running the replay on a loop here at the office.

Reward: ‘Hard Hat’

Congratulations! You have leveled up! ^x	
You have reached Level -7!	
+1 new Attribute Point available to invest!	
<i>Kills required for Level -8</i>	<i>2/20</i>

EVENT WARNING!

You have taken 3rd place!

Kills remaining: 11

“You killed 5 Players, Gambit!”

I groaned.

A second later, a large slap of surimi-looking meat landed with a *squelch* on the floor in front of my face, followed by a yellow hard hat and a packet of chewing gum with a rainbow-colored label that read ‘*Fusion!*’.

I reached out to grab the hat, thinking it might help as debris was still falling from above, but the moment my fingers touched it, the yellow surface turned purple. With a sigh I put it onto my head.

“I really hope this grape-purple curse goes away when I leave this place.”

Another pop-up appeared:

Weaponlution — Level 8		
Hydra	Batter	Purple+
+1 Blade	+30% Swing Speed	
+80% Weight	-30% Cutting	<u>Purple²</u>
	-30% Slashing	

I pushed it to the corner of my field of view, since I knew that I’d have five of them back-to-back, because of the Player kills. I instead reached out to grab the Mimic Meat as I sat up, the pain in my ribs immediately flaring up. The meat had a potent smell of raw seafood and it was spongy in a gelatinous way, which I found unsettling.

“Could really use a Full Recovery,” I complained. “*Inspect.*”

‘Mimic Meat’	x
<i>Harvested from a Treasure Chest Mimic, this meat is considered a delicacy amongst many of the GREAT GAME’s Agencies, particularly the Beetles of the REPD and the Caterpillars of the Accounting Department.</i>	
<i>You must devour this entire piece raw without pause to unlock the power hidden within.</i>	
Weight: 1 Panda	

“Well, it can’t be worse than the Meat Flower,” I said and took a bite.