# 14

\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 14</h1>  
  
---  
  
<p>Chapter 14</p>  
  
---  
  
<p>The Lycan that had leaped over Jin-Woo’s head saw the scene and began to tuck its tail, hesitating before slowly backing away.</p>  
<p>“Huh…?”</p>  
<p>Was this the result of focusing all my points on Strength?</p>  
<p>As Jin-Woo stood in shock, unable to close his mouth, the headless Lycan’s legs trembled before it finally stopped moving.</p>  
<p>Then, a familiar mechanical sound rang out.</p>  
<p>\*Ding\*</p>  
<p>[You have defeated the Steel-Fanged Lycan.]</p>  
<p>[You leveled up!]</p>  
<p>\*\*\*</p>  
<p>“My Level increased?”</p>  
<p>To confirm he hadn’t misheard, Jin-Woo quickly opened his Status Window.</p>  
<p>Name: Sung Jin-Woo</p>  
<p>Level: 2</p>  
<p>Job: None</p>  
<p>Title: None</p>  
<p>HP: 205</p>  
<p>MP: 22</p>  
<p>Fatigue: 0</p>  
<p>[Stats]</p>  
<p>Strength: 32 Stamina: 11 Agility: 11 Intelligence: 11 Senses: 11</p>  
<p>(Available Stat Points: 0)</p>  
<p>[Skills]</p>  
<p>Passive Skills: (Unknown) Lv.MAX, Tenacity Lv.1</p>  
<p>Active Skill: Dash Lv.1</p>  
<p>It was true. His Level had indeed increased.</p>  
<p>And with the Level up, all his Stats had increased by 1 point.</p>  
<p>It wasn’t just Quest rewards that could affect Stats.</p>  
<p>Leveling up also increased the Stats in the Status Window.</p>  
<p>‘So Leveling up is possible!’</p>  
<p>Something he had only dared to hope for had now become a reality right before his eyes.</p>  
<p>His heart began to beat faster.</p>  
<p>‘Moreover, the points from Leveling up are even higher.’</p>  
<p>The total Stat points from completing a Quest were 3.</p>  
<p>The total Stat points from Leveling up were 5.</p>  
<p>Although it was inconvenient that he couldn’t freely distribute the points, the growth from Leveling up was significantly greater.</p>  
<p>Additionally, while Quests could only be completed once per day, there seemed to be no limit to Leveling up.</p>  
<p>‘I only killed two, and my Level increased.’</p>  
<p>It’s the same in games.</p>  
<p>In the lower Levels, you can Level up quickly in a short amount of time.</p>  
<p>Currently, Jin-Woo’s Level was 2.</p>  
<p>It wasn’t an exaggeration to say he was at the very bottom.</p>  
<p>But this wasn’t your average low Level.</p>  
<p>His Strength Stat had already surpassed 30.</p>  
<p>Assuming his Strength increased by 1 with each Level, Jin-Woo’s current Strength was equivalent to someone above Level 20.</p>  
<p>What happens when a user with Level 20 Stats hunts in a Level 1 hunting ground?</p>  
<p>‘Absolute over-Leveling…’</p>  
<p>As if to prove this assumption, the destructive power of his punch earlier had far exceeded his expectations.</p>  
<p>‘Even though my Strength Stat only tripled… the difference in power wasn’t just triple.’</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo’s original Strength Stat was 10.</p>  
<p>Strength 10 and Strength 30 are a threefold difference in numbers, but the actual difference in power was much greater than that.</p>  
<p>‘Perhaps…?’</p>  
<p>What if Stats have a multiplier effect as they increase?</p>  
<p>Then this level of destructive power would make perfect sense.</p>  
<p>Moreover, his movements had become faster than before.</p>  
<p>Previously, it would have been impossible for him to dodge a beast’s attack while charging at full speed or to hear the sound of splitting air when throwing a punch.</p>  
<p>“Well, if muscle strength increases, speed naturally follows.”</p>  
<p>Increasing his Strength Stat had boosted both his ‘power’ and ‘speed.’</p>  
<p>This was proven in his battles with the Lycans.</p>  
<p>So, what would happen if he increased his Agility?</p>  
<p>It sparked his curiosity, but there was no way to know for now.</p>  
<p>To find out, he’d have to raise the Stat himself.</p>  
<p>‘Still…’</p>  
<p>He thought it would be a waste to invest the Quest reward points into Agility.</p>  
<p>If investing in Strength could increase both power and speed, why bother putting points into Agility?</p>  
<p>That left only one option.</p>  
<p>‘Level up as fast as possible.’</p>  
<p>Increase Agility through Leveling up.</p>  
<p>They say even dust can pile up to form a mountain.</p>  
<p>If I keep increasing it bit by bit, I’ll eventually feel the difference.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo pulled the sword embedded in the ground.</p>  
<p>‘Then, shall we begin?’</p>  
<p>There was still one more creature left to kill.</p>  
<p>“But… where did that guy go?”</p>  
<p>A Lycan that had been nearby just a moment ago had disappeared without a trace.</p>  
<p>He looked around intently but couldn’t find any trace of it.</p>  
<p>It seemed to have run away while he was checking his Status Window.</p>  
<p>No wonder it had been tucking its tail and watching him cautiously.</p>  
<p>“Tch.”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo clicked his tongue in disappointment, feeling as though he’d let experience points slip away.</p>  
<p>As he was about to move on...</p>  
<p>‘Do these guys not drop Magic Stones or something?’</p>  
<p>He suddenly stopped in his tracks, struck by the thought.</p>  
<p>Magic Beasts that came out of Gates usually had one or more Magic Stones inside them.</p>  
<p>If luck was on your side, you might even find a Rune Stone.</p>  
<p>Rune Stones, which could teach Skills, were valuable, and Magic Stones were also traded at high prices for various uses.</p>  
<p>It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that Hunters went on Raids not just for the base reward but also to hunt for these Magic Stones.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo was also a Hunter.</p>  
<p>It felt disappointing to have successfully hunted something but not have anything to show for it.</p>  
<p>Out of curiosity, he cut open the Lycan’s belly, but it was a wasted effort.</p>  
<p>These creatures seemed to be entirely different from Magic Beasts.</p>  
<p>He had been to many Dungeons, but he had never seen a Magic Beast that resembled a wolf so closely.</p>  
<p>As Jin-Woo was about to brush off his hands and stand up...</p>  
<p>“Hmm?”</p>  
<p>He noticed something shining inside the Lycan’s mouth.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo pried open the Lycan’s jaws.</p>  
<p>One of the Lycan’s fang appeared, gleaming brightly.</p>  
<p>When he reached out to touch it, a message popped up.</p>  
<p>[Item: Lycan’s Fang Found. Would you like to acquire it?]</p>  
<p>“Acquire.”</p>  
<p>[Item: Lycan’s Fang]</p>  
<p>Acquisition Difficulty: None</p>  
<p>Type: Miscellaneous</p>  
<p>A large and sharp Lycan’s fang. You can store it in your inventory or sell it at the shop.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo was baffled as he held the fang in his hand.</p>  
<p>‘There’s a shop too?’</p>  
<p>Where in the world is there such an unfriendly system?</p>  
<p>Forcing the user to figure everything out through trial and error.</p>  
<p>Even during the Penalty Quest, there had been no explanation, almost leading him to his death.</p>  
<p>Grinding his teeth, Jin-Woo summoned the shop.</p>  
<p>“Shop.”</p>  
<p>He half-expected a store with a sign saying ‘Shop’ and an NPC merchant standing inside, like in most games.</p>  
<p>But what appeared in the air was just a hologram-like green text, similar to when he first opened the message window.</p>  
<p>Only two words this time.</p>  
<p>‘Buy’ and ‘Sell.’</p>  
<p>“...”</p>  
<p>It was an extremely simplistic shop.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo selected ‘Buy.’</p>  
<p>He had no money on him, but he was curious about what items were available for purchase.</p>  
<p>But the system was cold.</p>  
<p>[You do not meet the Level requirement to use the Buy function.]</p>  
<p>Being treated like a nobody where money was involved was something he was already used to.</p>  
<p>“Yeah, yeah.”</p>  
<p>Casually, he turned his attention to ‘Sell.’</p>  
<p>[Would you like to sell the Item: Lycan’s Fang?]</p>  
<p>“Sure.”</p>  
<p>With a \*clink\*, the inventory window popped up.</p>  
<p>At the very bottom of the inventory, in the slot labeled ‘Gold,’ the number 20 appeared.</p>  
<p>It had been empty until just yesterday.</p>  
<p>‘20 Gold.’</p>  
<p>It wasn’t actual cash he could use, and since he couldn’t use the shop yet, he couldn’t quite grasp how much 20 Gold was worth.</p>  
<p>‘Well, what could I expect from creatures in an E-rank Dungeon?’</p>  
<p>Though there’s a difference between Dungeons and Instances, they’re all the same in the end.</p>  
<p>Still, just in case, Jin-Woo thought of collecting the other Lycan’s fangs before slapping his forehead.</p>  
<p>“I completely blew its head off…”</p>  
<p>With a bitter expression, he turned away.</p>  
<p>The 20 Gold he didn’t know the value of lingered in his mind, but he couldn’t waste time searching for the Lycan’s fang in this dark basement.</p>  
<p>However, as he turned around, that regret melted away like snow.</p>  
<p>“Grrrrr.”</p>  
<p>“Grrrr.”</p>  
<p>“Grrrrrr!”</p>  
<p>“Grk!”</p>  
<p>The Lycan he thought had run away had returned, bringing along a horde of its companions!</p>  
<p>A smile bloomed on Jin-Woo’s face.</p>  
<p>There were at least 20 of them.</p>  
<p>“Eureka!”</p>  
<p>Wait, was that the right word?</p>  
<p>Well, it clearly expressed his joy, so it didn’t matter.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo tightly gripped the hilt of his sword.</p>  
<p>“I’ll chew them all up except for their fangs.”</p>  
<p>The Lycans flinched, terrified by the murderous glint in the eyes of a man who couldn’t resist the allure of money.</p>  
<p>In that moment, Jin-Woo leaped toward them.</p>  
<p>\*\*\*</p>  
<p>[You leveled up!]</p>  
<p>[You leveled up!]</p>  
<p>[You leveled up!]</p>  
<p>As expected, his Level soared rapidly.</p>  
<p>After hunting down every Lycan in the first floor, Jin-Woo quickly reached Level 7.</p>  
<p>He had jumped five Levels in an instant.</p>  
<p>“Grrk!”</p>  
<p>As he caught the last one trying to flee with its tail between its legs, a strange message appeared.</p>  
<p>\*Ding\*</p>  
<p>[Title: Wolf Slayer Acquired.]</p>  
<p>“A Title?”</p>  
<p>[Title: Wolf Slayer]</p>  
<p>A title given to a hunter skilled in slaying wolves. All Stats increase by 40% when facing Beast-type Monsters.</p>  
<p>Opening his Status Window, he saw that his Title had indeed changed.</p>  
<p>Name: Sung Jin-Woo</p>  
<p>Level: 7</p>  
<p>Job: None</p>  
<p>Title: Wolf Slayer</p>  
<p>HP: 766</p>  
<p>MP: 81</p>  
<p>Fatigue: 3</p>  
<p>[Stats]</p>  
<p>Strength: 37 Stamina: 16 Agility: 16 Intelligence: 16 Senses: 16</p>  
<p>(Available Stat Points: 0)</p>  
<p>[Skills]</p>  
<p>Passive Skill: (Unknown) Lv.MAX, Tenacity Lv.1</p>  
<p>Active Skill: Dash Lv.1</p>  
<p>A 40% increase in Stats when facing Beast-type Monsters.</p>  
<p>Although it was limited to certain targets, a 40% Stat boost was quite impressive.</p>  
<p>‘Would it also apply to Beast-type Magic Beasts?’</p>  
<p>If it did, he could easily take down Magic Beasts during Raids.</p>  
<p>But even without that, the gains were substantial.</p>  
<p>‘34 Wolf Fangs, two Rusty Daggers, one Traveler’s Clothes, and one Return Stone.’</p>  
<p>While hunting the wolves, items occasionally dropped from their bodies.</p>  
<p>However, none of them were particularly useful.</p>  
<p>The Rusty Dagger had lower attack power than his current Steel Sword, and the Traveler’s Clothes wasn’t an equippable item but rather junk meant to be sold at the shop.</p>  
<p>After selling everything, he earned over 1,000 Gold.</p>  
<p>[Current Balance: 1,060 Gold]</p>  
<p>‘...But I can’t feel happy about it.’</p>  
<p>No matter how much he saved, there was no immediate use for it.</p>  
<p>Aside from the Gold, all he had left was the Return Stone.</p>  
<p>Earlier, when he was struggling to escape the Dungeon entrance, he was told that he needed a Return Stone to get out.</p>  
<p>Now, if he wanted, he could return to the outside world.</p>  
<p>A crossroads lay ahead.</p>  
<p>In front of him was a staircase leading down to the second basement level.</p>  
<p>And in his hand was the Return Stone.</p>  
<p>‘Advance or retreat…’</p>  
<p>In the past, he would have chosen retreat without hesitation.</p>  
<p>It was why he had survived numerous Raids relatively unscathed despite his subpar Stats.</p>  
<p>Others called it a miracle, but it was the result of his clever maneuvering.</p>  
<p>But now, things were different.</p>  
<p>He didn’t want to turn back.</p>  
<p>If he withdrew here, he felt as though he would never move forward again.</p>  
<p>“I’ve retreated enough times to get sick of it.”</p>  
<p>It wouldn’t hurt to charge ahead for once.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo slipped the Return Stone back into his pocket.</p>  
<p>His steps toward the second basement level were light.</p>  
  
\*\*CHAPTER END\*\*