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\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 19</h1>  
  
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Despite the terrifying bites of the insects, Hwang Dong-Seok waited calmly for the right moment to counterattack.   
  
When the Dealers unleashed their full damage without causing the Aggro to shift—   
  
'This should be enough!'   
  
Now begins the real hunt.   
  
The reason Hunters are called Hunters!   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok shouted,   
  
"Attack!"   
  
A short, loud command echoed, and the team’s full firepower poured onto the insects.   
  
\*KIIIEEEEKKK!\*   
\*KIEEEEKK!\*   
  
The screams of the Magic Beasts erupted from everywhere.   
  
Jin-Woo stood at the back, watching the battle unfold.   
  
That was the condition of the Raid contract.   
  
As he observed their fight, he imagined how he would have fought in their place.   
  
'This is frustrating.'   
  
Jin-Woo suppressed the urge to jump in multiple times.   
  
He saw too many openings in the Magic Beasts’ movements.   
  
He also noticed the Hunters frequently missing those openings.   
  
Yet, he had to stand still and just watch—of course, it was frustrating.   
  
However, Hwang Dong-Seok’s team took surprisingly little damage.   
  
The team members coordinated well with each other.   
  
The composure Hwang Dong-Seok had shown before the Raid didn’t seem entirely for show.   
  
"Jin-Seok, 11 o’clock!"   
  
"Hyung, they’re coming from the right too!"   
  
"Jun-Tae, Seok-Min, Gyu-Hwan! Take care of the right side!"   
  
"Yes!"   
  
"Cheol-Jin, your wrist is swollen. Fall back for now."   
  
"Hyung, I’m fine."   
  
"Should we just clear the entrance and leave? We don’t know how long this will take, so don’t overdo it from the start. Control your pace."   
  
"Got it."   
  
Their communication was smooth, likely due to years of working together.   
  
Smooth communication leads to good Team Play.   
  
They were different from the Hunters of the Ragtag Group.   
  
'Surprisingly, they’re somewhat competent.'   
  
Jin-Woo’s gaze shifted to Yoo Jin-Ho.   
  
A Magic Beast bit into the shield with its jaw, but Jin-Ho kicked it away and swung his sword.   
  
The expensive sword cleanly severed the Magic Beast’s head.   
  
For a rookie D-rank Hunter, he was holding his own.   
  
'His lack of skill and experience is being covered by his equipment.'   
  
Hunters don’t scramble for good equipment for no reason.   
  
Jin-Ho, who had made eye contact with Jin-Woo, gave him a thumbs-up.   
  
"..."   
  
His desperate gaze was hard to ignore, so Jin-Woo reluctantly returned the gesture.   
  
Jin-Ho turned back, seemingly satisfied.   
  
\*KIIIEEEEKKK!\*   
  
The intense battle was gradually coming to an end.   
  
Once the area was somewhat cleared, Hwang Dong-Seok gave instructions to his team.   
  
"Collect all the Essence stones! Divide them exactly into nine parts."   
  
"Yes."   
  
"I love this part the most."   
  
"Me too."   
  
Watching his team members cheerfully gather the stones, Hwang Dong-Seok approached Jin-Woo.   
  
"Ah, we owe you our lives."   
  
"Huh?"   
  
"You’re the one who warned us about the Magic Beasts coming from above, wasn’t it? How did you know?"   
  
"It’s... intuition."   
  
Jin-Woo brushed it off.   
  
He couldn’t say it was because of his high Senses Stat.   
  
"Ah, really? Intuition... That was really lucky. If we hadn’t noticed that, who knows what would’ve happened, phew—."   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok sighed in relief, patting his chest.   
  
But then.   
  
One of the Hunters, who was searching the insects, gestured to Hwang Dong-Seok.   
  
"Hyung, come here for a second."   
  
The team members had gathered together.   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok headed over.   
  
"Yeah?"   
  
"There’s something weird about these guys."   
  
When Hwang Dong-Seok arrived, the Hunters made way for him.   
  
He crouched down and looked around.   
  
Nothing seemed particularly strange.   
  
Everywhere he looked, there were only dead insects.   
  
"What’s so weird?"   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok tilted his head.   
  
One of his team members pointed to a nearby insect’s leg.   
  
"That wound... It’s not from us, right?"   
  
"..."   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok furrowed his brows.   
  
After a closer look, he said,   
  
"It looks like... something bit it?"   
  
"Right? There are several like this. Look, here too. And over there. This one’s missing a whole wing. Were these guys already beaten up before they fought us?"   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok’s face stiffened.   
  
No wonder the fight felt easier despite the large number of Magic Beasts.   
  
"Could these guys... have been fighting something else?"   
  
At that moment.   
  
For a brief second, Jin-Woo felt the gaze of Hwang Dong-Seok and a few other members shift toward him.   
  
When Jin-Woo noticed, they quickly looked away.   
  
Seeing that, Jin-Woo was certain.   
  
'As I thought...'   
  
His initial assumption was correct.   
  
Their seamless coordination meant they had been working together for a long time.   
  
And without any casualties.   
  
But was that possible without a Healer?   
  
No matter how skilled the Hunters were, as humans, mistakes were inevitable. Just moments ago, their formation almost broke due to the insects’ attacks.   
  
A rough picture formed in his mind.   
  
A smile crept onto Jin-Woo’s lips.   
  
'I might be able to use this to my advantage.'   
  
If everything goes as expected, that is.   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok stood up with a smile.   
  
"Alright, let’s move further in. If this keeps up, we’ll clear this place in no time."   
  
He spoke loudly on purpose.   
  
It wasn’t for his team members, who were already around him.   
  
Meanwhile, Yoo Jin-Ho approached with a wide grin.   
  
"Hyung, did you see that? You saw it, right? I totally destroyed those Magic Beasts."   
  
Jin-Ho swung his sword through the air excitedly.   
  
Jin-Woo asked,   
  
"That sword and shield... they’re expensive, right?"   
  
"Huh? Oh, yeah. My father wanted to make sure I was well-equipped for my first Raid."   
  
"Then you’d better be careful."   
  
Jin-Woo patted Jin-Ho’s shoulder a couple of times and then followed the Hunters moving further in.   
  
"What’s that supposed to mean?"   
  
Jin-Ho tilted his head in confusion but soon followed the group.   
  
The cave stretched deep inside.   
  
But along the way, not a single Magic Beast was seen.   
  
It was a linear Dungeon, so they should’ve encountered something.   
  
"Were the ones at the entrance all of them?"   
  
"Come on, no way."   
  
"This is really strange."   
  
"But there’s still a Boss, right?"   
  
"The Gate wouldn’t be open if there wasn’t a Boss."   
  
The Hunters were divided in their opinions about the empty interior of the large Dungeon.   
  
"Wait."   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok stopped abruptly.   
  
The sudden halt caused a minor collision.   
  
A Hunter who bumped his nose into the back of someone’s head whined,   
  
"Ouch— Hyung, what is it?"   
  
"Gyu-Hwan, shine the light here."   
  
Jo Gyu-Hwan moved the orb of light he had been holding to illuminate the corner Hwang Dong-Seok pointed at.   
  
"Oh my god..."   
  
"Is this all?"   
  
The Hunters murmured in shock.   
  
Wings, legs, torsos, even heads of insects—   
  
The remains of dead insects were scattered everywhere.   
  
The further they went into the cave, the more remains they found.   
  
At the end of it all was a large room.   
  
"The Boss Room."   
  
Someone muttered.   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok nodded.   
  
"Everyone, get your equipment ready."   
  
The Hunters quickly armed themselves.   
  
Tension filled the air.   
  
Step by step.   
  
Led by their Leader, Hwang Dong-Seok, the Hunters cautiously entered the Boss Room.   
  
But the silence didn’t last long.   
  
"Wow, this is amazing!"   
  
A Hunter with a red nose shouted.   
  
It was the same guy who had bumped his nose earlier.   
  
In Dungeons, loud noises were usually taboo.   
  
Magic Beasts could hear and come running, even if they weren’t nearby.   
  
But no one scolded the red-nosed Hunter.   
  
"Whoa—."   
  
"How much is this worth?"   
  
"This is insane!"   
  
Everyone was too busy marveling.   
  
"Hold it."   
  
Jo Gyu-Hwan fixed the orb of light high in the air, revealing the room’s full layout.   
  
Gem-like stones protruding from the cave walls.   
  
"Mana Crystals!"   
  
"An entire wall of Mana Crystals!"   
  
The Hunters’ eyes sparkled even brighter than the Mana Crystals reflecting the light.   
  
Mana Crystals!   
  
One of the treasures that could be found in Dungeons.   
  
Though they contained less mana than the Essence Stones found in Magic Beasts, they were usually discovered in large quantities, making them a lucrative find.   
  
Especially this time—the amount of Mana Crystals was no joke.   
  
They filled an entire wall of the large cave.   
  
"Roughly estimating..."   
  
One of the Hunters, who was good with numbers, quickly calculated.   
  
"If we mine all of this, it’ll be worth over 1 billion. Even divided into nine parts, each of us would get more than 100 million."   
  
Ooh—   
  
Smiles spread across the Hunters’ faces.   
  
Yoo Jin-Ho, who had been lagging behind, nudged Jin-Woo with his elbow.   
  
"Hyung, give me the contract!"   
  
"Why do you need the contract?"   
  
"Just trust me. I’m pretty sharp when it comes to legal stuff."   
  
Jin-Woo shrugged and handed over the contract as requested.   
  
Jin-Ho took it and approached Hwang Dong-Seok.   
  
"Excuse me, seniors, I have a question."   
  
The Hunters’ attention instantly shifted to Jin-Ho.   
  
He unfolded Jin-Woo’s contract and showed it to them.   
  
"Leader, this is Jin-Woo hyung’s contract. As you can see, it only mentions the Essence Stones obtained from hunting. There’s no mention of distribution for other treasures."   
  
Everyone understood what Jin-Ho was getting at.   
  
—It’s customary to divide treasures or rare items found in Dungeons equally among all members. This is different from hunts where you only keep the Essence Stones from the Magic Beasts you kill.   
  
In other words, the Mana Crystals should be divided into ten parts, not nine.   
  
The Hunters’ expressions changed for a moment, but Hwang Dong-Seok stepped forward with a smile.   
  
"Of course, we’ll divide it fairly. We know the rules. But first, there’s something we need to take care of."   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok pointed forward with his index finger.   
  
Jin-Ho flinched, thinking he was pointing at him.   
  
He turned around and saw a spider the size of a house crouching silently in the far corner.   
  
"Gasp...!"   
  
Jin-Ho stepped back in shock, covering his mouth.   
  
The spider didn’t move, as if it was asleep.   
  
Around it were piles of insect shells, resembling a mountain of discarded food waste.   
  
"That’s the Boss."   
  
"Did that thing eat all the insects in the Dungeon?"   
  
"It sure ate a lot."   
  
The Hunters muttered as they observed the spider.   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok gathered the Hunters.   
  
Jin-Woo and Jin-Ho also stood in front of him.   
  
"Everyone knows this, but once we kill the Boss, the Gate will close. So before we deal with the spider, let’s mine the Mana Crystals and move them out first."   
  
Everyone nodded.   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok’s gaze shifted to the buzz-cut guy.   
  
"Cheol-Jin, did you bring the equipment?"   
  
Lee Cheol-Jin shook his head.   
  
"No. Who would’ve thought we’d find Mana Crystals in a C-rank Dungeon? I left all the mining equipment in the car."   
  
"In-Seok... Didn’t I tell you to always be prepared?"   
  
"Sorry, sorry. My bad."   
  
Lee Cheol-Jin smiled sheepishly and bowed apologetically to Hwang Dong-Seok, the team members, and even Jin-Woo.   
  
Hwang Dong-Seok scratched his head and said,   
  
"Ah, this is going to be a hassle. Then, you two stay here and keep watch. We’ll go get the equipment."   
  
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\*\*CHAPTER END\*\*