# 25docx

25docx

25

\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*   
<h1>Solo Leveling – Chapter 25</h1>   
  
<div class="view-img">   
</div>   
  
<div class="q497228d235">   
<p>Chapter 25</p>   
<p>11. Cleanup</p>   
<p>Three days had passed since returning from the C-rank Gate.</p>   
<p>Jin-Ah, who had come home early because it was Saturday, sniffed the air and quickly kicked off her shoes.</p>   
<p>“Brother, what’s that? Did you order chicken?”</p>   
<p>“I ordered it just in time for you to arrive.”</p>   
<p>“Wow!”</p>  
<p>As Jin-Woo gestured from his seat at the table, Jin-Ah’s eyes widened, and she hurried over.</p>   
<p>“Wow, what’s the occasion? My stingy brother’s being generous. Did something good happen?”</p>   
<p>“Hey, hey, put your bag down first. Why are you in such a rush? What’s with the impatient attitude?”</p>   
<p>“It’s fine. The bag’s not heavy at all!”</p>   
<p>Not long ago, she’d complained about the bag being too heavy to carry a collapsible umbrella.   
Jin-Woo clicked his tongue but couldn’t hide the smile creeping onto his face.   
‘Did something good happen?’   
Of course, it had.   
Today, the balance in his bank account had increased from 800,000 won to 180.3 million won.   
The 180 million came from selling the Essence Stones, and he’d sent 500,000 won to his landlord as rent.   
180 million!   
He had earned a fortune of 180 million won in just one raid.   
Though he’d been steadily working as a Hunter, he finally felt like he’d become a real Hunter. After all, in this era, people immediately thought of money when they heard the word “Hunter.”   
The expression on the Essence Stone Exchange employee’s face when he brought in the stones was still vivid.   
“Y-you hunted all of these alone?”   
“It just turned out that way.”   
“My goodness… that’s incredible.”   
49 C-rank Essence Stones.   
The initial appraisal price was a little over 300 million won.   
But he hadn’t expected the taxes to be so high.   
“The tax is 40 percent?”   
“Yes. Individuals pay 40 percent in taxes, while Guilds only pay 10 percent.”   
“Is there a reason Guilds pay less tax?”   
“Unlike private raid parties, Guilds are obligated to cooperate when a Mobilization Order is issued.”   
Now that he thought about it, during the incident in the Double Dungeon, the White Tiger Guild had arrived at the scene alongside the Association Surveillance Division.   
Guilds received privileges, and in return, they cooperated with the requests of the nation and the Association.   
So, he had briefly considered it.   
‘Should I hold onto the Essence Stones and join a Guild before selling them?’   
But he quickly dismissed the idea.   
By the time he joined a Guild and became active, his main targets would likely be A and B-rank Gates.   
The Essence Stones from those Gates would be incomparable in value to those from C-rank Gates.   
Every penny counted right now.   
‘I can’t just recklessly sign a contract with any Guild just to save on taxes.’   
“Alright, let’s do the transaction.”   
That’s how he ended up with 180 million won.   
As Jin-Ah had said, the chicken and beer were a celebratory feast for earning a fortune.   
“Thanks for the meal.”</p>   
<p>Jin-Woo’s finger flicked Jin-Ah’s forehead as her hand slyly reached for a beer can.   
\*Tap!\*   
“Ow!”   
“You’re having this.”   
A can of cola was placed in front of Jin-Ah.   
“Heung… I was just joking…”   
While Jin-Ah rubbed her reddened forehead, Jin-Woo popped open a cold beer and gulped it down.   
Just then.   
\*Ding.\*   
Jin-Woo reacted sharply to the mechanical sound.   
‘Why a system message all of a sudden?’   
[Harmful substance detected.]   
[Treatment initiated due to the effect of ‘Buff: Detoxification.’]   
[3, 2, 1… Detoxification complete.]   
‘It detoxified a harmful substance? Could it be referring to the alcohol?’   
Jin-Woo finished the remaining beer and opened another can on the spot.   
\*Gulp gulp.\*   
[Harmful substance detected.]   
[Treatment initiated due to the effect of ‘Buff: Detoxification.’]   
[3, 2, 1… Detoxification complete.]   
The same message appeared again.   
Even after downing two cans of beer in the blink of an eye, he felt no intoxication at all.   
Whatever this buff was, its effect was undeniable.   
‘What’s going on?’   
Jin-Woo tilted his head in confusion.   
He had never met a Hunter who could grant buffs before.   
Most Hunters with such special abilities worked for Guilds.   
It was rare to encounter one affiliated with the Association.   
‘Even if someone secretly applied a buff, the system message would have notified me.’   
That left two possibilities.   
Either he received the buff while unconscious, or he received it before the system activated.   
The latter seemed more plausible.   
“Brother, what’s wrong? Are you okay? Be careful.”   
Seeing Jin-Woo’s serious expression, Jin-Ah asked with concern.   
“I just remembered something urgent. You go ahead and eat.”   
Jin-Woo went into his room.   
He meticulously went through every minor memory to see if he’d missed anything.   
‘Ah.’   
Something flashed through his mind.   
‘Every quest had a reward. Even the Penalty Quests. But there was one quest where I didn’t check the reward.’   
Jin-Woo hurriedly opened his message log.   
Back then, he hadn’t understood the system or what the rewards were, but there had definitely been a message saying he’d met the quest completion conditions.   
His heart began to race.   
Jin-Woo found the message at the very bottom of his inbox.   
[Welcome, Player.]   
Jin-Woo spoke in a trembling voice.   
“Confirm.”   
\*Ding.\*   
[This system supports the growth of the ‘Player.’]   
[Failure to comply with the system’s directives may result in penalties.]   
[Reward distribution complete.]   
As expected.   
There was a mention of a reward.   
The voice he’d first heard in the Underground Temple.   
The voice had said this:   
[You have fulfilled all the conditions for the ‘Secret Quest: The Courage of the Weak.’]   
Even a Secret Quest was still a quest.   
But he had yet to check its reward.   
Back then, he’d dismissed it as a delusion.   
[Failure to comply may result in penalties.]   
[Reward distribution complete.]   
[Would you like to check the reward?] (Y/N)   
‘Yes.’   
\*Ding.\*   
[‘Secret Quest: The Courage of the Weak’ Completion Reward]   
The Blessing of the Great Sorcerer Kandiaru   
Impressed by your courage, the Great Sorcerer Kandiaru has bestowed upon you a special incantation. As long as Kandiaru’s blessing is with you, you will always enjoy a strong and healthy life.   
“May light shine upon the challenger’s path.”   
-Temporary Effect ‘Will to Recover’: Restores all damaged parts of the body.   
-Permanent Effect ‘Longevity’: Grants immunity to all diseases, toxins, and abnormal effects, and drastically increases regenerative abilities during sleep.   
It all made sense now.   
‘So that’s why my leg…’   
His severed leg returning to its original state was due to the quest’s reward.   
And not getting drunk now was also because of it.   
‘Wait, immunity to all toxins?’   
Jin-Woo’s eyes widened.   
Could this also mean…?   
Jin-Woo quickly retrieved an item from his Inventory.   
[Item: Kasaka’s Venom Sac]   
Acquisition Difficulty: A   
Type: Elixir   
A pouch containing purified venom from a Kasaka. Obtained very rarely when slaying a Kasaka. Drinking the venom grants tough skin but permanently damages muscles due to its toxicity.   
Effect ‘Kasaka’s Iron Scale’: Reduces physical damage by 20%   
Side Effect ‘Damaged Muscles’: Strength -35   
‘If muscle damage is caused by toxicity, can the detoxification buff prevent it?’   
There was only one way to find out.   
Jin-Woo closed his eyes tightly and drank the liquid inside the pouch.   
\*Glug glug.\*   
The sticky liquid slid down his throat.   
It tasted bitter and fishy, but he forced it down.   
‘They say what’s good for you tastes bad…’   
As he swallowed the last of the venom, a message appeared.   
[Harmful substance detected.]   
[Treatment initiated due to the effect of ‘Buff: Detoxification.’]   
[3, 2, 1… Detoxification complete.]   
[Side Effect ‘Damaged Muscles’ has been removed.]   
“I knew it!”   
Jin-Woo clenched his fist.   
Still, just to be safe, he called up his stats window.   
‘Stats.’   
[Stats]   
Strength: 53 Stamina: 30 Agility: 53 Intelligence: 30 Senses: 35   
(Available Stat Points: 0)   
Physical Damage Reduction: 20%   
As expected, there was no decrease in strength.   
Strength remained at 53 points, and a new stat, Physical Damage Reduction, had appeared.   
Though limited to physical damage, it was an incredible ability that reduced damage by 20%.   
“Yes!”   
As Jin-Woo was celebrating his new stats, Jin-Ah’s voice came from the living room.   
“Brother, do you know someone named Yoo Jin-Woo? Someone named Yoo Jin-Woo is looking for you.”   
“That’s probably not Yoo Jin-Woo…”   
Jin-Woo walked into the living room and took the phone from his sister.   
“I’ve got it.”   
-It’s me, Yoo Jin-Ho.   
As expected.   
The voice on the other end of the line was familiar.   
“...How did you get my number?”   
-I have connections at the Association. You weren’t answering your phone, so I had to call directly.   
“Just state your business.”   
-Ah! Sorry, hyung. But it’s a bit hard to explain over the phone... Could we meet and talk?   
Jin-Woo tilted his head in confusion.   
‘Does he still want to meet me after what happened?’   
-I really need to talk to you, hyung.   
What an odd guy.   
\*\*\*   
After Yoo Jin-Ho’s pleas, Jin-Woo granted him exactly one hour.   
The meeting place was a franchise café near his house.   
[Café X]   
Though it was a weekday, the café was quite busy just after lunchtime.   
“Hyung, over here!”   
Yoo Jin-Ho greeted him warmly.   
Before entering the café, Jin-Woo had heightened his senses, but he didn’t detect the presence of any other Hunters.   
At the very least, revenge didn’t seem to be the goal.   
Not that he had done anything to leave any lingering resentment.   
Jin-Woo sat across from Yoo Jin-Ho.   
“Didn’t think I’d see you again.”   
On the table was the half-eaten ice cream Yoo Jin-Ho had been eating.   
Yoo Jin-Ho stood up and asked,   
“Did you order anything? Should I get you a coffee?”   
“No, it’s fine.”   
Yoo Jin-Ho sat back down with a slightly dejected expression.   
Jin-Woo was the first to speak.   
“So, what’s this about?”   
Just then.   
“He really did it, you know? It was no joke back then.”   
Jin-Woo glanced to the side.   
At the next table, three large, intimidating-looking student athletes were chatting with three girls.   
Jin-Woo tried to focus back on the conversation.   
“What did you want to talk about?”   
“I never did that! This guy’s just making things up in front of the girls!”   
“...What did you want to talk about?”   
“You did it! Want me to show you the photo? I’ll expose all the evidence!”   
The athletes’ voices were loud, but the girls’ giggles were just as noisy.   
“...”   
As the noise made it difficult to continue the conversation, Jin-Woo had no choice but to stand up and quietly walk over to the next table.   
The athletes’ eyes all turned to Jin-Woo.   
“Could you keep it down? There are other people here.”   
One of the athletes placed a hand on the back of his head and mockingly bowed.   
“Yes, yes. We’ll be quiet. Sorry about that.”   
The girls giggled at the scene.   
“...”   
Jin-Woo stared at them for a moment before turning away.   
But as soon as he turned, something lightly hit the back of his head.   
It was a rolled-up paper napkin that had fallen to the floor.   
“Pfft, hahahaha!”   
“Snicker snicker.”   
“Hey, don’t do that.”   
The athletes were openly laughing, while the girls pretended to scold them but were clearly amused.   
Yoo Jin-Ho’s face gradually froze as he watched the scene.   
“Hy… hyung.”   
Jin-Woo picked up an unused spoon next to Yoo Jin-Ho’s ice cream and walked over to the counter.   
“Look at that. He’s going to tattle now.”   
“Mom, they’re being loud. Tell them to stop. Pfft.”   
The gossip continued even as Jin-Woo approached the counter.   
Jin-Woo asked the nervous-looking female employee,   
“How much for this spoon?”   
“I’m sorry, sir. We don’t sell spoons separately here.”   
“It’s not more than 10,000 won, is it?”   
“Huh? Oh, no. Probably not…”   
Jin-Woo placed 10,000 won on the counter and turned away.   
“Sir? Excuse me, sir?”   
Ignoring the employee’s voice, Jin-Woo headed straight for the table where the student athletes were sitting.   
Seeing the intensity in Jin-Woo’s gaze, the athletes slowly stood up.   
“What? Why?”   
All eyes in the café were now on that table.   
Jin-Woo showed them the spoon he was holding.   
‘...?’   
‘...?’   
As question marks appeared on the athletes’ faces, Jin-Woo began to crumple the spoon in his hand with all his might.   
The spoon in Jin-Woo’s hand was mercilessly losing its shape.   
The athletes’ faces gradually turned pale.   
\*Thud.\*   
\*Roll roll.\*   
What was left on the table was no longer a spoon.   
It was a crumpled ball of metal.   
“Gasp!”   
The athletes swallowed hard.   
‘That’s not human strength.’   
‘He’s… he’s a Hunter.’   
After exchanging glances, the athlete who had thrown the napkin was the first to bow to Jin-Woo.   
“S-sorry.”   
The others followed suit.   
“We apologize.”   
“We made a mistake. We’re sorry.”   
The athletes bowed repeatedly with pale faces before quickly leaving the café, taking the girls with them.   
Whoa-   
The surrounding customers, who had been bothered by the noise, sent appreciative looks Jin-Woo’s way.   
Jin-Woo returned to his seat and sat down.   
Yoo Jin-Ho’s eyes sparkled as he said,   
“As expected of you, hyung!”   
“Enough of that.”   
Jin-Woo got straight to the point.   
“What did you want to talk about?”   
“Well… hyung. I’ve been thinking a lot. I really thought hard about it. I feel like I need to tell you something important.”   
Jin-Woo tilted his head in confusion.   
“What is it?”   
“Hyung, the truth is…”   
Yoo Jin-Ho blushed shyly before summoning the courage to speak.   
“I’m actually planning to form a private raid team.”   
Jin-Woo didn’t hesitate for even a second.   
“I refuse.”   
</div>   
</div>   
  
\*\*CHAPTER END\*\*