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\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 26</h1>  
  
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<p>Chapter 26</p>  
<p>1. The Deal</p>  
  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho looked completely bewildered.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim, already?”</p>  
<p>“I don’t need to hear the rest.”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo spoke firmly.</p>  
<p>It wasn’t that he disliked Yoo Jin-Ho.</p>  
<p>Although he seemed a bit odd, his attitude was straightforward, and he appeared to have a sense of loyalty.</p>  
<p>He was different from the chaebols Jin-Woo had seen in the media.</p>  
<p>However, Jin-Woo had no desire to indulge the young master’s Hunter play.</p>  
<p>“If you have nothing more to say, I’ll be going.”</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim!”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho hurriedly grabbed Jin-Woo as he stood up.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim, just 20 times! No, 19 times! Please go with me just 19 more times!”</p>  
<p>“Where to? The Dungeon?”</p>  
<p>“Yes! I’ll make sure the reward is substantial.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho’s voice was desperate.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo tilted his head in confusion.</p>  
  
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<p>There were two main reasons people became Hunters.</p>  
<p>Money and a sense of duty.</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho didn’t fall into either category.</p>  
<p>Perhaps he saw the Hunter profession as just a more extreme sport.</p>  
<p>That’s how Jin-Woo had interpreted it until now.</p>  
<p>It was quite surprising that, after the incident in the Dungeon, Yoo Jin-Ho still wanted to form a Raid Party.</p>  
<p>‘The world is full of all kinds of people.’</p>  
<p>It wasn’t strange for a young master from a wealthy family to have a lack of awareness about danger.</p>  
<p>However, Yoo Jin-Ho’s gaze was strangely intense, making it hard to dismiss him so simply.</p>  
<p>‘Does he have some kind of ulterior motive?’</p>  
<p>What caught Jin-Woo’s interest wasn’t the ‘reward’ Yoo Jin-Ho mentioned but the fact that he wanted to go on 19 more Raids.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo’s mind began to race.</p>  
<p>‘Wait... If we consider the last one as the first Raid, and he wants to do 19 more...’</p>  
<p>Could it be...</p>  
<p>It didn’t take long for Jin-Woo to reach a conclusion.</p>  
<p>He made a face of disbelief.</p>  
<p>“Are you planning to get a Guild Master License by any chance?”</p>  
<p>“Yes, Hyung-nim!”</p>  
<p>It was a good thing Jin-Woo hadn’t ordered coffee.</p>  
<p>If he had been drinking it, he would have spat it out right then and there.</p>  
<p>“You’re going to become a Guild Master?”</p>  
<p>“It’s a bit complicated, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho’s face turned even redder as he spoke.</p>  
<p>“Please, just hear me out, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>“...”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo hesitated but eventually gave in to his curiosity and sat back down.</p>  
<p>“Alright, let’s hear it.”</p>  
<p>The agreed-upon hour wasn’t up yet, anyway.</p>  
<p>He could spare some time to listen.</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho quickly took a seat across from him.</p>  
<p>“As you said, Hyung-nim, I want to obtain a Guild Master License.”</p>  
<p>For a Hunter, obtaining a Guild Master License wasn’t difficult.</p>  
<p>All you needed was to have participated in at least 20 Raids.</p>  
<p>If you met this minimum requirement, you could acquire the license by passing a simple written exam.</p>  
<p>Of course, if a Guild was formed by an incompetent Hunter, no one would join, and if the minimum number of members couldn’t be maintained, the Guild would dissolve.</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho continued his explanation.</p>  
<p>“This isn’t public knowledge yet, but my father is planning to create a Guild.”</p>  
<p>“Yoojin Construction is going to make a Guild?”</p>  
<p>“Yes.”</p>  
<p>Yoojin Construction was one of the top construction companies in South Korea.</p>  
<p>It had expanded its business into many fields and was thriving, and recently, Jin-Woo had heard that they were making huge profits in Hunter-related ventures.</p>  
<p>‘A company like that is going to form its own Guild?’</p>  
<p>Seeing Jin-Woo’s interest, Yoo Jin-Ho excitedly added more details.</p>  
<p>“He plans to recruit strong Hunters and grow it into a large Guild, with all Hunter-related businesses under its umbrella.”</p>  
<p>For a corporation to venture into the Hunter business, collaboration with a Guild was essential.</p>  
<p>To collect Essence Stones, monster remains, and Mana Crystals from A and B-rank Gates, the power of large Guilds was indispensable.</p>  
<p>“So, you’re planning to become self-sufficient in this area.”</p>  
<p>“Exactly, Hyung-nim!”</p>  
<p>With Yoojin Construction’s financial power, forming a Guild wouldn’t be an issue.</p>  
<p>The problem was who would run it.</p>  
<p>“My father plans to hire an S-rank Hunter as the Guild Master and place my older brother as the Vice-Master to operate the Guild as a company, but...”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo understood what Yoo Jin-Ho was getting at.</p>  
<p>That would create a risk.</p>  
<p>The Guild Master’s authority was too overwhelming.</p>  
<p>Even if the Vice-Master side hired the Guild Master, if friction arose between the two later, the Guild Master could take control of the Guild entirely.</p>  
<p>Then, there was only one solution.</p>  
<p>Hand the Guild over to a Guild Master who would never betray the employer.</p>  
<p>For example, a sibling or, say, a son.</p>  
<p>Chairman Yoo Myung-Han had his son, Yoo Jin-Ho.</p>  
<p>“But my brother’s track record isn’t something I can easily compete with. It was his idea to venture into Hunter-related businesses, and he’s reaped enormous profits from it.”</p>  
<p>His older brother, at 31, was already a capable entrepreneur.</p>  
<p>In comparison, Yoo Jin-Ho, at 22, was just a college student.</p>  
<p>He did have the unusual distinction of being a D-rank Awakened, though.</p>  
<p>The Chairman planned to entrust the Guild to his eldest son.</p>  
<p>Although the eldest son wasn’t a Hunter, he couldn’t become a Guild Master, but since he was knowledgeable about Hunter businesses and had achieved significant results, the Chairman was willing to take the risk.</p>  
<p>“So, you want to convince your father to let you take the Guild Master position?”</p>  
<p>“Yes. That’s correct, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo finally understood why Yoo Jin-Ho was so desperate to rope him in.</p>  
<p>If he hired a high-rank Hunter to obtain the Guild Master License, it would just be a license bought with money.</p>  
<p>But if he could earn the license by completing 20 Raids with low-rank Hunters like himself?</p>  
<p>He might be able to sway his father’s heart.</p>  
<p>All he needed was to prove he could lead Hunters.</p>  
<p>That was Yoo Jin-Ho’s calculation.</p>  
<p>If Yoo Jin-Ho became the Guild Master, he could appoint an S-rank Hunter as Vice-Master and gather capable Hunters.</p>  
<p>If one of the two top positions was held by a competent Hunter, other Hunters would feel at ease joining.</p>  
<p>But for that, he needed 20 Raids.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim, please help me! You’re the only one I can count on!”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho bowed his head.</p>  
<p>If it hadn’t been for Jin-Woo, he would have lost his life during the first Raid.</p>  
<p>Once to the spiders, and once to Hwang Dong-Seok.</p>  
<p>Twice in total.</p>  
<p>He needed a reliable ally.</p>  
<p>‘I can trust Hyung-nim.’</p>  
<p>Although he was a cold-blooded man who could kill without batting an eye, he didn’t take the lives of the weak lightly and didn’t seek unjust gains. He was a fair man.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo was the perfect fit.</p>  
<p>However, Jin-Woo didn’t need Yoo Jin-Ho.</p>  
<p>So, Jin-Woo asked,</p>  
<p>“What’s in it for me?”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho, lifting his head, pulled out a document envelope from his bag with a bright face.</p>  
<p>Inside was the blueprint of a building.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo took it and examined it.</p>  
<p>“This is a building under construction, intended to serve as the Guild’s office. Its estimated market value is around 30 billion won, but it’s expected to rise further.”</p>  
<p>Although the Hunters Association managed Dungeons, there was always a possibility of monsters emerging from them.</p>  
<p>Therefore, land prices tended to skyrocket around Association branches or large Guilds.</p>  
<p>After all, nothing was more valuable than life.</p>  
<p>Even a small Guild nearby would ensure safety.</p>  
<p>What more if a large Guild occupied the building?</p>  
<p>It went without saying.</p>  
<p>“If I become the Guild Master, for exactly one year—until the Guild is fully established—I’ll transfer the building to your name. Of course, I’ll handle all the legal procedures cleanly so there won’t be any complications later.”</p>  
<p>“A 30-billion-won building for 19 C-rank Raids...”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo smirked.</p>  
<p>“Even if you become the Guild Master, this is still a profitable deal, huh?”</p>  
<p>“Exactly, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho had learned that day that anything could happen inside a Dungeon.</p>  
<p>If you hired an incompetent Hunter, you could lose your life.</p>  
<p>But if you hired a famous Hunter, you’d lose the justification to convince your father.</p>  
<p>However, Jin-Woo was different.</p>  
<p>Despite being an E-rank Hunter, he had single-handedly taken on multiple C-rank Hunters and a C-rank Boss without a scratch.</p>  
<p>‘Hyung-nim is at least a B-rank... No, perhaps even higher.’</p>  
<p>With Jin-Woo by his side, 19 C-rank Raids would be a breeze.</p>  
<p>If it meant becoming a Guild Master, 30 billion won was a small price to pay.</p>  
<p>The only thing left was Jin-Woo’s approval.</p>  
<p>‘Surely he won’t reject such an offer, right?’</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho anxiously watched Jin-Woo’s expression.</p>  
<p>What should he do?</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo fell into deep thought.</p>  
<p>30 billion won.</p>  
<p>It was an astronomical sum.</p>  
<p>If the jackpot for a lottery was 1.5 billion won, you’d have to win it 20 times in a row to have that kind of money.</p>  
<p>And its value was expected to increase.</p>  
<p>For an ordinary Hunter, this would be an offer too tempting to refuse.</p>  
<p>But Jin-Woo was far from ordinary.</p>  
<p>He was unique.</p>  
<p>The only Hunter capable of leveling up.</p>  
<p>If he continued to complete Quests and level up, he could one day reach S-rank—or even beyond.</p>  
<p>‘If I can become S-rank or higher, 30 billion won is nothing.’</p>  
<p>An S-rank Hunter’s contract fee alone could amount to hundreds of billions.</p>  
<p>No celebrity or sports star could compare to the value of an S-rank Hunter.</p>  
<p>In this era, the number of high-rank Hunters represented national power.</p>  
<p>The treatment of S-rank Hunters was beyond imagination.</p>  
<p>So, for Jin-Woo, the top priority wasn’t money but growth.</p>  
<p>It was easier to grow alone.</p>  
<p>‘It’s better to minimize variables.’</p>  
<p>If he hunted with others, his experience points might decrease, or he might feel restricted if others were watching.</p>  
<p>In the last Dungeon, he even had to resort to an unwanted threat against Yoo Jin-Ho to avoid complications.</p>  
<p>Scheduling around a team was also a problem.</p>  
<p>All these factors would inevitably reduce efficiency.</p>  
<p>‘I can always earn money later.’</p>  
<p>Just as he was about to reject the offer, a thought struck him.</p>  
<p>‘Wait.’</p>  
<p>He had an idea that could allow him to catch both rabbits—money and growth.</p>  
<p>‘With this method...’</p>  
<p>Lifting his head, he saw Yoo Jin-Ho staring at him with nervous eyes.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo slowly opened his mouth.</p>  
<p>“There’s one condition.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho’s face lit up.</p>  
<p>“Anything, Hyung-nim!”</p>  
<p>But would he still be smiling after hearing the condition?</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo swallowed a laugh and said,</p>  
<p>“It’ll be just you and me.”</p>  
<p>“Huh?”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho was taken aback.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim, please forgive me if I misunderstood, but... are you saying that just the two of us will clear a C-rank Dungeon?”</p>  
<p>“You understood correctly.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho’s face turned pale.</p>  
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