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\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 30</h1>   
  
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Jin-Woo answered calmly.   
"When I regained consciousness, I was completely fine. I don’t know how it happened either."   
  
Song Chi-Yeol nodded.   
Since Gates appeared over a decade ago, the world had been filled with events beyond common sense.   
Hunters, the awakened individuals, were a prime example.   
It was said that S-rank Healer-type Hunters could fully restore patients who were on the brink of death, as long as they were still breathing, even if their bodies were torn apart during a Raid.   
What if a high-rank Healer-type Hunter had come and healed Jin-Woo’s wounds while he was unconscious?   
In that case, a severed leg reattaching itself wasn’t even worth considering as an anomaly.   
  
"A young man like you shouldn’t be disabled. It’s a relief, truly a relief."   
Song Chi-Yeol patted his chest as if it were his own matter.   
Suddenly, Jin-Woo’s gaze shifted to Song Chi-Yeol’s left arm.   
The sleeve of his shirt hung empty.   
Song Chi-Yeol chuckled and gestured toward his left shoulder.   
  
"Don’t mind this. Hunters get hurt sometimes while hunting. It was just good luck that I hadn’t had an accident until now."   
Though Song Chi-Yeol spoke casually, the expressions of others around them told a different story.   
  
"Oh my, look over there..."   
"Poor man... He must’ve been attacked by a Magic Beast, right?"   
Passersby, from middle-aged women to students, whispered as they caught sight of Song Chi-Yeol’s fluttering sleeve.   
One man even openly stared with curiosity.   
  
Jin-Woo spoke up.   
"Should we move somewhere else?"   
The area near the meat section was too crowded.   
Feeling the weight of the stares, Song Chi-Yeol nodded.   
He still had more to say to Jin-Woo.   
  
"That’s a good idea."   
The two moved to a quieter area.   
As they walked, Song Chi-Yeol felt something strange.   
'Mr. Sung’s footsteps...'   
Jin-Woo’s steps were too light.   
Even standing right beside him, it was hard to sense his presence.   
Why was that?   
A bizarre feeling crept over him, as if even if he fought Jin-Woo right now, he wouldn’t be able to lay a finger on him.   
This was despite the fact that he was a C-rank Hunter and Jin-Woo was an E-rank.   
  
'What am I thinking...'   
Song Chi-Yeol shook his head.   
That wasn’t the important thing.   
He had something to say to Mr. Sung.   
No, something he \*had\* to say.   
Song Chi-Yeol stopped in a secluded spot.   
Jin-Woo followed suit.   
Song Chi-Yeol turned to Jin-Woo and, before Jin-Woo could stop him, bowed respectfully.   
  
"Mr. Sung, thank you so much."   
Seeing a man his father’s age bowing made Jin-Woo’s demeanor turn solemn.   
Despite Jin-Woo’s attempts to stop him, Song Chi-Yeol continued without raising his head.   
"If 11 people died because of me, it’s thanks to you that six survived. Since I bear the greatest responsibility, I’m bowing on behalf of all the Hunters who were there."   
Every word Song Chi-Yeol spoke was filled with sincerity.   
Jin-Woo could sense his genuine feelings.   
The situation was a bit awkward, but the feeling wasn’t unpleasant.   
Rather, it felt fulfilling.   
However, he couldn’t let an elder stay bowed like this forever.   
  
"Sir, please stand up now."   
As Jin-Woo tried to help Song Chi-Yeol up, a phone call came through on Song Chi-Yeol’s phone.   
Song Chi-Yeol excused himself and pulled out the phone from his inner pocket.   
  
"Yes."   
His face hardened as he listened to the call.   
"Understood. I’ll head there soon."   
After hanging up, Song Chi-Yeol spoke.   
"I think I should get going now."   
His tone suggested it was a personal matter.   
But Jin-Woo had already heard the entire conversation.   
With his heightened Senses Stat, his hearing had become incredibly sharp.   
The call was a request from the Hunters Association regarding a Gate that needed to be dealt with.   
Song Chi-Yeol had deliberately concealed the details, fearing Jin-Woo might join the Raid and get hurt again, especially since he had just been discharged from the hospital.   
  
Jin-Woo asked directly.   
"Was that the Association?"   
Song Chi-Yeol hesitated before responding.   
"You... heard that?"   
When the Association called for a Raid, they summoned all nearby Hunters affiliated with the Association.   
If Song Chi-Yeol received a call, it naturally meant Jin-Woo’s household had also been contacted.   
It was a summons they had been waiting for.   
  
Jin-Woo answered briefly.   
"I’ll go too."   
"You..."   
A strange light appeared in Song Chi-Yeol’s eyes as he looked at Jin-Woo.   
  
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They arrived at the meeting point.   
The Gate had formed on a road close to a residential area, and police were controlling the surroundings.   
However, there were few onlookers.   
Most Gates handled by the Association were usually discovered days later, often in a dangerous state, and there was nothing to see since the Hunters’ battles couldn’t be observed directly.   
Only a few mischievous kids occasionally lingered nearby before being chased away by the police.   
  
\*Thud.\*   
The taxi door closed.   
Jin-Woo and Song Chi-Yeol, having exited the taxi, walked toward the gathering spot for Hunters but were stopped by the police.   
  
"Can you show us your identification?"   
Song Chi-Yeol took out his wallet and showed his credentials.   
"C-rank Hunter Song Chi-Yeol, and this is my colleague, Sung Jin-Woo."   
The police checked the photo on the ID against Song Chi-Yeol’s face and returned the credentials, stepping aside.   
  
"Apologies, Hunter."   
"Good work."   
Song Chi-Yeol gave a brief nod to the police and continued walking. Jin-Woo followed behind.   
An Association employee was waiting in front of the Gate.   
She was a young woman wearing round glasses.   
She approached the two upon seeing them.   
  
"Hunter Song Chi-Yeol! Oh? But Hunter Sung Jin-Woo, how are you here? You weren’t answering your calls."   
Song Chi-Yeol answered for him.   
"We were together when the call came in."   
"Ah, is that so? I thought Hunter Sung Jin-Woo was avoiding calls again."   
The employee joked with a laugh.   
In the past, that had indeed been the case.   
After being seriously injured during a Raid, Jin-Woo had been too afraid to enter Dungeons and had even turned off his phone.   
Though, after three refusals, the Association would expel you, so he eventually had to return.   
Jin-Woo smiled bitterly at the memory.   
  
"Anyway, the other Hunters are over there. You two can go and chat with them."   
The employee pointed to a spot where two Hunters were gathered.   
They were the only ones who had arrived so far.   
After the major incident, the number of Hunters had significantly decreased.   
On the way here, the older man had mentioned that aside from the Hunters who had died in the accident, several others had decided to retire due to the aftermath.   
'One of them was Joo-Hee.'   
Jin-Woo looked around but didn’t see Joo-Hee.   
  
As Jin-Woo and Song Chi-Yeol approached, the two Hunters awkwardly averted their gazes.   
Jin-Woo’s eyes narrowed.   
'Understandable.'   
The ones standing there were Kim Sang-Shik, who had fled to save himself, and the male Hunter who had abandoned Jin-Woo when he lost his leg.   
It was only natural they’d feel uncomfortable.   
  
"Uh, Mr. Sung..."   
Kim Sang-Shik, who had been about to greet him late, quickly turned his head upon meeting Jin-Woo’s cold gaze.   
"..."   
Kim Sang-Shik kept his mouth shut, glanced around, and subtly stepped away.   
From a distance, he stared at Jin-Woo, tilting his head in confusion.   
'Is that really the Sung Jin-Woo I knew? His eyes are like a Magic Beast’s.'   
Kim Sang-Shik shivered.   
Sure enough, goosebumps had formed on his arms.   
  
Jin-Woo withdrew his intense gaze.   
Fortunately, unlike Yoo Jin-Ho, Kim Sang-Shik was quick to catch on.   
After meeting eyes once, he didn’t even dare to come near.   
Jin-Woo hoped he’d keep it that way.   
  
"Mr. Sung."   
Song Chi-Yeol, standing beside him, smiled as he looked somewhere.   
"She’s coming."   
Jin-Woo turned his head in the direction Song Chi-Yeol was looking.   
But before he could even fully turn.   
  
"Jin-Woo!"   
Something soft latched onto him.   
"Joo-Hee?"   
As Jin-Woo stood stunned, Joo-Hee tearfully inspected his body.   
"Are you okay? Are you hurt anywhere? Wait, your leg? How’s your leg?"   
Joo-Hee’s eyes widened as she alternated between looking at Jin-Woo’s face and his leg. Her reaction wasn’t much different from Song Chi-Yeol’s, just warmer.   
  
"Ah, that’s..."   
Just as Jin-Woo began to formulate an excuse.   
"So hot, so hot!"   
Both Jin-Woo and Joo-Hee turned toward the source of the voice.   
A man in the distance was whistling at them.   
He was dressed in a blue prisoner uniform.   
'Is there a movie shoot nearby?'   
As Jin-Woo tilted his head in confusion, a man in a suit stepped out from the front seat of a van.   
He quietly warned the prisoner.   
"Shut your mouth."   
The prisoner looked away, pretending to be innocent.   
Then, as if he’d been waiting, he winked at Joo-Hee.   
Jin-Woo’s brow furrowed.   
  
Soon, two more men stepped out of the van.   
All of them were men.   
What stood out was that they were all wearing prisoner uniforms and handcuffs.   
The man in the suit led the three prisoners toward the Association employee.   
The employee greeted him warmly.   
"Glad you’re here."   
"Sorry, we got stuck in traffic on the way."   
The man in the suit began signing the documents the employee handed over.   
  
Meanwhile, the employee gathered the Hunters.   
"These gentlemen are substitute convicts who will be joining you for today’s Raid."   
The Hunters’ expressions stiffened.   
Kim Sang-Shik stepped forward.   
"Substitute convicts? Are you saying we’re supposed to Raid with criminals?"   
  
Hunters who committed crimes had a choice.   
Either serve their full sentence in prison or cooperate with the Association to reduce their sentence.   
Most chose to reduce their sentence, and these convicts were called ‘substitute convicts.’   
  
The employee repeatedly bowed to the Hunters.   
"I’m sorry, I’m sorry. The number of Hunters in our area has decreased too much. The Association has no choice for now. But don’t worry, a Hunter from the Surveillance Division will also be joining you."   
Kim Sang-Shik asked with a skeptical look.   
"A Hunter from the Surveillance Division is coming too?"   
  
\*\*CHAPTER END\*\*