# 35

\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 35</h1>  
  
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<p>Chapter 35</p>  
  
<p>When Jin-Woo picked up a stone from the ground, it quickly disappeared from his sight. 'Will this work too?'</p>  
  
<p>Just in case, he placed his hand on the shoulder of a dead Hobgoblin, but nothing happened. It seemed there were limits to the skill’s application range.</p>  
  
<p>At the very least, it was clear that the clothes he was wearing or the things he could hold in his hand would disappear.</p>  
  
<p>Then it happened.</p>  
  
<p>[‘Skill: Stealth’ will be canceled due to insufficient Mana.]</p>  
  
<p>"Huh?"</p>  
  
<p>Suddenly, the ‘Stealth’ was deactivated.</p>  
  
<p>‘It’s only been a few seconds since I used it. Already out of Mana?’</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo, who had been moving his body here and there to get used to the Stealth state, panicked and quickly checked the skill list in his Status Window.</p>  
  
<p>[Skills]</p>  
  
<p>Passive Skill: (Unknown) Lv.MAX, Tenacity Lv.1</p>  
  
<p>Active Skill: Dash Lv.1, Killing Intent Lv.1, Stealth Lv.1</p>  
  
<p>What he wanted was information about the Stealth skill.</p>  
  
<p>Words floated before his eyes.</p>  
  
<p>\*Ding!\*</p>  
  
<p>[Skill: Stealth Lv.1]</p>  
  
<p>Active Skill.</p>  
  
<p>Mana Required: 200.</p>  
  
<p>Hides the user’s presence while temporarily erasing all traces of the caster. Maintaining ‘Stealth’ consumes 10 Mana per second.</p>  
  
<p>‘200 Mana required and 10 Mana consumed per second?’</p>  
  
<p>"Sigh..."</p>  
  
<p>No wonder his Mana couldn’t keep up.</p>  
  
<p>[MP: 7/548]</p>  
  
<p>Only 7 Mana remained, and it felt pitiful.</p>  
  
<p>‘I’m completely drained.’</p>  
  
<p>His current maximum Mana capacity was around 550.</p>  
  
<p>Using Stealth once would allow him to maintain it for about 35 seconds.</p>  
  
<p>Considering the Mana needed for other skills, he couldn’t even fill the full 35 seconds.</p>  
  
<p>‘Now that I think about it, Kang Tae-Shik also deactivated Stealth after just a few seconds.’</p>  
  
<p>It wasn’t for no reason.</p>  
  
<p>He simply didn’t have enough Mana to maintain Stealth for long.</p>  
  
<p>If a high-rank Hunter like Kang Tae-Shik was at that level, then low-rank Hunters wouldn’t even be able to use the skill even if they learned it.</p>  
  
<p>"Mana is the problem."</p>  
  
<p>Until now, he had invested Stat Points in everything except Intelligence, but his Mana pool had never increased.</p>  
  
<p>In other words, to increase Mana, he needed to raise his Intelligence Stat...</p>  
  
<p>‘Should I start raising Intelligence soon?’</p>  
  
<p>However, it felt wasteful to use Stat Points on a non-combat stat just to use a skill a little longer.</p>  
  
<p>‘Intelligence’s efficiency is too low compared to other stats.’</p>  
  
<p>Strength, Stamina, Agility, Senses.</p>  
  
<p>He had personally experienced the effects of all these stats.</p>  
  
<p>The higher the stats, the noticeably stronger he became.</p>  
  
<p>But with the ‘Intelligence’ stat, no matter how much it increased, he couldn’t feel any noticeable changes.</p>  
  
<p>‘Even though it’s nearly four times higher than when I was at level 1.’</p>  
  
<p>The only thing that changed was his Mana pool increasing—that was it.</p>  
  
<p>But to invest points just for that...</p>  
  
<p>‘It’s too wasteful.’</p>  
  
<p>If he put those points into other stats, they would directly contribute to his strength. So, he eventually concluded that he should continue leveling up until his Mana wasn’t an issue.</p>  
  
<p>He decided to use his Stat Points on better stats.</p>  
  
<p>‘Stat Points...’</p>  
  
<p>Come to think of it, he still had five bonus points left from the Emergency Quest reward.</p>  
  
<p>For a moment, Jin-Woo considered putting them into Intelligence, but in the end, he allocated 3 points to Strength and 2 points to Stamina.</p>  
  
<p>[Stats]</p>  
  
<p>Strength: 75 Stamina: 45 Agility: 82 Intelligence: 39 Senses: 69</p>  
  
<p>(Available Stat Points: 0)</p>  
  
<p>Physical Damage Reduction: 20%</p>  
  
<p>‘As expected, numbers ending with 5 feel much cleaner.’</p>  
  
<p>As Jin-Woo smiled with satisfaction...</p>  
  
<p>\*Rumble\*</p>   
  
<p>The dungeon’s vibrations became too intense to ignore.</p>  
  
<p>‘Has it already been almost an hour?’</p>  
  
<p>There was no more time to hesitate.</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo closed the Status Window.</p>  
  
<p>He had deliberately waited until the last moment before the Gate closed, but if he delayed any longer, he might never be able to leave the dungeon.</p>  
  
<p>Before leaving the boss room, Jin-Woo turned around to take one last look inside.</p>  
  
<p>‘I’ve got the Essence Stone...’</p>  
  
<p>There was nothing he had missed.</p>  
  
<p>Having confirmed this, Jin-Woo quickly disappeared into the passageway.</p>  
  
<p>\*Rumble\*</p>  
  
<p>As if warning that the Gate was about to close, the dungeon trembled even more violently than before.</p>  
  
<p>\*\*\*</p>  
  
<p>Right on time, the Investigation Department staff arrived in front of the Gate.</p>  
  
<p>They widened their eyes as they saw Jin-Woo casually stepping out of the closing Gate.</p>  
  
<p>"H-Hunter! Were there no survivors?"</p>  
  
<p>"No."</p>  
  
<p>"Ugh!"</p>  
  
<p>The expressions of the staff stiffened.</p>  
  
<p>Nine people had entered, but only three had come out alive.</p>  
  
<p>This was a major incident.</p>  
  
<p>With significant events happening one after another in the same area, the Association staff were undoubtedly in a tough spot.</p>  
  
<p>They wanted to confirm if there were more survivors, but the Gate had closed, leaving them with no way to find out.</p>  
  
<p>This was exactly why Jin-Woo had deliberately waited until the last moment to come out.</p>  
  
<p>‘I can’t let them find out there were survivors.’</p>  
  
<p>Now, the testimonies of the three who had returned alive were the only evidence.</p>  
  
<p>A staff member spoke with a troubled voice.</p>  
  
<p>"We’ve just secured a confession call from the Chairman of Geumgang Industries."</p>  
  
<p>Song Chi-Yeol took a step forward.</p>  
  
<p>"The Chairman of Geumgang Industries?"</p>  
  
<p>"He’s the father of the victim who hired Hunter Kang Tae-Shik for the murder."</p>  
  
<p>"Ah..."</p>  
  
<p>The Chairman of Geumgang Industries had confessed everything after hearing that Kang Tae-Shik had successfully killed the perpetrator.</p>  
  
<p>‘Technically, it wasn’t Kang Tae-Shik but me...’</p>  
  
<p>The police went there, and the Association came here.</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo, who had been silent, spoke up.</p>  
  
<p>"Then there’s no problem, right?"</p>  
  
<p>The staff member looked awkward at Jin-Woo’s question.</p>  
  
<p>"Yes. That’s correct."</p>  
  
<p>There was clear evidence of Kang Tae-Shik’s crime, and the three had fought Kang Tae-Shik as he attacked them to survive.</p>  
  
<p>As Jin-Woo had said, there was no issue.</p>  
  
<p>However, there was one thing.</p>  
  
<p>The staff member asked about the part that had been unsettling them.</p>  
  
<p>"Who killed B-rank Hunter Kang Tae-Shik?"</p>  
  
<p>It seemed the staff hadn’t received a detailed explanation yet, as they had only just arrived at the scene.</p>  
  
<p>‘Well, how far is it from here to the Association building? They must’ve rushed over as soon as they got the call.’</p>  
  
<p>Everyone looked visibly exhausted.</p>  
  
<p>Before answering, Jin-Woo briefly thought of Yoo Jin-Ho’s face.</p>  
  
<p>‘Unfortunately, I won’t be able to help with raids anymore.’</p>  
  
<p>If he claimed it was a re-awakening and went through a rank re-evaluation, he wouldn’t be able to fit into Yoo Jin-Ho’s plans anymore.</p>  
  
<p>What Yoo Jin-Ho needed was a low-rank Hunter with exceptional skills.</p>  
  
<p>If his rank went up, everything would be for naught.</p>  
  
<p>But for some reason...</p>  
  
<p>Thinking of Yoo Jin-Ho’s sulky face made him feel more amused than sorry.</p>  
  
<p>It was a pity about the building he was supposed to receive as payment, but...</p>  
  
<p>‘Well, what can I do?’</p>  
  
<p>As Jin-Woo was about to open his mouth to speak...</p>  
  
<p>"It was me."</p>  
  
<p>A voice came from the side, and naturally, everyone’s gaze turned towards it.</p>  
  
<p>There, Lee Joo-Hee was looking at Song Chi-Yeol with wide eyes.</p>  
  
<p>"Uncle...?"</p>  
  
<p>Before Jin-Woo could ask what was going on, Song Chi-Yeol stepped forward first.</p>  
  
<p>"I’m the one who killed Kang Tae-Shik."</p>  
  
<p>The staff still looked skeptical.</p>  
  
<p>"Hunter Song Chi-Yeol, you defeated Hunter Kang Tae-Shik?"</p>  
  
<p>It was understandable. Song Chi-Yeol was a C-rank Hunter who had lost his left arm, while Kang Tae-Shik was a B-rank Hunter, commonly referred to as a high-rank Hunter.</p>  
  
<p>The power of high-rank Hunters was beyond imagination.</p>  
  
<p>It was common knowledge that the gap between B-rank and C-rank Hunters was incomparable to the gap between C-rank and D-rank Hunters. Song Chi-Yeol chuckled and replied.</p>  
  
<p>"Doesn’t anyone know who was behind me?"</p>  
  
<p>"Ah!"</p>  
  
<p>As everyone’s gaze suddenly turned to her, Lee Joo-Hee blushed and lowered her head.</p>  
  
<p>Lee Joo-Hee was a B-rank Hunter.</p>  
  
<p>Although she wasn’t a combat-type Hunter and hadn’t been mentioned, in terms of rank alone, she was just as much a high-rank Hunter as Kang Tae-Shik.</p>  
  
<p>With a B-rank Healer supporting him, there was no reason a C-rank Hunter couldn’t defeat a B-rank Hunter.</p>  
  
<p>Only then did the staff begin to look convinced.</p>  
  
<p>Taking advantage of the slightly chaotic moment, Jin-Woo quietly asked Song Chi-Yeol, who was standing beside him.</p>  
  
<p>"Why did you lie?"</p>  
  
<p>Song Chi-Yeol also lowered his voice.</p>  
  
<p>"I figured Mr. Sung had a good reason for hiding his abilities. Did I do something unnecessary?"</p>  
  
<p>Of course, he hadn’t.</p>  
  
<p>Thanks to him, Jin-Woo could avoid troublesome matters. It wasn’t unnecessary at all.</p>  
  
<p>This was why experience couldn’t be underestimated.</p>  
  
<p>"Not at all."</p>  
  
<p>"I’ve only received help from Mr. Sung so far. If I could be of any assistance, I’m glad."</p>  
  
<p>An Investigation Department staff member approached.</p>  
  
<p>"Mr. Song Chi-Yeol, please come with us. We just need your assistance with a brief statement."</p>  
  
<p>"Let’s go."</p>  
  
<p>Song Chi-Ye left with the Investigation Department staff, and soon, only Jin-Woo and Joo-Hee remained at the scene.</p>  
  
<p>The sun had already set long ago.</p>  
  
<p>Joo-Hee, feeling awkward around Jin-Woo, who now exuded a completely different aura, hesitated before carefully approaching him.</p>  
  
<p>"Do you want to walk together for a bit?"</p>  
  
<p>‘Ah, the dinner invitation.’</p>  
  
<p>He had been moving around a lot and was feeling hungry, so it felt like good timing.</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo readily agreed.</p>  
  
<p>"Sure."</p>  
  
<p>The two walked side by side under the streetlights as if they had planned it, neither taking the lead.</p>  
  
<p>"..."</p>  
  
<p>Joo-Hee kept her gaze fixed on the ground.</p>  
  
<p>If she looked up, her eyes would naturally drift to the side.</p>  
  
<p>No matter how hard she tried not to think about it, it was useless.</p>  
  
<p>Before, Jin-Woo had felt more relaxed, but now, he radiated strength.</p>  
  
<p>It made it difficult for her to start a conversation.</p>  
  
<p>‘What happened...?’</p>  
  
<p>He had effortlessly subdued a B-rank Hunter, and...</p>  
  
<p>He had completely changed.</p>  
  
<p>She had no intention of asking, as he had told her to keep it a secret, but she couldn’t help but be curious about the drastic transformation.</p>  
  
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