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\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 40</h1>  
  
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<p>Chapter 40</p>  
<p>-Is there any doubt?</p>  
<p>“I’ll be waiting by the phone, so if anything happens, contact me immediately.”</p>  
<p>-Understood, Section Chief.</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min hung up the phone after giving his instructions.</p>  
<p>Suddenly, he felt a wave of hunger.</p>  
<p>\*Growl.\*</p>  
<p>‘I’ve been too focused on that side…’</p>  
<p>It was already well past lunchtime, and he hadn’t eaten yet because he was waiting for Sung Jin-Woo. He couldn’t leave his post since he didn’t know when Yoo Jin-Ho’s team would arrive. Now that he had some time, Ahn Sang-Min looked around for a place to eat nearby and ended up going to a convenience store.</p>  
<p>‘It’s not that I’m trying to save money…’</p>  
<p>For some reason, he felt self-conscious about going into a restaurant alone, even though no one would care. After much deliberation, he settled on a cup of instant noodles from the convenience store.</p>  
<p>He poured hot water and waited for three minutes. Just as he was about to open the wooden chopsticks…</p>  
<p>\*Ring ring.\*</p>  
<p>“Ugh! Who’s calling while I’m eating? How annoying.”</p>  
<p>He glanced at the screen and saw a familiar name.</p>  
<p>\_Right Hand.</p>  
<p>‘Hyun Gi-Chul, this guy…’</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min answered the phone irritably.</p>  
<p>“Couldn’t hold back and had to call, huh?”</p>  
<p>-Section Chief, it’s not that.</p>  
<p>“Then what is it? If it’s nothing important, you’re eating nothing but instant noodles for lunch for the next week.”</p>  
<p>-That’s not it, Section Chief! Two people have just come out!</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min’s hand, which was about to put the noodles in his mouth, froze like a paused video.</p>  
<p>“What?”</p>  
<p>-Yoo Jin-Ho and Sung Jin-Woo have just come out, and the Raid Party members are preparing to leave!</p>  
<p>He hadn’t misheard.</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min quickly checked the time.</p>  
<p>“It’s only been 30 minutes! Did they abandon the Raid midway?”</p>  
<p>-No. The Gate is shaking.</p>  
<p>This was unbelievable!</p>  
<p>Even if there were differences in difficulty among C-rank Dungeons, a C-rank Dungeon that could be cleared solo in 30 minutes was unheard of.</p>  
<p>“Double-check! Is the Gate really closing?”</p>  
<p>-Yes, it is. Should I send you a video?”</p>  
<p>“…No, it’s fine.”</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min hung up the phone and stared blankly ahead.</p>  
<p>An A-rank Hunter cleared a C-rank Dungeon, which usually takes 2 hours, in just 30 minutes?</p>  
<p>What does that make him? B-rank or higher?</p>  
<p>Based on objective data, even the most conservative estimate…</p>  
<p>“At least A-rank…”</p>  
<p>This was an unexpected jackpot.</p>  
<p>\*\*\*</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim. Do you have something urgent today?”</p>  
<p>“No. Why?”</p>  
<p>“It’s the first time I’ve seen you hunt this fast.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho clicked his tongue in amazement.</p>  
<p>He knew Jin-Woo was strong, but today he was on a whole different level.</p>  
<p>Of course, there was a reason.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo suppressed a laugh internally.</p>  
<p>‘The Magic Beasts in the Dungeon were werewolves.’</p>  
<p>[Title: Wolf Slayer]</p>  
<p>A title given to a hunter skilled in hunting wolves. All stats increase by 40% when facing beast-type monsters.</p>  
<p>The ‘Wolf Slayer’ buff naturally applied to werewolves as well.</p>  
<p>With his already high level and the buff, how could C-rank Magic Beasts stand a chance?</p>  
<p>“Gyaaak!”</p>  
<p>“Kyaak!”</p>  
<p>“Kiiing!”</p>  
<p>Thanks to that, Yoo Jin-Ho was so busy extracting Essence Stones from the dead Magic Beasts that he felt like he needed ten hands.</p>  
<p>He had already drunk five Healing Potions inside.</p>  
<p>He shook his head several times, feeling like he didn’t need to eat because he was full from the potions.</p>  
<p>‘By the way…’</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo raised his head.</p>  
<p>He had been feeling someone’s gaze on him for a while now.</p>  
<p>‘Since I can’t sense any Mana, it’s probably not a Hunter.’</p>  
<p>He looked around but didn’t see anyone suspicious.</p>  
<p>If he really wanted to find them, he could, but since he didn’t sense any killing intent or hostility, it would take a while.</p>  
<p>‘…’</p>  
<p>Maybe it was nothing.</p>  
<p>Sure enough, the gaze soon disappeared.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim, what’s wrong?”</p>  
<p>“…Nothing. Let’s go.”</p>  
<p>Time was limited.</p>  
<p>There was no time to waste.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo glanced around once more before getting into the passenger seat of the van.</p>  
<p>At the second Gate, he didn’t feel any gaze at all.</p>  
<p>Neither when entering nor when leaving.</p>  
<p>‘Was I being too sensitive?’</p>  
<p>At least it was a relief to know it was nothing serious.</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho, who had approached, bowed his head slightly.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim, I’m sorry. This is the only Gate for today. The others are too far.”</p>  
<p>“It’s not your fault, so why are you apologizing?”</p>  
<p>The sun was still high, but thanks to their efforts, the nearby Gates were all cleared, so their schedule for the day was over.</p>  
<p>“Good work.”</p>  
<p>“The Raid Leader did all the work.”</p>  
<p>“See you tomorrow.”</p>  
<p>“Good work.”</p>  
<p>After dismissing the members, the two got into the front seats of the van.</p>  
<p>“I’ll take you home, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho had somehow become a loyal chauffeur.</p>  
<p>He looked completely natural in the role of a driver.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo looked at Yoo Jin-Ho with a pitiful expression.</p>  
<p>‘The young master of a wealthy family, reduced to being a driver just to try his hand at being a Guild Master…’</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho, who was happily stepping on the accelerator, noticed Jin-Woo’s gaze and asked in a bright voice.</p>  
<p>“Huh? Is there something on my face, Hyung-nim?”</p>  
<p>“…No.”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo feigned ignorance but suddenly remembered something and checked the time on his phone.</p>  
<p>‘It’s 4:46 PM.’</p>  
<p>It was definitely too early to just go home.</p>  
<p>Luckily, he had something to do.</p>  
<p>‘It’s around here, right?’</p>  
<p>If his memory served him correctly.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo spoke up.</p>  
<p>“Jin-Ho.”</p>  
<p>“Yes, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho skillfully turned the steering wheel as he answered.</p>  
<p>The car they were in smoothly took a curve.</p>  
<p>“Let’s go to Mirai Department Store.”</p>  
<p>“Mirai Department Store?”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho looked surprised.</p>  
<p>“Yes.”</p>  
<p>“It’s right ahead, but… You’ve been hunting so fast today, is there something going on, Hyung-nim?”</p>  
<p>“…Why do you keep talking more and more?”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho’s head snapped forward as if nailed in place.</p>  
<p>“I’ll drive at the speed of light, Hyung-nim. Please fasten your seatbelt tightly.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho, who had quickly changed his attitude, drove the car like lightning without hitting the brakes once.</p>  
<p>They arrived quickly since it wasn’t far.</p>  
<p>\*Screech.\*</p>  
<p>The car they were in stopped in front of their destination.</p>  
<p>The grandeur of Mirai Department Store, located in the heart of Seoul, was impressive.</p>  
<p>\*Tap.\*</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo got out, and Yoo Jin-Ho followed.</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho closed the door and stood beside Jin-Woo, who was staring blankly.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim. Our Guild should also use a building like this as our office.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho looked up at the department store building and made a half-serious joke.</p>  
<p>But there was no response.</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho, sensing something strange, quickly looked to the side.</p>  
<p>“Huh?”</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo had already disappeared.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim?”</p>  
<p>No matter how much he looked around, he couldn’t find any trace of Jin-Woo.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim?”</p>  
<p>\*\*\*</p>  
<p>[The Boss has been defeated, so the Dungeon interior will be restored to its original state.]</p>  
<p>‘Another 2 levels up in the department store Instant Dungeon.’</p>  
<p>On the way home, Jin-Woo’s steps were light.</p>  
<p>The key that had come out of the Random Box after a long time.</p>  
<p>It was an Instant Dungeon Key that could only be used in Mirai Department Store.</p>  
<p>He had been waiting for the right time to use it and decided to clear it today since he had the time.</p>  
<p>-Hyung-nim?</p>  
<p>The dumbfounded look on Yoo Jin-Ho’s face as he searched for the disappeared Jin-Woo was still funny to think about.</p>  
<p>Then, his phone rang.</p>  
<p>\*Ring ring.\*</p>  
<p>He habitually checked the screen before answering, but it was an unknown number.</p>  
<p>‘Who is it?’</p>  
<p>During high school, he was busy taking care of his younger sibling in place of his mother, and after graduation, he immediately started working as a Hunter, so Jin-Woo’s social circle was small.</p>  
<p>‘There’s no reason for an unknown number to call me…’</p>  
<p>He tilted his head in confusion for a moment but decided to answer.</p>  
<p>“Hello.”</p>  
<p>-Hello, is this Mr. Sung Jin-Woo?</p>  
<p>A clear male voice.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo hung up the phone immediately after hearing the voice.</p>  
<p>\*Click.\*</p>  
<p>‘In my experience, 99% of these calls are promotional calls or loan offers.’</p>  
<p>Just as he was about to put the phone back in his pocket, it rang again.</p>  
<p>\*Ring ring.\*</p>  
<p>It was the same number.</p>  
<p>‘Huh? Was it not a promotional call?’</p>  
<p>Promotional calls, which are made randomly to meet quotas, rarely call back immediately after being hung up on.</p>  
<p>Even the caller knows it’s a waste of time.</p>  
<p>‘Then they must really have something to talk about…’</p>  
<p>This time, he answered properly.</p>  
<p>“Yes, this is Sung Jin-Woo.”</p>  
<p>-Ah, it is you. I thought I had the wrong number when the call got disconnected earlier, haha.</p>  
<p>“…”</p>  
<p>The voice had such a promotional vibe that Jin-Woo wondered if he should apologize for hanging up, thinking it was a product promotion or loan offer. He debated for about 2 seconds before deciding against it.</p>  
<p>‘Apologizing would be more rude than not apologizing.’</p>  
<p>After a brief silence, the man, who sounded like a salesperson, finally introduced himself.</p>  
<p>-Oh, I forgot to introduce myself. I’m Ahn Sang-Min from the White Tiger Guild.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo’s steps halted.</p>  
<p>‘The White Tiger Guild is calling me?’</p>  
<p>No matter how he thought about it, there was no reason for the White Tiger Guild to call him. The only connection he could think of was that the White Tiger Guild had assisted the Association during the Double Dungeon incident…</p>  
<p>‘They’re not calling to ask about that now, are they?’</p>  
<p>His curiosity got the better of him.</p>  
<p>Before Ahn Sang-Min could speak, Jin-Woo asked first.</p>  
<p>“What does the White Tiger Guild want with me?”</p>  
<p>-It’s a bit difficult to discuss over the phone. Could we meet in person to talk?</p>  
<p>He wasn’t being asked to come over, but rather, they wanted to meet in person. There was no reason to refuse.</p>  
<p>He also had free time the day after tomorrow.</p>  
<p>‘Jin-Ho said there’s some family event, right?’</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho had asked for understanding since he had to attend a big family event where all family members were required to be present, so he wouldn’t be able to raid.</p>  
<p>‘A big event…’</p>  
<p>Was it because of dramas that he imagined a party scene in a luxury hotel’s banquet hall when he thought of a wealthy family’s event?</p>  
<p>Anyway, it was easy to set up a meeting.</p>  
<p>“I’m free on Thursday.”</p>  
<p>-Actually… could we meet right now?</p>  
<p>Right now?</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo checked the time.</p>  
<p>The clock on his phone screen showed 8:00 PM.</p>  
<p>“It’s already almost 8 PM.”</p>  
<p>-I’m waiting nearby. It’ll only take a moment.</p>  
<p>“Nearby, you say?”</p>  
<p>-I’m at a nearby café.</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min named the café.</p>  
<p>It was a familiar café.</p>  
<p>It was near his house, so he often passed by it, and he had also used it as a meeting spot with Yoo Jin-Ho.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo’s eyes sharpened.</p>  
<p>‘They know my address.’</p>  
  
\*\*CHAPTER END\*\*