# 42

\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 42</h1>  
  
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<p>“The estimated value is around 30 billion won, Hyung-nim. Once the construction is completed and our Guild moves in, it’ll skyrocket even further. Oh! If you need the documents you notarized earlier, I can send them to you via fax right now.”</p>  
  
<p>“Wait a moment.”</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo covered his phone with his palm to muffle the sound and asked,</p>  
  
<p>“If you don’t trust me, shall I hand it over to you directly?”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min wiped the cold sweat from his forehead and shook his head vigorously.</p>  
  
<p>“No, that’s fine.”</p>

<p>“I’ll hang up now.”</p>  
  
<p>“Yes, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
  
<p>After the call ended, Ahn Sang-Min’s expression had completely changed from before. His pupils were shaking uncontrollably.</p>  
  
<p>‘Yoojin Construction promised 30 billion won as a deposit even before forming a Guild? And Yoo Jin-Ho, the second son of Chairman Yoo Myung-Han, is using honorifics meticulously?’</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min was utterly confused.</p>  
  
<p>“Um, well... Such a large amount is beyond my authority... If you could give me some time, I’ll discuss it with the higher-ups in the Guild...”</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo cut him off sharply.</p>  
  
<p>“Then let’s end the discussion here.”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min was at a loss for words. He hung his head weakly, analyzing the cause of his failure in his mind.</p>  
  
<p>‘In the end, it’s due to a lack of information.’</p>  
  
<p>He had acted too hastily, and that was his downfall. Overexcited by the smell of a huge opportunity, he had moved carelessly. If he had confirmed Yoojin’s conditions and proceeded step by step with the Guild’s support...</p>  
  
<p>‘First, I’ll have to report to the Guild Master.’</p>  
  
<p>If Chairman Yoo Myung-Han had already offered 30 billion won for this Hunter, who knows? He might be worth 50 billion, or even 100 billion.</p>  
  
<p>It wasn’t too late yet.</p>  
  
<p>‘If I secure support and gather more information about Sung Jin-Woo, then push aggressively...’</p>  
  
<p>At that moment, Jin-Woo’s voice interrupted his thoughts.</p>  
  
<p>“Let me ask you one thing.”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min looked up. The smile on Jin-Woo’s face had vanished. Despite the spring air, the atmosphere suddenly felt chilling.</p>  
  
<p>\*Gulp.\*</p>  
  
<p>As Ahn Sang-Min swallowed dryly, Jin-Woo asked in a low voice,</p>  
  
<p>“How many people know about me?”</p>  
  
<p>“Ah... It’s just me for now. I was in a hurry to bring you in quickly, so I didn’t have time to report to the higher-ups.”</p>  
  
<p>Well, there was actually one more person—his subordinate and right-hand man, Hyun Gi-Chul. But he decided to keep Gi-Chul’s involvement a secret. He didn’t want Jin-Woo to feel displeased.</p>  
  
<p>However, Jin-Woo’s voice grew even lower and more threatening.</p>  
  
<p>“Let’s not lie to each other for the sake of mutual trust.”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min was taken aback.</p>  
  
<p>‘What’s this? Did he already investigate us to some extent?’</p>  
  
<p>If that were the case, denying it further could completely ruin their relationship. That was the last thing he wanted.</p>  
  
<p>‘I’ll just be honest.’</p>  
  
<p>The relationship between Hunters and Guilds was similar to that of celebrities and their agencies. Even if they couldn’t secure a contract now, maintaining a good relationship could pay off in the future.</p>  
  
<p>Not provoking the Hunter unnecessarily—that was the Second Management Division’s golden rule.</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min opened his mouth.</p>  
  
<p>“Actually, there’s one more person—my subordinate. That’s the truth.”</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo nodded.</p>  
  
<p>‘As I thought.’</p>  
  
<p>It was too much work for one person. Investigating, surveilling, and making contact—it was overwhelming. What was most telling was the timing of the call. The moment he arrived near his house, the phone rang immediately.</p>  
  
<p>‘They must’ve been watching me and contacted me right away.’</p>  
  
<p>They wanted to meet as quickly as possible, but they couldn’t risk Yoo Jin-Ho finding out.</p>  
  
<p>‘Still, it’s not like the entire White Tiger Guild is moving.’</p>  
  
<p>He could tell from their earlier reactions. When the 50 billion won figure came up, Ahn Sang-Min panicked, clearly indicating it was beyond his authority. If there had been orders from above, he would’ve at least pretended to contact them, regardless of the outcome.</p>  
  
<p>So, Jin-Woo suspected it was a small team of two or three people. And sure enough, Ahn Sang-Min confessed they were operating with just two people.</p>  
  
<p>‘Good.’</p>  
  
<p>He didn’t want to complicate things. Two people were within manageable limits.</p>  
  
<p>However, if left alone, they would undoubtedly continue to be a nuisance. So, a slight warning was necessary.</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo spoke.</p>  
  
<p>“Actually, I’ve rejected Yoojin’s offer as well.”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min was startled.</p>  
  
<p>“What?”</p>  
  
<p>At that moment, Jin-Woo disappeared without a trace.</p>  
  
<p>“No!”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min shot up from his seat. He frantically looked around, but Jin-Woo was nowhere to be seen.</p>  
  
<p>‘What the...? Did he move so fast that I couldn’t see him?’</p>  
  
<p>In his panic, Ahn Sang-Min belatedly noticed someone’s hand resting on his shoulder.</p>  
  
<p>“Huh.”</p>  
  
<p>Chills ran down his spine.</p>  
  
<p>“Don’t turn around.”</p>  
  
<p>The voice came from beside him. Jin-Woo, who had been sitting across from him, had vanished and now stood next to him.</p>  
  
<p>‘In... Invisibility?’</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min’s forehead was drenched in cold sweat.</p>  
  
<p>‘Is... is he mad at me?’</p>  
  
<p>Hunters were monsters. He knew this well from working closely with them. That’s why he had been as polite as possible.</p>  
  
<p>‘Was it a mistake to surveil and tail him? Should I have requested security from the Guild from the start? But how could I request security without knowing his rank...?’</p>  
  
<p>His mind was a mess, and his heart was pounding. Even the sound of him swallowing became unbearably loud.</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo spoke softly.</p>  
  
<p>“Sit down slowly. I don’t want to scare you.”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min nodded.</p>  
  
<p>‘This situation is already terrifying enough...’</p>  
  
<p>He slowly sat back down as instructed. Jin-Woo revealed himself and took a seat beside him.</p>  
  
<p>‘Well...’</p>  
  
<p>He understood why Jin-Woo said he didn’t want to scare him. The look in Jin-Woo’s eyes earlier was enough to turn the air chilly. If he had to face that gaze head-on, it would’ve felt like his heart dropped to his stomach.</p>  
  
<p>‘It’s his way of being considerate.’</p>  
  
<p>But that didn’t make it any less frightening.</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo continued.</p>  
  
<p>“The reason I rejected Yoojin’s offer is that I have no intention of joining any Guild for the time being.”</p>  
  
<p>The two continued their conversation without making eye contact, staring straight ahead.</p>  
  
<p>“I... I see.”</p>  
  
<p>“And,” Jin-Woo paused for a moment before adding, “I don’t want the number of people who know about me to increase.”</p>  
  
<p>His demands were straightforward. He didn’t plan to join a Guild, and he didn’t want anyone talking about him.</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min understood the point immediately. But there was still something he was curious about.</p>  
  
<p>“Then... why are you traveling with Yoo Jin-Ho?”</p>  
  
<p>“Yoo Jin-Ho is helping me with some personal matters. He’s the only one who knows about my re-awakening, and I trust him as a friend. So,” Jin-Woo’s voice grew heavier, “if I hear any rumors about me in the future, I’ll hold Section Chief Ahn Sang-Min or your subordinate responsible. Understood?”</p>  
  
<p>Even though Jin-Woo’s hand had long left his shoulder, the weight of his voice alone felt suffocating.</p>  
  
<p>‘This isn’t just empty intimidation.’</p>  
  
<p>For some reason, Ahn Sang-Min was certain that Jin-Woo was someone who could genuinely harm him.</p>  
  
<p>‘My instincts about people are almost always right.’</p>  
  
<p>Jin-Woo had survived several horrific incidents unscathed. What happened inside the dungeons stayed inside the dungeons, but who knew what Jin-Woo had done in there?</p>  
  
<p>‘Plus, this man has the Stealth Skill...’</p>  
  
<p>The Stealth Skill was a headache. If a Stealth Skill user decided to commit a crime, they could easily do so without leaving a trace. CCTV, security, and alarm systems would all be useless.</p>  
  
<p>A bead of sweat trickled down the side of Ahn Sang-Min’s forehead.</p>  
  
<p>‘I didn’t expect him to have Stealth...’</p>  
  
<p>Outstanding abilities and a rare skill—it was no wonder Yoojin had offered 30 billion won.</p>  
  
<p>‘They’re not the type to make a losing investment.’</p>  
  
<p>His heart was pounding, not just from fear but also excitement.</p>  
  
<p>With trembling lips, he finally spoke.</p>  
  
<p>“I-I’ll keep this strictly confidential. I’ll make sure to warn Gi-Chul—I mean, my subordinate—as well.”</p>  
  
<p>In fact, secrecy was something he wanted to request first. A skilled Hunter without a Guild affiliation—he didn’t need to spread rumors and invite unnecessary competition.</p>  
  
<p>‘Though the biggest reason is that turning him into an enemy would be terrifying...’</p>  
  
<p>“I’ll trust you, Section Chief.”</p>  
  
<p>With those words, the presence beside him vanished completely.</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min glanced around. The café’s atmosphere was peaceful, as if he had been abruptly dropped into another world.</p>  
  
<p>“Phew...”</p>  
  
<p>He couldn’t find the words to say. All he could do was calm his pounding heart.</p>  
  
<p>Hyun Gi-Chul rushed into the café. He had been watching from outside the glass and, seeing Jin-Woo disappear completely, hurried in.</p>  
  
<p>“Section Chief!”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min’s complexion didn’t look good. Gi-Chul asked worriedly,</p>  
  
<p>“What happened? Did things not go well with Sung Jin-Woo?”</p>  
  
<p>With trembling hands, Ahn Sang-Min pulled out a cigarette and answered,</p>  
  
<p>“Gi-Chul... I think we’ve stumbled upon something much bigger than we expected.”</p>  
  
<p>He had to secure this deal. That thought filled his mind. Fortunately, there was still a chance.</p>  
  
<p>Just then, Gi-Chul gently grabbed his wrist.</p>  
  
<p>“Uh, Section Chief...”</p>  
  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min, who was about to light the cigarette, looked up.</p>  
  
<p>“Huh?”</p>  
  
<p>Gi-Chul glanced around and whispered cautiously,</p>  
  
<p>“This is a no-smoking zone.”</p>  
  
<p>The cigarette crumpled in Ahn Sang-Min’s hand.</p>  
  
<p>“You little jerk...”</p>  
  
<p>\*\*\*</p>  
  
<p>As soon as he arrived home, Jin-Woo summoned his Status Window.</p>  
  
<p>\*Ding!\*</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Name:\*\* Sung Jin-Woo</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Level:\*\* 39</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Job:\*\* None</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Title:\*\* Wolf Slayer</p>  
  
<p>\*\*HP:\*\* 7,229</p>  
  
<p>\*\*MP:\*\* 683</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Fatigue:\*\* 0</p>  
  
<p>[\*\*Stats\*\*]</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Strength:\*\* 97 \*\*Stamina:\*\* 59 \*\*Agility:\*\* 97 \*\*Intelligence:\*\* 51 \*\*Senses:\*\* 81</p>  
  
<p>(\*\*Available Stat Points:\*\* 0)</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Physical Damage Reduction:\*\* 20%</p>  
  
<p>[\*\*Skills\*\*]</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Passive Skills:\*\* (Unknown) Lv.MAX, Tenacity Lv.1, Advanced Dagger Technique Lv.1</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Active Skills:\*\* Dash Lv.2, Killing Intent Lv.1, Stealth Lv.1, Vital Strike Lv.1</p>  
  
<p>[\*\*Equipped Items\*\*]</p>  
  
<p>\*\*Gatekeeper’s Necklace (A)\*\*</p>  
  
<p>‘No wonder people are starting to notice me.’</p>  
  
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\*\*CHAPTER END\*\*