# 44

\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 44</h1>  
  
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<p>Chapter 44</p>  
<p>Thick smoke filled the air.</p>  
<p>“Cough, cough.”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho covered his nose with his wrist and coughed repeatedly.</p>  
<p>However, he was more worried about Jin-Woo than himself.</p>  
<p>The attack from the Lizardman Shaman was that threatening.</p>  
<p>Contrary to his concerns, Jin-Woo emerged from the smoke unscathed.</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho couldn’t help but exclaim in admiration.</p>  
<p>‘As expected of Hyung-nim!’</p>  
<p>He had dodged the attack of a Lizardman Shaman, known to be the most troublesome opponent in a C-rank Dungeon, without a single scratch.</p>  
<p>It seemed like Jin-Woo was getting faster with each passing day.</p>  
<p>‘…Am I imagining it?’</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo spat out the dust that had gotten into his mouth.</p>  
<p>“Tch.”</p>  
<p>The color of the spit that fell to the ground was black.</p>  
<p>‘These bastards…’</p>  
<p>It was extremely unpleasant to think he had to inhale smoke just because of some show-off lizard.</p>  
<p>The displeasure was immediately evident on his face.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo’s brows furrowed. </p>  
<p>[Skill: ‘Killing Intent’ activated.]</p>>  
<p>[Effect: ‘Fear’ activated.]</p>  
<p>[All stats of the targets are reduced by 50% for 1 minute.]</p>  
<p>The Lizardmen exposed to the killing intent panicked.</p>  
<p>“Sswuak?”</p>  
<p>“Ssrukka?”</p>  
<p>Not missing the opportunity, Jin-Woo threw ‘Kasaka’s Venom Fang’ with all his might. The dagger flew in a straight line and embedded itself into the forehead of one Lizardman Spearman.</p>  
<p>\*Thud!\*</p>  
<p>The Lizardman’s slowed body couldn’t react to Jin-Woo’s dagger in time.</p>  
<p>“Sskwa!”</p>  
<p>The Spearman, witnessing the death of his comrade, let out a furious scream.</p>  
<p>However, Jin-Woo was no longer where the spear was pointing.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo had vanished.</p>  
<p>“Ssrkannaka!”</p>  
<p>The Shaman shouted in excitement.</p>  
<p>“Ssrkannaka!”</p>  
<p>As the Shaman repeated the same words to the Spearman, the Spearman turned toward the Shaman and let out a roar.</p>  
<p>“Ssuukwa!”</p>  
<p>The Spearman bared its teeth and approached the Shaman.</p>  
<p>The Shaman, too, didn’t back down.</p>  
<p>“Sswamet!”</p>  
<p>Then.</p>  
<p>\*Stab!\*</p>  
<p>A hole was pierced through the Spearman’s chest.</p>  
<p>The Shaman, whose face was now covered in blood, startled, hastily retreated.</p>  
<p>“Sswak?”</p>  
<p>\*Slurp.\*</p>  
<p>As the stealth effect faded, the spear that had pierced the Spearman’s chest came into view.</p>  
<p>The person holding the spear was Jin-Woo.</p>  
<p>When Jin-Woo released his grip, both the spear and the Lizardman impaled by it fell to the ground together.</p>  
<p>\*Thud.\*</p>  
<p>Meanwhile, Jin-Woo retrieved ‘Kasaka’s Venom Fang’ that was embedded in the head of another Lizardman Spearman.</p>  
<p>“Sswaaaamet!”</p>  
<p>The Shaman’s hands began to gather a bright red flame once again.</p>  
<p>However, Jin-Woo didn’t give him any time to act.</p>  
<p>‘Dash!’</p>  
<p>The distance between Jin-Woo and the Shaman disappeared in an instant.</p>  
<p>The Shaman’s eyes widened.</p>  
<p>Its reptilian eyes were disgusting.</p>  
<p>\*Whoosh!\*</p>  
<p>Dodging the flame that was about to erupt, Jin-Woo appeared behind the Shaman and stabbed his dagger into the creature’s spine.</p>  
<p>‘Vital Strike!’</p>  
<p>\*Stab!\*</p>  
<p>The Shaman let out a scream.</p>  
<p>“Kyyaaak!”</p>  
<p>However, when Jin-Woo stabbed its back again, the scream wasn’t as long as before.</p>  
<p>\*Stab!\*</p>  
<p>“Cough!”</p>  
<p>The Lizardman Shaman spat out blood and collapsed forward.</p>  
<p>\*Thud.\*</p>  
<p>Jin-Woue mentally celebrated.</p>  
<p>‘That was clean!’</p>  
<p>As if celebrating his victory, the System emitted a cheerful sound.</p>  
<p>\*Ding!\*</p>  
<p>[You leveled up!]</p>  
<p>[The ‘Player’ has reached the required level.]</p>  
<p>A familiar message followed by an unfamiliar one.</p>  
<p>‘Required level?’</p>  
<p>At that moment, he had no idea what it meant.</p>  
<p>But when the next sound rang out, Jin-Woo had to struggle to calm his wildly beating heart.</p>  
<p>\*Ding!\*</p>  
<p>[Job Change Quest has arrived.]</p>  
<p>[Will you accept the Job Change Quest?] (Y/N)</p>  
<p>‘Job… Job Change Quest?’</p>  
<p>He had been so focused on leveling up and increasing his stats that he had forgotten about a certain section of his status window.</p>  
<p>[Name: Sung Jin-Woo]</p>  
<p>[Level: 40]</p>  
<p>[Job: None]</p>  
<p>The third line of the status window—the ‘Job’ section.</p>  
<p>‘If a Job Change Quest is possible…’</p>  
<p>It meant that the word ‘None’ could finally be replaced.</p>  
<p>Acquiring a Job.</p>  
<p>In most games, characters gain significant benefits when they change jobs.</p>  
<p>Considering how similar the System behaved to a game, this shouldn’t be much different.</p>  
<p>Thump, thump.</p>  
<p>His heart raced.</p>  
<p>Thinking about how this could bring him one step closer to gaining stronger powers, Jin-Woo couldn’t calm down.</p>  
<p>[Will you accept the Job Change Quest?] (Y/N)</p>  
<p>The Yes or No option blinked incessantly in front of his eyes.</p>  
<p>‘Of course…’</p>  
<p>What fool would pass up such an opportunity?</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo was ready to accept the quest without hesitation.</p>  
<p>But then, he instinctively paused.</p>  
<p>‘Wait, hold on.’</p>  
<p>He didn’t know what the quest would entail.</p>  
<p>After the instinctive hesitation, a rational warning followed.</p>  
<p>‘This is inside a dungeon.’</p>  
<p>Dungeons were the most dangerous places in the world.</p>  
<p>Even if he had become familiar with C-rank Dungeons, a dungeon was still a dungeon.</p>  
<p>There was no need to take unnecessary risks.</p>  
<p>Moreover, Yoo Jin-Hoi was nearby.</p>  
<p>It wasn’t that he didn’t trust Yoo Jin-Ho.</p>  
<p>But was there a reason to give him clues about the System or explain the strange phenomena that might occur during the job change?</p>  
<p>Things could get complicated.</p>  
<p>‘And depending on the quest, it might even harm Jin-Ho.’</p>  
<p>What if monsters spawned unexpectedly?</p>  
<p>‘That would be the least of my worries.’</p>  
<p>Monsters could be dealt with by simply killing them.</p>  
<p>But there were plenty of other quests that could be far worse.</p>  
<p>For example, like the Emergency Quests he had received twice before.</p>  
<p>‘The objective might be to kill the closest Hunter.’</p>  
<p>Just saying.</p>  
<p>It was purely hypothetical, of course.</;p>  
<p>Just then, Yoo Jin-Ho approached.</p>  
<p>“Hyung-nim!”</p>  
<p>It seemed that the magic the Lizardman Shaman had cast before its death had landed nearby, as Jin-Ho was covered in a fine layer of dust.</p>  
<p>“How did you disappear and reappear like that just now? Do you have a skill like that too?”</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho’s eyes sparkled with curiosity as he asked.</p>  
<p>He seemed fascinated by the rare Stealth skill.</p>  
<p>‘Honestly, I’m more fascinated by your appearance right now.’</p>  
<p>Instead of answering, Jin-Woo took out a handkerchief from his inventory.</p>  
<p>It was something he had received as a reward from a Daily Quest earlier that day.</p>  
<p>“H-Hyung-nim?”</p>  
<p>Without hesitation, Jin-Woo used it to wipe Jin-Ho’s face vigorously.</p>  
<p>“Ugh, ugh!”</p>  
<p>The once pristine handkerchief turned black.</p>  
<p>Only after inspecting the handkerchief did Jin-Ho realize the state of his face.</p>  
<p>Feeling embarrassed, Yoo Jin-Ho quietly wiped his face thoroughly.</p>  
<p>“Jin-Ho.”</p>  
<p>“Yes, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>“I just remembered something urgent.”</p>  
<p>Jin-Ho’s head shot up.</p>  
<p>“Do you need to leave?”</p>  
<p>“After we finish this dungeon.”</p>  
<p>“Understood. Then I’ll cancel the rest of the Gate reservations.”</p>  
<p>Though he didn’t show it in front of Jin-Woo, Jin-Ho secretly regretted having to cancel the three Gates he had reserved.</p>  
<p>‘I’m starting to run out of funds.’</p>  
<p>Yoo Jin-Ho lacked a steady income, and his funds consisted solely of his allowance.</p>  
<p>Since he was doing this behind his father’s back, there was a limit to how much money he could use.</p>  
<p>Canceling the Gates meant losing the money he had already spent on reservations.</p>  
<p>It was like throwing cash into the wind.</p>  
<p>How could he not feel regret?</p>  
<p>Due to their unique raiding style, they had already spent far more than anticipated.</p>  
<p>And now, he had to waste even more money.</p>  
<p>Jin-Ho’s shoulders naturally sagged.</p>  
<p>But Jin-Woo spoke with an indifferent expression.</p>  
<p>“Why would you waste money by canceling them?”</p>  
<p>Jin-Ho tilted his head in confusion.</p>  
<p>“Huh? If we don’t enter the Gates within two days of reserving them, the permits are automatically canceled, Hyung-nim.”</p>  
<p>Of course, Jin-Woo knew that basic fact.</p>  
<p>“Leave it to me.”</p>  
<p>‘Does he have a good idea?’</p>  
<p>While curious, Jin-Ho couldn’t help but feel reassured.</p>  
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<p>White Tiger Guild building.</p>  
<p>“Section Chief Ahn! What on earth are you thinking?”</p>  
<p>A loud shout echoed from the Second Management Division.</p>  
<p>The voice belonged to Baek Yoonho.</p>  
<p>He was the Master and Chairman of the White Tiger Guild.</p>  
<p>The fact that the Chairman himself had come downstairs to confront someone indicated that the situation was far from ideal.</p>  
<p>“How can there be no Gates for the new recruits to train in? You’ve already delayed the training schedule by three days. Do you understand that or not?”</p>  
<p>The employees of the Second Management Division all lowered their eyes.</p>  
<p>Everyone was nervous, fearing they might get caught in the crossfire.</p>  
<p>Even the Section Chief, Ahn Sang-Min, who was at the receiving end of Baek Yoonho’s finger-pointing, had his head lowered deeply.</p>  
<p>“...”</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min wasn’t as inexperienced as his subordinate Hyun Gi-Chul, who would respond to an angry superior and fuel their anger even more.</p>  
<p>In situations like this, the best course of action was to keep his mouth firmly shut.</p>  
<p>Whether he understood Ahn Sang-Min’s feelings or not, Baek Yoonho waved the report submitted by the Second Management Division that morning.</p>  
<p>“Is this your excuse? Other teams are bidding too high, so we can’t reserve them? Do we not have money in our guild? Or do our competitors have some chaebol backing them?”</p>  
<p>For just this moment, Ahn Sang-Min really wanted to speak up, but he endured with the patience of a saint.</p>  
<p>He had made a promise with Jin-Woo.</p>  
<p>‘If I open my mouth now, the conversation about Yoo Jin-Ho and Sung Jin-Woo will naturally come up.’</p>  
<p>Unaware of Ahn Sang-Min’s internal turmoil, Baek Yoonho continued to shout loud enough to shake the office.</p>  
<p>“Whether it’s 1 billion or 2 billion, make sure to reserve the Gates! Do you understand?”</p>  
<p>Then, Ahn Sang-Min’s phone rang.</p>  
<p>[Ah! Sorry I missed your call earlier, I was meeting a friend, shy shy shy~♪]</p>  
<p>After a quick glance to check the caller, Ahn Sang-Min’s eyes widened.</p>  
<p>“Chairman, I need to take this call.”</p>  
<p>“...”</p>  
<p>For the Second Management Division, where recruiting new members was their main task, timing was everything!</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min was the boss of this division.</p>  
<p>Even though he had made a mistake and was currently being scolded, preventing him from answering a call would be foolish.</p>  
<p>“What are you doing? Pick it up quickly.”</p>  
<p>Baek Yoonho reluctantly allowed it.</p>  
<p>Ahn Sang-Min slightly bowed his head to the Chairman as a gesture of understanding and hastily answered the call.</p>  
<p>“Yes. This is Ahn Sang-Min from the White Tiger Guild.”</p>  
<p>As Ahn Sang-Min took the call, Baek Yoonho stood with his arms crossed, waiting.</p>  
<p>“Yes, yes. Understood. We’ll be there right away if you wait at the cafe on the first floor. Yes, see you.”</p>  
<p>After hanging up, Ahn Sang-Min spoke quickly.</p>  
<p>“Chairman, I need to step out for a moment.”</p>  
<p>The ace of the Second Management Division.</p>  
<p>If a call was enough for the legendary Section Chief Ahn to rush out during such an awkward situation...</p>  
<p>Baek Yoonho’s expression softened slightly.</p>  
<p>“Is this call related to a new recruit?”</p>  
<p>“Yes.”</p>  
<p>From Ahn Sang-Min’s confident expression, Baek Yoonho sensed something significant.</p>  
<p>‘For Section Chief Ahn to personally go scout a new recruit…’</p>  
<p>This meant the recruit wasn’t an ordinary individual.</p>  
<p>A smile gradually appeared on Baek Yoonho’s previously stern face.</p>  
<p>“We can’t let our Recruitment Specialist be hindered from doing their job. Don’t worry about this matter and hurry back.”</p>  
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