# 50

\*\*CHAPTER START\*\*  
  
<h1>Solo Leveling - Chapter 50</h1>  
  
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<p>Chapter 50</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo couldn’t believe his ears.</p>  
<p>‘...Penalty Zone?’</p>  
<p>Ah—</p>  
<p>He remembered now.</p>  
<p>Come to think of it, he hadn’t done today’s Daily Quest.</p>  
<p>It was a decision he made to test the results of his Level Up and decide whether or not to head to the Demon Castle Dungeon.</p>  
<p>Who knew things would turn out this way?</p>  
<p>\*Rumble rumble rumble—\*</p>  
<p>Just like what happened in the hospital, everything around him began to shake violently.</p>  
<p>\*Crunch.\*</p>  
<p>\*Crunch.\*</p>  
<p>The knights surrounding Jin-Woo crumbled into sand one by one.</p>  
<p>The world was changing.</p>  
<p>‘Ha... haha...’</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo let out a silent laugh.</p>  
<p>For some reason, the words the System had spoken right before the quest began kept echoing in his mind.</p>  
<p>-Good luck.</p>  
<p>Did it mean the quest was so difficult that he’d need luck? Or was it cheering him on to earn high points, even if it took luck?</p>  
<p>Luck, chance, call it whatever you want.</p>  
<p>Either way, the opportunity had come.</p>  
<p>The important thing was how he’d use it from here on out.</p>  
<p>\*Rumble rumble—\*</p>  
<p>The shaking grew more intense.</p>  
<p>Instead of struggling to maintain his balance, Jin-Woo let his body sway with the tremors and gently closed his eyes.</p>  
<p>‘Don’t panic...’</p>  
<p>Then, as if floating, all sound vanished in an instant.</p>  
<p>When he opened his eyes again, he was in the middle of a desert.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo collapsed face-first into the sand.</p>  
<p>“Kuh-huhuk— Huhuk, Huuuhk—”</p>  
<p>Clutching the sand with both hands, he exhaled the breath he’d been holding with all his might.</p>  
<p>Fresh air flowed through his lungs and spread throughout his body.</p>  
<p>Finally.</p>  
<p>“I feel alive.”</p>  
<p>Enveloped in a sense of relief, Jin-Woo flopped down onto his back.</p>  
<p>Nothing but black sky.</p>  
<p>An endless expanse of pitch-black ceiling filled his vision.</p>  
<p>It was exactly as he remembered the Penalty Zone.</p>  
<p>‘Oh, right. I can’t just lie here.’</p>  
<p>Having narrowly escaped from such a dangerous place, he’d momentarily forgotten that this wasn’t a safe spot either.</p>  
<p>Still, he didn’t feel like getting up, so Jin-Woo summoned his Status Window while lying down.</p>  
<p>[HP: 104 / 10270]</p>  
<p>[MP: 202 / 850]</p>  
<p>[Fatigue: 91]</p>  
<p>No wonder it felt so hard to move—his Fatigue had exceeded 90.</p>  
<p>‘This is the first time my Fatigue has gone over 90, right?’</p>  
<p>He really didn’t want to lift a finger.</p>  
<p>His Health was one thing, but reducing Fatigue was his top priority.</p>  
<p>“Shop.”</p>  
<p>\*Ding.\*</p>  
<p>The words ‘Purchase’ and ‘Sell’ appeared in the air.</p>  
<p>It was a pitifully barebones shop, devoid of any semblance of effort, but today, it felt unexpectedly welcoming.</p>  
<p>Among the items, he selected the most expensive Healing Potion and purchased it.</p>  
<p>The moment he confirmed the purchase—</p>  
<p>\*Swoosh—\*</p>  
<p>A glass bottle filled with a red liquid appeared at the tip of his outstretched hand.</p>  
<p>\*Pop.\*</p>  
<p>Struggling to pull the cork out, Jin-Woo poured the potion into his mouth as if downing it.</p>  
<p>\*Gulp gulp.\*</p>  
<p>The red liquid flowed down his esophagus and into his body.</p>  
<p>[Fatigue is being restored.]</p>  
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<p>[Fatigue is being restored.]</p>  
<p>Perhaps because it was a top-tier potion, his Fatigue continued to drop noticeably after just one bottle.</p>  
<p>Strangely, however, his Health didn’t budge at all.</p>  
<p>[HP: 106 / 10270]</p>  
<p>[MP: 204 / 850]</p>  
<p>[Fatigue: 0]</p>  
<p>Even as the bottle emptied, his Health remained unrecovered, in stark contrast to his Fatigue dropping to 0.</p>  
<p>‘Why is that?’</p>  
<p>Only after tipping the last drop into his mouth did he find out the reason.</p>  
<p>\*Ding.\*</p>  
<p>[When Remaining Health is below 10%, Health cannot be restored with Healing Potions.]</p>  
<p>The reason was simple.</p>  
<p>His Health was too low, apparently.</p>  
<p>‘Well...’</p>  
<p>Even Healing Magic had its limits, after all.</p>  
<p>It wasn’t an unfamiliar concept.</p>  
<p>Just as healers had a range of healing capabilities based on their skill level, it seemed potions also had a limit beyond which they couldn’t heal.</p>  
<p>‘And that limit is up to 10 percent, huh?’</p>  
<p>Good to know.</p>  
<p>If he’d blindly relied on potions, he might’ve been caught off guard in a truly critical moment.</p>  
<p>This was why experience was important.</p>  
<p>Isn’t there a saying?</p>  
<p>Whatever doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.</p>  
<p>That’s the power of experience.</p>  
<p>And fortunately, Jin-Woo had experience with this Penalty Zone.</p>  
<p>‘It should be about time...’</p>  
<p>Sure enough.</p>  
<p>He sensed the presence of a living being beneath him.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo curled his body and sprang up from the spot.</p>  
<p>His body felt as light as a feather.</p>  
<p>Thanks to the potion, his strength had fully returned.</p>  
<p>\*Thud!\*</p>  
<p>Landing a distance away, Jin-Woo turned to look behind him.</p>  
<p>\*Slide—\*</p>  
<p>Just as he’d expected, the spot where he’d been lying caved in, forming a pit of sand.</p>  
<p>‘Last time, I almost died slipping into that.’</p>  
<p>Now, he could watch it leisurely.</p>  
<p>At the bottom of the newly formed sand pit, something began to writhe as if boiling.</p>  
<p>\*Whoosh!\*</p>  
<p>A pillar of sand shot up, revealing a giant centipede.</p>  
<p>“Kieeeeeek!”</p>  
<p>Everything matched his memories.</p>  
<p>‘When I first saw it, it was terrifying...’</p>  
<p>Now, it felt like watching a slow-motion video.</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo’s gaze shifted upward.</p>  
<p>There, he could clearly see the red letters above the centipede’s head.</p>  
<p>[Venom-Fanged Giant Sand Centipede]</p>  
<p>A red name.</p>  
<p>The same color as the Cerberus he’d seen in the Demon Castle Dungeon.</p>  
<p>Just then, a quest message popped up.</p>  
<p>\*Ding!\*</p>  
<p>[Penalty Quest: Survival]</p>  
<p>Objective: Survive until the required time.</p>  
<p>Required Time: 4 hours.</p>  
<p>Remaining Time: 4 hours 0 minutes 0 seconds.</p>  
<p>After reading the message, Jin-Woo clenched his fist tightly.</p>  
<p>‘This buys me time.’</p>  
<p>Since he hadn’t used the Return Stone to escape the dungeon, the opportunity was still there.</p>  
<p>‘Most likely, I’ll be transported back there as soon as the Penalty Quest ends.’</p>  
<p>And if the time spent in the Penalty Zone counted toward the time he needed to endure?</p>  
<p>The Promotion Points would be astronomical.</p>  
<p>How much of an impact that would have was still unknown.</p>  
<p>‘But...’</p>  
<p>Considering the influence the System usually had on him, this was undoubtedly a massive boon.</p>  
<p>‘A full 4 hours!’</p>  
<p>He couldn’t last 10 minutes before needing to pull out the Return Stone, but thanks to being transported to the Penalty Zone, he’d gained 4 hours for free.</p>  
<p>There was just one problem left.</p>  
<p>Could he safely escape here with only around 100 Health?</p>  
<p>Since potions couldn’t restore his Health, he’d have to kill the centipedes without taking any damage until he could Level Up.</p>  
<p>A sort of mission had been born.</p>  
<p>‘...Let’s do it.’</p>  
<p>Jin-Woo summoned ‘Kasaka’s Venom Fang.’</p>  
<p>And then.</p>  
<p>[Remaining Time: 3 hours 59 minutes 59 seconds]</p>  
<p>As soon as the Penalty Quest began, he darted forward.</p>  
<p>The centipede hadn’t even started moving yet.</p>  
<p>In an instant, Jin-Woo closed the distance and leaped lightly in front of the centipede.</p>  
<p>\*Tap!\*</p>  
<p>With a single jump, he landed on one of the centipede’s legs, halfway up its body. Stepping on its segments one by one, he left wounds all over its exoskeleton.</p>  
<p>\*Whack! Crack! Whack!\*</p>  
<p>Everywhere ‘Kasaka’s Venom Fang’ grazed, the exoskeleton split open, and bodily fluids gushed out.</p>  
<p>“Kieeeeeek!”</p></div>  
  
\*\*CHAPTER END\*\*