

## Level 0 Master - Chapter 2

“Aw... I expected you to be released. Those bad guys...” his mother blamed them with tears in her eyes.

Dad...

Next to her, Sungjin was so sad and angry that he was at a loss.

This was all so miserable and unfair to him. He could not imagine what his father was going through. He hated those guys who broke his father’s dream.

“No... I will not end this way.”

His father stopped and turned back at the front door of the hospital.

“Honey... What are you going to do?”

“I am going to fight in the match with painkillers,” his father declared as he puffed out his chest and raised his head.

The light in his eyes had revived...

“Honey, that’s too much. The doctor already told you.”

“I know it’s unreasonable, but I can’t give up.”

“Honey, your body is most important, even though we have no money, no money. Please...”

“I know. The body is ahead of money. But, there is one thing ahead of that. This is the first and last chance I’ll have when considering my age.”

In fact, his father’s age had already passed over his peak a little.

“But...”

“Honey, please understand. My dream is my life.”

“Dad... you are suffering from too much pain right now,” Sungjin dissuaded, but his father did not give up his decision.

“Don’t say any more! Just watch what this father can do!”

His father saying so was robust as if he was not injured at all. Even though his body was obviously injured, his fighting spirit was stronger than usual. His eyes were more intense.

Sungjin felt his heart pounding. He really worried if it was okay. But, this pounding heart was not caused only by anxiety. There was something else making him excited.

It was the day of the big match.

His father was repeatedly knocked down by his injuries and adverse effects of the painkillers. The opponent was the current champion, and he was a really strong and vicious man who used fouls to try to win.

But against such an opponent, while being injured, his father stood up again and again till the end. However, in the 12th round, where loss was certain, he knocked out his opponent with 10 seconds left to spare.

He foiled the plot of those cowards who defiled the game with money and overcame the man who tried to win through fouls. Finally, he won by overcoming everything with his own ability and strength.

He accomplished his dream without running away.

“Honey! Sungjin! I’m the champion now!”

The champion belt was shining on the two hands of his father.

“You did it... you really made it! You... are so great!” his mother cried loudly.

“Dad, you’re so awesome! Wasn’t it hard?”

“Hahaha, Of course, it was hard. But, Sungjin...” His father stroked Sungjin’s head with his big hand. His father explained in an imposing yet caring voice, “A man must be brave in front of his dream. You may face times when you are sick or in pain or wish to give up. But life will have real value when you overcome all of those things.

The champion belt was shining more brilliantly than any jewelry Sungjin had ever seen.

“Money, victory and reputation can have their real meanings after that.”

Sungjin shouted with a pounding heart, "I will live like Dad!"

"Really? How great my son is!"

His father fell to the ground after smiling hard, and Sungjin waited for his father to get up. He intended to nag his father to show him how he could live and have such indomitable will like his father. He wished to hear more stories than ever.

But he wouldn't be able to hear any more stories from him. His father was brought to a hospital because he had a cerebral hemorrhage and fell into an eternal sleep.

But the words left by his father were eternally buried in the heart of Sungjin. He also decided that he would find his own game like his father and be the best at it. And without succumbing to any cowardly tricks, he would win fairly and shine like his father.

He firmly decided on his dream. This was the moment that a young boy became a man, embracing his dream.

His mother, however, had a hard time raising him alone.

She eventually fell sick three years later and was hospitalized. Sungjin worried as he held his mother's hands.

"Mother. You worked too hard... How did this happen?"

"This is not the time for me to be lying here."

"Take a break. You're going to face big troubles if you don't."

"We don't have your dad, so I have to make money."

"Mother, I am okay."

"Don't say okay. I know best. Don't you have a hard time facing those kids who make fun of you for having no dad?"

"No! Never!"

Indeed, no kids teased him because he would beat them up if they said anything wrong.

“Yes, that’s right. He left so early... How can the two of us live...?”

Sungjin couldn’t tell anything by his mother’s sigh.

He really respected his father. He also decided to follow his dream gallantly as his father did. But it was not so simple when considering his mother’s hardships.

“However, Sungjin, I do not resent your father either. When we lived together, I resented so much because he did not make money from boxing... Your father... who became a champion by standing firmly in his dream to the end... Only now can I say such nice things. He was so honest and hard-working.”

“Mother...”

“So don’t worry about me. Keep going if you have a dream, don’t worry about me. It’s worthwhile for me to take care of you.”

“Mother...”

“I know best, so why wouldn’t I know my child? You took after your father. Live as you are. Your happiness makes me happy too.”

“Mother...”

His mother hugged Sungjin as he was about to cry.

He had hesitated in his admiration of his father up till now, but her words pushed him forward. Sungjin made up his mind to dedicate his victory trophy to his mother. But he did not have the chance to do so because his mother suffered a heart attack and passed away.

She was so weak due to being overworked. She passed away because she was trying to support her husband and cheer up her son.

Sungjin made a solemn vow that he would work towards his dream and follow his father’s example. He would use his mother’s support and his own desire to work hard.

And the time has come.

My parents! Please wait a while longer!

Sungjin smiled slightly. He found his own game.

My legend starts from now.

The team X Group had a plan to launch a new pro gamer team in seven days. Sungjin would join and defeat numerous strong players one by one till becoming the world champion finally.

Fairly, bravely and consistently...

I must compete in games and win without resorting to any trickery except for what's available in the game.

How many people are disappointed at sports games being fixed or by referees being bribed and falsely calling fouls?

I will keep my sportsmanship. I will play games honestly and be courteous to my opponents and finally reward to the fans who support me...

I will win persevere like my father. No, beyond him.

Just then, a new message popped up on the monitor.

What the hell... Sorry...

Sungjin's face changed from anger to pleasure.

[You want to debut as a pro? Come to the world stage. I will fight with all my might from the beginning. Let's play against each other again.]

He smiled slightly at the opponent's challenge.

[Tch, that is just what I wanted.]

[You promised. Come without being defeated by amateurs along the way.]

[Of course.]

They promised this to each other

But the next day, Sungjin was shocked by something he never would have imagined.

[The Ministry of Gender Equality has enacted the Game Control Law for minors following the Poisoning Control Act. In it, the total game time of a minor is managed, and the game company gives 6% of the total sales to the management fund controlled by this ministry. It is also impossible for minors to engage in e-Sports.]

Seeing the news on the Internet and from the TV, even he was at a loss as to whose opinion caused the destruction of common sense and standard procedure...

These guys, what the hell are they thinking?

The real fundamental source of various school problems had to be a poor upbringing at home and schools only focusing on entrance exams while neglecting everything else. But yet, they are blaming it on video games. Moreover, is it right to crush someone's dream just to fulfill their greed and desire for power?

Oh, my God! No matter how good the Ministry of Gender Equality is, how can they do this? Damn...

What about the trophy he promised to dedicate to his parents? The support of the many fans who cheered him on in his matches and asked him to be a pro to participate in better games? His life-long dream? The promise he made with his rival to make it to the world stage?

His dreams were about to be destroyed.

He visited the home page of the X Group team immediately and saw the notice of pre-match cancellations and an indefinite postponement of the establishment.

Tch, who accepts this kind of law?

Fair game rules must be kept. However, such rules where the powerful people trample on others cannot be tolerated.

He uploaded posts online about this situation and made a petition to combat it. He showed reports that contained objective analysis data about sales, exports, etc. This showed that only foreign companies could get benefits if the game industry in Korea enforced this law.

This raised the awareness of gamers online, and Sungjin collected 300,000 signatures in an instant.

Some members of the National Assembly flinched at that news.

But...

“Tch. The resistance of 300,000 idiots? This is the predicted rebellion.”

Sunwoo Dukjo, the minister of the Ministry of Gender Equality, picked up the phone while sneering. Of course, she started this because she had a countermeasure.

“Secretary, please arrange a luncheon with Pastor Cho, Pastor Lee, Chairman Yang, and Chairman Chung.”

The next day, the Korean Holy Christian Association, Korea Shepherd Society Meeting, Parent Association, and Poisoning Psychiatric Association commenced fire altogether.

[We condemn video games leading children down impious roads with the gathered strength of 10 million believers.]

[We strongly support the government’s law in managing video games that prevent children from studying in the name of 20 million parents. It needs to extend the shutdown system to 24 hours...]

[Scientifically speaking, as a professor of psychiatry, the brains of children who have played a lot of games are changed like those of animals... they become like those of drug addicts, and they’re violent and impulsive...]

“Apart from the others, the professor’s thesis would prove to be totally bogus in the US. Would that be okay?” the secretary advised in anxiety while watching the TV announcement.

“Anyway, the school parents and voters don’t want the truth. Stopping kids from playing video games satisfies their illusion that their children will study more. It is enough to console them by saying that the errant children were a result of games and not a failure of their home education.”

“I... I see.”

The secretary agreed with her out of fear rather than respect. They did things according to their interest without thinking of the people that they deceived, even though they know it is a lie. He was afraid that the minister didn't even have a conscience.

In the presence of the Ministry of Gender Equality driving the overwhelming vote, the signatures were not even a considerable thing to the parliamentarians. The law was reviewed and realized with lightning speed. Most parents agreed because their children seemed to study more if they couldn't play video games, and the public opinion was also on their side accordingly. They were criticized only online.

As a result, the current teams began to review their maintenance rather than resume function. The world champion, Virgo, wasn't an exception.

"Coach... are we disbanded?"

"I have been informed from the mother group that it was impossible to go up against the government and that they would disband."

"Then what do we do? I planned to pay the operation charge of my mom with the prize money of this game."

The heart of the coach, who knew the circumstances of a crying Gyuhyun, was torn. The lack of understanding by the adults should not have stepped on a child's dream and home in this way, but the reality did not make sense.

"I am sorry. I can't do anything against the law."

They, whom Sungjin told he would see in the world stage again, became jobless in a day. Dreams, efforts, the time of five players and the hearts of countless people who cheered together for them were thoroughly trampled.

At that time, the minister of the Ministry of Gender Equality smiled as she heard that the bill had been passed.

"Hmph. We will now prepare for the political funds to go even further. Secretary, what percentage of sales did the game companies offer?"

"They would like to make a compromise within a range of 3%."

"4%! No less than that."



“Minister, the funds made with only 3% reach 300 billion won. At 4%, some marginal companies will escape to foreign countries or go bankrupt, and that will result in a large number of unemployed people.”

Her secretary asked her not to be greedy, but Sunwoo Dukjo asked for 4% as if she didn't care.

“What is the problem?” the minister asked.

“So the unemployed...”

“It was already checked. Up to 4%, more funding is gained even though the total size of the Korean game industry gets smaller. So it's 4%.”

The breath of the secretary was stopped at that moment.

Sunwoo Dukjo was never an idiot. She was rather smart and competent. She had a political sense of knowing what kind of lies could move voters, and she had the guts to carry it out and the power to figure out how to rip people off for more money.

She only had an interest in how much money could be secured. She didn't care whether other people would be jobless as a result or not, nor whether the country would decline or not.

She had the typical mental state of a sociopath. In psychology, a sociopath only thought about their own interests without empathy for others' pain. Her secretary feared how many people would be trampled on in the future if she made a bigger move.

No need to submit the report that the unemployed will come from the pro-gamers club. The dreams of some children were trampled on... She'd be dumbfounded upon me telling her such things...

He felt miserable today because he worked under such a woman.

\* \* \*

Sungjin ground his teeth in front of his monitor.

Tch... Those guys of the Ministry of Gender Equality... Damn.

He knew well that they would use extortion funds even though they talked about protecting young people. He saw through their elaborate lie. The first round was over. How should he tackle the second round?

Damn, I will follow the shining legend of the world champion even by going abroad! Sungjin shouted inwardly, but his mood was very bad.

It was not easy to go abroad for him, but would all the other Korean teams do that? Many of the world's strongest teams were Korean. If any of them disappeared due to this bill, he would easily win the games without those strong players.

That was not smart.

It was great to become a world champion by winning against the hard-liners without assuring victory through fighting openly and squarely...

The Ministry of Gender Equality half-crossed his dream.

What do I do?

However, even while shouting pompously, he was only just a student of high school who was defeated by the absolute authority of the Ministry of Gender Equality.

Then a new message popped up in the game window on his screen.

[Devil Commander, you know the recent law of the Ministry of Gender Equality?]

It was Dark Wolf of the Virgo Team.

[Of course.]

[We were also disbanded. The return match on the world stage is now impossible.]

[Will you also give up? I will go abroad.]

[Great! But I cannot go abroad and leave my family here. Even though I don't know what I can do... I cannot help wanting to find another way.]

Their conversation stopped for a while as Sungjin couldn't find the words to soothe him.

Thirty seconds later, Dark Wolf messaged again.

[However, let's play the game like we promised before]

[Hoo... It was the worst these days, but that sounds good.]

[Let's do it even though there isn't a grand stage or prize money.]

They shared the same burning desire within their souls without having to type it out.

[Okay... What time?]

[A week from now. And for this game, I invited the other pro-team, Elion, which would also be disbanded. After they heard, they said that they might be interested. They agreed that 4 people, except for Slayer who plays the same position as you, would join as your temporary members.]

Elion was a team competing against the best in Korea. Even though they temporarily joined Virgo, adding them meant that Virgo wanted to win against Sungjin while playing with other talented players.

[Hmph. They are members who will not let you down.]

[Take each other in and prepare. We'll also prepare.]

[Okay.]

The country broke their dreams. However, the boys decided to play, even though there wasn't a reward... Preferably, they decided to play more purely because there was no reward.

One week later, ten adventurers sat down in front of their computers. They checked their communication connections in their headsets to make sure it was working.

[Let's do this.]

[Okay, let's finish up this last game.]

[The last game...]

Before changing to a private channel, Gyuhyun was about to cry in the public chat with ten other people.

[Hey, why must you make us feel sad?]

[Sorry.]

Even though the burning atmosphere declined for time being, nobody blamed him. Although they were different in using the prize money, they all felt the same pain due to their dreams being stepped.

Damn those guys of the Ministry of Gender Equality!

Sungjin also felt down once again.

[Sorry, friends. Please forget what I said just now. Let's concentrate on the game.]

[Okay, let's do. Let's make a great memory.]

[Since we've been put down, let's play this game honestly.]

[Good!]

They finally started the game.

The first rule was to ban each team from using three select champions in the game. Even if there were more than 100 selectable champions, the number of main champions was limited. The tricky fight had already begun from which champion was banned.