

LEVEL 4 HUMAN IN A RUINED WORLD

Chapter 3

Chapter 3: Chaebols Transform into Dragons (3)

“Is this the currency exchange?”

“Where did it come from...?”

As the currency exchange appeared on the ground, the reactions among the front-runners were mixed.

Some gazed anxiously at the sky, unsure.

Others, stricken with fear, took a few steps backward.

And then...

Determination.

Someone, daringly, began walking straight toward the currency exchange.

Though a minority, Yeongwoo was among those individuals.

“...”

Forcing his stiffened legs forward amidst his fear.

‘The world might have reset, but not everyone’s abilities did. In terms of physical abilities, I’m at the very bottom... destined for vulnerability.’

It was a realization that struck Yeongwoo when he fell behind in the race earlier.

In a world with dragons and quests, what would be the most crucial ability? Undoubtedly, physical abilities.

Moreover, the first quest came with a coveted first-come-first-serve reward.

Even if the appearance of the currency exchange hadn’t overwhelmed the crowd, swift individuals would have seized the reward long ago.

‘But I still have a chance.’

Yeongwoo continued advancing, seeing those who surpassed him still frozen in place.

...Brrr!

...Brrr!

As the distance to the currency exchange shortened to within 20 meters, its emitted light and vibrations intensified.

Simultaneously, another piece of information seeped into Yeongwoo's mind.

One, the currency exchange doesn't attack humans.

Two, it'll disappear after approximately two hours in this location.

Three, touching the surface of the currency exchange initiates the exchange.

It felt as if he'd known these facts for a long time.

'...?'

Yeongwoo felt the inexplicability of this strange experience but continued moving forward.

And then finally.

"...Huh."

He stood boldly before the pulsating currency exchange.

...Brrr!

...Brrr!

Its surface, indiscernible in material, was completely black.

Despite the high sun casting its rays, this bizarre object neither reflected nor allowed light to pass through it.

It blatantly declared itself as something not of this world.

"..."

Yeongwoo cautiously reached out, making contact with the currency exchange.

Thud.

It was cold.

And the touch was as solid as touching marble, felt throughout his palm.

Following this, a new interface appeared before Yeongwoo.

Whoosh!

[Resident information has been registered.]

|Name: Jeong Yeongwoo07

|Role: TBC (To Be Confirmed)

|Active Benefit: [Tax Deduction – Single Household]

‘A tax... deduction?’

At this point, Yeongwoo even felt gratitude toward Bonghee for dying in front of him.

If not for that incident, he wouldn’t have taken this seriously.

‘Is this some sort of a status window?’

Yeongwoo meticulously inspected his resident information.

Given the number 07 appended to the name Jeong Yeongwoo, it seemed like...

‘Among all the Jeong Yeongwoos in the country, I’m the seventh to register resident information.’

In other words, there were six or more daring or reckless Jeong Yeongwoos out there.

Yeongwoo, feeling oddly immersed, examined the sole benefit he possessed: the tax deduction for a single household.

|Active Benefit: [Tax Deduction – Single Household]

There was no argument against the diagnosis of a single household.

He was abandoned in front of an orphanage as an infant and did not know who his parents were, thus he also had no siblings.

‘But being eligible for tax deductions because I’m from a single household means that someone, somehow, will collect taxes.’

In a world where even the president had dismantled and vanished, who was going to collect taxes?

While Yeongwoo pondered this, the resident information screen disappeared, replaced by a new message.

[We will begin the currency exchange.]

[For every remaining karma point you have, 10,000 karma will be provided in coin form.]

Karma.

Likely the new currency in this reset world.

‘As expected...!’

Confirming that the remaining points were eligible for exchange, Yeongwoo felt a subtle excitement.

|Worker Jeong Yeongwoo07 possesses 3 karma points.

|An exchange of 30,000 karma will be provided. Please be prepared.

‘Prepared? For what...?’

As Yeongwoo pondered the instructions, suddenly,

Ting! Ting! Ting!

A sound reminiscent of coins rolling came from inside the currency exchange...

Shwoosh!

Suddenly, dozens of crimson coins poured out all at once.

“Whoa...!”

He instinctively reached out with both hands, but capturing all the coins was nearly impossible.

Ting! Ting! Ting!

In the end, about a dozen coins slipped from Yeongwoo’s grasp, hitting the ground and bouncing noisily in all directions.

‘...Oh no.’

But the “incident” didn’t end there.

Ting! Ting! Ting!

Someone, allocated to the same currency exchange as Yeongwoo, had also begun their exchange on the opposite side.

“Hey, be careful!”

Yeongwoo attempted to warn them, but it was too late.

Whoosh!

A much larger amount of coins than Yeongwoo’s spilled out from the currency exchange, followed by someone’s startled voice from the other side of the exchange.

“Huh?”

Gradually, the figure of a person, previously obscured by the massive exchange booth, became visible.

“I-I’m sorry! This, uh...”

The person, a tall young man, quickly apologized upon noticing some of his coins mixed with Yeongwoo’s.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo, noticing the man’s police uniform, picked up the few coins that had rolled towards him and handed them over.

“These... came all the way here.”

“Oh, thank you!”

Seeing the young man repeatedly bowing, Yeongwoo momentarily eased his guard.

For some reason, he felt he was facing a genuinely good person.

But that didn’t last long.

[Translator – Peptobismol]

Soon, a fierce and massive presence overwhelmed not just the two of them but everyone in the exchange area.

Thud! Thud!

The “latecomers,” who had been observing the situation from afar, began rushing in upon seeing the coins pouring out.

“It’s an actual money exchange, huh?”

“Incredible.”

“They’re just scattered on the ground?”

Due to the reset, everyone knew the existing currency had become useless. As a result, the people rushing towards the currency exchange were in a complete frenzy.

‘Crazy. I need to hurry.’

Sensing that chaos would soon erupt, Yeongwoo swiftly gathered the coins from the ground.

Through this process, he realized that each of these crimson coins, roughly the size of a 500-won coin, were worth 1,000 karma each.

Since, after he collected all the coins scattered around, there were precisely 30 coins.

‘If I didn’t have a bag, I’d be in real trouble.’

As he poured the handful of coins into his backpack, Yeongwoo suddenly remembered the police officer from earlier.

Swiftly glancing up, he noticed the officer, with a desperate expression, stuffing coins into his pants and shirt pockets.

The amount of karma received from the exchange was too much; even using both hands, he couldn’t pick them all up.

Dududududu...!

In the meantime, the latecomers had closed in.

With his eyes fixed on the dozens of coins scattered around the police officer.

‘There’s no way out for him. They’ll swipe them all in front of his eyes.’

Seeing no space left in the officer’s pockets, Yeongwoo shouted loudly.

“It’s too late! Give up the rest!”

“But, but still...”

It was only after hearing Yeongwoo’s words that the officer, belatedly grasping the situation, hesitated to leave his spot.

He still had regrets. There were too many scattered coins on the ground.

And so, in the end...

“Waaah!”

The latecomers finally rushed in and overwhelmed the officer before reaching the currency exchange.

Thump! Thump!

Despite being considered “latecomers,” they were essentially no different from highway robbers.

They intentionally started scuffles to snatch away his coins.

“Hey, hold on!”

Clearly, the officer, whose pockets were filled with coins, became the prime target.

Dozens of people crowded around him, squeezing their hands into his pockets, while others started picking up coins from the ground due to his imposing figure and uniform.

‘...My god.’

Even Yeongwoo, who had escaped from the scene earlier, was not safe either.

In fact, there was no safe place in the first place.

Similar incidents were unfolding at other currency exchanges that had appeared everywhere.

‘There is no way out.’

Everywhere he looked, it was a scene of robbery.

And soon, the robbers closed in on Yeongwoo.

“Aaah!”

Unlike the officer who had to deal with dozens, Yeongwoo had only a few men clinging to him.

However, the pressure of being outnumbered was enormous for Yeongwoo, who was not very large and strong to begin with.

“You greedy bastards!”

Adding to the chaos.

Wooosh!

As someone behind attempted to tear his backpack away, Yeongwoo felt an emotion close to the fear of death.

“My belongings...!”

It was practically his entire fortune.

Whump!

Once again, his body was pulled violently.

Enraged, Yeongwoo twisted his upper body to face the culprit.

Just then, a punch landed squarely on his face.

Baam!

The robbers were equally anxious.

Before others could latch on more, the immediate goal was to snatch away the backpack.

“Ugh!”

As Yeongwoo groaned in agony, those surrounding him thought, “He might give up the backpack if we hit him a bit more.”

Baam!

The second blow struck between Yeongwoo’s right ear and cheek.

“Argh!”

Accompanied by a dull thud and a ringing in the ears, a sudden loss of strength in both legs was felt.

It was his first time receiving such a blow from someone else, making it difficult to gather his senses.

Meanwhile, people continued to attempt to strip him of his backpack.

‘No! Without that, I...’

As Yeongwoo struggled and resisted, someone outside his field of vision twisted his arm without restraint.

Thwack.

The pressure felt as if their intention was to break his arm, regardless of whether it actually did or not.

‘At this rate, it’ll really break.’

Would he end up penniless, or would he end up penniless and crippled?

‘Ah.’

In the moment of despair, as Yeongwoo considered giving up his backpack,

Poof!

The quest message that had been lingering in the corner of his vision vanished, replaced by a new message.

[Quest Complete – “New Life”]

[Rewards Granted]

|Basic Living Funds

|First-come, First-served Reward

Then, a glaring warning message interrupted his view.

|You are a first-come, first-served recipient.

|Prepare yourself.

‘Prepare...?’

Just the word ‘prepare’ made Yeongwoo’s heart grow cold. When he had seen the previous ‘prepare’ prompt, the currency exchange had suddenly showered out coins.

And now...

Swoosh!

With a sharp sound, something descended from the sky, far above the ground.

‘What?’

Unwittingly sprawled on the ground and enduring the assault, Yeongwoo managed to open one eye and glanced up at the sky.

And there it was.

A sword-like object descending straight towards him.

“...!”

The speed was so fast that by the time he realized what was happening, the sword had already arrived right in front of him.

Right next to Yeongwoo’s right hand, which was being twisted on the ground.

Shiing!

As the 80-centimeter-long metal object fell from the sky, everyone stopped moving.

“Huh...?”

“Wh-what is that?”

“Ah.”

It wasn’t just one sword that had descended.

Shoosh!

Thud!

There was only a slight time difference, but everyone who met the first-come first-served condition received a sword.

Swoosh! Thud! Swoosh!

At every spot where people had gathered, silver streaks rained down, ranging from one to three at a time.

‘Two, three, seven... ten... roughly ten people.’

Yeongwoo estimated the number of ‘first-come’ recipients based on the landing sounds of the swords.

Then,

Thud!

Faster than anyone else, he picked up his sword.

[Translator – Peptobismol]