912 Episode 51 8 years (4)

"No, what's that—"

A commotion filled the auction hall.

"You didn't just see something, did you?"

"It's true. I saw it too."

"Does this make sense? The scale seems to have miscalculated."

The crowd raised their weight. Then the scale itself twitched, and a giant mouth-like thing appeared at the top of the scale.

[The appraisal result of the relevant department is 10,000 D Coins.]

There must have been a problem with the appraisal, because the message that came up wasn't very good.

Still, the result was clear.

"10,000 D Coins?"

A series of gasps of shock erupted from the crowd.

It was understandable.

10,000 D Coins for a single hair.

At this rate, it wouldn't be surprising if coin inflation occurred.

[Would you like to exchange the item you placed on the scale for D Coins?]

Can I exchange it right away?

"Exchange."

As soon as I agreed, the mouth at the top of the scale swelled abnormally and sucked in the hair. Then, with a whoosh, the scale's mouth began spitting out D Coins. The D Coins that poured out flashed towards me in a bright light and were absorbed.

"Wow, benefactor… "

Namgung Myung's expression changed rapidly in real time. From bewilderment to shock, then to delight again.

I nodded and answered.

"It's easy to make money."

[The constellation that made money by selling blood is amazed by your price tag!]

10,000 per hair. If I just pull out nine more, I could even pay off the company's debt?

Hair will grow back anyway, so if I shave it all off, I could become the richest man in the <Star Stream>.

But there's one thing—

[The 'Settlement Scale' is looking at you.]

Since when? A pair of eyes sprouting from the scale were staring at me. I felt a sense of unease.

Where did the hair that this scale just devoured go?

Is it okay to continue settling accounts like this?

"You, what the hell have you done?"

A cold voice echoed in my ear.

I turned around, seeing the ones who submitted a tooth fragment earlier. The employees of Veda Biotech, who earned 3,000 D-Coins, surrounded me with menacing expressions.

I smiled kindly and removed the hand on my shoulder.

"Just tell me."

But the supervisor, his expression hardening, threatened me once again.

"What did you do? How did you get such an appraisal?"

"You don't seem to know, but hair is precious."

It was a statement that would have made even the Great Jecheon nod, but the supervisor didn't seem convinced at all.

"Bullshit!"

The Veda Biotech supervisor, unable to accept reality, drew his weapon at me.

I ignored him and stared up at the scoreboard in the air.

+

1st place. ■?■?■?■?■?■?■?■?■? Hair — 10,000 D Coins.

+

The rankings on the scoreboard had changed.

[The incarnation that takes first place in this week's appraisal ranking will receive an additional reward.]

[This week's appraisal ranking closes in one hour.]

I see, so this is why these guys are so angry. Basically, they're angry because their ranking reward was taken away.

"Just tell the truth. What the hell is that thing you brought?"

"According to the scale's description, it must be the hair of a end-level outer god."

"There's no way an end-level outer god could exist! They were all wiped out eight years ago! Catch this guy! He must have been involved in the illegal collection!"

It seems like it's not going to be a good idea.

Should I use [Incite] to take them out? Or should I show off my power and make them retreat?

I was contemplating which would be more effective.

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who records <Veda Biotech> is displeased with you.]

I frowned slightly and looked up into space.

Come to think of it, I'd heard the message from the Recorder who recorded <Veda Biotech> and <Olympus Technology> before.

They were displeased with my entry into this 'New Murim District,' and immediately after hearing the message, the thugs from <Tamra Heavy Industries> attacked.

Wait a minute, so maybe even now?

"The Recorders ordered you to kill me?"

"Wh-what are you talking about?"

Their panic made it seem like it wasn't an entirely unreasonable assumption. I recalled something I'd briefly heard at the auction.

「"If it was that much, it would have caught the eyes of the recorders. Even executives are guaranteed a high-speed promotion."」

Most of the recorders in this city had titles related to companies like Veda Biotech and Tamra Heavy Industries. Then, we can make this assumption.

What if each company had a 'Recorder' attached to it?

"Let me ask again. Did a 'Recorder' affiliated with your conglomerate order you to stop me?"

"It's none of your business—"

"Who is it? Tell me. The Demon King of the Cinema? The Fox Who Commands the Sky?"

For your information, the 'Demon King of the Cinema' was the alias of Asmodeus, and the 'Fox Who Commands the Sky' was the alias of Bicheonhori.

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who writes for <Veda Biotech> is startled by your remark.]

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who supports <Tamra Heavy Industries> asks how you know that alias.]

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who supports <Olympus Technology> questions who the recorder is.]

Hmm, I see.

Judging by the situation, it seems no recorder I've encountered in the 'Time Fault' has been present.

By the way, what on earth is happening that has the Recorders of Fear gathered in this city?

The Supervisor shouted indignantly.

"How dare you, a scamp, mention the aliases of the great Recorders!"

The incarnations slowly surrounded me.

The sky then sparkled. The constellations' messages came in.

[The constellation, 'Monarch of the Small Fries', is curious about your response.]

[The constellation, 'Bald Leader of Justice', enters the channel!]

[The constellation, 'God of Wine and Ecstasy', enters the channel!]

…

From the Recorders to the constellations themselves.

There are too many eyes watching. With this much attention, resolving the situation by force is a bit burdensome.

I haven't yet confirmed the capabilities of major corporations like Veda Biotech or Olympus Technologies, and revealing my strength first would only be detrimental. So—

"Well, I understand. I don't want to fight, so let's be honest."

Let's do this.

"First of all, this hair wasn't obtained illegally. I never participated in any collection or anything. Why don't you try using [Lie Detection]?"

As I raised both hands and spoke in a disinterested voice, one of the incarnations interrogating me activated their skill as if they had been waiting for it.

Then a message flashed:

[Someone is activating 'Lie Detection'!]

['Lie Detection' has confirmed your words.]

The supervisor, his expression hardening, asked,

"You didn't get it illegally? Then where did you get it?"

I calmly pointed to my head.

"Here."

['Lie Detection' has confirmed your words.]

"No way... How is your hair worth over 10,000 D Coins?"

"How could I possibly know that? Could the scale be broken?"

"The settlement scale has never broken before!"

"Really? Then let's check again."

I plucked four strands of hair in front of everyone and placed them on the scale.

"Request appraisal."

Faint sparks appeared on the scale, and the appraisal results were displayed.

[Appraising four identical parts.]

[The total value of the appraisals and purifications within the relevant parts is 40,000 D Coins.]

"Exchange."

D Coins poured out of the air.

I leisurely collected the coins, looking back at the bewildered men.

"It seems to be broken, doesn't it? Human hair can't be this expensive, can it?"

With [Incite] activated, I slowly looked around the crowd. Then, emphasizing each word, I continued.

"The <Star Stream> isn't perfect. I once obtained a bugged item from an item called a 'Random Item Box'."

[Incitement] becomes more effective when combined with truth.

['Lie Detection' has confirmed your words are true.]

The crowd, once filled with distrust, slowly began to see a flicker of greed in their eyes.

I watched them for a moment, then grabbed my hair again and said,

"Well. Since no one seems to believe me, I'll continue the assessment…"

The supervisor, his face abruptly changed, pushed me and stood in front of the scales.

"Get out of the way!"

That was the beginning.

"Stop! I'll do it first!"

"No, I'll do it first!"

"I'll do it first!"

"Hey, don't push me! Don't push!"

In an instant, the area in front of the scales was filled with a crowd. Watching everyone, one after another, pluck out their own hair and place it on the scales, I quietly retreated to the outskirts of the auction hall with Namgung Myung.

From a distance, I could see the scale's mouth sucking in people's hair.

And a moment later.

[The 'Settlement Scale' has detected an abnormal emotional attempt!]

A strange message rang out.

The startled incarnations turned to each other and said,

"What? That guy from before is gone!"

"Wasn't that a glitch? My coins—"

The mouth that appeared on the scale began spitting out the hairs it had sucked in.

The moment those who sensed something was wrong tried to flee,

[A fee will be charged for an abnormal appraisal attempt!]

[The 'Settlement Scale' is processing the settlement!]

The scale's veins twitched, and tentacles burst out from within its mouth.

"Kuaaaaak!"

The incarnations caught in the tentacles were flowing up the scale beam. They were all incarnations who had pulled out their own hair and placed it on the beam.

Among them was the supervisor who had picked a fight with me.

"What are you all looking at! Untie this now! Quickly!"

"What is this, what is this—"

[A fee will be charged for an abnormal appraisal attempt!]

The scale's mouth opened with the message. A thud, the sound of flesh crushing. Broken stories scattered everywhere, along with streams of blood.

「"An idiot came in. You don't even know that if you misjudge an item, you'll be cursed by the scale—"」

I guess that's what they meant by 'misjudged.'

"Aaaaaaaaah!"

The entire incarnation screamed in the midst of the horrific scene.

In an instant, the auction house was in chaos.

Only the starlight twinkling in the empty sky calmly observed the situation.

[The constellation, 'Monarch of the Small Fries', shows an expression of admiration.]

[The constellation, 'Bald General of Justice', turns his gaze to the brutal landscape.]

[The constellation, 'God of Wine and Ecstasy', is curious about your identity.]

[The constellation, 'Lying Dragon', enters the channel!]

[The constellation, 'Lying Dragon', asks what on earth has happened.]

[The constellations of absolute evil support you with 20 D-coins!]

Along with the outpouring of support from the constellations, angry messages from the Recorders also spread.

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who writes about <Veda Biotech> is furious!]

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who supports <Tamra Heavy Industries> frowns.]

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who supports <Olympus Technology> shakes his head.]

[The Recorders have begun the 'narrative agreement'!]

For a moment, my vision felt as if it were creaking, and a sentence appeared before my eyes.

「The auction house was in chaos. This was unthinkable. The hair of a mere incarnation was treated as the appendage of a 'end-level outer god'.」

For the first time since leaving the Fear Realm, I was startled.

Sentences narrated within the colorless landscape.

「The master of the Fear Realm died eight years ago, and every single one of his appendages was collected. However, the scale had just appraised the appendage of an 'end-level outer god'. The meaning was clear.」

It wasn't my thoughts, nor was it a record of 'Ways of Survival' or the [Fourth Wall].

「The 'Settlement Scale' is broken.」

It was a scene similar to when I used [□□].

Someone was interpreting the reality before my eyes to their own liking.

「The incident was immediately transmitted to the 'Management Bureau'.」

The next moment, a powerful aftershock blasted from the scale, and it immediately ceased functioning.

[A new notice from the Management Bureau has arrived!]

[A 'Probability Appropriate Determination' will soon be conducted in the area!]

[The 'Settlement Scale' will be temporarily suspended while the 'Probability Appropriate Determination' in the area is conducted!]

The incarnations sighed.

"What? Was it really a bug?"

"Then what about that guy earlier! Did he benefit alone?"

"Where did he go?"

"Supervisor! Move the Supervisor!"

Having escaped early, I was hiding with Namgung Myung in a side street of the auction house, which had become a chaotic mess.

Namgung Myung, catching his breath, asked in a tense voice.

"Benefactor, what just now... was the scale really broken?"

"I don't know."

I stared at the message from the management office blinking in the air, thinking,

「There was no such thing as a bug.」

The reason my hair received a 'end-level' rating was because I inherited the story of the 'King of Fear.'

However, someone observing this situation was denying this fact and trying to attribute the situation to a 'scale malfunction'.

The reason was clear. They didn't want me to gain any more from this situation.

[The 'Recorder of Fear' who writes <Veda Biotech> looks at you with a displeased look.]

"Gungmyung-ssi, why are the 'Recorders of Fear' here?"

Namgung Myung's eyes slowly widened as he listened to my question, his thoughts racing.

"Benefactor, you were chosen by a 'Recorder of Fear'?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Oh... you weren't?"

Namgung Myung added, somewhat concealing his disappointment.

"I've heard that the 'Recorders of Fear' occasionally make special offers to incarnations who excel in the 'New Murim District'. In particular, those who quickly rise to 'executive' status are often chosen by the Recorders."

The Recorders' choice?

It wasn't some kind of sponsor selection. Why would a 'Recorder of Fear' choose an incarnation?

This world isn't even a 'Time Fault' of the Fear Realm.

[You have attracted the interest of the 'Recorder of Fear' in that area.]

Huh?

[A small number of 'Recorders of Fear' are offering you a 'recording contract.']

[You can now choose the 'Recorder' who will record your story.]

Wait a minute, can't this be...

[If you accept the 'Recording Contract,' the 'Recorders of Fear' will personally record you on the 'Final Wall.']

[The 'Recorders of Fear' will spare no effort in completing an interpretation that benefits you.]

[Stories recorded through this contract will have their status greatly elevated in the <Star Stream>!]

Starting with that, countless messages flashed before my eyes.

[A Recorder, yet unsupported, wants to record your story.]

[A Recorder who enjoys large-scale fraud wants to record your story.]

[A Recorder who enjoys squinty characters wants to record your story.]

As I reviewed the suggestions from each Recorder, one message in particular stood out.

[A Recorder who hates regression wants to record your story.]