918 Episode 52 Light Sword Emperor (3)

A suffocating storm of white and blue struck the manor.

The three ascendants, their faces paling, simultaneously dodged.

A spark of probability erupted eerily from the dust.

Sentences then emerged.

「This power? Could that constellation be...?」

「That can't be. That constellation must have died then!」

「Nonsense...!」

Sentences that seemed to be the inner thoughts of the recorders. They didn't seem to have been written directly by them; perhaps they were part of their subconscious.

"Everyone, wake up! The record is leaking!"

The 'Unchanging One' warned, and the intermittent lines of text abruptly cut off.

"Don't panic! It's the same as a narrative-grade! And there are three of us!"

Perhaps not yet fully grasping the situation, the ascendants seemed to be regrouping. I said to those guys.

"They're not the same narrative-grade."

Five stars shining from my entire body. I gradually drew on the power contained within the constellation.

[Your incarnation is overloaded!]

Power acquired after enduring the 1,863rd round with Han Sooyoung.

AKA 'Demon King of Salvation' mode.

Use time is approximately 5 minutes.

Instantaneous combat power is 'late stage of narrative-grade.'

"Wh, what... the level keeps rising!"

"Don't be intimidated by the level alone! I've heard information about that guy! That constellation's combat prowess isn't that great compared to its level!"

I was a little surprised by the accuracy of the information.

As he said, the 'Demon King of Salvation' didn't have great combat skills compared to his level.

But the reason the 'Demon King of Salvation' is so scary isn't because of his 'powerful techniques'.

"Heir, I'll borrow another story."

With a tsutsutsu, a new story was added to the constellation.

[The story, 'Insect Massacre', begins its storytelling.]

Story 「Insect Massacre」.

A story that unleashes overwhelming power when the opponent is 'weaker' than the story's owner.

The sphere surrounding my incarnation body began to glow even brighter.

[This story resonates with the constellation 'Demon King of Salvation'!]

The reason the Demon King of Salvation is so terrifying is because his story affinity is unparalleled among other constellations.

The story's power, instantly activated, took control of the entire area through my body.

"That's—"

The ascended beings, recognizing the story, retreated.

But it was too late.

In a flash, Baekcheong's sword swung, slicing off the head of one ascended being.

"First, one."

Even if it were the 'Insect Massacre' unleashed by the 'Demon King of Salvation', this story, born of 'great-grade' origins, wouldn't work well against beings possessing a certain level of power.

For example, with someone like Yoo Joonghyuk, who had only faced overwhelmingly stronger opponents, 'Insect Massacre' couldn't fully demonstrate its capabilities.

But the ones before me were different.

"R-R-Run! We must inform the other ascendants!"

The ascendants before me had relied solely on their own power, crushing only weaker opponents. That was why they were dying now. Their history had become their weakness.

"Two."

[White-Blue Ganggi], overlaid with [Way of the Wind], decapitated another ascendant.

As the two incarnations crumbled in vain, the constellation's terrifying scream echoed through the air.

[The constellation, 'Twins Who Own Horses', suffer a massive blow and are removed from the scenario!]

Interestingly, the recorders who recorded them are in a similar situation.

[The Recorder of Fear, 'One Who Writes Youth', loses his records and enters a period of inactivity.]

[The Recorder of Fear, 'One Who Doesn't Like Twists', loses his records and enters a period of inactivity.]

It seems the Recorders of Fear who signed a 'recording contract' take a major blow when the contracted incarnation dies.

So that's why Bihyung said I only need to deal with the contracted incarnation.

In any case, this leaves only one thing.

I turned my head to see a terrified Yoon Hyunseok preparing to flee.

Normally, he would have thrown a tantrum, having been cornered.

[The cnstellation, 'Parrot of Desire', lowers the synchronisation with the incarnation.]

Unfortunately, the guy's sponsor seemed to have made an unusual choice.

"Spo, Sponsor?"

Feeling his own status rapidly diminishing, Executive Director Yoon Hyunseok wore a blank expression.

"Hey, wait. Don't come! I told you not to come!"

If he were to lower his synchronisation with the incarnation in this situation, his purpose was clear.

Since this was a losing battle anyway, he'd probably lower his synchronisation to lessen the damage to his true form.

But I couldn't just let him run away. I pulled the 'Four Yin Demonic Demonic Sword' from my pocket.

[The S+-grade item 'Four Yin Demonic Demonic Sword' evolves into the holy relic 'Four Yin Demonic Demonic Sword.']

Originally, it could only be used with the power of the Big Dipper, but at the level of a narrative-grade constellation, it could be replaced with one's own constellation.

My stories were imbued into the hilt of the 'Four Yin Demonic Demonic Sword', and a bright starlight was engraved on its blade.

[The constellation, 'Desire Parrot', looks at you in astonishment!]

[The constellation, 'Desire Parrot', implores you. If you do not kill its incarnation-]

Swinging the 'Four Yin Demonic Demonic Sword', it slashed at its chest.

Immediately, a horrifying scream and the constellation's message were heard.

[The constellation, 'Desire Parrot', suffered a massive blow and was forced out of the scenario!]

Leaving Yoon Hyunseok behind, who had collapsed to the ground, spilling his stories, I retrieved the D-Coins dropped by the dead executives.

[You have acquired a total of 25,300 D-Coins.]

As expected of an executive, he had quite a lot of D-Coins.

At this rate, I should be able to collect 100,000 D-Coins in no time.

[The story, 'Heir of the Eternal Name' is retrieving the stories you borrowed.]

Just then, the time limit for 'Salvation Demon King Mode' expired. I tasted blood on my tongue. I forced myself to remain calm and swallowed my breath.

A faint spark coursed through my body.

I guess five stories is still too much.

"Benefactor, are you alright?"

"Inho-ssi—!"

I saw Namgung Myung and Kyung Sein, who had retreated for a moment, approaching.

I held out my palm to them, signaling them not to move.

Yoon Hyunseok's lifeline was still attached.

"Keuk..."

Even though he couldn't use the power of his sponsor, I couldn't let my guard down forever.

I approached him, maintaining [Baekcheongganggi].

"S-Spare me, spare me… "

I looked down at him and said,

"I have some questions for your 'Recorder'."

When I mentioned the Recorder's existence, Yoon Hyunseok's body trembled as if struck by lightning.

[The Recorder of Fear, the 'Unchanging One', is staring at you!]

Then, as if waiting, a message flashed through my mind.

[The Recorder of Fear, the 'Unchanging One', expects your generosity!]

There was a reason I kept him alive in the first place. There was information I needed to uncover.

What on earth are so many Recorders plotting in this city?

What are the dokkaebis thinking hiring these guys?

Perhaps this 'Recorder' before me knows all that information.

"What do I get if I spare you?"

[The Recorder of Fear, the 'Unchanging One', offers D-Coins!]

"That's not necessary."

Considering what happened to my eldest brother, I had no intention of letting any of them live.

Still, I finally got the information. I couldn't miss this opportunity to rip it out.

But the next moment, instead of his answer, I heard his inner thoughts.

「Just a little more time.」

Huh?

「It'll be 'that time' soon. If we take refuge in the 'Records Archive' before we lose the contract, we can avoid the end of writing...!」

Records Archive?

Sensing something odd, I was about to swing my sword at Yoon Hyunseok's arm when...

「Hahahaha! That's it! It's two o'clock!」

A bright light emanated from Yoon Hyunseok's entire body, and soon a translucent energy surged through him.

The next moment, what looked like a pen mark the guy had left rippled through the air. I reached out and firmly grasped it, and a message flashed before my eyes.

[Would you like to enter the 'Records Archive' in that area?]

Seeing the message, something occurred to me.

「"Hmm. I heard there's a separate space only the recorders can access..."」

It seems I've finally figured out where the 'subspace' Bihyung spoke of was.

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A pure white, circular space reminiscent of a gigantic Colosseum. Fierce sentences were floating in real time above the space's margins.

「Blood Jade Fist Master Jo Jincheol shouted, "Damn it, Light Sword Emperor! I won't miss this time!"」

「Paradise Emperor Reinheit gritted his teeth. "As expected, Light Sword Emperor. He truly lives up to his reputation."」

「Nirvana, filled with madness, shouted, "Hahahaha! Where did you go!? Become one with me!"」

As various incidents unfolded in the city, a dozen or so recorders scribbled on the screens, examining each one.

「...Auction house unusual report...」

「...High-level fragment analysis. Currently assessing probability...」

What was unusual was that each recorder wore a mask. Most were blue or purple, but occasionally green and orange masks were seen.

The recorder wearing the orange mask spoke first.

【What happened to the order from the nebula? Has there been any change?】

The green mask beside him answered.

【It's the same. I've protested several times, but they say the decision won't be reversed. The city will be closed in the next scenario.】

【Is that how it's going to end?】

The orange mask spoke in a dejected tone. The city's scenery was reflected in his eyes behind his mask.

「New Murim District.」

Until now, this city has been divided into two parts, the remnants of the fallen Fear Realm. Its lifespan was sustained by the power of the three.

The fragments of the Fear Realm that were occasionally unearthed were refined into 'D-Coins', and these 'D-Coins' were transmitted to the constellations in the higher scenarios, proving their worth.

However, the vitality of such a system was limited.

【If only the Light Sword Emperor hadn't destroyed the orbital elevator...】

When the orbital elevator was destroyed, the D-Coin circulation route was blocked, and naturally, the ascenders who had become stronger through D-Coins also found their path to ascending blocked.

A single incarnation brought the entire city's system to its knees.

【In fact, this was expected even without the Light Sword Emperor. The story fragments found in the Fear Realm were practically nonexistent.】

The Light Sword Emperor was merely a trigger. Perhaps the constellations in the higher scenarios simply concluded that the city had outlived its usefulness.

【That's true. Wasn't there a harvest worth using this week?】

【There was talk of an 'end-level fragment' being discovered during the day...】

【End-level fragment?】

【Yes. The situation was so absurd that the new recruits stepped in and altered the records. The 'Management Bureau' is also investigating the probability of the scale.】

【End-level fragment...】

【If that's true, the giant nebulae above might have changed their minds.】

The orange mask, who had been thinking so, shook his head.

【There's no way there's an end-level fragment of Fear.】

【If there were still such fragments, the 'Twelve Thrones' of <Olympus> and the 'Locapala' of <Veda> would have already descended, turning the city upside down.】

【When is the next scenario launch?】

【It's in an hour.】

【The Light Sword Emperor? Or are we just going to leave him alone?】

【A small [Fate] launch order will soon be issued from the 'Giant Nebulae'.】

[Fate].

At that statement, the recorders in the room whispered.

【You're using [Fate] to deal with just one incarnation?】

【It's not just one incarnation. We've deployed ascenders, but we still haven't caught him. It's an incarnation with combat power greater than that of a narrative-grade heavy machine.】

The orange mask, listening to the recorders' conversation, asked.

【Where was he last seen?】

【Near <Tamra Heavy Industry>.】

【Then the objective is clear.】

The orange mask stared at the <Tamra Heavy Industry> headquarters on the screen.

In the basement of that company, a monster once sealed by the recorders was imprisoned.

The orange mask smiled faintly, as if thinking about something.

【Since it's come to this, let's create a proper finale. A scenario of this scale will surely interest even the 'high-ranking recorders'.】

The objective of every 'Recorder of Fear' is clear. It was about completing the 'ultimate sentence' to be left on the 'Final Wall'.

However, not all recorders were able to achieve this ultimate sentence. Only the chosen recorders left behind great records.

Therefore, most recorders wanted to write 'commentaries' to accompany such a 'great sentence'.

【Listen carefully, everyone. If we successfully complete this scenario, we might even be able to claim the 'commentary' position from the high-ranking recorders who monopolize the interpretation of the wall.】

【Re, really?】

【Yes.】

The recorders' eyes were filled with fear and excitement. It was understandable, for they were the 'high-ranking recorders' of the <Star Stream>, beings they couldn't even dare to listen to, let alone look at—even their true names.

But what if they could help these high-ranking recorders complete the 'ultimate sentence'...?

Just then, one of the recorders, who had been scanning the screen, ran over.

【Urgent news. Two recorders just stopped writing.】

Stopped writing. The weight of these words made all the recorders' expressions harden for a moment. For the recorders, the 'stop writing' was a punishment akin to eternal destruction, in terms of constellations.

The orange mask asked.

【What kind of guys are they?】

【Newbies. They're called 'Those who write about youth' and 'Those who don't like twists and turns'.】

The orange mask's eyes narrowed.

No matter what they did in this city, it was unlikely to cause an incident worthy of 'stopping writing'.

【If there was a possibility, it would be if the embodiment of the 'Record Contract' died.】

The orange mask spoke in a grave voice.

【Perhaps it was the work of that bastard, the Light Sword Emperor.】

【The Light Sword Emperor.】

The tense recorders exchanged glances.

【Dispatch ascenders to the nearby area. If the Light Sword Emperor is discovered—】

The order was finally given.

【Prepare to declare [Fate] immediately.】

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The 'Recorder of Fear' trembled before my eyes.

【Uh, how? How could this be happening?】

To put it simply, it was like this.

He moved to this 'Recording Center' as soon as it was two o'clock, and I followed him.

He was jubilant, thinking he'd escaped safely, but then he turned to me and looked as if he were about to faint.

Hurriedly, he collected his expression and began to speak.

【W-Wouldn't you be the same 'Recorder'? But how could the contract holder and the recorder be the same person...?】

I stared at the 'Unchanging One'.

I expected him to have some impressive appearance since he was called a 'Recorder of Fear', but he was just a young man wearing glasses. Compared to 'Asmodeus' and 'Bichonhori' I'd met before, he felt like a mere idiot. My silence must have been what the guy was thinking, as he fell to the ground and cried out.

【Please save me! I will never touch your contract again! I will not come near you! I will not add a single conjunction or adverb to your presence!】

I watched him for a moment before opening my mouth.

But no sound came out. Is it impossible to speak audibly in this space? In that case…

【Do you speak like this?】

At that moment, the 'Unchanging One' heard my voice and opened his eyes wide.