924 Episode 52 Light Sword Emperor (9)

Jung Heewon couldn't understand why the giant had saved her.

The giant ran, carrying her in its massive side.

[Your incarnation body is badly damaged.]

Only after the waves of destruction had barely moved away did the giant place Jung Heewon on the ground.

[If you continue like this, you will die.]

Jung Heewon knew this. Her incarnation body had already reached its limit. To reach the end zone of the Fear Realm, she had exhausted her potential.

The reason she was still alive was clear.

[The story 'Regret, Exhaustion, Obsession', continues its storytelling.]

Her story was keeping her alive.

[What a peculiar story.]

Breaking the Sky Sword Master looked closely at Jung Heewon and asked.

[Is there someone you wish to save?]

Breaking the Sky Sword Master's 'Myeonggyeongmok' glowed brightly and began to read Jung Heewon.

[Are you perhaps an acquaintance of 'that child'?]

Jung Heewon slowly raised her head.

That child. Though the two syllables were nonsensical, Jung Heewon realized who it referred to.

"Do you know... Dokja-ssi?"

Breaking the Sky Sword Master nodded heavily and continued her brief story.

A man who suddenly appeared in the 'Fear Realm' one day. He joined the Transcendent Alliance, confronted the Great Nebulae and the King of Fear, and ultimately fell into the final Time Fault.

"We must meet."

Jung Heewon struggled to get up, but her body wouldn't respond.

[I repeat, you will die soon.]

Jung Heewon despaired.

She finally heard the story of the person she had longed to meet.

[Become my disciple.]

Breaking the Sky Sword Master spoke to her, who suddenly raised her head.

[If you inherit the 'immortality', you can survive.]

The moment she heard that voice, Jung Heewon instinctively realized. Perhaps she hadn't crossed this long path into the Fear Realm to meet this person.

Jung Heewon gasped for breath and asked,

"If I become your disciple, can I protect him?"

The words were so broken that it was impossible to understand. Nevertheless, Breaking the Sky Sword Master discerned the meaning within them.

[Do you know what it means to protect someone?]

Jung Heewon shook her head, and Breaking the Sky Sword Master spoke.

[If the person you wish to protect is attacked by a constellation, you must fight that constellation.]

Constellations. Jung Heewon now knew well about those terrifying stars.

[If the person you wish to protect is attacked by a nebula, you must confront that nebula.]

Nebula. A vicious group of terrifying constellations.

Breaking the Sky Sword Master continued,

[If the person you wish to protect is attacked by a world, you must fight that world.]

"I know. That's exactly what I intend to do."

[I don't know how to protect someone.]

No one, not even Breaking the Sky Sword Master, would know such a method. However, Breaking the Sky Sword Master extended a large hand and added,

[But I can teach you how to fight alongside someone when they face the world.]

From that day on, Jung Heewon studied swordsmanship under Breaking the Sky Sword Master near the central region of the Fear Realm.

[Breaking the Sky Ganggi], [Breaking the Sky Geomdo], [Jujak Sinbo], [Breaking the Sky Geomro].

With her exceptional talent, she quickly mastered all of Breaking the Sky's techniques.

[It's been a long time since I've seen a student who has mastered the basics so well.]

A swordsman with no major strengths, but no bad habits. That was Breaking the Sky Sword Master's assessment of Jung Heewon.

It was only natural.

Since the scenario began, Jung Heewon had trained only one swordsmanship skill.

[Kendo].

The path of the sword, to draw the fastest and most precise trajectory.

Breaking the Sky Sword Master observed her sword and showed her the path she should take.

[In the Breaking the Sky Swordsmanship, everyone shatters the heavens in different ways. Some shatter the heavens with flashy swordsmanship, while others cleave the heavens with an extremely refined single sword.]

She also heard a story about another disciple of the Breaking the Sky Swordsmanship.

Supreme King Yoo Joonghyuk.

The man she had been targeting, surprisingly, was her master's disciple.

"How much training does it take to become that strong?"

[That kid is special. He doesn't just have 'talent'.]

He doesn't just have talent.

Jung Heewon mulled over the meaning of that statement over and over again.

[Of course, you have incredible talent. It's been a while since I've seen an incarnation achieve 'transcendence' on their own.]

"But this isn't enough, is it?"

[What you need to overcome isn't his talent, but his time. If you want to beat him, you'll have to work several times harder than he does.]

"Still, that's the area I'm most confident in."

For several more years, Jung Heewon studied swordsmanship under the Breaking the Sky Sword Master. Through endless training and sparring, she learned the proper stance for the sword and how to confront the constellations.

[This has taught you all the basics, so from now on, it's up to you.]

"These are only the basics?"

[The basics are enough. Those 'basics' are your greatest strength.]

"But I haven't yet broken the sky."

[To break the sky, you first need to understand what it looks like.]

"So you're saying I should carry out the scenarios?"

Ultimately, this world is made of stories.

[The story, 'Regret, Exhaustion, Obsession', wants to continue its storytelling.]

And in this world made of stories, all incarnations must walk toward the completion of their stories. Only those who walk this lonely and arduous path to the end can overcome the limitations imposed by the <Star Stream> and become true transcendent beings.

[Yes, it's time to go back.]

With that, Jung Heewon and Breaking the Sky Sword Master left the Fear Realm.

Looking at her master's large back as she walked ahead, one sleeve fluttering in the wind, Jung Heewon pondered.

「Why did master sacrifice her own arm to save her?」

Of course, Breaking the Sky Sword Master had already answered.

[Because that's what chivalry is.]

But Breaking the Sky Sword Master's words were nothing more than a tautology.

[I saved you because I had to. That's all.]

Everyone knows that saving people is the right thing to do.

But is it really justifiable to sacrifice oneself to save someone just because it's the 'right thing to do'?

However, Jung Heewon liked Breaking the Sky Sword Master in that way.

And it wasn't simply because she had saved her.

Her master, with her back straight, looked up at the sky. Her back, unfazed by any starlight, served as a kind of guide for Jung Heewon. Proof of how far a single incarnation could rise in this terrifying world of the Star Stream.

No matter what enemies appeared before them, she felt safe as long as she was with her master. Learning swordsmanship by her side and growing stronger—she felt she could become proud when she met him again.

And ironically, her small hopes were finally shattered upon arriving at the 'New Murim District'.

Constellations of the narrative-grade surrounded her master.

The master, blood-red stories spilling from her eyes, faced a world to protect someone, and spoke.

[Run away, disciple.]

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In a hazy state of consciousness, the Light Sword Emperor suddenly regained consciousness. She couldn't remember when she'd lost consciousness.

Swish, stories poured out.

The shattered stories fell from her poisoned incarnation body. Her memories slowly reconstructed, and her master's last appearance came to her clearly.

「[Run, disciple.]」

An incarnation stronger than anyone she knew. She had reached the pinnacle of [Breaking the Sky Swordsmanship], a powerhouse who could even compete with the great narrative-grade constellations.

But even the Breaking the Sky Sword Master couldn't stand against [Fate].

"You were hiding there, Light Sword Emperor."

The Light Sword Emperor reflexively activated [Vermilion Phoenix Divine Treasure]. The ruined building she had been hiding in collapsed under the slash.

The swirling dust clouds were like the chaos of her mind.

Like someone trying to escape from a chasing memory, the Light Sword Emperor swung her sword. Her sword strikes were imbued with the stories she had experienced over the past few months.

「The time she lost her master and swung her sword like a madman.」

"I found it! It's Light Sword Emperor! Kaaaaaaak!"

「The time she killed an ascendant.」

"This is crazy! Get out of the way!"

"She's almost at her limit! Push her!"

「Becoming a wanted person in the 'New Murim District' and being called 'Light Sword Emperor'.」

"Too, too strong—"

"My arm! My arm! Aaaah!"

「Realizing the identity of the 'New Murim District', fighting against the corporations, and finally destroying the 'Orbital Elevator'.」

Even as the dust clouds turned into clouds of blood, the incarnations continued to surge forward without rest.

[The recorders cheering on the ascendants of the Great Nebulae are watching you.]

The terminal incarnations of the Great Nebulae. And the ascendants leading them were also visible.

Leading the charge were the Blood Jade Fist Demon Jo Jincheol and Paradise Saint Reinheit.

"As expected, she lives up to her reputation."

"Hahaha! We finally caught her, the Light Sword Emperor!"

As they joined the battlefield, already in the early stages of the narrative stage, the Light Sword Emperor gradually began to gain ground. It was difficult to fend off the attacks from the ascendants flying in from all directions. Blood spurted from her thighs and arms in an instant. Her breathing quickly reached the tip of her chin.

[Your incarnation body is in danger.]

Under normal circumstances, there would have been any way to escape. But now, her incarnation body was poisoned. Maintaining a prolonged battle with them was a huge burden.

'There's only one way.'

The Light Sword Emperor grabbed a sword that had fallen to the ground and poured all her magical power into the blade.

Breaking the Sky Swordsmanship.

Aura.

Breaking the Sky Ryu Seonggyeol.

The fragments of the sword shattered like meteors, piercing the bodies of the rushing ascenders.

"What—"

"Kwaaaaak!"

The golden energy of Breaking the Sky Ryu Seonggyeol swept through the battlefield like a storm. The unsuspecting ascenders rolled on the ground, clutching at their pierced chests, arms, and stomachs.

[The constellation, 'Monarch of the Small Fries', is astonished by the Light Sword Emperor's might!]

[The constellation, 'Bald General of Justice', is astonished by the Light Sword Emperor's might!]

[The constellations of the giant nebulae are astonished by the Light Sword Emperor's might!]

[Beware.]

A force that could sweep away ascendants who had reached the narrative-grade alone.

The Light Sword Emperor, who had let out the breath she had been holding, began to stagger forward.

'I'll get out of here.'

But the moment she turned around and was about to activate [Vermilion Phoenix Divine Treasure], something grabbed her ankle.

She felt the hairs on her body stand on end.

She felt as if her feet were fixed to the ground, unable to move. She felt a blazing heat from somewhere, and then the ground around her began to burn.

A vision that set the world ablaze with just a glance.

The Emperor of Light knew full well whose power this was.

[The constellation, 'Flame of Purification', glares at you.]

Slowly turning her head, she saw the radiant incarnation of the constellation there.

A storm of probability raged beneath the brightly open sky.

The constellation descended upon the incarnation of the suffering ascender.

[The constellation, 'Flame of Purification', descends upon the scenario area!]

A constellation that surpassed even the narrative-grade, looming over myth-grade. One of the eight Lokapalas of the great <Veda> was staring at her.

[Child, you have been too violent.]

The Flame of Purification, 'Agni'.

One of the Lokapalas of <Veda> who had imprisoned her master that day.

The Emperor of Light charged at Agni without hesitation.

If someone of the level of a Lokapala had appeared, there was nowhere to run. She had to confront her. Just like her master had done that day.

Transcendental Stage 4.

In an instant, her story exploded, taking over the entire area. The golden currents of energy contained in [Breaking the Sky Swordsmanship] surged forth.

Agni stared at the story of Breaking the Sky's swordsmanship flying towards him and said,

[Breaking the Sky Sword Master has a remarkable disciple.]

A swordsmanship strong enough to rip through the flames of Agni, one of the Eight Lokapalas, and inflict damage on his incarnation.

[If only a few more years had passed, another transcendent that would scorn constellations would have been born.]

It was a strike that would have been impossible to block if the target had been an ordinary narrative-grade constellation. Nevertheless, Agni parried the blow. It wasn't simply because Agni was a Lokapala of Vedas.

[You will die here.]

Because the laws of this world were not on the Light Sword Emperor's side.

[The recorders of this scenario declare 'Fate'.]

[Fate]. The damned curse that had bewitched her master had just been placed upon her.

「The Emperor of Light knew. She couldn't kill Agni now.」

「The poisoned body incarnation was breaking apart in real time.」

「The magical power, which had reached its limit, had long since been exhausted.」

Agni's two fists, momentarily on the defensive, moved as the sentences shackled her entire body. The Emperor of Light groaned at the fists imbued with a distant story. The pain felt as if her grip was being torn apart.

「With her end before her, the Emperor of Light thought.」

A fiery storm pounded through her entire body.

The shattered legend flowed ceaselessly from her.

「"Why did Heewon-ssi do that?"」

The fragments of the leaked legend swirled around her.

The question that had brought her here.

「"You could really die. You heard what kind of place it was. What exactly is that person?"」

She, speechless, was helpless before that question. But her sword answered her.

A sword she had swung to protect someone, or because she wanted to protect someone. That sword spoke for her.

「At least while she swung her sword for someone, she felt infinitely special.」

The thing that made her, a nobody, special.

It was once Cheon Inho, now Kim Dokja. Protecting him. The desire to protect him.

"I—"

Perhaps she hadn't sought him out for him. She simply wanted to continue feeling this special feeling.

「I saved you because I had to. That's all.」

At that moment, the Light Sword Emperor seemed to understand, even a little, her master's words. 'I saved you because I had to' wasn't just about righteousness.

「I save because I must, and I protect because I must.」

The truly important reason for living is bound to be tautological.

Her knees buckled, and Agni's fist approached.

「It was finally the end of the Light Sword Emperor.」

Even in her final moments, she didn't close her eyes. Instead, she stared proudly at the fist flying towards her.

Although she hadn't been able to protect what she wanted, she glared wide open to prove she hadn't given up.

And at that moment, Jung Heewon witnessed a strange sight.

「It was finally the end of the Light Sword Emperor.」

A sight she could witness because she kept her eyes open until the very end.

Agni's fist was slowly slowing down.

「It was finally the end of the Light Sword Emperor.」

The world was slowly becoming covered in black and white.

「It was finally the Light Sword Emperor」

Amidst a landscape as if pure white snow was falling, the sound of the rules of space and time breaking apart could be heard.

「It was finally the Light」

The sentences of [Fate] that had bound her were scattering. The skull mask covering her face clattered and fell.

「Finally」

What filled the void of her shattered fate was a single line written just for her in this world.

「Finally, Jung Heewon slowly raised her head.」

When had it been?

A small window had appeared before her eyes.

[The Recorder of Fear, 'The One Who Rewrites Eternity', requests a 'Recording Contract' from you.]