

Chapter 268 - Reunion with the Witch of the Wastelands

A trove of dazzling treasures.

Thereupon, "Gaoo~"

"Nya~"

Balmint and Rollo cried. It looks like they're interested in the gorgeous jewelry. Bal was apparently curious about a piece of jewelry with a disk-like, round part. Rollo unleashed a cat punch at a wire-like, thin metal piece. The punched wire rebounded, heading for Rollo. My partner suddenly jabbed it from below with her forepaw. I name it Paw Jawbreaker, an uppercut, no, I guess it's kinda like a corkscrew blow.

"Nn—— nyaoo."

"Gaooo."

The recoiling wire spring transformed into a natural punching machine. Rollo and Balmint got fully engrossed in it, transforming into small boxers.

...Now then, we've arrived at the Saldia Wasteland, but...there's no sign of the witch, Sazihali.

I recalled that I had hunted goblins in the wastelands here. ...I guess we'll wait for a while.

Grabbing the 24-faceted orb that had separated from the mirror, I put it away into my bandolier's pocket.

"Balmint, Rollo, don't veer off too far. We will wait here for Sazihali."

"N, gao~"

"Nn, nyaa."

Balmint was digging a hole at a place where ornaments were piled up. Rollo was giving him instructions while sitting on his head.

Just what are those two doing...?

Since I got some spare time, I summoned Divine Spear Ganghis. Then I worked on combinations of sweeping and thrusting with the spear in my left hand.

Next I slanted the moon-shaped spearhead diagonally upwards, and tested out the Wing Spear Style 『Jawbreaker』 technique, alternatively tearing the air apart from above and below. And after performing stepwork as if drawing a small semicircle on the wasteland's ground with the toes of my left foot clad in Arzen's Boots, I kicked so powerfully off the ground that a shockwave got released, jumping high into the air.

Imagining an enemy in midair, I switched to holding Ganghis with both hands, and continued to unleash a series of <Thrusts> while imagining the surekill technique Riko had shown me before.

Ganghis' spearhead pierced the soil, and I landed with one knee on the ground.

...As expected, I guess it's impossible. That might be a technique catered towards her.

Accordingly, I activated <Magic Hand guided by Thought>, and leaped while pulling Ganghis out of the ground. Creating <Magic Hand guided by Thought> in the air, I used its crooked mana hands as footholds, and moved up high into the air.

I stopped my training, trying to spot a dragon...I took an extensive view of the land. Should we go back for today as we couldn't meet Sazihali?

Just when I started to think about it...I spotted it, the figure of a huge, crimson dragon.

It was fighting a swarm of whales and jellyfish.

...After a short while, the dragon drew close to us while holding whale meat in its muzzle. A crimson, fierce dragon - that's Sazihali-san.

Let's go down to the ground, just in case.

Using <Magic Hand guided by Thought> again, I went down all the way to the ground at a nice rhythm. Waiting down there, Sazihali-san also got down while flapping her wings, and then immediately changed her form into that of an old dragon lady modeled after a human.

The red, diadem-like forehead protector was in the same place as in the past. Even her hair color was no different from before, a black color tinged with red. Her long hair, which spilled down on her back, swayed in the cross wind. She had wrinkles, but was still a beauty.

"...Hyahyahya, Shuuya Kagari. It's been a long time, no?"

"Sazihali-san, nice to meet you after a long while. Today I've brought someone along I'd like you to meet."

"...Me? The one called Witch of the Wastelands? —Hmm?"

Sazihali-san apparently sensed the mana close-by. She stared at the high ancient dragon Balmint.

"Balmint, Rollo, come here."

"Gaoo~"

"N, nya? Nyao."

Balmint stopped digging and ran over to me with Rollo still sitting on his head.

Since Balmint couldn't act spoiled by rubbing his own head against my shin, he instead stroked his four wings up and down against my shin.

"...The name of this small dragon is Balmint. He seems to be a kin of the high ancient dragons."

"The child of a high ancient dragon, you say? To see one after so many years. That sure comes totally unexpected."

Sazihali widened her eyes in surprise. And then she spotted the mark on my thumb, "You tied a contract with this child...?"

"Yes."

"Moreover, for it to be a high ancient dragon with four wings. None such dragons exist among the high ancient dragons I know of! It's my first time to see one like this. It's probably no mistake to assume that the child originates from a great, old dragon tribe..." Sazihali said with excitement dyeing her voice.

So she as an old dragon lady doesn't know either...? Well, Wild God Cazdolo mentioned another

continent.

"Will Balmint become able to use the dragon language magic, too?"

"I wonder. Even though it's from the same dragon species, it has a different appearance. What kind of appearance did the parent dragon, who gave birth to this child, have?"

"She was a huge dragon with four wings. She didn't transform into a humanoid when I saw her."

"...Hmm, I have two wings as you can see. This child seems to be intelligent, but if it comes to a different species, I really don't know whether it'll become capable of using it..."

"...Gao~ gaa."

Balmint moved at Sazihali's feet with cute motions, and formally greeted her.

"Oh my...dear, what adorable voice." Sazihali smiled.

She had a face that you could rather describe as the wrinkled face of a young woman than that of an old granny. I wonder how that works. Her expression is mysterious as it lets me feel youth and cunningness from it at the same time.

"...Nya."

Rollo separated from Balmint, and returned to me.

"N, gao~"

Balmint rubbed his head against Sazihali's knee, apparently sensing something from her.

"Oh my, oh my, what a spirited child...I'm Granny Sazihali, okay?"

Looking at her smiling face, it soothes my mind, but...she's a high ancient dragon that the neighboring countries cannot allow to live as she devastates their territories, isn't she?

"It seems that Balmint perceived through the smell that you're the same kind of dragon as him."

"Want to try living with this old dragon lady for a bit?"

"Gao~" Balmint replied, obviously agreeing.

"I see, I see." Sazihali stroked Balmint's head.

It'll be lonesome, but...he must learn the way of living as it's characteristic to a dragon to some extent, including how to catch prey. If she accepts him, it might be good to try leaving him with her.

"...Sazihali-san, can you look after Balmint?"

At that moment, Sazihali's expression turned womanly.

"...Yeah, it's embarrassing, but I understood this child's feelings."

Why is it embarrassing? That's what I asked myself, but...

"I think I won't be able to teach dragon language magic to this child, but if it comes to pride as a high ancient dragon, I will be able to manage somehow."

"Thank you very much. But, can I have you stop attacking humans indiscriminately?"

"...Why? They're food."

Sazihali-san furrowed her scale-like eyebrows, seemingly angry.

"I know. It's survival of the fittest. I'm fully aware that this is a world where survive by eating or being eaten..."

"So you do get it, don't you?"

"Well, I'm a monster who makes others my own by devouring their blood. But, I like women. That's why I won't attack humans indiscriminately. I'd like Balmint to adhere to this principle as well. I don't want him to consider people as nothing but food..."

Since I wasn't in the position of making requests here, I bore in mind to stay polite.

"...Kukukuku, what a selfish man you are. However, if it's the words of Shuuya Kagari, I will try to seriously accept them. I will teach him how to hunt monsters, how to fly in the sky, and the dignity of dragons, the rulers of the skies. However, if people attack us, we will mercilessly devour them, got it?"

That much is inevitable.

"Yes, of course. As long as you can get him to keep a minimum of morals, it will be plenty."

"N, nyaa, nyao."

"Gaogaoon——" Balmint cried sadly, apparently sensing that he would be separated from Rollo who was his mother's replacement.

She had changed into her black panther form. Her mother mode, huh?
Balmint turned around towards us, and briskly walked back to Rollodeen.

"Bal, if you want to be at our side..."

"Gao, gaon——"

Balmint moved his four wings left and right. I felt like he said 『That's not it gao』.
After licking Rollodeen's entire body with his long tongue, he rubbed his head against my shin as well.

I guess that's Bal's very own way of bidding farewell.
After rubbing his head, he looked up at my face with a single tear running from his round eyes.

"Gaoooooo." While crying, he sent his feelings at me with a draconic roar.

Thanks, Bal.

"I have received your feelings. You make sure to do your best as well."

"Gaoon."

After fawning on us, Balmint returned to Sazihali-san again.

"...Sazihali-san, please take care of Balmint."

"...Very well. I will take responsibility and make sure that he will be able to hunt by himself. The skies have lots of prey after all... I will teach him how to fly in the high, high, airless, black sky, and also the special way how to hunt the creatures up there."

Sazihali-san made her eyes transform into a reddish brown color, and gently looked at Balmint with mysterious patterns of triangular magic crests showing in her eyes.

"I plan to come back after a while. Is there something like a sign to let you know at that time?"

"Hmm, there is——"

Eh!? Did she lose her mind?

Suddenly Sazihali-san tore off her own right arm, and tossed it into midair. Moreover, she thrust her bloodstained left hand into her own chest. And then she pulled out her own heart...exposing it in front of her eyes...

Blood vigorously gushed out of her chest and the base of her right arm. Moreover, the right arm, she had tossed into the air, defied gravity and remained unnaturally still. Blood was trickling down from it with no end in sight..

Sazihali-san, who had become one-armed, poured her mana into the heart squirming on her left palm with her face twisting in pain.

In the next instant, the great amount of blood that had been released from the cut end, and her floating right arm, headed to her left hand, and then right arm and heart fused, transforming into a crooked end-blown flute.

Sazihali-san still looked pained. However, a new right arm grew out from the place where the old one had been ripped out, and the wound at her chest also closed up..

High ancient dragons are amazing. I wonder whether she actually possesses three, four or even five hearts.

"...This is Leyleba's Flute. It uses my grandmother's name. If you blow this flute at this place, I will immediately come back while bringing Balmint along——" With those words, Sazihali-san threw the flute towards me.

I caught her grandmother's flute. Sazihali-san also looks like a grandmother, but I won't point that out.

"...Well then, that's all, strong man Shuuya Kagari and divine beast."

"N, nyao~n."

"Let's meet again..."

Sazihali nodded at Rollodeen's voice. As if to leave a lingering memory of her parting words behind, she transformed into a fierce, crimson dragon in front of us.

Balmint and the dragon looked at each other, exchanging an eye signal.

It's picturesque...although they have different forms...they look like dragon parent and child.

"Balmint, keep at it. I will definitely come back once some time has passed! At that time we will soar through the skies together!" I yelled to hide my loneliness.

"Gao! Gaoooooooooo." Bal replied as a high ancient dragon, so as to fire himself up.

The mark on my right thumb shone as well. Bal...

"Nyaoooooo." Rollodeen meowed as well.

It's because she had warmed the egg, and given him plenty of breast milk. They also played around on the courtyard.

Afterwards Balmint looked up to the draconic countenance of Sazihali-san as if seeing his new mother in her. He extended and moved his four wings for dear life while shaking them in alternation, as if to imitate the wings on Sazihali-san's back. It looked as if he was showing her that he wanted to learn how to fly.

"I'm looking forward to the next time we meet..."

"Nyao."

Rollodeen meowed sadly, but somehow her face had a trace of dignity as mother.

Sazihali-san skilfully bit Balmint's nape as he was moving his wings, easily lifted him up, and placed him down at the back of her head. Immediately following, she spread her crimson wings, flapped them, obviously causing a gale, and flew high into the sky.

In the end her figure vanished from my sight...

Since I feel lonely, let's blow it...even though I just received it. I placed Leyleba's Flute at my lips, and tried to blow into it as a test.

Huh? How mysterious.

The instant I blew into it, a sound came out, but my mana was taken by the flute itself, and it felt like I kissed it.

At that moment Sazihali returned with a nose dive. She immediately changed into a human. As effect of that, the swellings at her chest, which looked plump like steamed buns, swayed seductively. Because of the costume she was wearing, the shape of her boobs was pretty distinct.

"——What is it!? Do you have any urgent business with me?"

She looked like an old dragon hag, but a red tinge was plastered on the surface of her cheeks.

"Gaoo." Balmint, who got off Sazihali's head, cried as well.

"Sorry, I just wanted to try blowing the flute as a test."

Upon my reply, Sazihali became expressionless, straightening her back like a plant, and then, "...I see, I see, you've got no business with me...kukukuku, don't fuck with me!

——Fadzurroagaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Oh shit, I pissed her off. It was draconic language magic that seemed to make her throat tremble. My body was engulfed by a sudden gust.

"Gaodzuroagao"

Balmint spread his mouth and adorably imitated her, but not more than a breath at the level of a sigh escaped his mouth.

"Shuuya Kagari. Even though I may look like this, I'm a woman, you know? If you make my heart throb like that, it wakes the urge in me to eat you."

An angry woman. I don't want to be eaten by a dragon hag. But, I feel like her way of being angry is slightly off.

"I'm sorry. Is there something to this Leyleba's Flute?"

"...Now you ask that?"

Sazihali-san glared at me with a force as if shooting a human to death with just her eyes. Her eyes changed from slit-eyes to something similar to demonic eyes. Their color turned even more dark red, and the mysterious patterns with the triangular magic crests began to rotate.

"Ah, no, forget I said anything."

"Kukukuku, it's too late for that. Perk up your ears properly, and listen really closely. Presenting someone Leyleba's Flute means...you acknowledge the other party as "man.""

Eh? Oh damn! It was a confession? So eating meant eating me as a man, eh?

"I-I see, so Sazihali-san, you..."

"Humph, in the first place, the act of entrusting a contracted dragon child itself is already a confession of love!"

Eehh? I didn't know that...

"...I hadn't known of that."

"And, when placing your mouth on Leyleba's Flute, Shuuya Kagari, your breath connected with my heart...it's become a contract now. Ufufufun."

Holy granny, no, holy shit, I'm totally confused. Her tone has somehow become quite youthful... As I looked at Leyleba's Flute, I saw my name inscribed on it. Sazihali-san's as well. ...It seems that our hearts got connected without me noticing. I suppose it's the outcome of having my mana and kiss stolen.

"Gaogaon." Balmint talked to Sazihali-san.

"Sure, I gotcha. You want to fly through the sky, right? But, first we've got to get away from the folks of **【Zelubia Kingdom】**, I think. The destination will be...I guess we'll go to that place... By the way, Shuuya Kagari, man tied with me, you can come a long for a bit if you don't want to bid farewell yet."

"That's fine?"

For me this option might be better.

"I don't mind. That way Balmint won't be sad either, right?"

"Kyu, gao."

Balmint screamed in a cute and heartrending manner, seemingly having recalled his childhood. ...Bal.

"Well then, Rollo, transform. Let's follow Sazihali-san."

As soon as Sazihali-san heard those words, she transformed into a dragon...not. As if remembering something in the middle of transforming, she returned to a human shape.

"Since I'm close, don't blow that flute anymore, okay?"

"Oh, okay."

Sazihali-san's face became bright red all the way to her nape. Her scaly costume had been reddish to begin with, but it was quite obvious nonetheless. Does she actually want me to blow the flute? Maybe she's acting tough.

When I tried to bring the flute close to my mouth, "Hey, that was no joke. Stop it."

"Oh, okay."

"What's with that reply? You're messing around too much all the time. Want to be eaten?"

"Oh, okay...that was a joke."

"Kukukuku, you sure got guts..."

It might be inevitable going by the flow of events...

"Gaoooo."

"Nyaoo."

When I was peacefully flirting around with Sazihali-san, Balmint and Rollo went in to stop it.

"...You're an odd man, despite having style. Well then, I will fly ahead." Sazihali-san said with a sigh, and while freely showing me her legs, pulling up her longhair, and laughing, she transformed into her draconic form.

Rollo also changed from her black panther form into a huge lion-shaped black cat. Rollodeen extended big, black wings to the sides from her torso.

"Gyaaaao."

"Gao."

Sazihali yelped in surprise at Rollodeen's big size as a divine beast. However, that surprise lasted but a moment, and just like a while ago, Sazihali-san placed Balmint on the back of her head. Then she roared in my direction as if telling me, 『Let's go, follow me』, and jumped after spreading her wings.

I jumped on Rollodeen, straddling her back with the soft black fur. Rollodeen extended the rein tentacle, and attached its flat tip to my neck.

The instant I shared her senses, Rollodeen put strength into her limbs, and jumped into the sky with a force that burst open the ground. In the blink of an eye the back of the red dragon flying ahead of us came into sight.

She had a thick, splendid tail. It reminded me of Rollo, but maybe it has a function similar to an airplane's radar. Moreover, I learned that the dragons of this world had an imposing butthole.

...I knew that already, though.

If Sazihali-san were to poop here, I...ended up imagining something disgusting. The divine beast Rollodeen sensed it. Reading the mood, she headed over next to Sazihali-san.

Well done, Rollo.

But it looks like Rollodeen is superior in flight speed.

"Nyaaaaaaaa." Rollo rejoiced.

She had been sending to me her feelings of wanting to fly through the sky for a while now. On this occasion I will enjoy the sky as a fighter plane pilot while at the same time going on a stroll with her.

With the image on booting up the battle fairy, I touched the attachment next to my right eye, activating the Kaleidoscope.

Now then, I guess I'll leave Sazihali in the dust. Let's fire the afterburner so strongly that it'll make this blue sky tremble!

It's a dance with an angel!