

## Chapter 269 - Sazihali's Domain

We advanced through the transparent blue sky at a terrifying speed, as if heading for some sky island. As we broke through a towering cirrus cloud, the scattered cloud vanished as if escaping from us.

Sazihali was also fast in her draconic form. Just when I thought that we had overtaken her after firing the afterburner, I found her flying next to us.

However, as I didn't know our direction, I reflected on the point of Rollodeen flying in the lead. Rollo's feeling of joy and happiness over the flight erupted while being transmitted into my mind. After gently stroking the black fur on the back of the divine beast I was straddling, I had her fall back a bit.

The sight of the Kaleidoscope was clear. It was also possible to zoom in. Even the figure of the crimson dragon flying next to us was actually real.

Each and every single scale on her skin had a minutely different shape. No sooner than I believed to have found a scar, it was a crest that had been engraved onto her skin's surface through small unevennesses in the scales. There also existed parts that had taken on a shape similar to weapons at the tips of her protruding bones...interesting.

Her length was equal to that of around four wyverns combined. She was a size bigger than the Evil Dragon King, too. It's no wonder the "high" signifies a rank up compared to an ancient dragon, after all.

Therefore I focused on the ∇ mark on the line bordering Sazihali-san, making her stats show up.

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Napalm High Life Form exKi7?###

Brain Waves: stable

Body: exalted

Gender: female

Overall Physical Strength: 3210

Elenium Integration: 8924933

Weapons: present

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Wow! Those are just numbers, but what's amazing remains amazing. It's still too early to make a conclusion, but is she the strongest life-form in this world, on this planet?

Her Elenium is high, but her Physical Strength is unprecedented. Even the image of her internal body after having been scanned is also awesome...it's tightly crammed with bones and muscles. It seems her physical strength radically drops in her human form, though.

Even Pax, who had become equal to a bug as a disciple of Evil God Hyuriox, had a far lower Physical Strength value.

The strongest so far...was Rulizeze of the Cyculse race, if I recall correctly. But, she's ultimately a humanoid, after all.

The scales covering her skin's surface might be taken into consideration for the value of Physical Strength as well, but in the end, the plain, strongest individuals are ancient dragons...

For me to make jokes towards someone like that...I felt how my spine froze.

I think I could win if I fought while using everything at my disposal, but I don't want to feel such pain like during the battle against the Evil Dragon King, or the evil god's fragment.

No, wait, it might unexpectedly work out with Hal'Konk's defensive power, a three or four spear style using Ganghis, Baldok, and Magic Hand guided by Thought, and Murasame. If it comes to ranged combat, I'd also have my chains, light chains, ancient magic, and ice magic at hand, right?

No, no, let's keep the idea of a battle to an imaginary possibility in my mind. Sazihali-san is going to be Balmint's teacher, and as there's also Leyleba's Flute...I've become connected to her.

It looks like I ended up forming a marriage-styled contract, so I want to get along with her. She's a beauty and a dragon hag, but the flexibility of the Boobs Committee is vast. I guess I should carve a new history onto the pages of the scriptures.

At that point I touched the attachment at my right eye, returning to my normal sight by deactivating the Kaleidoscope. While enjoying the scenery of the normal sky, I turned my eyes towards the small and quiet figure of Balmint as he rode on the back of Sazihali's head.

Bal was restlessly moving the four wings growing on his back. Maybe he was overlapping the image of him flying through the sky with the figure of the flying Sazihali-san. Or he might be moving them while communicating with her through a telepathic ability shared between dragons.

At that moment Sazihali changed the state of her two wings into a shape similar to the wings of the Concorde, and kept rising while spiraling her body up.

Rollodeen countered undaunted by speeding up as well.

After putting away Leyleba's Flute into my item box, I drew a blood message into the air with my left hand, contacting my <Head Servant Leaders>.

『I have introduced Balmint to Sazihali-san, and she decided to take care of him. I'm accompanying them since I'm worried』

At the end I added, 『I will come back home soon』.

『Hee, as expected of the dragon race! It looks like she's gonna become Balmint's new mum. It'll be a bit lonely, but I'm glad to hear it. I was worried as Bal-chan was way too docile for a dragon. Oh, rather than that, I got cautioned by Sanya-san, err, Instructor Sanya that my balance is bad judging by the way I walk, when she was teaching me the Kulbul Boxing Style. That's why I'm practicing the walking style instructor taught me. It appears this walking method - I think that's what it's called - is a basic of martial arts, but...』

Rebecca wrote a drawn-out essay about martial arts. She appears to plan becoming a sorceress and martial artist who's good at close and ranged combat in the future.

『Understood, Master. After doing my normal training session, I went on a walk through the shopping district while doing market research and at the same helping the Great Knights with their investigations. I looked for beverages like ten-ten-dutea, and the magic jars, which you had used for making ice cream after obtaining them the other day, Master. As I'm also looking for dwarven language books and books about rare, old languages, I'm going to try expanding my search towards the Magic District.』

Viine sent me a reply.

Book search? Hobbies are important. Viine might also have a lifework which only she enjoys. Using your own time for yourself, this is something essential. In addition, it'll make her a cool woman, and one I can respect for possessing a resolute strength. Love is something you give without asking for compensation, and I'm receiving plenty of it from her.

If she's searching for a magic tool for my sake, she's investigating various things for me, albeit market research might be a hobby of hers as well.

『Nn, my regards to ancient dragon-san. Do your best, Bal-chan. We're in the middle of gathering ingredients in the Great Prairie. We encountered adventurers with bad manners who picked a fight with your combat slaves here. That's why I punished them with my tonfa. But, Kaldo got angry, and destroyed all their arms, shaved off all the hair on their heads. Since he chastised the adventurers with such bloodshot eyes that even I got scared while saying, 「You know whose combat slaves you're meddling with here?」, it felt somewhat refreshing. If Yui hadn't stopped him, the adventurers might have died』

Eva's reply was simple. Or rather, such an incident happened, huh? I would have wanted to watch that.

『Roger. All the best to Bal-chan. In the future he's probably going to become the Lucival family's guardian dragon. So, as you've heard, I'm currently in the middle of gathering ingredients for Eva's restaurant. In the middle of that Dad snapped at hoodlum adventurers, and it became troublesome in various ways, but...you can have a peace of mind since the food gathering is proceeding at a good pace. There's many things about monster combat I can learn from the combat slaves as it's different from interpersonal combat. So, it's completely unrelated to the hunting talk, but...today I heard about blood mana from Veronica. She taught me, 「You've got no choice but to gather different blood, repeatedly use Pheremone's Touch, and raise your own skills in martial arts and magic」, for opening the second gateway. 「Anyway, if there's a skill that quickens growth it's a different matter, but there's no point in getting impatient since it usually takes time」, she said. That's why I'll do my best at training martial arts and monster hunting with my new katana』

It seems Yui has gotten in touch with Veronica.

『Master, if possible, I'd like to have scales of a high ancient dragon. I'm curious about their ecology. Ah, but I've got a fair share of things on my side as well...I'll have you listen to my complaints a bit, okay? The student Mia got injured. She was alright since a healing potion was applied in time, though. For there to exist students that try to kill their opponent despite it being a mock battle...her opponent was a black-haired girl with the name Silvie who's also referred to as genius. She's the daughter of a high-ranking noble, and a beautiful female student, but...I can't forgive her for trying to kill a student I favor. It made me reflexively think that I might as well sock her good one using my Lucival blood. She's become cocky since she also defeated a martial arts instructor. If you come here to be a temporary teacher, master, it'd be really great if you could give Silvie and her followers, who are getting carried away, a harsh lesson in the name of martial arts guidance... Ah, I'm not telling you that you have to do it. I'm known as a gentle, sweet teacher or a bookworm. Besides, it'd stand out as strange if an amateur made a move here... There's many noble ladies in this academy, and as it is, my name is just Mysty... There might even be children knowing about my past in Hekatrail. Hence, I don't want them to investigate my past by doing something uncalled-for. Well, if I get exposed, so be it. It will allow me to devote my time to research while secluding myself in the mansion. So, about that mansion, as a story unrelated to the academy, I've planned to build a sorcery doll together with Zaga and Bon-kun. I must finish a blueprint that includes Munjay's Heart for that sake after this... I also want to experiment mixing crystal powder while gradually soaking it with my mana and blood as well as the mysterious white meat... So that's why, tell Bal-chan in my stead: 「Mischievous Bal-chan! I have scolded you in the past, but in truth I love you!」. Considering he won't pull any pranks anymore in my workshop...I feel very sad. Even

now I have tears in my eyes, but...but in the end it's for the sake of Bal-chan. I'm also going to advance the research of the mysterious dragon metal that child created by peeing on it. Lastly, I want to fly through the sky with the grown-up Bal-chan.』

Mysty appears to have no time thanks to her school work and research. I'm kinda curious about that black-haired genius student...

It might be a good idea to go see that beautiful female student while at the same time teaching martial arts at the academy someday.

『Humph! How did you manage to get acquainted with something like a high ancient dragon? In the past I've seen the old dragon ridden by Oseberia's crown prince from afar...anyway, about the matter with my bloodkin...I confessed to Mel and Benett about my blood! Then they said that it'd be alright for them to become my bloodkin. That's why I plan to turn them into my bloodkin soon♪ Guildmaster, you said I wouldn't really need to inform you about it, but I wanted to tell you in advance, just in case. You're my beloved Lucival god after all♪ Well, I've sent you a message because I was also asked about my bloodkin several times by Viine, but moments ago I also heard from Viine that Mel would be good as strategist for something called Holy Lucival Empire...guildmaster, do you truly plan to found such a country?』

Veronica's ascension to empress, huh? However, Viine...she never mentioned something like to me...I guess she got influenced by Helme.

Immediately after I finished the blood message exchange with my bloodkin in such a tune, we encountered a struggle for survival with countless monsters fighting, such as small dragons, wyverns, a dragon possessing snail-like eyes, several winged rock giants, a flock of life-forms owning six wings on their backs and round eyes that were similar to raccoons or squirrels that had grown big, a rectangle object so hairy that it was scary, sauries, jellyfish, and big whales.

Sazihali-san unleashed a fierce roar and charged at those monsters. She sank her fangs into her target as if swallowing it whole, and devoured it.

As if ignoring anything that didn't interest her, she blew away a flying squirrel-shaped monster by ramming it, and obviously crushing it in the process. The hard scales of the crimson dragon were turned into a weapon.

However, even after a crimson, fierce dragon had appeared, the monsters didn't try to escape, and kept fighting her... Quite the gutsy monsters, eh? Though I feel like it's rash and reckless...

Next Sazihali-san released a merciless roar at those monsters. She caused a fire breath similar to that of Rollodeen burst out from her muzzle.

Crimson flames that made one feel like being in a sea of fire dominated the area. The monsters on the left side were annihilated by it. Next she transformed the ends of her scales into sharp stakes, and shot a huge amount of those at a big whale in front of her.

The big whale was one-sidedly crushed to death as if getting squashed by rock piles. She unleashed a directional whirlwind from her wings at a rock giant, chopping it up so that it looked like it had been sliced apart by sharp blades.

She showed me a scenery of unilaterally overrunning the monsters. She's the very definition of a sky king, the supreme ruler of the heavens.

Even though Sazihali-san was moving through the air with terrifying maneuvers like a fighter plane, Balmint, who was sitting at the back of her head, didn't show any signs of falling off as if his butt was stuck to Sazihali-san's scales due to a powerful magnet.

I can't see it from my position, but has Sazihali-san coiled invisible tentacles or transparent strings around Balmint's body? It might also be some kind of contrivance characteristic to dragons that doesn't allow one to fall off.

It's not that we were inspired by Sazihali-san's amazing combat style, but Rollo and I also joined the air battle. I separated from Rollodeen as if having some fun at skydiving.

While sensing the gravity pulling my body downwards, I created crooked mana hands as foothold. Using those hands, I dashed through the sky by performing hops, steps, and high jumps in midair while targeting the flock of strange, saury-shaped birds fighting a huge whale which caught my attention.

At the same time as I extended my right hand, I focused on the Blue Eye on my shoulder dragon. The one blue eye of the dragon head might be shining.

In the next instant, I cast 《Frozen Dragoness》 while pouring a grand amount of mana into it.

Alongside an instantaneous drop of the surrounding temperature, ice pillars in the shapes of dragon heads were created from the tip of my arm.

However, it was different from usual. I don't know whether it was proof of me having grown, or because I had poured too much mana into it, but the dragon heads weren't Asia-styled serpents with ice tails and fins, but instead transformed into a hydra with multiple heads. A multi-headed ice dragon had been created.

Countless ice fangs that seemed to be as sharp as glass grew out across its whole body, and while rotating itself in a spiral to capitalize on those fangs, the dragon flew in an arc through the sky, heading for my target. The ice dragon violently crashed into the targeted whale. The impact sound piercingly roared across the sky.

The dragon shape froze the atmosphere in an instant, creating a world of ice in midair. As if to break that, a myriad of ice needles, freezing snow, and polished ice similar to mirrors shot off into the vicinity. Fragments of the frozen big whale were mixed in among those as well.

No traces of the saury-shaped birds were left behind.

Even Sazihali-san, who had witnessed this overwhelming, picturesque ice scenery, stopped moving while holding her prey in her mouth. Then she turned her crimson head in my direction, and while swallowing her prey down by extending her head, she hurled a roar at me, as if saying 『Nice one!』. The wind of her roar reached all the way to me. What an amazing roar.

Rollodeen answered that fierce roar with a "Nyaoooooon" of her own in my stead, but Sazihali-san swooped down on another monster without even looking our way.

Bah, I don't have the spare time to watch either. Right now and here, there's a dog fight going on all around me.

A raccoon monster, which had been outside the ice spell's range, tried to attack me who might have looked defenseless to it. It transformed the part from its lower body half to the feet into the shape of a hard-looking drill. Many drill-shaped bone fangs were ejected from its drill leg, attacking me.

I activated <Magic Hand guided by Thought> while summoning Baldok into my right hand. Using the mana hand as a scaffold, I dodged the army of drill fangs at hair's breadth by dancing through the sky. As some grazed Hal'Konk, green sparks were scattered.

In exchange for me who was busy dodging, Rollodeen extended many tentacles from her whole body, counter attacking the raccoon. The raccoon-shaped life-form was stabbed by tentacle bone swords across its entire body.

It had turned into a beehive, but it was still alive. Quite the tough one.

Even with its wings penetrated and bloodied, it barely managed to stay airborne. But, that was just the right moment.

I glared at the flying raccoon that had launched an attack against me as it was unsteadily floating around in front of me.

At that moment, after amassing Magic Combat Style at my feet, I kicked off the mana hand with such a force that a dull sound could be heard in the vicinity, suddenly accelerating towards the bloodstained raccoon.

I twisted my body while putting strength in my right hand, which was grasping Baldok, mid flight,

and focused on my back muscles as if I was going to perform a "Tornado" pitch. After confirming the raccoon's head, which had approached so close that it was filling my whole sight, I rotated vertically, and activated <Powerful Slash> while placing the rotational power into my halberd. The red ax blade dug into the raccoon's head, bisecting its body vertically right in half. Light brown blood sprayed out of the raccoon's corpse that turned into two chunks of flesh.

I landed on one knee on a mana hand I had created. As expected, contrary to the labyrinth world, no magic stones will conveniently pop out even if you defeat a monster. However, I'll gladly accept the blood.

Kicking off the mana hand, I jump towards the space where the blood is flying. While my sight became dyed in blood, I focused on <Blood Path - Open First Gate>, and absorbed all the blood around me into my body.

Alright.

Once I looked around me, one of the flying raccoon or squirrel-shaped monsters had been defeated, but there were still many more monsters in the vicinity.

Divine Beast Rollodeen seemed to be interested in a flock of saury-shaped monsters that had been flying around elsewhere...

Watching the actions of the flock, she restlessly moved her head around with saliva dripping through the sharp fangs peeking out of her mouth, and then she chased after them, leaving me in the dust.

I can fully understand her feelings. They look like fish, so they might look delicious to her.

...I guess I'll go for it as well. I think I'll aim for the fellows in the opposite direction.

I decided to aim for the site where a multi-colored, flying raccoon and the terrifyingly hairy, rectangle object were fighting.

This time I'll go with a collaboration of light and darkness. I won't use my usual <Chain>. I activated five instances of <Chain Spear of the Ray System> at a distance. Next I created countless <Dusk's Stakes>.

The rectangle life-form seemed to use its hair as a weapon, just like its appearance suggested. The five light spears approaching the monster were completely swallowed by that damn mass of hair and stopped in flight. The rear parts of the light spears split apart and turned into light nets, but even that was blocked with the nets being entangled by countless hair strands.

However, even though the hair tried to entangle the swarm of dark stakes, which rushed in with a slight delay, it was in vain. At first their momentum was stopped by the hair just like the light spears, but since the dark stakes kept clashing many times against the hair strands trying to entangle them, the hair continued to be extinguished as if getting burned by the friction, each time it clashed with the stakes.

One by one, the hair strands disappeared, obviously being whittled down by the stakes. The rectangle object formed by hair strands gradually fell apart.

The flying raccoon was also stabbed by many dark stakes, and once a part of its wings was torn apart, its movements became dull.

I suppose I'll go for the finisher here. It will consume quite a bit of mana, but...

With the intention of rounding up all the surrounding monsters, including those two, I activated <Thousand Palms of Darkness>. The darkness stakes, that transformed into a thousand hands of a black thousand-armed Kannon figure, didn't only swallow up and crush the two weakened monsters, but the surrounding monsters as well.

With this, the majority of the monsters are gone.

Sazihali defeated the last big whale by eating it, and flew ahead.

Maybe because she thought that she would be left behind, Rollo stopped chasing the saury-shaped monsters, and came back. Looking at my face, she meowed, "Nyaaa", as if telling me 『Get back on quickly nya』.

— I'm already on it even without you telling me.

I jumped on Rollodeen's back as she came close while circling. Rollodeen then flew through the sky at a terrifying speed, pursuing Sazihali.



The change of the landscape visible below was extreme. We had already passed the wastelands, crossed the ridgeline of an unknown hill, and passed above a place that seemed to be some city with conspicuous white houses plastering the hill's slope like a flock of birds.

Just when high mountains came in sight...Sazihali-san dropped her speed.

The sun was hidden behind the mountains' edge. As if taking the fact that it had become night with stars twinkling in the sky as signal, she swooped down into a valley.

On this occasion, the chirping of skylarks reached my ears from a part of the mountains.

A cliff with a flat slope, similar to a ski area, became visible at the top.

Sazihali-san went around to the bottom of the cliff side, which changed into a steep precipice that carved its contours into the starry night sky, instead of the top of the slope, and quietly landed on the ground after releasing mana at her feet.

While inclining Rollo's rein tentacle diagonally, I had her turn towards the bottom of the towering cliff. I performed a landing by making Rollo slide from the flank to the subterranean area in front of the cliff's bottom. During that time, the claws at Rollo's paws shaved off the ground while sliding, creating a brake trace.

Sazihali-san won't get angry, right?

"—This way."

Sazihali-san had returned into her human shape. Turning on her heels, she walked into the cliff's bottom while taking Balmint with her.

She didn't particularly mention the scratch marks caused by Rollo.

Suddenly, a light automatically illuminated the path above Sazihali-san's head. Has it reacted to her?

"Okay."

I checked the area while answering...

The cliff's bottom, where Sazihali-san and Balmint were walking, narrowed the further you headed inside, and ended in a cave. The cliff's bottom was formed by rock bordered in an oval shape. The rock's color was obsidian. It became a wall that had a design of being created by systematically shaving down the obsidian with a tool.

Beneath traces of raindrops that had streamed down through chutes was a beautiful cistern. Even now water kept dropping into it. Apparently it had rained not long ago. The sound of water echoed throughout the cave like whispers. Objects similar to slimes were floating in that cistern, though...

Ignoring the buoyantly floating objects, I gazed at a new light. It came from the root of an alcove bordered by smooth curves. A worn-out aromatic tree, large plates, vases, bundles of parchments, and books were disorderly placed in a corner of the wall.

Given the dust piling up on the aromatic tree, and the heaps of dirt, I could feel that this place had been neglected for a long time.

At that point...I shifted my eyes outside the cliff. The mountains' shape melted into the night sky

with the ridgeline being shrouded in darkness.

The visibility might be better with the Kaleidoscope, but I invoked <Night Vision>. It looked as though lushly green mountains were lining up in a row like folding screens. It truly had the atmosphere of a hermit's recluse.

I could spot magic source responses, but no people. Locals might live on the other side of those mountains, though...

"...Don't worry, unlike close to the city, you won't see Eykhan's Desert Knights, the desert's Muryu race, Zelbia's Griffon Unit, dragoons, and hired adventurers around here. However, it's necessary to pay attention to the believers of demigod Geronas, and the believers of the Abrahnam-based Wild God Geshmyr, especially because Geshmyr is on Azra's side. If you enter the sphere of their temples, you will be attacked without any questions asked, without minding whether you're from Zelbia or Eykhan. Completely unrelated to those religions, lizardmen, sebumun, mermaids, and underground labyrinths inhabited by a black-haired sorcerer and mysterious familiars, who mainly confront the hazard and whom I help every now and then, exist, but they shouldn't deliberately approach my domain."

Sazihali-san explained so that I could understand the current situation as she had apparently noticed me scanning the vicinity while looking back at me.

I put together my legs as if performing a pommel horse performance, and jumped on the ground from Rollodeen which I had been straddling.

I'm curious about the black-haired sorcerer she's been helping, but still, Wild God Geshmyr and Azra's side...huh? Cazdolo's words that he'd like me to not join Azra's side reverberated in my mind like a chant.

Immediately after I thought about that, Rollo returned to her cat form.

"Nn, nyao."

For a change, Rollo didn't come on my shoulder. She meowed while looking up at Sazihali-san in front of her with keen interest. Sazihali-san answered Rollo with a smile.

Are the wrinkles on her face gradually disappearing? I feel like her beauty level is steadily rising... It might be an effect of the contract. Maybe my preferences are being passed on to her through the flute or something... That flute is inside my item box, though.

It made my heart race a bit. I canceled <Night Vision>, and asked about something that bothered me while not showing those feelings on my face.

"...I never heard the name Wild God Geshmyr, but I heard that the wild gods split into two camps and fought each other in the past."

Hearing my words, Sazihali-san's expression completely changed. She sent a sharp look my way.

"...Huh, you knew about the Great Abrahnam War, the battle between Ho-Oh and Azra, caused by the wild gods of old?"

I guess I'll ask her without beating around the bush.

"Yes. To which side do you belong, Sazihali-san?"