

Chapter 270 - New Magic Books

"Kukuku...the way you're asking...sure sounds worried."

Well, of course. Balmint's mother Ronbalua is a high ancient dragon serving the Wild God Cazdolo.

"...Yes."

"A handsome man with a sharp glint in his dark eyes, eh...? But, don't fret. I don't belong to any side...however, I guess you could say my mind inclines towards Ho-Oh's faction."

That's great. You could call Balmint's bloodline to be on Ho-Oh's side. I've also been asked to give my support to Ho-Oh's side.

"Oh, I see. Your mind means..."

"Granny Leyleba fought several times against Wild God Geshmyr and his apostles. And Granny Leyleba told me in a strict manner, 「The high ancient dragons have lost many brethren due to the conflict between the wild gods! It was a totally useless quarrel! No matter which side's wild god, I'm going to crush them all!」. Even after my spirited granny died, that conflict still seems to be going on... There are powerful demigods, cursed gods, and wild gods, including Wild God Geshmyr in this area. It's necessary to be careful since especially Azra's side, including its believers, picks fights with the gods of the divine domain and the spirit world all over the place. Well, there's many Azra believers heading to their own demise thanks to that, but still..."

So that's what the previous warning was about, eh?

"...Does Demigod Geronas have many believers that are just like that?"

"Yes. They are turning temples with disgusting forms into their strongholds. Likewise they're part of the folks launching attacks against the underground labyrinth where the black-haired female magician, whom I help out every now and then, lives. I saw the figures of the demigod's manservants on those occasions, but I can't really say that I really like their appearance much."

The magician is a woman, huh? I'm kinda curious, especially since she's got black hair...
Oh, come to think of it, slimes have been floating in the cistern...

"There were slimes in the cistern..."

"I see. It's probably a message. Well, it's because I neglected this place for a while...it looks like the fight is still going on."

"Is it fine for you to not take a look?"

"Yea, don't worry. I'm the Witch of the Wastelands. I'm basically evil. As I only help her when I feel like it, there's no obligation for me to do so in particular. Besides, right now the being with whom I tied a contract for the first time in my life is in front of me, and there's also Balmint, a very important high ancient dragon child."

The power in her eyes as she looked at me was intense.

"Also, for me, who lived for a long time as nothing but an incarnation of evil chaos...this is a novel mission. You see, at this point, you two have already become more important than anything else... Back then I made fun of it, but thinking back now, the words of that woman who called herself "Lamenting Sage" might have been no lie..."

It looks like someone called lamenting sage exists.

The words of Sazihali were the truth. Dignity and melancholy were transmitted through them. They made me feel an absolute truth through an old might that lived through eternity. She should become a good mother for Balmint.

"...I'm slightly relieved."

"Kukuku, what an honest man you are, one with the eyes of night, Shuuya Kagari."

"It's for our cute Bal, so Rollo offered her boobs, and all of my bloodkin also pampered him."

Besides my mana, I also gave him my blood, albeit by coincidence.

"I see. Even the divine beast... Which reminds me, earlier, when I saw the divine beast's huge figure, it startled me so much that I almost buckled over...hmm? Does that mean you gathered the divine relics, the treasures of the twilight of the gods...the miraculous items you mentioned when we met for the first time?"

I'm gathering them, for the sake of keeping my promise with Rollo. I ran through the Great Forest of Demonic Haunts while refusing the plea of a beauty in the Holy Kingdom.

"...I certainly gathered various things, had a conversation with Plant Goddess Sadeyula and Earth God Gaia, received a certain sake, and had Rollo drink it."

"If you interacted with the gods of Seuros who won't meddle with the transient world unless it's something very important...you must be a tremendous man after all. Shuuya Kagari, are you a person as they appear in fairy-tales? Hyahyahya, for me to have formed a contract with such a man...gufufu."

Uoh, at the end of her remark, suddenly a fierce pressure... Also...have the wrinkles on Sazihali-san's face decreased even further? Even if I were told that she's in her twenties, I wouldn't be able to rebuke...

"——Nyao."

Rollo-san had transformed into her black panther mode. Understanding that we were talking about divine beasts, she put on a proud expression, and then extended black tentacles from within the fluffy black fur at her neck towards the rejuvenated Sazihali-san.

Her tentacles touched Sazihali-san all over her body as if stroking her. Even while being caressed, she didn't budge at all, just like Kaldo before. She didn't even blink.

Suddenly the flat end of a tentacle tightly attached itself to her cheek, gently stroking it.

At the same time, she grabbed a flat tentacle with a hand, and carefully massaged its backside. ...In the end even an old dragon can't win against the charm of the pads on the tentacle's backside.

"I see, I see...with the gods, that's amazing, yep, yep. It was a delicious sake, wasn't it?"

Rollo had apparently transmitted her feelings to Sazihali-san. Did she also talk about the union between Sadeyula and Gaia? Sazihali-san spoke to Rollodeen with a smile.

"Nn, nyaon."

Rollodeen-san, with a triumphant look, retracted her tentacles.

While looking at Sazihali-san who was smiling in a good mood, "...About our talk just now, there are several underground labyrinths around here, right?"

"Shuuya, one who talked with the gods, are you also interested in them just like the other humans?"

"I am. After all I'm currently living in 【Labyrinth City Pelneet】."

"A name I don't know. Is it one of the cities located beyond the Mahaheim Mountain Range, far in the south, I heard about before? I know of several labyrinth cities myself as well. The 【Bug Labyrinth City Hanbrain】 that's protecting 【Zelbia Kingdom】 from an invasion by the 【Barbarian Kingdom Donred】. I've heard that the 【Hidden Shrine of Chandola】 of the 【Eykhan Kingdom】 in this place is connected through a mysterious path with the labyrinth of the Religious State. And, it's not a city anymore, but in the far, far northeastern lands from here...lay a labyrinth located in an underground city which was destroyed through the a night raid by a demonic army which had appeared from a Black Ring. It's something from quite a long time before that, but the Lamenting Sage Christ, who lives in a forest close to that labyrinth, told me, 「There exists a fated partner for you as well as me」..."

Black Ring and Lamenting Sage, eh? I remember that there was a similar description in one of the literary fragments of the Giants, which I found in my item box. This world is huge...there's something to be found everywhere.

"Also, I don't think it's related, but the black-haired magician talked in a way as though she also knew the area around there."

It's not a subliminal effect, but I've become curious about that magician who has come up several times now.

"...Can I meet with that black-haired magician?"

"Kukuku, because she has black hair like you? It looks like she piqued your interest."

"You're right."

Because she has black hair, she's maybe...

"Very well. I will take you along later after looking at her message."

"Thank you. I think I'll return to my mansion after talking with that woman for a bit... By the way, this place looks more like a historic ruin than a house..." I commented while tracing the obsidian-like rock face with a finger.

"This is the refuge where Granny Leyleba and her kin have lived together in the past."

A house where grannies lived, huh?

"...A place where they lived in the past means the grannies are..." I asked timidly.

"You're correct. All my relatives, including Granny Leyleba, have already passed away... But, if it's my acquaintance, the old dragon Aldit and her kin should be still alive. If it's you, who lives in the far southern land beyond the mountain range, I think you should have heard the names of the old dragons as they should be in the south, but...how about it?"

Relatives...so Sazihali-san is all alone? It gives reason and depth to her previous words. Also, I have heard the name Aldit she asked me about. It's the ancient dragon mounted by First Prince Relsan, I think. I recall that Remrona had mentioned a Sacred Guardian Beast Aldit-sama in her conversation with her little sister.

"...I have heard of it. It looks like the dragon is serving a human country while being called a sacred guardian beast."

"Serving, you say? It sounds like there's some backstory to this. There's no way that a proud high ancient dragon would tie itself to the likes of humans without a reason."

The number of wrinkles of Sazihali-san's face increased, and a sharp glint flashed through her eyes. Her eyes reminded me of a reptile because of their slits. As expected, she's an old dragon. Her intensity is nothing to scoff at.

"...Given that dragoons also exist, it might be some kind of magic or skill?"

The Great Knights and the captain of Magic Dragon Rider Corps all wore special masks with green dragon marks at their throats.

"Such things exist. The theft of dragon eggs has been going on since old times. As a result of that, even the research of the crests, which appear if you tie a contract after a dragon is raised from its childhood by humans, has advanced...it appears that unique imprinting magic to make dragons obey has been developed, and furthermore, dedicated skill have been confirmed as well. I'm aware that the desert's Muryu even possess mind powers. However, those spells and skills shouldn't work on us. It's different if it happens out of our own will, but..."

Then it'd mean that Aldit-san had desired for it to be so by herself. Does she have some kind of relation to the royalty of Oseberia?

Still, research of the contract's crests by stealing dragon eggs and enslaving them?

And yet Remrona had ignored the crest on my thumb and Balmint, whom I kept on my courtyard... She might have stayed quiet about the matter with Balmint while considering it another good reason to invite me as Great Knight... Or maybe she simply failed to notice the mark on my thumb by

chance?

Given that Sazihali-san was a high ancient dragon, she apparently noticed the proof of my contract with Balmint right away, though.

"...Research of this contract crest, you say?"

Hearing about the contract symbol, and research, it's probable that it's a top secret of Oseberia.

"Indeed...it's odious, but still, knowledge is power. Humans' lives are short, and they're fragile and weak, but...I know that there are rarely humans that amaze even me. That's why I can't take them lightly. In case of battle, I don't show any mercy."

Going by her way of speaking, it sounds like she doesn't regard all humans as food.

"...After all there's also people who continue to put in great efforts, trying to follow in the steps of dead great men, handing down magnificent exploits. Anyway, I have a question about that."

I asked while feeling ashamed.

"What is it? Also, umm, how to say it...w-we're already tied by contract, so...you can talk to me without mincing your words, you know?" Sazihali-san used a cute tone, apparently feeling bashful about her own words.

"...Well, then I'll take you up on that offer. In fact, I saw a city-like place on the surface on the way to this refuge, but...I wonder, was that a city of the **【Zelbia Kingdom】**?"

"Correct. To be more precise, it's one part of the **【Zelbia Kingdom】**. It should be a city in the area of the former **【Centline Kingdom】**. The **【Zelbia Kingdom】** overthrew and destroyed its neighboring countries using a stupid dragon. It's now a major power that has absorbed their former territories. However, in the end they're humans. The Silver Bubu monsters living in the dark world, the high empty sky, taste crunchier to me."

Dark world as in space? Are the monsters called Silver Bubu the aliens I saw before?

"...Now then, let's wrap up the talk at this point. Come inside my house. It doesn't have any gaudy treasures like the one in the wastelands, but this place is what it is. I'll especially show you the items gathered by my granny and her kin."

The items gathered by Granny Leyleba and her family, eh? I heard they died, so do high ancient dragons have a life span as well?

"Gaogao——"

As I was pondering about life spans, Balmint bumped his head against my shin while flapping his four wings.

"Nyaoo." Rollo climbed on Balmint's head while meowing.

After she extended a pair of bean-sprout-like tentacles to the front, giving an instruction in the style

of saying, 『Go that way nya』, both of them headed outside.
And here Sazihali was going out of her way to give us a tour of her cave home.

"...Balmint, don't go too far since I'll lead you to the training location later on."

"Gaoo." Balmint cheerfully replied at Sazihali's words.

"Rollo, you heard her, right?"

"Nyaaa."

It looks like she understood, so far as it goes.

"Kukuku, how lively... However, I'm happy."

Sazihali's face was kind of like that of a cheerful, beautiful mother since it had rejuvenated to an extent.

"It looks like Balmint is adoring you as well."

"Yeah, that boy's feelings have been painfully clearly transmitted to me. It appears that he's grown up with nothing but pure love that doesn't know any slaughter."

Well, I guess that's our fault.

"...I'm sorry. Should I have contacted you much earlier?"

"No, it's okay. While riding on my head, Balmint had properly watched and learned the way of my hunting, even during the intense hunting maneuvers. However, to think that I'd be truly able to personally look after a child, the child of a high ancient dragon..." Sazihali said with a wistful expression.

I pondered whether I should ask her about her deceased grandmother, but it's better I don't if she pulls such a face.

"...Sazihali, the items located in your house..."

"Ah, right. Come this way."

Leaving behind the playing Rollo and Balmint, I proceeded into her house while watching how Sazihali's long hair spilled down her back.

The cave was gradually getting narrower. The ceiling became lower, and even the side walls, turned yellow with age, kept getting closer. Their distance shrunk, but pretty artificial flowers as interior design started to stand out at parts of the obsidian walls.

I thought they were artificial, but I was apparently wrong. A gentle fragrance of the flowers tickled my nose. I got wrapped up by a nice smell. And then, those flowers turned into vivid, richly colored flowers that gave me the image of pretty parrots.

Wonderful...this is inside a cave, but the flowers made it seem as if I'm walking through a fantastic flower garden. The various kinds of colors contrasted each other, just as you'd see in a painting.

Once a dazzling glow was released from the flowers growing at those walls, the cave's darkness faded and retreated.

"Those flowers are mysterious, aren't they?"

"Yes...are they artificial?"

"Not quite. They're eternal flowers created by Granny Leyleba. They'll react to my mana and pulse——"

Walking in front, Sazihali grandly swung her arms as her body was basked in the bright illumination. The shadow that had been beneath her also swam. Seemingly manipulating the wind of life magic, she had it pick up the dust and let it be carried outside as if to replace the stagnated air wafting out from the entrance of the cave's passage. The traces of age vanished at the places touched by the wind, causing the light to gain in intensity.

Is it because it's a mana wind? Cleaning magic?

Passing a place that seemed to be a kitchen with calabash decorations, we turned to the left. Pictures of children and dragons alongside words had been carved on the surface of the curving wall on the right, as if a child had pulled a prank.

Sa·zi·ha·li·lo·ves·Ley·le·ba.

Words she had written in her childhood, eh?

...It seems she was reminded of her family. She turned left while dominated by sad emotions.

Thereupon, I was greeted by a deep, open living room which had been created by drilling through the rock.

"...This is the main living space."

I looked at the whole as if zooming out.

Faint, amber light, similar to sunlight filtered by trees, poured down from an artificial flower-shaped magic lamp on the ceiling, which had reacted to Sazihali. There was a huge sofa bed with a straw hat placed on it. Moreover, one small bed. A rectangle, black table that felt cosy, and several black chairs with backrests adorned by inlays surrounded the table. A thick cape, and an old-styled handbag were hanging over a chair's backrest.

Given that this room was quite dusty as well, Sazihali cleaned it up by causing a gale.

With the dust cleared away, it became apparent that the sofa had beautiful floral patterns here and there. The straw hat was whirled up into the air by the fresh wind.

Previously it gave me the impression of a deserted place, but now it had completely changed.

The side walls, that continued as if drawing gentle curves from the ceiling, were pretty as well.

Sazihali swiftly walked up to a door located in front. She opened the round door, which seemed as if it had been made for dwarves, by sliding it to the side. However, even after she opened it, the entrance was covered by vines of plants and lilac flowers as if forming a protective wall.

At the same time, the smell of old paper hung in the air.

Sazihali extended her slim hand, which had a streamline-shaped mark on its surface, towards those lilac plants, and released her mana at them. In response, the lilac's vines squirmed automatically, and retreated inside the door with a sound similar to curtains being gathered up. The whole movement of the vines looked stylish.

The room showing up behind the wall of vines was square. Dust was dancing in the air, but once

Sazihali released her chantless wind spell again, the dust began to rotate in a flash while gathering in one place, and after it settled down inside a trash can located at the side, the room became clean. The wind attribute makes cleaning easy. Come to think of it, I have sometimes seen my head maid and vice-head maids cleaning with life magic as well. However, they used life magic only seldomly for cleaning, performing it by hand most of the time.

As I was recalling the cleaning of my mansion, Sazihali turned over a white cloth. Beneath was an antique, massive bookshelf. It was filled with magic books, bundles of papers, a dagger, a stone with vertical stripes similar to a jade, mugs, rock clusters, split-toe socks, and octopus legs filled into a transparent bottle. It's not that it was a huge amount, but the shelf was also crammed with books.

I guess this is what Sazihali wanted to show me. The items gathered by Granny Leyleba... Several books, magic books, books that contained a vast amount of mana, and books leaking mana. It looked like Magic Create Books were among them as well. The titles were: Great Wild God War Illustrations, Centline's Knight Order of Roses, Quill's Tunnel, Illumination of the Divine Sphere, Night Poetry, Low Ancient Languages, The Eight Wise Masters of the Spirit World Sedelguo Seil, Zonsol and Telpott Tribe Outline, The Relation Between King Tree Quiluha and the Barrier of the 12 Seas of Trees, Earthworm Hole, Spell God..., Calamity Demon User, Objectives of the Flying Jellyfish, God of Secrets Soqnal, Intestines of Sky Emperor Phyffindo, Applications for Labyrinth Crystal Cores and Magic Stones, and Love Between the Priest God and a Dragon.

"These books come from the humans?"

"Granny Leyleba said that she stole them during her hunts."

"Hee, there's even magic books among them."

I didn't touch them, but it was obvious that they were magic books that would vanish once you read and understood those matching your attribute.

"I think it's language magic, but...if you want them, I'll give them to you."

"Oooh, in that case..."

Hearing Sazihali, I touched the magic books, searching for the ones matching with my attributes. There were only two books which made me feel mana from them.

"I'll take these two."

I showed the two magic books to Sazihali.

"...You could sense mana from only these two? So it's not like you possess all attributes, huh?"

She said in a tone as if it was unexpected.

"Correct."

"Hmm, attributes are just one part of it, eh? Which reminds me, you let me see magnificent ice magic exceeding King class during our previous hunt."

"Thanks. Well, it's one of the spells I excel at. But, I'm basically a spear user. I'm the kinda guy who will match his opponents."

Fighting close combat monsters and divine king ranker is more thrilling than magic.

"...I know that there are humans called soldiers and martial artists. I suppose it's close to that kind of thinking."

"Up to around 80%, I'd say." I answered while laughing.

"Kukuku, I see. Come on, you can learn those spells without any need to hold back." Sazihali turned her eyes at the magic books in my hands.

I think I'll ask what kind of magic it is before that.