

Chapter 210 - First Love of the Puff-Puff Knight?

T/N: The "puff-puff" in the title is a kludge. In Japanese it's ぼあぼあ騎. ぼあ or ボア (Boa) is a term used to describe a knitted ground covered by soft fluff like the fur of sheep or poodles. Here it refers to the fluffy smoke released by the Burning Knights.

We landed on the ground, returning to our friends.
I noticed how my forelocks were swaying. A prairie wind, huh?
Rebecca approached me while restraining her beautiful blond hair fluttering in that wind with her white hand.

"——Good work with the reconnaissance. It took a while. Did something happen up in the sky?"
She asked.

I think it's fine to not particularly mention those eyeball monsters.

"Yeah, I had a little chat with a winged person originating from the spirit world." I replied.

"A chat? That's certainly a friendly race." Rebecca appeared to be slightly interested. The ends of her thin, golden eyebrows went down a bit.

"Yep, totally different from the monsters from before. She^[efn_note]It's a gender neutral answer but since we know her gender...^[efn_note] was amicable." I answered.

"Nn, meaning, there's bad and good beings, just as with humans?" Eva asked from behind.

She had transformed her magic wheelchair into its Segway mode.

"You could say so." I said.

Eva quietly passed next to Viine with a light mobility exceeding that of an electric car.

"Nn, mysterious. ——This 20th floor is a spirit world where demons live?" She asked while tilting her face to the side.

Her violet eyes are really beautiful. Her slender chin line and her look that feels as if she's peeking upwards are charming.

"...I don't think it's the spirit world. I did hear evil godish names being mentioned." I replied.

"Then it means this place is a part of the evil domain Hellrhone, a place reaching the enormous size of a continent." The smart Viine uttered.

It was through the mask, but I could sense her curiosity towards this world from the silver sparkle in her eye. There was a town in the opposite direction, too. Just like she had been watching the magul world, she might feel an urge to live, watch the unknown culture, and actually experience this 20th floor.

"...I wonder whether that's correct? I mean, Evil God Steertop also mentioned that it's connected to a huge, infinite world or something like that, didn't he?"

"...In that case, it doesn't seem like all the races you can encounter here are enemies, just like Eva said," concluded Yui while gently caressing Rollodeen (Divine Beast).

Seemingly with the intention to return the pleasantries, Rollodeen stroked Yui's cheek with the flat part of a tentacle she had extended from her neck. Another slender tentacle patted her back.

Yui with her beautiful, white skin grabbed the flat end of the tentacle that had caressed her cheek, and said, "——How cute~ So there are proper pads on the backside of the tentacles as well."

She carefully pushed the backside surface of the tentacle with her fingers as if popping a bubble wrap. In a word, she was massaging the pad.

Each time she pushed the pad, the bone sword faintly popped out from the tentacle's end. I suppose it's like red bean jam coming out from a manjuu.

Yui kept massaging it repeatedly. Finally, Rollodeen began to extend and retract the nails at her limbs each time the tentacle was pushed with an expression that made her feeling comfortable obvious.

Is extending and retracting her nails the same sensation?

"So Yui became a captive of them as well, eh? The lovely pads located on the backside of the tentacles and the soles of her feet have the same, high destructive force. Even during battle there are times when I can't endure while imagining how very soft they are!" Rebecca talked about the cute pads while getting slightly excited. I could understand her feelings, however.

"Nn, Rollo-chan, want me to do squishy squishy?" Eva asked.

Whether black horse or black lion, the imposing Rollodeen extended a tentacle to Eva, too.

That Rollo...even though she's pulling an adult face, she wants her tentacle to be squished.

[efn_note]In the raw it's punyu punyu which sounds a lot cuter, but I'm not sure how to phrase that in English xD[/efn_note]

She got Eva to massage the flat backside of her tentacle's end by having it touched by Eva's fingers with movements that looked like that of a skillful piano player.

"N, nyaon, nyaa."

Rollodeen meowed, seemingly saying, 『That feels wonderful nyaa~ Mooore』.

The tip of her tentacle repeatedly extended and shrunk.

Kuuuh, even when big, she's adorable...what a wonderful temptation.

How outrageous! Being on the verge of convoking the Boob Research Society, I also felt the desire to massage that pink pad...

As I watched the pleasant scene with a smile on top of Rollodeen, Mysty called out to me, "Master, this stone is slightly different."

Mysty held out a stone she picked up with a serious look.

"...It looks like a normal stone to me, though." I objected.

To be honest, the pretty, reddish brown manicure on the nails of her slender fingers interested me much more than this stone. She has been matching the color of her manicure with the hue of her eyes.

"That's not wrong, it's a normal stone. But, its mana efficiency is subtly different." Mysty made the color of her hand holding the stone change black in an instant, and after she turned the stone into sand, she made it transform into a differently shaped cluster again.

Ye do possess an as amazin' skill as ever. [efn_note]The MC uses here an Osaka dialect, for whatever reason. Prolly a reference to somethin'[/efn_note]
While admiring her, I suddenly hit upon an idea...if it's a technique capable of manipulating metals, can it be fused with martial arts?
If it's now when her physical abilities as <Head Servant Leader> increased, an interesting future as a strong steel master might await her...if she also learns swordsmanship or spearmanship like I did. Well, she has her own things she wants to do. I won't tell her, who's focused on scholarly knowledge, to study martial arts or alchemize steel like a certain pair of brothers[efn_note]Full Metal Alchemist reference[/efn_note] against her will.

I pushed away the stuff about martial arts into a corner of my mind...and asked her something else, "...Is there anything related to that?"

"Of course. Sorcery doll creation. By merely having a slightly different mana efficiency, the control of the metals spreading out from the core will become more delicate. It also influences the range of how many command lines can be carved into the core." Mysty explained.

In other words, its amplitude becomes bigger or more complicated?

"Does it become complicated? I guess it might be some kind of new discovery." I answered vaguely.

"That's it! This small ore here might be just a coincidental outlier, though. However, albeit there are still many things we don't understand on the surface, even the logic of this evil god domain...as expected, I can't handle it. I will study it, though." Mysty said with her beautiful, reddish brown eyes sparkling.

It's the expression of a researcher. She seems to have fun.

"...Sure, just don't overstrain yourself. Being smart sure seems to be a hard fate." I commented.

Even while saying, "I will keep writing while making sure for it to be no obstacle during battle...", Mysty was scribbling on a parchment with an amazing verve.

I don't know whether it will serve as advice for her, but, "...If you were to fuse unknown ores existing in this world and the ores existing on the surface, you might get your hands on special steel material, no?"

Right, she might be even able to create something like an artificial diamond. We will work our way

up on the surface from jewelers, who sell those on a large scale in the style of Echigo that buttered up to evil magistrates and corrupt merchants with "Those are natural diamonds!", to a successful, upstart different world gem dealer company!

As I was imagining such irresponsible, dumb things, Mysty answered, "...That's possible——," and began to check by casually picking up stones around us. "...I will take this one with me. This one looks good as well."

"Hey, don't spend too much time on it." I cautioned her.

"Sure thing. But you know, master, you've been strangely well-informed on sorcery dolls since the beginning. You must possess a flexible thinking after all." Mysty pulled off a sparrow dance after flashing me a smile.

Then she stored the stones she picked up in her bag, and wrote something into her notebook again. As we were proceeding onwards through those unduly wide plains in such a manner while I enjoyed a unique mood as if a new era of a huge, world-wide journey had started, I detected magic sources.

"There are magic source responses from ahead." I urged the others to be on alert.

At once monsters, which seemed to be flies that turned big, showed up. It's the ones I saw in the sky some time ago. Huge flies, three of them, with compound eyes on their heads and beaks as thin as straw.

They were like stones giving one an earthen image, but feathers were growing on their surface. The transparent wings on their backs flapped restlessly like those of hummingbirds. An eerie buzzing sound was audible.

Those flies attacked us.

"Albeit big, they are just flies! Those who are wise stay away from danger! We won't allow you to get close to His Excellency!"

"Your Excellency, leave these pests to us! Please watch mine, the Red Burning Knight's, exquisite skill!"

The Burning Knights made samurai-like statements and started to fight against the flies. I feel like I heard a proverb mixed in there, but without minding that, I guess I will try leaving it to them for a change with the feeling of a shogun.

"Sometimes it might also be fine to simply watch the efforts of the bone knights."

"Nn, puff-puff knights, do your best!" Eva agreed with Yui, who was fully in a spectator mode while shouldering her magic katana, and cheered them on with a cute voice.

Eva raised her arms diagonally...seeing as I have completely fallen in love with the dynamic boing of Eva's boobs, I probably must report that swaying to the International Intracerebral Boob Federation Congress as the highest priority issue. It's my duty as Special Boob Committee Member. Her beautiful, slender arm peeking out through her sleeve is magnificent, too.

The metal fixtures of her black tonfa were twined around her arm, but I felt Eva's characteristic sex appeal from her pretty armpit, visible deeper inside and her thick blood vessels that seemed to to

have risen to the surface.

And, seemingly happy about Eva's cute cheering, the Burning Knights' armors increased their smoke as if throbbing.

The "puff-puff smoke" as it was called by Eva seemed to have grown in volume by one level.

The puff-puff black Burning Knight performed a *flèche*^[efn_note]Fencing term, google it[/efn_note]. He advanced, extending his bone longsword of which I forgot the name straight ahead. The sword deeply stabbed into the torso of a fly, broke out through its back, and skewered it alongside its transparent wings.

The red Burning Knight cut down the wing of a fly which had approached from the opposite direction.

——Not bad.

Next, the puff-puff black Burning Knight rotated his stiff-looking body sideways while pulling out his longsword. He swung the shield in his other hand. The shield, which took the trajectory of a hook punch, was aimed at the head of the fly which had its wing cut by the red Burning Knight.

The red Burning Knight collided with the head of the fly, crushing it in the process.

A disgusting, orange blood gushed out with a splash while sinking into the ground.

One fly was left. Once its straw-like beak vibrated, an unnatural rift ran through it. A crack resounded from the rift, and the thin beak rotated fully like a split banana peel being rolled up. As it rolled up while opening up in a circular shape and rotating, the beak transformed into a quadrangle. There seemed to be a hole in the depths of that quadrangle——

A liquid with a color similar to a washing detergent and apparently poisonous blew out from deep within with the force of a geyser.

However, the puff-puff black Burning Knight remained calm. Even when seeing that sickening attack, he didn't get agitated. He held up his tower shield, obviously capitalizing on his physique, blocking the poisonous, AoE liquid attack with just his shield. Sizzling sounds of the shield melting could be heard from the shield's surface, but his technique to shift the shield up, down, left, and right was a magnificent shield technique...it might actually be better than Bia's shield technique.

Suddenly the red Burning Knight jumped out from behind the defending black Burning Knight. He swung down his longsword towards the head of the fly, cutting it in two with a single stroke.

All the monster flies had been defeated.

Cool. It was a splendid combination work of the Burning Knights.

If they had one more in their team, they might have been able to carry out the jet stream attack which made the White Demon of the Federation.^[efn_note]Gundam Reference - Amuro Ray of the RX-78-2 Gundam[/efn_note]

They properly picked up the large magic stones, and then ran back while making the bones clatter.

"Your Excellency — were you able to see our superb performance?"

"Your Excellencyyy, did you watch mine sword techniques?"

Both were quite passionate.

I nodded, and said, "Well done, Zemetas, Adomos. It looks like your sword and shield techniques have improved."

"Oooh, I'm deeply humbled."

"Ooh, Your Excellency, please watch us the next time as well."

While rejoicing, the Burning Knights handed the magic stones to Yui and Eva. On that occasion, the crimson light in the eye sockets of the black Burning Knight became big as he handed his share to Eva. And, the black puff-puff smoke cladding his bone armor started to blink.

How funny. Is his heart throbbing? Is it love?

However, as if to crush Zemetas' springtime of life, a magic source response appeared. This time it was a different monster. It was big and had horns. And yet it was a cow?

There were four pointed horns on its head. Sharp-looking teeth were visible in its mouth.

A huge monster cow similar to a raging bison. Its skin color was a mix of light brown and bluish white, waking the image in me that it was atrocious.

The huge cow seemed to be agitated, seeing how it was wheezing roughly. It came charging at us.

『Helme, come out of my eye for now.』

『Okay.』

For the time being, I had Helme make an appearance.

"I will slow down its movement——" Helme said after not having had her turn yet.

Seemingly excited, she emitted small water sprays in spirals from her whole body, and jumped into the air. She gathered blue mana on her right and left palms, creating cocoons on each.

She unleashed ice pebbles at the charging bull from the blue cocoons on her palms which appeared to be clusters of mana. Countless pebbles hit the cow's head, chest, and forelegs. With each hit fresh blood sprayed into the air.

However, the cow didn't drop its charging speed. How tough.

Its eyes are bright red, huh? Like with vampires, blood veins are visible in its eyes. It's completely agitated.

"This is the work of a vanguard! The backbone of a Burning Knight——" Zemetas yelled in high spirits.

It looks like he wants to show off his good parts to Eva. The opponent isn't a wild boar, though... As I felt like asking which would be more reckless, cow or boar, Zemetas ran towards the bull.

"Puff-puff, do your best!" Eva's cute voice reverberated.

It's a really adorable voice.

Obviously delighted, Zemetas caused a seething puff-puff to appear from his entire body.

Uh huh, I would have become happy as well.

While leaving trails of black smoke in his wake, he was about to take on the cow's horn attack from the front.

Is he going to be alright?

And just as I doubted that, a part of his shoulder bone was damaged by the attack, the bone armor was penetrated by a huge horn, and one of his bone feet was buried in the ground.

But, he "properly" stopped the bison's attack.

I thought he would be blown away in an instant due to the excessive difference in body weight, but way to go, man. I think it's the effect of the cheering.

"Zemetas, I'm envious!" While making that comment, Adomos mowed down the left foreleg of the

cow with his longsword.

"It's a good chance——" Yui started sprinting with her seductive, white thighs.

Then, after stepping in sharply, she splendidly cut off the cow's thick right leg with a flash of her special katana. Blood surged out of the cut wound.

"Swift cut——," the black-clothed Kaldo commented with a refined expression.

After he moved like a martial artist by lowering his waist as if to exhibit his swordsmanship skills to the others, he slipped past the cow's left abdomen. I didn't hear anything but "Flower——", but he swung his sword, cutting up and down through the flesh of the huge cow.

The copiously flowing blood created yet another wonderful flower. While showing his vampire face, Kaldo swallowed the blood as if to destroy the crimson flower, and took his distance.

Next, the thick, black, metallic arm of the golem manipulated by Mysty pummeled the side of the cow's head, and the cow swayed, obviously stunned as if small birds were flying around its head. And then one of its big horns was destroyed alongside a heavy bass sound.

It was a severe megaton punch.

Probably because of being stunned and having its forelegs lopped off, it pitched forward and collapsed, unable to support its own weight.

Because of that, Zemetas, who had stopped its blow from the front, shouted, "Your Excellency, I shall be off to the spirit world——", and got crushed with an expression - albeit a boney one - that was a mixture of courage and timidity without being able to speak at the end.

Farewell, Burning Knight Zemetas. I will summon you later.

"I'm going," said Viine.

She readied her Jade Snake Bow. The pretty, snake-patterned wing decorations at the upper nock, root nock, upper string, and lower string of the bow were conspicuous. An emerald-shining laser bowstring and beam arrow were created as well.

As I thought, no matter how often I see it, a dark elf readying a bow with both arms clad in an aura is damn cool.

Once she pulled back the arrow with her bluish white fingers, the green bowstring began to flash. And then she released the beam arrow. It flew straight ahead while leaving behind a pretty trail in the air. The arrow stabbed the cow between the eyebrows.

The small, green snakes, which came out of the arrow, penetrated into the cow's head. For an instant the cow's head blinked unnaturally, and then it exploded alongside a flash.

At the moment a part of its head was destroyed, Rebecca's blue fireball directly hit the cow's chest. With the blue flames creating a huge tunnel through its torso, the huge cow finally died.

Helme didn't point out anything, but it looks like the blue flames had even reached the cow's butt. And, exactly because it was a cow, the aroma of grilled meat hung in the air. Once the flesh got turned up, a large magic stone fell out, dropping into a pool of blood.

Eva and I had only been watching.

"Nn, everyone moves well! Dulling down its movement with spirit-sama's magic, and stopping its charge with the black, puff-puff Burning Knight. Yui and Kaldo cutting with a whoosh, Mysty's golem hitting with a bam, Viine's light arrow piercing with a plock, and finally Rebecca's fireball

defeating the huge cow with a boom." Eva nodded in great admiration, and talked about the battle while clapping her hands.

"...Indeed. Especially the black Burning Knight truly accomplished his task as The Vanguard." I give some praise to Zemetas.

"Ooh, Your Excellency's words...how enviable...Zemetas will rejoice in the spirit world. I'm jealous. Next time I shall serve as a shield myself." Adomos said while genuflecting.

So they do possess feelings of jealousy as well, eh?

"Nothing less of His Excellency's vanguard. I shall teach you a special, new pose." Helme said to the Burning Knight while obviously dancing in joy.

And then she unveiled a unique pose by twisting her waist. I felt as though a wobbling sound was audible from her pretty butt.

...What an outrageous, magnificent booty she has.

Seemingly deeply impressed, Adomos yelled, "Ooooh, spirit-sama! Such a pose is more than I deserve. I shall try it at onc—— guuuah."

For real? Just now he turned his waist too far, and a cracking sound from his bone...

...He's a Burning Knight, but in the end he consists of nothing but stiff bones. It's not like he's flexible.

"Yep, a new butt pose was too sophisticated after all...in the end you're just bones."

"Next time for suuuuure! Your Excellencyyy, I shall return to the spirit world..." With those parting words, Adomos-kun left towards the spirit world.

I thought that I mustn't laugh at his thoughtless act, but everyone burst out laughing.

"Haha!" I ended up laughing as well and meanwhile got off Rollodeen, whose shape was close to that of a black horse or lion, to pick up the large magic stone.