

Chapter 225 - Dearly-missed Magic Beast

"Pubo, pubopubo!"

"Oh, Popobumu!?"

"Nyaaa." Rollo meowed happily while bumping her head against Popobumu's leg as she brought her body close with a momentum of hugging Popobumu.

After licking the Popobumu's leg just like that, she jumped, heading towards the back of Popobumu's head. Then she flopped down with her bum in the round, somewhat depressed location behind Popobumu's head. As she remained sitting there, she flaunted her fluffy belly.

"Nn." Her voice was throaty, but she appealed to me with her round and cute eyes with a triumphant look.

At the same time, Rollo extended small pea-like tentacles from the left and right of her neck. Using the ends of those cute tentacles, she gently stroked Popobumu's throat, and started to groom herself by picking at her own belly.

There shouldn't be any fleas in there, but I guess it's a cat habit.

"However, how nostalgic." I gently brushed Popobumu's hard skin while addressing him.

There was a wooden box tied to Popobumu's saddle with a rope using a bowline. The wooden box itself was a simple construction of piling small, thin planks.

A big opening had been added to the box' side. The oil jars crammed inside the box shook since I was caressing Popobumu.

"But, why are you here...?"

"Shuuya, is that magic beast an acquaintance of yours?"

"Yeah, it's a magic beast that helped me in the past."

"Hoh." Rulizeze muttered with a curious look.

At that moment, a tiger beastman merchant ran up to us.

"Haaah, haaah, finally caught up with you."

He was a young man. He hung his head as he placed his hands on his knees, heavily gasping. It looks like he ran all the way here.

"Umm?" I spoke up to him in a style of asking who he might be.

"Sorry, this is my Popobumu. I have been using him for my oil peddling business. However, after we arrived at the arena, he started to cry, moved his head around, and suddenly ran off..."

"Pubopuboooh."

Popobumu shook his square head sideways as if saying that he wanted to meet me. He raised his heavy-looking, broad face with all his might, and turned his small green eyes at me.

...Cute. However, it appears he sensed Rollo's and my smell...from far away.

I recalled the scenes of us having gone on adventures together...

I did give him dried meat at the narrow bottleneck after Goldiba's village, didn't I? He ate the meat of the crabs, Rollo and I had defeated, with quite the verve. The meeting with Yui, the ownerless area, the Forest of Demonic Fog, Hekatrail, Holkerbaum...

At one time the arrow of some bandit pierced his bum... Ah, damn, there's still a faint scar of that time left...

So you still got a proper proof of our adventurers, don't you...Popobumu?

I teared up because of the nostalgic memories, and my visual field was naturally blurred by a watery membrane.

"Puboooh." A gentle trumpet sound.

Shit, don't look at me so kindly with those small, green eyes of yours!

Oh...you're also crying? You properly remembered Rollo and me...

Pro...perly...me... I'm so sorry for selling you, Popobumu...

I felt a gentle emotion penetrate the bottom of my heart.

"...Would you let me take charge of this guy?"

"Eh? A magic beast that doesn't listen to orders?"

I don't care about such things.

"How much do you want?" Suppressing the emotions welling up in my chest, I asked for the price in a natural manner.

"I bought him for 4 gold coins."

"Got it. I will buy him off you for 6 gold coins."

"Really? Thank you sooo much!" The peddler answered happily.

While sensing how tears flow down my cheeks, I took the agreed gold coins and some extra out of my item box, and handed 6 gold coins to him.

"Ooh, thanks. I will give him to you just like that then."

The peddle didn't show any interest in my tears, and cheerfully handed over Popobumu together with the box and the black saddle. He then put the coins into his pocket, and walked back along the street he came from with a pleased expression.

He's probably still in the black even after selling Popobumu together with the luggage.

At that point I looked into Popobumu's eyes again.

"Popobumu! I won't ever sell you again!"

I hugged Popobumu's massive torso, experiencing his beloved, rough and hard skin.

"Pubopuboooh." Popobumu exclaimed, moving his thick neck.

He was doing his best to rub its big, horned head against me.
Because of his thick neck, Popobumu...couldn't nudge its head against my body well.
He probably wants to rub his cheek against me like my partner usually does. What an adorable fellow.

At that moment, "Nyaa," Rollo had entered the wooden box.

A black cat stuffed in a box. It somehow feels as if she's sitting in a boxed seat.
She was placing her two front paws on top of the plank, and her hind paws were extending straight outside through the box' wooden floor.
What's with this grieving appearance...?
What's with those straightly stretched out hind paws?
Her bushy black fur at her thighs is nice... The part around the Achilles tendon, which looks as if it was covered by a small sock, is indescribable.
It totally looks as if she's watching an amateur baseball match and commenting 『You gotta swing a lot better nya』 or 『Hit that 163 km/h ball nya』 while sitting in the child seat of a bicycle standing all alone on a river terrace.
It's a funny posture.

"Haha, Rollo, you developed yet another new pose, didn't you?" I said while looking at Rollo with a smile despite tears still running down my face.

"Nyaa." Rollo-san tilted her small face diagonally to the side, and then attached the flat part of a tentacle to my cheek.

『Popo』 『Came Back』 『Popo』 『Happy』 『Play』 『Cry?』 『Cry?』 『Play』 『Let's play』 『Popo』
『Happy』

She threw those emotions at me.

I tried to caress that cute little head of hers, but the contrarian black cat quickly dodged my palm while retracting her tentacle. And then, after drawing back her hind paws as if folding them in, she removed her head from the box' plank, and climbed towards Popobumu's head.

I wondered whether would show me a self-satisfied expression next, but no, she adopted a posture of embracing the back of Popobumu's head.

"Nyaanya~ nyaoo."

Pressing her tentacle against Popobumu's lower neck, she started to instruct him to run.

"Pubopuboooh."

Hearing that instruction for the first time in a long while, Popobumu separated from me, and began to run towards the courtyard.

It looks like Rollo is of a higher priority than I am for this guy.

"Rollo-sama...looks truly happy." Viine smiled.

"That black cat and the magic beast sure are good friends." Rulizeze laughed very womanly with her four-eyed demon face.

"Yeah..."

It's really nostalgic. Let me apologize once more: Sorry for having sold you, Popobumu...

"——For a strong warrior like Shuuya to bawl with his nose running...interesting." Rulizeze said while putting strength into her frontalis muscle.

It gave the impression of her characteristic four eyes to plop out a bit. She spoke while showing a surprised expression. Two of her eyes were hidden by the eyepatch, though.

"...Well, even I have times where I cry...rather than that, take this with you."

I handed the extra gold coins, which I took out earlier, to Rulizeze.

"Didn't you say that you won't take care of me?"

"Don't say anything unnecessary, okay? Look, you're going to tour the surface, right Rulizeze? The street is over there." I looked in the direction of the street after becoming slightly embarrassed.

"Fufu, you're a weird man. I'm sure I won't forget you for life, Shuuya."

"I won't forget you either, Mighty Warrior Four Eye Rulizeze. See you again somewhere. Ra Kelarda!" I bid farewell from her with Master's words. As a friend.

"Farewell, Mighty Warrior Shuuya. My Lucival friend." Rulizeze walked off after showing me a smile.

It was strange since it looked as if a big spear had been crammed inside the rolled-up carpet she was carrying with one arm.

Come to think of it, that mana-emitting carpet... I didn't ask her what kind of effect it has. Given that she's treasuring it, it must be an important item, I think.

Possessing the instincts of a wild animal, Rollo had jumped on it as the first among us, and meowed like a spoiled little kitty...maybe cat powder has been added to it? No, it might simply be a highly soothing item.

This is just my speculation, but...is it some kind of memento?

Considering it positively, her stay of several thousand years in the evil god domain wasn't just full of bad things. Nice, heartrending memories might be connected to that carpet.

Rulizeze, huh?

There were many creases and gaps on the surface of the big knapsack she was carrying. Those creases and gaps give me a hunch that a hard life of hunger is lying ahead of her. Four Eye Rulizeze. I won't forget that fierce fight.

It was an instant, a moment in time, a very short period, but the time of the battle was dense as if we had spent several years together. I want to believe that she shares the same feelings.

We might run into each other elsewhere. She's a mysterious Cyculse woman who makes me harbor

such feelings.

——Stay in good health.

While indulging in this sadness, I turned my eyes towards the courtyard.

"The magic beast, which Rollo-sama is riding right now, had been mounted by you in the past, right Master?" Viine asked while tilting her pretty face sideways in order to peek into my face.

"Correct, he's a magic beast I received from Master. Because the opportunities to use him had decreased, I sold Popobumu for his own sake. That Popobumu...had apparently remembered our smell..."

Once again my visual field became blurred by tears.

I don't know how much longer Popobumu has left to live, but in this place he will find a big stable and there are also servants to take care of him. He will be looked after, even if I were to not be here. That's why Popobumu should be able to live here for the rest of his life.

"Master..."

Seeing me shed tears, Viine leaned in close, showing her flower stem-like nape, seemingly intending to console me.

...What a sweet girl.

While being deeply moved by her who took a lovely action to share my feelings, I put my hand on her shoulder, and responded with a tight hug while kissing her silver hair.

"..." Viine looked up to me with a tender, smiling look.

After pointing her chin upwards with my fingertips by gently stroking it, I softly kissed the cheek on the opposite side of her silver mask.

"You're always so kind to me, but today I..." She said, stood on her toes, and placed her lips on mine, fully stretching herself.

Viine...

We switched from a soft, gentle kiss, to a deep and passionate one.

Once I separated my mouth from Viine's lips with a smack while pulling strings of saliva, her eyes were moist, and she donned an expression full of expectations for more lewd stuff.

Thank you. Viine, my tears stopped because of your tender love.

Though, I couldn't tell her that while facing her cheek.

At that point, the heavy lumbering of Popobumu as he ran across the courtyard with Rollo on top resounded. I turned my eyes that way, obviously putting the flirting time to an end.

Balmint had joined them on the courtyard, and so did Helme while scattering water.

Even the servants, who had worked at the cleaning tool shed and firewood storehouse, had noticed how a divine beast, a dragon, a magic beast, and a spirit kicked up a fuss.

The servants were laughing as well, but...just as I thought, there were also some spiritless servants among them.

Usually there's a relaxed atmosphere. Did something happen?

I was bothered by the servants' state, but Balmint joining at the end of the line as if starting a magic beast train and chasing after Popobumu with cheerful cries of "Gaoo" entered my line of sight.

Rollo ordered Popobumu meowed "Nyaooo" as if ordering Popobumu to run away while sitting on

his head. Popobumu vigorously dashed onward while trumpeting "Pubopuboooh." And even Helme ran around cheerfully while emitting sheets of water spray from her body and hitting Popobumu's group with a water pistol.

They ran across the wide courtyard as if being in a zoo. It took the shape of Balmint chasing after Popobumu, though.

Don't tell me, he's not going something as silly as eating Popobumu, right...? I'm worried.

"Balmint~" I called Balmint who was trotting after Popobumu.

"Gaooo?"

My thumb of the dragon rider, the nail art which seemed to be the proof of our contract, shone. The child dragon, who had stopped in the middle of his chase, lifted his face and looked at me. And then, while spreading his four small wings, he briskly ran over to me with small steps.

His four childish wings have already grown into what you can call a prototype for the wings of a grown dragon, but they are still cute.

"Gao."

Balmint bumped his head against my shin. Due to the impact, I felt as if I had been hit in the back of my knee, but it was a spoilt flattery.

In this regard he might have mastered Rollo's behaviors.

I lifted up the cute fellow, and looked into his round eyes. White and green were blended in there, but his beautiful, black eyes felt like the night.

You cute lil' bugger!

Balmint opened his mouth, displaying fangs that were in the process of becoming magnificent just like his wings.

He extended his long, red tongue towards me. He made a small "kyuu" sound similar to a young chick, and licked my face.

"Ahahaha, there, there. Balmint~ I fully grasp your feelings of love."

"Gaoon."

Balmint drew back his tongue, and stared at me with his big, round, black eyes.

"This is the magic beast called Popobumu who joined us, or rather, came back to us again. Popo is no fodder, okay? He's our friend."

"Gaogaooooo——" Typical for a dragon, Balmint showed his fangs as he roared.

At the same time, the nail art on my thumb shone. I don't know whether it's related to orders, but I have the mysterious feeling that my intentions got through to him.

"I suppose you understood."

I thought so before as well, but I'm looking forward to the future of this child.

Once he reaches the point where he can fly through the sky, I will fly around with him on Rollo, who would change into a huge divine beast then...

Ah, it might be a great idea to travel to the unknown continent mentioned by Cazdolo, the home of Ronbalaua, Balmint's mother. I won't know the ways since there's no map of it, but we should be able to reach another continent if we cross the ocean.

While indulging in such aimless imaginations, "...Ball, you're a good boy. Go and play together with Rollo and Popobumu." I put down Balmint on the stone pavement.

"Gao!"

While making his four wings twitch, Balmint headed back towards Rollo who was still giving orders atop Popobumu. His tottering steps using two legs that vividly reminded me of that penguin was too cute. His tail has become long as well.

However, as I was watching this zoo, I thought that it's really great that I bought a house with a big courtyard by paying big money. The dormitories and stable connected to the wall, which was surrounding this big mansion, and the front gate were tall.

Even if Balmint were to grow big, I don't think that he would stand out outside too much. Of course, once he grows into an ancient dragon like Ronbalaua who exceeds the wall...

It's wrong if I don't consider a place where he can live. I guess I will move from here once he grows so big, or we will depart on a journey together.

I think I should consult with that dragon lady living in the Saldia Wasteland. At any rate, I have to think about Balmint...including a dragon education. It will be lonely for the cute fellow to leave the nest for the sake of education, but it can't be helped.

However, for now it's fine as is.

Rollo and Popobumu are happily running across this spacious courtyard together with Balmint, after all.

I went across the courtyard while gazing at this zoo attraction running around while being showered by Helme's water.