



MUSHOKU TENSEI

JOBLESS REINCARNATION

BOOK☆WALKER EXCLUSIVE SHORT STORIES
"DEAD END, ALLY TO CHILDREN" & "WITH ROXY"

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BOOK ☆ WALKER
Exclusive Short Stories

WRITTEN BY
Rifujin na
Magonote

ILLUSTRATED BY
Shirotaka



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TRANSLATION: Sylvia Gallagher

ADAPTATION: Lorin Christie

COVER DESIGN: Nicky Lim

INTERIOR LAYOUT & DESIGN: Clay Gardner

COPY EDITOR: Meg van Huygen

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EDITOR: Winter Greene

PREPRESS TECHNICIAN: Melanie Ujimori, Jules Valera

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VICE PRESIDENT: Adam Arnold

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BOOK ☆ WALKER EXCLUSIVE SHORT STORIES

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Dead End, Ally to Children

“MY NAME IS DEAD END.”

“Bwaaaaah! Aaaah! Uwaaaaah!”

I was searching the Superd Village when I heard a child crying. Wondering what was going on, I went toward the sound, upon which I saw a kid sitting on the ground sobbing. Orsted was nearby.

The kid had no doubt burst into tears after getting scared of Orsted. The poor thing—Orsted, that is—probably hadn’t even done anything.

I mean, look. The kid might as well have said, “He started it!” with the way he held the hem of Orsted’s cloak and wouldn’t let go. By now, the grown-up superds had overheard the crying and were gathered around, spears in hand.

Orsted looked down at the kid like he might gobble him up, but that was just the face he wore when he didn’t know what to do. *I* could tell.

The Superd who stood on the kid’s other side, facing him down, was another familiar face: Ruijerd.

Whoa, whoa. Now I felt less sure. Ruijerd had to be just as scary to a kid as Orsted. Which one had scared him and set off the crying?

This was the Superd Village. The kid was a Superd, too, so it was more likely that he was scared of Orsted than of a fellow Superd. But after spending a few days getting to know superds—ones other than Ruijerd, that was—I’d found out that, even among them, Ruijerd was known as “the scary dude with a bad temper and a permanent scowl.” You never knew what he was thinking.

That was to say: Ruijerd actually *might* have made the kid cry. I mean, the way he grabbed the hem of Orsted’s cloak? That was the very picture of a plea for help.

So, stuck between a scary grown-up and a *super* scary grown-up, he’d chosen the least scary option.

Still, it didn't look like Orsted thought so. He and Orsted were looking down at that kid with full-on murder in their eyes.

I guessed it was about time for me to come to the rescue. I mean, the other superds were standing around like they didn't know what to do. *Someone* had to help.

Just as I thought about helping, a red-haired woman briskly strode over, then rounded on Orsted.

"Hey! What're you doing, making a kid cry?"

"Nothing. He bumped into me and fell over. That's all," Ruijerd said, making an excuse.

"Indeed. Ruijerd Superdia is not at fault," Orsted said supportively. This here was a rare sight, but Orsted was really soft on Ruijerd. Even if he *was* in the wrong, I'm sure Orsted would have defended him.

The woman paused. "Well, whatever!" she said. "C'mon, let's go!"

"Bwaaaaaaaaah! Aaaaaah!"

When Eris tried to scoop the kid up in her arms, he started crying twice as loudly as before.

Okay, Eris was probably scary to a kid too.

Now that I thought about it, our kids didn't usually scream over nothing like this. Maybe that was because Sylphie and Lilya had a knack for soothing that sort of thing? Maybe they instinctively understood that Eris wasn't a threat.

In any case, Eris started to panic, faced with the tears of an unfamiliar child. "H-hey, now. It's not that bad. Um, come on..."

Right. *Now* it was time for me to come to the rescue.

"Wuh-whoa! What's the matter? Did we get scared of all the *scaary* grown-ups? You're okay now!"

I went over to crouch down beside the kid, then gave him a smile. In times like this, the key thing was to play the clown with everything you've got.

"Uwah... Hic...hic..." The kid saw my face then, maybe thinking a *dumb* grown-

up had finally shown up, he stopped crying, though he did still screw up his face.

Without missing a beat, I held my arms open to him. *There. You're safe now. Come give me a big hug!*

"Bwaaaaah! Gwaaaaah!"

Big mistake.

Such was the power of my smile. When I used it on, say, Sylphie or Lucie, it made them happy. This time, however, it hadn't played out how I'd wanted.

"Hey. What do we do?"

I didn't respond right away. Eris and Ruijerd were looking at me for help. Made me a bit nostalgic. Back in the days when we traveled the Demon Continent, I often came up with ideas when we got into these sorts of fixes.

"All right," I said. "I have a good idea." I scooped the kid up in my arms, and he started screaming like the world was ending now that he'd been peeled off of Orsted's cloak.

A creepy, face-shaped mark had been left on the cloak, but Orsted himself was creepier and scarier, so that wasn't a problem.

"Hey! He's crying!"

"It's fine. I've got this."

See, you've just got to let them cry. No ill will or malice here.

"What's the child's name, Ruijerd?"

"Ruikil," Ruijerd said at length.

"Where does he live?"

"Over there," he said, confused.

I followed the directions Ruijerd gave me and took the kid home.

When I dropped the kid off, his parents asked me why he was upset. I gave them the only answer I had. "He fell over and started crying," I told them. It

wasn't a lie.

The kid ran over and clung to his parents. He sniffled a bit, but all of the energy he'd had while with us was gone now. The other three looked unconvinced.

"Hey, he stopped crying!"

"Well, he was crying because he was scared of us. The top priority was to get him away from us ASAP."

"Well, yeah, but..."

"Eris..."

Ruijerd chimed in abruptly. "You are dependable as ever." The way he said it reminded me of old times. I smiled.

"Well, you can count on me. I mean, if Ruijerd of Dead End gained a reputation for making children cry, it'd hurt the Superd's image too."

"It's all well and good. Even if the superds acquire such a reputation, it will not hurt our pride."

"Can't argue with that!"

It wasn't really a joking matter, but we all laughed a bit anyway.

Afterward, I actually went and comforted Orsted, who was moping after having made a kid cry. But that's a story for another time.

With Roxy

I THOUGHT I'D TAKE a bath, so I went to the changing room. There, I saw God.

That's right. Roxy was in her underwear, striking a pose in front of a full-length mirror. And it was a *sexy* pose. A really serious look was on her face for some reason... Anyway, this wasn't a sight one was blessed with every day. It'd be no exaggeration to call it a miracle.

"Thank you, God..." Words of gratitude slipped from my lips, my reverence deepening. I think that, as a rule, faith was something that made you a better person or took care of your mental health. I didn't believe you were allowed to demand rewards in return for your belief. When a person saw a miracle like this, though, it gave you conviction in God's existence and deepened your faith.

God looked upon my devotion, and She said, "Oh! Rudy, what are you doing?! Please don't barge in!"

"If you didn't want people to see you, you should have just done this in your room," I replied sensibly. True, it was probably best to knock in the interest of manners, but there was no such rule for the bathroom in our house.

I guess the reason there was no rule was because I had anticipated this sort of accident. There hadn't been many up till now, and since Nanahoshi started coming to use our bath from time to time, I'd taken care so that they didn't happen at all. I took care to avoid an accident, even though I wanted one. It was a genuine paradox.

"But I don't have a big mirror like this one in my room..."

"What were you checking out in the mirror?" I asked.

Roxy twiddled her fingers around the vicinity of her belly button, suddenly bashful. "It's just, um," she began, sounding reluctant. "You know how we, the four of us, *did* it the other day?"

"Yes, and I am very grateful to you for that occasion."

It had been a perfect night. Only, it had been 100 percent them indulging my

selfishness. As a rule, the three of them liked me to love them one at a time, not all together. I had to give them my thanks.

“And...?” I prompted.

“I woke up first the next day, and, well, I saw Sylphie and Eris. You could say I came back to my senses... I found myself thinking about attraction.”

Ah, true. Compared to beautiful Sylphie with her slim but nicely proportioned figure, and Eris, with curves in all the right places like her mom and every extra ounce burned away by her training, Roxy had what I guess you’d call a childlike figure. Or rather, it was childlike by human standards. That was just how her race was built, but even I knew that Roxy had always had a thing about it. That was why I had to reassure her at times like this. “Roxy, you’re incredibly attractive. I’ll swear to it.”

“At times like this, Rudy, I can’t believe you.” Roxy did not look impressed, even though I’d put on a cool look as I said it. That was weird. For starters, I thought I’d proven my love every time we’d done the deed. If she still didn’t believe me even then, I needed to choose my next words carefully.

I cleared my throat. “Say, for example, there were three different sweets here. Let’s say a doughnut, a caramel pudding, and a slice of cake.”

“Uh huh.”

“You like all of those, don’t you, Roxy?”

“Mm.”

“If you ate all three, you’d think they were all delicious, right?”

“Yes, of cou—wait, I’m not so greedy that I’d keep them all for myself.”

Yes, I know that.

“All right. Now, what if those sweets were three doughnuts all made by different chefs?”

“I’d...probably compare them.”

“That’s what this is like.”

“That’s it, is it?”

When people had multiple things of the same type, they decided which was best, even when they didn't necessarily mean to. But when they had things of *different* types, they could enjoy each for itself, without making comparisons. In short, it was the act of comparing that was wrong.

"Rudy." Roxy put her arms around me. Holy moly. Roxy, coming over to me of her own accord? That almost never happened! She'd usually glance around us, and, after making sure no one was watching, ask, "Can I hold you?" And yet!

There's no time to lose. Embrace her back! Now is the time to prove your love!

"You *are* greedy, Rudy. Keeping all three people to yourself," Roxy said when I returned her embrace. Could this have been a trap?

"Real sorry 'bout that."

I had no excuse. If she ever got sick of me, I was ready to get down and grovel. "Don't go," I'd whimper. "If there's something wrong with me, I'll fix it. Don't leave me." Admittedly, there was a lot beyond fixing.

"It's okay. I like that about you," Roxy said. Just like that, she pulled away from me, quickly slipped on her clothes, and left the changing room. Humming drifted down the corridor, which meant that what I'd said must have worked.

With that, I headed for the bath.

About the Author

Rifujin na Magonote

Resides in Gifu Prefecture. Loves fighting games and cream puffs. Inspired by other published works on the website *Let's Be Novelists*, they created the webnovel *Mushoku Tensei*. They instantly gained the support of readers and became number one on the site's combined popularity rankings within one year of publishing.



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