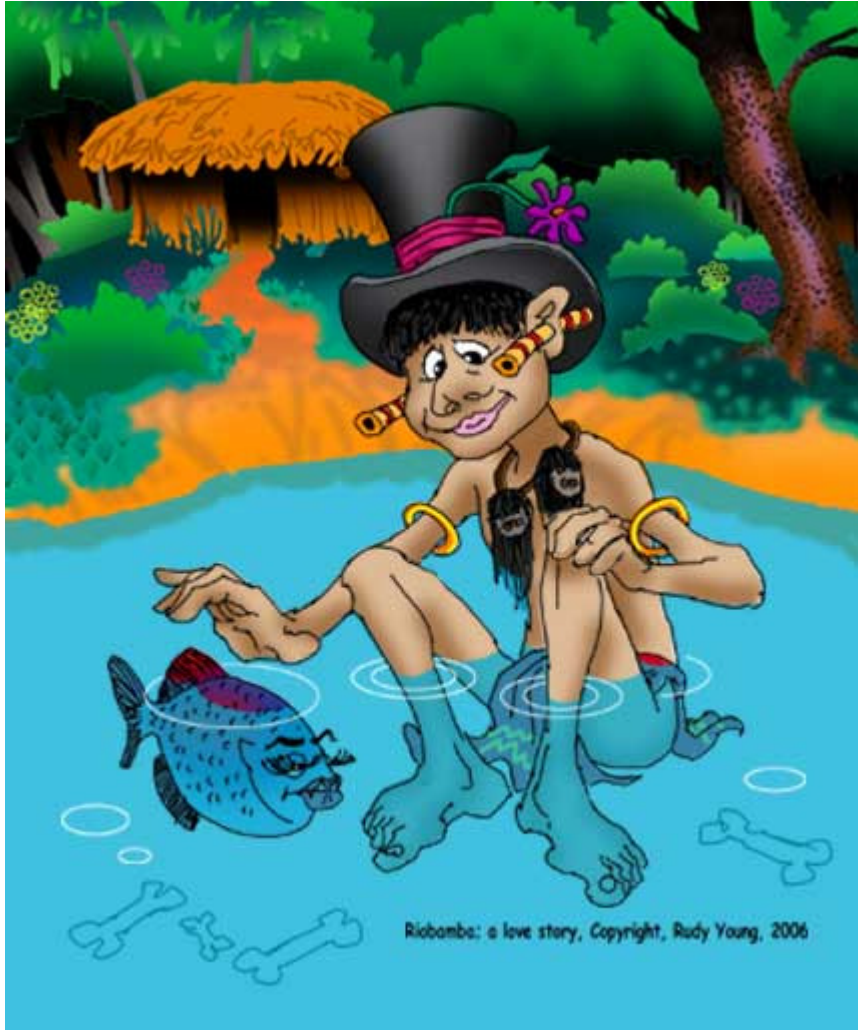


Blubbo Boy; a love story

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Looking For An Agent

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Of all the love stories from South America, none is more poignant and cherished by the poets than that of Blubbo Boy and Sasha. This story will truly live in the hearts of the people for all time

,na, free, rudy young,
Lightnin' Graphics, artist,
writer, musician.

Blubbo Boy brought his cow to the water to drink. He had just moved his family into the little thatched hut near the *Pastaza River*, a tributary in Ecuador flowing from the Andes Mountains down to the *Amazon*, and he was excited about his new environment. Living with him were his wife, Rosalita, their son, Fat Zooie, and Lackachacka, an older-daughter, who was engaged to a boy in the village. The kids had a dog, Mongo, and a large pet snake named Fattyworm.

They lived comfortably in the straw-thatched hut, which had running water and even a telephone. But Blubbo Boy liked his privacy, so he never went into the village. A descendant of the Aucakim Indian tribe, from deep in the rain forests of Ecuador, Blubbo Boy ate people; or his ancestors did, and at sixty; he was a very unsociable Indian. He wore a simple loincloth hanging front and back between his knees, he was bare-chested beneath a ruffled tuxedo coat with tails, and on his head,

most impressive of all, Blubbo Boy wore a tattered old top hat he had traded from a tugboat captain. A sight to see, Blubbo Boy waited by the river while his cow stepped into the water to drink.

Not knowing how to swim, his entire family avoided the water, and, since Blubbo Boy never talked to his neighbors, he had no way of knowing the river was filled with ferocious Piranha fish. Blubbo Boy made this discovery when his cow suddenly went crazy, squealing and baying, finally falling to her knees where she disappeared into a pool of frothing red water. There was nothing Blubbo Boy could do but watch in horror as his precious cow vanished before his eyes.

When there was nothing left of the cow but bones scattered in the shallows, Blubbo Boy turned to leave, and noticed all of the Piranha fish had left the scene but one. She was a large, silver and red, blue-eyed beauty.

“Hello, Blubbo Boy,” the fish said, her words plopping to the surface in bubbles. “My name is Gosha.”

He was appropriately surprised and jumped back.

“You don’t have to be afraid of me,” Gosha explained. “My friends and I just ate your cow, so we’re not hungry any more; you can come on in the water and stroke my back.”

“Well, okay.” Blubbo Boy said, kicking off his sandals. He walked into the water, sat down next to the beautiful fish, and began stroking her back.

She smiled up at him, fluttering her long black lashes, and said, “No one ever trusted me before, Blubbo Boy. People think just because we Piranha eat people, we have no emotions.”

“That’s not fair,” he considered.

“I have never been this close to a human before,” she said; but corrected herself. “I mean, a living one. I think your trust in me has done something to my heart.”

“D-do you mean what I think?” Blubbo Boy asked. “Could it be, Gosha, you love me, too?”

“Yes, yes, my darling,” Gosha delighted, swooning under the touch of his hand. “I never knew such magic.”

Blubbo Boy was still sitting in the water long after the moon came up, talking with Gosha and stroking her back, both of them entranced by their newfound love. When finally Gosha had to leave, Blubbo Boy sadly got out of the water and returned home. He tried to act normal around his family that night, but found that his love for Gosha now ruled his heart. He sat awake all night at the edge of the bed, but when the sun came up, he was waiting on the riverbank.

Gosha soon arrived, but she warned him not to enter the water. “My friends and I have not eaten yet; by instinct, we would have to eat you.”

“What am I to do?” Blubbo Boy cried, his reflection rippling in the swirl of her dorsal fin. “I love you.”

“I’m sorry, my darling,” Gosha said. “I love you, too. We can only satisfy our instincts; we can not change them.”

“I’ll think of something,” he said. Throwing her a kiss, he went back to his hut.

That afternoon Blubbo Boy was again sitting with Gosha in the shallow water, stroking her back.

His wife, Rosalita, came down to the river. “Blubbo Boy,” she said, “have you seen Mongo?”

“Our dog? Why, no, I haven’t seen him.”

“Well, he’s gone. Looks like somebody just untied the rope and took him.”

Rosalita walked back to the hut, calling the dog's name, while in the surrounding woods the kids could be heard calling the dog as well, but Mongo would not be found."

After sunset, Blubbo Boy again pulled himself from the water and sadly returned home. Early the next morning, Lackachacka found her father sitting in the river stroking a fish. "Daddy, have you seen my pet snake, Fattyworm?" she asked. "He's missing."

"You know I'm afraid of snakes," Blubbo Boy said, even as a burp from Gosha plopped to the surface in a bubble. Lackachacka searched all day, but Fattyworm could not be found.

Two days went by while Blubbo Boy contemplated his next move. After much thinking he gave in; he had no choice but to sacrifice Lackachacka, his only daughter.

The next morning, Lackachacka found her father sitting on the riverbank, out of the water.

"Darling," he said when he saw her approach, "I saw Fattyworm just a minute ago, swimming right over there. He's hiding underwater; why don't you jump in and surprise him."

"Daddy, I can't swim."

"It's shallow. You've seen me sitting right there."

It was not without some remorse that Blubbo Boy watched his daughter jump into the water, then froth away in screams like the cow, Mongo and Fattyworm. It was only natural that Blubbo Boy should feel sadness for the loss of his daughter, but his love for Gosha allowed him to rise above it all. He feigned concern at the dinner table, but when Lackachacka didn't return all night, in the morning Rosalita telephoned the police.

"They want to talk to you," she said, handing Blubbo Boy the receiver.

"Hello?" he said. "Yes, she had a boyfriend. Yes, they were engaged. Yes, you're probably right; they ran off and got married. Thanks; good-bye." Blubbo Boy hung up the phone.

But Rosalita told her husband, "She would never run off without telling me."

They both slept a restless sleep that night, though for different reasons, and in the morning Blubbo Boy asked his wife, "Have you looked for Lackachacka down by the river?"

"Well, no, I thought you did."

So they left Fat Zooie eating his breakfast, and together walked down to the river. Blubbo Boy had intended to save his wife until last, her being such a good cook, but his love for Gosha was now directing his every move. He pushed his wife into the river, and in a few minutes, he was sitting in the water with his beloved Gosha.

Fat Zooie searched for his mother all morning, and in the afternoon came to the river where his father was sitting in the water with his new friend. "Daddy," he asked, "Is that fish going to be my new mommy?"

Sidestepping the question, Blubbo Boy arranged for Fat Zooie to join him there the next morning, where they would organize a proper search for the boy's mother. Of course, when Fat Zooie showed up, Blubbo Boy pushed him into the water and the lad frothed away like the rest of them. It was getting expensive, but Blubbo Boy realized that to keep Gosha, the fish he loved, he was going to have to feed them all.

That night the police made a follow-up call on the missing daughter, and Blubbo Boy told them that his whole family had vanished.

"We'll send someone over to investigate," the desk-sergeant told him.

"Do you have any fat officers?" Blubbo Boy asked.

The sergeant was confused. "Well, yes, we do."

“Would you please send over a fat officer? My family was fat; I would feel more comfortable around fat people.”

Three fat officers came to Blubbo Boy’s place over the next three days, but none of them ever returned to the police station. However, every afternoon, Blubbo Boy was able to sit in the water with his beloved Gosha. After the last of the fat policeman fed the voracious fish, Blubbo Boy called the police and announced that his family had not vanished at all, but were stuck in a tree; could they please send over some fat firemen. When all the fat firemen in the village were used up, Blubbo Boy was reduced to trapping animals in the woods. But a squirrel would only get him five minutes with Gosha, before she warned him out of the water. He had to do better.

The following day a yellow school bus drove up to Blubbo Boy’s hut, and he greeted the teacher as twenty children filed out of the bus.

“I really want to thank you, Mr. Blubbo Boy,” the teacher, Mr. Hernandez, said. “It isn’t often our class gets invited swimming.”

“Glad to do it, Mr. Hernandez,” Blubbo Boy replied. Then to the kids, “Children, go get your swim suits on, then we’ll all jump in the river.”

While the teacher and the kids went into the bushes to change into their bathing suits, Blubbo Boy eased down to the water’s edge.

Gosha saw him and came closer. “Not more school children, Blubbo Boy,” she said. “Aren’t there any grownups left in the village?”

“No. The village no longer exists. Except for the skinny Bambooza twins, but they’re moving tomorrow. These school kids are from the other side of the Andes.”

Soon the laughing and squealing children came out of the woods and ran down to the river, followed by Mr. Hernandez. Dressed now in their colorful swimsuits, they lined up along the water. “Wait on Mr. Hernandez, children” Blubbo Boy instructed them. “We don’t want to go swimming without teacher.” When everyone was ready, Blubbo Boy raised his arm. “When I drop my hand, everyone jump into the water!”

The children held hands, laughing, anticipating the coolness of the water. But suddenly one of them pointed to a boat pattering around the bend. It was a small, flat bottom outboard, driven by a very large man in a Constable’s uniform.

“Your name Blubbo Boy?” the lawman called out, as the boat glided to stop at the riverbank. The man was serious-looking, he wore a badge, and at his side there was a large pistol in a holster.

“Yes it is, Constable,” the Indian said. “Is there a problem?”

“From your place all the way to the Amazon River people are starving because there haven’t been able to catch any fish.”

“Gosh, Constable,” Blubbo Boy said with genuine concern. “Why do you think that is?”

“Because there aren’t any fish.”

“No fish?” Blubbo Boy was confused. How could Gosha’s relatives be eating all the fish, along with everybody he’d been feeding them? Could it be Piranha fish were really that greedy? “I sure don’t understand, Constable.”

The Constable explained, “At first we thought it was the huge population of Piranha fish that seem to have congregated at this bend in the river.”

The schoolteacher was appalled. He pulled the kids back from the water. “Piranha?” he cried. “You mean there are cannibal fish in this water?”

“Yes,” the Constable said. “Millions of them; there’s not another Piranha fish for two thousand

miles north of here.”

The teacher sent his kids back on the bus, then turned to Blubbo Boy. “I can’t believe you were going to let us swim in that river.”

The Constable continued, “Yep, we thought it was the Piranha fish at first, but now that I’m here I can see what’s really causing the problem.”

Blubbo Boy was silent, the schoolteacher inquisitive.

The Constable stood up and stepped casually out of the boat and onto the water, where his boots sank no deeper than an inch beneath the surface. Blubbo Boy and the teacher watched with mouths dropped open, as the Constable walked to the far side of the river and back again. Standing on the water before Blubbo Boy, the Constable reached beneath his feet and brought up a handful of bones. There were long ones, short ones, little ones, all sizes, and they lay on the bottom of the river so thick as to form a dam all the way across, just below the water’s surface. While water could flow through these bones, fish could not. Taking a long hook from the bottom of the boat, the Constable broke up the dam and the bones were swept away with the renewed flow of the river. “I’m going to have to arrest you, Blubbo Boy,” the Constable told the little Indian, “for about a hundred counts of murder.”

In tears, Blubbo Boy fell to his knees at the edge of the water. “Gosha! I love you!” he called out to her. “I’ll never be able to see you again.”

But with the arrival of the Constable, the beautiful Gosha stayed back in the shadows. Only after Blubbo Boy was handcuffed and put in the boat, and the boat was well on its way back to civilization, did Gosha come back into the shallows. “Why, hello there,” she said to the schoolteacher, who was watching the boat putter away. “Would you like to stroke my back?”

Taken off-guard, the schoolteacher collected himself. Looking into her deep blue eyes, he could not suppress a passion he had not known before. “W-why, yes,” he said, trying to understand his own feelings. “But, won’t you bite me?”

“Well, yes; it will have to be after my friends and I have eaten.”

“And when will that be?”

“Well, it looks like it might be a while. Since the Constable broke up the dam bones, the fish are again swimming free to the Amazon, leaving us all very hungry.”

“Is there anything I can do?”

“You are an attractive man,” Gosha told him. “I would love for you to come sit in the water with me and stroke my back. But, unless you can feed the Piranha fish, the Piranha fish will eat you.”

The teacher thought a moment, then snapped his fingers as he considered an idea. He stepped to the top of the riverbank and called out to the school bus, “Oh, children?”

El Endo

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