

An Afternoon With Gix

By C. Jade Wyton

Weltaron is flourishing, and the children are especially enjoying the wonderful changes. Gix, happy that the horrible Dr Mori has been chased from Weltaron, can finally make herself at home without fear. And without her fear, she allows herself to finally make real, proper friends.

Contains mentions of past medical/child abuse.

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It was only a few hours until Weltaron's First Play, and Gix could barely contain her excitement. She could barely focus on her healing lesson and, after running a blank on all four questions Ashdown asked her, the man had simply chuckled and hefted her onto his shoulder to take her outside for snack time.

She'd sat with her little sister —sweet Acorn— and helped her pick the seeds from her oranges so chewing wouldn't be so difficult.

Allie had appeared, briefly, before running off with her apple slices to avoid her mother, and so when Ashdown had taken Acorn aside for a checkup on her misshapen jaw, Gix had made over for the garden to sit in the dirt and draw little animals with a rather pointy stick she'd found.

She thought of all the stories Maggie had told them while she had been staying in Weltaron— Of adventures and fights and cool mysterious creatures from other worlds.

And she thought about Humphrey and Blossom and Singer and Miles and the secret agreement they had all secretly made and promised not to tell the adults.

The little council that Raven had put together for Weltaron's leadership was good; but when Singer took over as King, he'd need to make his own. So they'd all made their decisions on which roles they would be learning:

Miles would head up the workforce, learning from both his parents about things like fixing buildings and making furniture and animal husbandry.

Blossom wanted to do Pauline's job with the children, so that meant Humphrey would be the one to go out to trade stuff with other kingdoms and organise hunting parties and things like that.

They'd make Franch in be charge of the kitchens and food stuff, if he didn't have a heart attack from stress or something before then.

And Gix would be the head healer, just like Ashdown was now!

Her friends had been surprised when she'd decided her role; with everything that happened with Mori, they thought it would be too scary. But to her, it made sense. If she understood it, it wouldn't be able to scare her anymore.... And she had been right. The things Mori did to her weren't so scary now she understood them better.

And she wouldn't even waste her energy being mad at him; no! She'd been watching Cirrus and his friends very closely, and thought she was starting to understand the best times to be mad. Like Eulogy; he used his anger to get things

done. But now that Mori wasn't here anymore, being mad at him wouldn't be productive.

So instead of being mad, she decided she would be busy instead. And do everything she could to have fun and be happy— And if it had the added *bonus* of making Mori angry enough to scream, then that was fine with her!

A hand brushed the edge of Gix's tail and she gave a little squeak to acknowledge whoever was trying to get her attention; taking two seconds to finish her little doodle before she turned around.

'Oh! Genny!' Gix chirped, taking the sad little creature by the cheeks and—just like Fungus did to her— ruffling her up playfully. 'Why are you so sad?'

Genny just gave a low groan, and shifted forward to hug the kobold child. It was a weak squeeze; like she had no energy left, and it made Gix worried as she squeezed tightly back.

She tried to remember what Ashdown had told her about Genny's soul being connected to Genevieve's, and knew that whatever was happening to Genevieve must have been *real* bad to make Genny act like this— And Gix could relate. She remembered feeling a lot the same when Fungus had first saved her.

'*Wonda's gonna get you out,*' she promised, quietly, into Genny's ear. '*She says she's not gonna give up 'til you're safe at home.*'

Genny shuddered, and Gix couldn't tell if it was a good thing or not, so she hugged her even tighter just to make sure she *knew* she was loved.

And the creature just sighed, nuzzling her face into Gix and half-closing her eye.

'I know,' Gix comforted, rubbing Genny's arm up and down just like adults used to do for her when she was upset. 'It's gonna be okay. See— Look—' she pulled away, pointing. 'Wonda's already been fighting his vultures! She's got a whole cape of their feathers! She's not gonna give up 'til *all* of you is safe! See!'

Slowly, Genny turned around to look at her daughter... and after taking a moment to peck a kiss on the tip of Gix's nose, she ambled away to go and take Wonda's tail and nuzzle into her thick dress. And Wonda didn't complain or even seem to think twice as she wrapped her tail around Genny and continued about her business.

And Gix was left in the garden with her stick, so she continued to draw. And draw, and draw, and draw! Until Allie came running back to the courtyard and all but tackled her as she chirped and nuzzled into Gix's stomach in excitement.

Gix only froze up for a moment, before she regained her senses and nervously put an arm around Allie.

*She's a victim, too,* she reminded herself of Ashdown's gentle explanation. *She never meant to hurt you. She just didn't understand....*

'Allie!' Pauline's voice called. 'Be gentle!'

'It's— It's alright!' Gix called back, using every ounce of bravery she had to call out across the courtyard 'She's being gentle!'

And it was true; Allie was being much more gentle than she had been back in Mori's lab. She had learnt how her rough play hurt sometimes, and had been very clearly trying not to be so rough. And that was why Gix was willing to give her a second chance.

'Show!' Allie suddenly said, pulling back to snap a playful nip at Gix's cheek.

‘Show! You!’

‘You want to show me something?’ Gix asked. And, before she could ask *what* Allie wanted to show her, the tabaxi had nodded and in a flash of spinning green, the pair found themselves in the middle of the Jones’ dining room.

Only a couple of the familiar-looking gnomes bothered to look up; seemingly unphased by Allie’s sudden appearance. And as Allie began to bound around on top of the table, people simply moved their food out of the way without any kind of fuss or bother— One didn’t even look up from her book as she lifted her plate out of the way.

Then, Allie grabbed Gix’s arm and with a nod and a wide smile, tugged her towards the hall.

‘Own room!’ she chirped. ‘Show! Show!’

Gix didn’t complain as she was dragged to Allie’s room. And she didn’t complain when she was dragged *out* of Allie’s room and to a library-looking room where Raven was napping, surrounded by open books. And she didn’t even complain when she was dragged out into the tall grass so Allie could show her the bugs within it— Not even when a bee flew a little too close to her face!

Instead, she took deep breaths, and thinking of all the things Cirrus had taught her about being kind, pushed away the scary feeling of being somewhere new, and let Allie be her friend.

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