

First Touch

By C. Jade Wyton

It has been a very long day for Maggie. She is sore and tired. But a visit from her closest friend brings her comfort; no matter how brief it is.

Contains mild sexual content, and mentions of abuse.

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It had been a long day, and Maggie was exhausted. Looking after the children with Fern never left her with much time for herself. She loved the children, of course. But she thought that maybe there were too many to look after under one roof. Because every day she was left so tired that the thought of moving, even just rolling over, made her fur tingle and quiver in agony.

And she never got the chance to read, anymore.

She missed reading.

She missed the adventures she would go on, flicking through the pages of her wonderful fantasy books....

*Gods, even her tail ached....*

*Perhaps this was why Fern was always so mad....*

Maggie groaned as a low, red light filled her room; casting tree-looking shadows on the walls and black-painted windows.

Her little pet beetle gave a clicking noise, and the red light grew dim again as the creature began to audibly chew on a dry leaf.

*She couldn't even spend much time with Ben, anymore—*

Maggie's gloomy thoughts were interrupted by a quiet *click* and her ear twitched as the basement door slowly creaked open.

A dull yellow light filled her room for a brief moment before fading again, and she listened as familiar footsteps felt their way down her stairs.

Slow. Careful. Quiet.

'*Edmund,*' she whispered, not moving as he made it to the foot of her bed.

'*You shouldn't be here. Fern'll get mad at you.*'

'*Oh, stuff the matron!*' Edmund whispered back, and Maggie felt him sit beside her. '*I've missed you.*'

Her lip twitched into a weak smile.

*She'd hoped he'd say that.*

Edmund's visits were always a treat.

Ever since he turned of age and gotten his work with the blacksmith he'd barely spent any time at home. He only came back for meals and a place to bed.... And since Maggie had been assigned her many duties inside the orphanage she'd spend all of the communal mealtimes in the kitchen; only eating after everyone else had left the dining hall....

Meaning by the time she was finished her food Edmund would be long gone, either to work or to sleep, and the two friends wouldn't find any time to spend

together.

So it was nice that he had come in to see her now, even at the risk of being on the receiving end of Fern's temper....

Edmund lay down beside Maggie in the cramped bed, slipping a hand under her wing and laying against her to give her a comforting hug. *'Are you alright? I heard Fern yelling at you, today.'*

*'I dropped a plate,'* Maggie felt her cheek-fur rise in a blush. *'One of the good ones. Fern hit me.'*

*'You're too old to be hit,'* Edmund sighed. *'Maggie, I... Maggie... if I ever got the money, would you move away with me?'*

*'What?'* Maggie didn't understand. *'Move away? What do you mean move away?'*

*'Leave,'* he whispered, simply. *'Get out of the orphanage— Out of town! Go somewhere better. Travel. See the world....'*

*'You mean... go on an adventure?'* Maggie asked, her heart skipping a beat as Edmund hummed in confirmation. *'Of course I would, Edmund! That's all I've ever wanted!'*

A quiet, breathless chuckle found its way out of Edmund, and he buried his face into Maggie's back between her wings. *'Tell me where we could go,'* he begged. *'Tell me what your books described.'*

*'Endless oceans,'* Maggie breathed. *'And forests so tall even birds can't find the canopy. Cities so large they take days to pass through. And music so beautiful you're brought to tears. Open fields of soft grass that the wind whispers through, calling your name on the breeze. Caves so large and long and deep, with so many plants and glowing insects, you forget that you're underground....'*

Maggie trailed off as she felt Edmund press closer into her, and she rubbed her talons together sheepishly as his warm breath met the back of her neck.

His grip on Maggie tightened, and his hand moved over her in a way that felt... *different* to the hug from before....

It ran over her chest, down to her middle... and then rested on her hip as Edmund's breath quivered with nerves that Maggie couldn't place the reason for.

*'Edmund?'* she asked, her ear twitching as she craned her neck to look at her friend. *'What are you doing?'*

*'N... Nothing,'* Edmund withdrew his hand at Maggie's question, shifting back in the bed until he was on his feet again. *'I uh... should go. Before Fern comes in to check on you.'*

*'Oh... okay,'* Maggie tried not to sound disappointed, but it was hard. Edmund had only just arrived, and now he was already leaving...?

Maggie rolled over, ignoring the aching pains in her body so that she could say goodbye properly— And saw Edmund's cheeks were deep and dark in a blush.

*'Edmund? Are you alright?'*

*'Yeah, mhm, fine,'* Edmund responded, curtly, before heading for the door. *'I'll, uh... see you tomorrow at breakfast.'*

*'Okay. Goodnight, Edmund.'*

Edmund's footsteps creaked back up the stairs, a little bit quicker and a little less careful than when he'd come in. And then when the dull yellow light peeked

in, just a crack, Edmund paused and looked back down to Maggie.

*'Hold on for me, just a little bit longer,' he whispered. 'And then I'll take care of you properly. I'll love you the way you deserve to be loved.'*

His words were so soft they sent a shiver up Maggie's spine, and she felt her wings fluff up.

*He'd love her the way she deserved to be loved...?*

She didn't understand what he meant.

The love of his friendship had always been so wonderful; she wasn't sure how he could possibly change it....

She felt the tip of her tail twitch, and she ran her own hand down her body the way that Edmund had....

*It didn't feel the same.*

How different, it felt, when he had touched her.

She wasn't sure *why*, but....

*She hoped he might touch her like that again....*

—END—

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