

I Like What We Are

By C. Jade Wyton

Maggie is staying in Edmund's apartment, tonight, and they're finding themselves in a serious-but-loving conversation about their relationship.

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Tonight, Maggie was staying in Edmund's apartment.

It wasn't very big; it had been the nicest apartment he could reasonably afford when he first moved into the city.

He'd been considering moving to a bigger place, lately. Now that he had a high-paying job aiding shipwrights with their work— Blacksmiths were in high demand wherever ships were built, and Maggie had overheard people saying that Edmund's work was some of the best they'd ever seen!

Good strong work led to safe sturdy boats....

'What do you think of this one?' Edmund's voice interrupted Maggie's thoughts as he held up a newspaper ad for Maggie to look at. 'It has two bedrooms.'

'Edmund—' Maggie cut off with a sigh, her ears folding back. 'I've told you before, I'm happy with how I live.'

'Oh I uh— I-I know,' Edmund stammered, his face darkening in a blush as he averted his gaze. 'You wouldn't *have* to stay with me. You could still go from friend-to-friend. But you could leave your things there.... And maybe... if you had a permanent address to give the government they would, uh... leave you alone?'

Maggie's whiskers twitched in amusement as Edmund tried to justify himself. He was giving her every reason he could think of, except the reason she knew he wanted most.

She leant forward, pressing her nose to his cheek in a kiss and purring into his ear, 'I know you mean well, Edmund. And don't think I don't appreciate what you're trying to do.... But be honest with me.'

Edmund's hand took hers, giving it a firm squeeze as he took in a trembling breath. 'I... I love you, Maggie. I want to look after you.'

'I know,' Maggie acknowledged, resting her head on his shoulder and letting out a contented sigh. 'I love you too. But I'm not a kid anymore. Nobody needs to look after me. Even Eulogy knows that.'

'Does he, *really*?' Edmund asked with humour.

'If he thought I wasn't able to handle myself he wouldn't let me go out on jobs,' Maggie pointed out. 'And he would have chased you out of the city by now.'

A chuckle escaped Edmund, and he licked his lip before nervously biting it. 'Yeah. He scares me a little bit. So does Doll.'

'Doll has a big heart,' Maggie defended.

'Yeah. They showed it to me, once,' Edmund raised his brow high, flicking his head to emphasise his concern. 'I'm pretty sure hearts are supposed to remain *inside* your chest. Not be kept in jars.'

'They've been through a lot.'

*'I'll say.'*

Maggie sat up so she could give Edmund a friendly punch. 'Be nice!'

'I am!' Edmund laughed. 'I promise.'

'Good!' Maggie grinned wide, and climbed into Edmund's lap so she could point a finger at his nose. 'Because Eulogy and Doll are very important to me. As important as you are! And if you didn't get along I would be *very* sad.'

Edmund tried to hide his grin, but it forced its way to his face regardless of his efforts as he wrapped his arms around Maggie and buried his face into her chest. 'I love you,' he told her again.

'I love you too,' Maggie echoed, resting her head atop his and letting a low, loving rumble fill her body. She played with the ends of his hair as she purred until, finally, she sat up straighter and took his cheeks in her hands. 'I'm sorry our lives can't be like we hoped when we were little. Everything's so different now to what we used to plan. I feel like it's my fault for leaving without you. But I— I just.... I don't know why I did. I'm sorry.'

'Maggie.... *It's okay,*' Edmund reassured, his eyes sparkling. 'I like what we are.'

Maggie leant forward, pressing their foreheads together lovingly. 'So do I.'

—END—

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