

Lash Out

By C. Jade Wyton

Kidnapped by a lich claiming to be Maggie's mother, Edmund tries to stop his family from getting themselves into more trouble than they're already in.

Violence, abuse mention, kidnapping mention.

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It had been one *hell* of a week. Well. Not even a week. Only a little over *half* a week had passed, since they'd been whisked away to this horrid place, and it still didn't feel real.

Edmund rubbed his arms as he walked in pace with Doll down the long, cold hallway. Maggie was about five paces ahead, taking out her anger on the decorations as she passed them. Every window she passed was hit by a flick of her wing and shattered. And every vase that crossed her path ended up on the floor.

The first time she'd remembered Eulogy's birthday without help, and she was spending it trapped in a castle only gods-know how far away from Waterdeep.... And on top of that, her oldest childhood fears had all but been confirmed; she had been made by evil, for evil.... And now that evil had tracked her down and taken her back.

Edmund felt for her. He had never seen her so angry, before; it made his heart hurt to see. But there was nothing he could do to comfort her. All he could do was watch as Maggie grabbed a wreath of wilting flowers that hung from the roof and yanked them down, struggling to shred them in her trimmed-down claws and muttering to herself.

She cursed her mother aloud for cutting her claws short, though Edmund was glad it was *all* that had been done to her, after she'd scored those long deep lines across the lich's face and arms her first day in the castle. He had half-expected the furious lich to completely declaw her, and was relieved when she'd simply ordered her nails cut down to the quick— It had been painful, but it was better than the alternative.

Maggie discarded the ruined flowers on the floor with a hiss, her tail lashing side-to-side as she threw them down. She looked at them for a moment, growling, before bending down to hiss directly *at* them, as if they had offended her. Then she turned to the wall and knocked down a painting.

She kicked at it, then hissed at it, then kicked at it again.

Then, Doll stepped to her side and took her hands, mumbling something as Maggie growled under her breath.

Edmund joined them, taking Maggie in a tight hug and holding her close. He could feel the growls vibrating through her as she pressed into him for comfort.

Then, her growls cut off, and her head and ears perked up alert.

Edmund followed her gaze down the hall and took a sharp breath when he saw them: Ashdown and Mori.

Mori was carrying a box and chattering happily as Ashdown trailed behind him, his body language completely unreadable behind his bright yellow hazard suit.

The growl returned to Maggie's throat, and Edmund's embrace around her tightened.... But, apparently, not tight enough, as she broke free with a sudden burst of movement and sprinted down the hall. An animal-like yowl escaped her as she pounced on the half-elf scientist, who dropped his box and screamed as he landed on the ground with a heavy *thump!*

Droplets of blood spurt into the air as Maggie clawed at the man; though her claws were short, the force in which she used them still managed to break skin with every other swipe.

And Edmund's heart leapt as he rushed to Maggie and hooked his arms under her own to lift her off the scientist.

'Let me go, Edmund!' Maggie cried. 'Let me go!'

'Maggie, you can't!' Edmund explained. 'If you hurt him, the lich will rip your claws *out!*'

At Edmund's reminder of her mother's threat, Maggie stopped struggling. Though, tears still welled in her eyes as she was deposited several feet from the scientist, and she gave another loud hiss of fury in his direction.

And then Edmund heard the man give another shout of pain, and turned to see Doll had begun to kick him.

'DOLL! NO!' Edmund cried, running to pull Doll away from the man. 'STOP!'

Doll got in another two kicks before Edmund managed to remove them from Mori and shove them next to Maggie. They crossed their arms, giving Edmund an annoyed look as he held them back.

'Remember what the lich said about—'

'I'm not scared of the lich, Edmund,' Doll interrupted. 'I'll kill her, too.'

'Doll, *please!* It's too risky to—'

Another grunt sounded, and Edmund whirled around, his heart jumping into his throat as he worried that Maggie had returned to Mori. But, instead, he saw *Ashdown* standing over him. And a clear boot-mark on Mori's back.

'ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?!'

—END—

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