

# Bébé's New Mama

By C. Jade Wyton

*Bébé is a young baby mimic, who has been separated from its mama after being bought by a young couple as a gift for their daughter. It is having a hard time; its new people clearly love it very much, but Bébé's old people lied to them about how to look after Bébé. So now, Bébé is hungry and sad, and Bébé's new people are desperate to help it get better.*

***Contains animal distress/illness.***

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Bébé didn't want to eat.

Bébé was too sad, and too sick, and this food smelt too funny and was too weird and red and—

And... and....

*And Bébé missed its mama too much to eat!*

The mimic let out a long, mournful whine and curled tighter into itself.

It had taken the form of a small toy rabbit; though it was hard to tell with how it had rolled into an almost ball-like shape as it trembled and whimpered.

The kind-hearted little girl who's lap Bébé lay in stroked Bébé gently and mimicked its upset sound; something Bébé had never heard a person do before.

She was Bébé's new person, Bébé knew. Bébé's mama had told it so. And Bébé's mama had made Bébé promise to be a good, well-behaved friend for its new person.... But Bébé was finding it hard.

It had been a long, hungry journey to this new house. And Bébé hadn't realised just how different things were going to be without its mama and siblings.

*Whine.*

*Whine.*

*Lick.*

Bébé licked at the little girl's hand as she picked Bébé up and held it close to her chest.

She was warm, just like Bébé's mama. And she pecked a kiss on Bébé, right where Bébé's mama used to lick it.

But Bébé couldn't muster up a purr. Because this wasn't its mama.

Bébé's mama had milk; and this person had no milk. Only meat.

Lots of different kinds of meats, all that she had offered to Bébé to try and get it to eat.

But none that Bébé had wanted to try more than a bite of....

Another kiss, and the little girl rose to her feet and carried Bébé out of her bedroom, through a hall, and down a flight of stairs to a lounge room.

'M... M...' the little girl attempted to speak, to softly call to the older woman who rested in an armchair, but it caught in her throat until she stomped her foot and raised her voice. 'MUM!'

The woman jumped in surprise and turned to the girl. 'Becky!' she scolded.

‘Don’t yell. There’s no reason for it!’

‘Mum!’ the girl, Becky, repeated. She was little quieter than before, but still held a forceful tone. ‘Mum! Mum!’

‘What? What is it, honey? I’m listening.’

‘*Mm!*’ the girl stomped her foot again, and Béb  felt itself pulled briefly away from her chest before being held close again. ‘*Hmp!*’

‘Hm...’ Becky’s mother’s eyes grew sharp as she watched Béb . ‘She still hasn’t eaten?’

‘No!’ Becky snapped. ‘Not one! No!’

‘Not even the mince?’

‘No!’ Becky declared, shaking her head. ‘No. No. Not one.’

That was when the girl’s mother stood up and took Béb  from her; though Becky clearly didn’t want to let it go.

‘Hey, little thing,’ the woman sighed, carefully unfolding Béb  so she could examine it. ‘What’s wrong with you? You were so energetic when we picked you up.... What are we doing wrong...?’

‘Vet?’ Becky suggested. ‘Sick?’

‘Yes, I think so,’ Becky’s mother sighed, giving Béb  back to the girl. ‘I’ll make an appointment now. And in the meantime, while we wait, we can go to the pet shop and see what Mr Muffins suggests we do.’

‘Mhm!’ Becky gave a nod and held Béb  in a firm-but-careful embrace. ‘Vet!’

‘Yes. The vet. Because she’s our responsibility now, and that means we have to take her to the vet when she’s sick,’ her mother confirmed. ‘You go put your shoes on and wait by the car, and I’ll give the vet a call now. See if they can fit us in tomorrow. And while we wait we’ll go and see Mr Muffins and ask what he thinks. Go on, now. Shoes on.’

‘Mhm!’ Becky nodded to her mother before hurrying off.

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The drive hadn’t been too bad, Béb  thought. It had been *much* better than the plane ride over from its first house....

But Béb  was feeling nervous as the car pulled to a stop in front of a very full-looking window.

A *pet shop*, Becky’s mother (Barbra, Béb  had heard Becky’s papa call her when she told him she was going out) had said. *For pet things*.

And Béb  was a pet. So they were bringing Béb  in to see if the owner of the store, “Mr Muffins,” could figure out how to make Béb  feel better.

Becky pet Béb  again, running her hand down its back in a comforting way before letting Barbra help her out of the car.

She didn’t stop comforting Béb  as she walked; which helped Béb  to not tremble as they made their way into the scary-smelling store.

It was crowded. Full of things that all looked so familiar to Béb , but were also so different from anything it had known in its first home.

Toys, and beds, and cages, and bags of food all lined the shelves in a way Béb  had never seen before.

‘Ah! Hello, hello! Who are you, then?’ greeted a short, fluffy man as he

approached the trio. 'I'm Mr Muffins, I— Oh! It's you, Barbra! Back so soon? Was there a problem with what you bought, or...?'

'Not what I got from *here*, no,' Barbra said, motioning to Becky— Who held up Béb  and gave a worried grunt. 'But I'm afraid the mimic we bought has gone off eating. It didn't take to the kibble we got it, so we tried fresh meat but it just... won't eat.'

'Hm... let me have a look,' Mr Muffins tutted, holding out his hands and very *very* carefully taking B    from Becky.

B    gave a pitiful whine as it was examined, and Mr Muffins didn't look impressed.

'Who did you say you got it from, again?'

'From the owner of a show-mimic,' Barbra explained. 'He said that he hired a stud out and was selling some of the babies that weren't quite show-quality.'

'Mhm. And how old did he say they were?'

'A year.'

'What a bold-faced lie!' Mr Muffins scoffed. 'I'd put this poor thing at... maybe four months at *most*!'

An annoyed hum escaped Barbra, before she snorted through her nose. 'Four months?'

'At most.'

'I thought mimics weaned at five.'

'They do.'

'Ah,' Barbra's nose scrunched up in a scary-looking scowl, and she gave another snort. 'Could you... excuse me for a moment?' she asked. 'I hope you don't mind if I leave Becky here for a few minutes but... I need to make a phone call.'

'Oh, yes, of course,' Mr Muffins gave a polite nod before offering his free hand to Becky. 'Come on, dear. Don't look so worried. I have some formula in the back that we can make up.'

'Mmm...' Becky gave a nervous hum as she took Mr Muffin's hand. She let him lead her to the back of the store as Barbra pulled out her phone and began to dial.

'Come on,' Mr Muffins urged, shutting the door behind him and sitting Becky down on a chair. 'Here. You hold the little one while I get some food ready for it, hm—'

'*H   connard!*' Barbra's voice shouted furiously from the other room, making both B    and Becky jump in fright. 'C'est Barbra Bloom! *Vous souvenez-vous de moi?!*'

'Woof,' Mr Muffin gave a heavy sigh, petting Becky on the back as she stared, wide-eyed, in the direction of her mother's voice. 'She is *not* happy, is she?'

Becky shook her head, and gave B    a comforting pat. Her gaze turned to Mr Muffins as he began to fiddle with a tin of white powder; though B    was much more interested in what Barbra had to say.

It understood a lot of the words she was screaming; they were words for *liar*, and *scammer*, and *bastard*, and *animal abuser*.

She was very angry... but from what B    could hear.... It was because B   's old people didn't care that B    would get sick, and Barbra didn't want B    to be sick.

Bébé's little heart fluttered, and it gave a weak purr.

*These people cared for Bébé. These people wanted Bébé to be safe!*

Becky held Bébé closer, and Bébé's purring grew.

It felt safer, now, knowing for sure that these people wanted to protect it.

'So, what's the little thing's name?' Mr Muffin's asked.

Becky's ear twitched; though she didn't look up from Bébé. She kept quiet, and stared down at it with a loving look.

'Have you named it, yet?' Mr Muffins tried.

Becky nodded her head, but didn't say anything.

'Am I allowed to know?' a laugh escaped the man as Becky shook her head, and he wandered back over to the young girl with a bottle of....

*Milk!*

Bébé gave a curious chirp as Mr Muffins wrapped a piece of cloth over the bottle's open top and offered it to Becky.

'Here, hold this down like this,' Mr Muffins instructed; angling down Becky's hand so the cloth was aimed at Bébé.

*Sniff, sniff....*

It smelt good.

*Sniff.... Sniff....*

*Lick?*

Oh! It tasted even better!

*Lick!*

*Lick lick lick!*

'Eating!' Becky exclaimed, a high and happy note to her voice that Bébé hadn't heard since it had first been gifted to the girl. 'Mhm! Mhm! Eating!'

'Wonderful!' Mr Muffins clapped his hands together and took a step back as Becky continued to feed Bébé. 'That should have it feeling better in no time!'

*'Mmmmmhm!'*

Bébé could feel Becky bouncing with happiness as it fed, and it gave a purr.

It was doing good! It was making its new person happy, just like it had promised its mama!

*Its mama....*

Bébé shifted closer to the bottle, pressing its tongue harder against it to try and coax the milk out faster.

*Mama gave Bébé milk.*

*And now Becky was giving Bébé milk....*

*Was....*

*Was Becky now Bébé's mama?*

The thought made Bébé pause, and it looked up at the girl with wide eyes as she smiled back down at it.

It was a look of love. One that nobody but Bébé's mother had ever given it before.

Nobody else. Not even Bébé's old people had love so clear for Bébé in their eyes.

Just Mama, and Becky. So....

Yes, Bébé decided. *Becky was Mama now!*

It went back to drinking, letting itself purr at full volume as it did. It was

feeling much better with a full stomach.

Yes! It was!

‘Aw, little thing’s happy!’ Mr Muffin cooed; then cast a glance up as Barbra slowly entered the back room. ‘How did your phone call go?’

‘I gave them a piece of my mind,’ Barbra said, simply, before stepping over to Becky and watching as Béb  drank enthusiastically. ‘Becky, honey. How is she?’

‘Mm!’ Becky beamed at her mother. ‘Mm! Mhm! Mm!’

‘I’m glad,’ Barbra gave a smile back— It was tired, Béb  noticed, but still had warmth to it. ‘Now, honey. I have a *very* important question to ask. Okay?’

‘Mhm?’ Becky cocked her head quizzically. ‘Yah?’

‘Okay.... So... Becky, the breeder we got this girl from lied to us,’ she said, simply. ‘They said that she was older than she is. And that she was fully grown. But I just talked to them again and made them tell me the truth, and they said that they don’t even know what breed she is! We don’t know how big she’s going to get. Or how she’s going to behave.... So I need to ask you. And I want you to be honest and think *really* hard about this.... Do you think we should give her up?’

‘AH!’ Becky let an upset cry, and pulled Béb  close so she could lean over it protectively. ‘No! Love her! Love her! Love her!’

‘I know— I know you do, but I need you to listen to me, okay?’ Barbra gently put her hands on her daughter’s shoulders, and brushed the hair from her face. ‘We don’t know how hard it’s going to be to look after her when she’s older. If she gets bigger she’ll be harder to look after.... I’m not going to make you give her away if you don’t want to— She was a gift to you, and I can’t just make you give her up. But I’m asking you to be responsible, okay? She is going to be a lot of work to look after.’

‘Mm!’ Becky gave an upset grunt, and shifted in her seat. ‘Look after her.... Me. Yes. Will do! Promise! Promise.... Please?’

Barbra gave a sigh; though she smiled. ‘Okay. If you think that’s something you’ll be able to handle?’

‘Mhm! Mhm! Mhm!’ Becky nodded furiously, her own smile appearing as she leant forward with excitement. ‘Promise!’

‘Okay,’ Barbra kissed Becky’s nose before leaning back and addressing Mr Muffins; ‘So. Formula? How do we do that?’

‘Just like regular baby formula!’ Mr Muffins reassured, gathering up the tin he’d used to make Béb ’s meal into a bag. ‘Though— Don’t use that for a mimic.’

‘Of course not,’ Barbra gave a chuckle as she accepted the tin of formula. ‘Thank you so much, Mr Muffins. It’s really appreciated.’

‘Aw, no worries!’ Mr Muffins waved a hand before turning to Becky. ‘So, now that I’ve helped out, am I allowed to know her name?’

Becky shook her head again, and Barbra gave a humoured scoff.

‘Becky!’

‘Ah, but then how am I supposed to put her name on her new bowl!’ Muffins joked, picking up a pink bowl with a blank metal plate attached.

Becky’s eyes widened, at that. As did Béb ’s.

Béb  was getting its own name?

*Oh! Oh! That was wonderful!*

It had never had a name all of its own, before! It had always shared its name

with its siblings!

It wondered what its name was going to be—

‘Mi... mi,’ Becky mumbled.

‘Mimi?’ Mr Muffins echoed, his ears flicking forward with amusement when Becky nodded. ‘Mimi Bloom! What a wonderful name!’

*What a wonderful name!*

Mimi agreed with a loud chirp, and wiggled excitedly in Becky’s arms.

What a wonderful, fantastic name! And it was all Mimi’s own!

‘She likes it! Perfect. Let me just get this engraved for you!’ Mr Muffins said, pulling the metal plate off the bowl and making his way over to a strange-looking machine. ‘No cost, of course, Barbra. I wouldn’t spring that on you.... Not after hearing that phone call!’

*Mimi.*

Mimi gave a happy trill as it thought about its new name, and its full belly, and how warm Becky’s arms were as she cuddled it close.

*Mimi.*

*Mimi.*

*Mimi!*

Oh, it liked that name a lot!

—END—

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