

# Becky's Last Chance

By C. Jade Wyton

*Becky Bloom has just graduated her thirteenth year of high school and spent the night in the woods celebrating with her druid class and grandfather. This was directly against the instruction of her stepmother, Isa'vanna, who told her that she was to come home straight after graduation as she was grounded.... So as Becky heads home, she's prepares herself for a scolding.*

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Becky knew she was going to be in trouble.

She was probably never going to be allowed outside, ever again.

She knew that, as soon as she climbed in through her bedroom window and tried to crawl her way to bed (and crawl it would be— She was *exhausted*), she was going to be met by Isa's tapping foot and crossed arms and a dirty look.

But it was worth it.

Becky couldn't believe she had actually managed to graduate! She had, almost her entire school life, just been waiting for Isa to let her drop out.... She'd been so mad at the start of every year when Isa would scold her into continuing her education; but now she was glad that her ilhar had been so firm.

Because she had graduated! And she was actually *excited* that she had graduated!

She still couldn't believe it.

And even less believable was that a significant chunk of her druid family from Germany had suddenly shown up on her doorstep to celebrate with her. Including... her grandfather; her dad's biological father. Who she had found out was called *Haydn* at some point in the night— Though he had insisted that Becky call him *Opa*.

So, even though she was grounded and was *supposed* to go home straight after graduation was over, Becky had snuck out with her druid classmates and Opa to run wild out in the woods.

The other druids had run with Becky and her grandfather for most of the night; but even invigorated by their meeting with Yall'dve, the most powerful arch druid in the area, they still *eventually* ran out of stamina.

It had been a long day. And Becky was fairly sure that, unlike herself, none of her fellow druids had actually *lived* in the woods before. Not like she had.

And so, when Becky had introduced her grandfather to the erkling and the pair had taken to playing tug-o-war with their mouths and a very large stick, the group had slowly dissipated until it was just Becky showing her grandfather all of her favourite places in the woods.

This had continued until dim morning light began to break its way through the trees and Becky's grandfather sniffed out a comfortable spot at the base of a nearby tree; nestling down and settling in to sleep.

'You sleep?' he asked; his voice awkward as it was translated by the magical amulet he had placed around his neck.

'Uuuuuuh...' Becky rubbed the back of her head. 'I should, like. Go home. Isa is going to, like. Be so mad at me and stuff. I was supposed to, like, go straight home with her after graduation because I'm like. Grounded.'

'Grounded?'

'Yeah. Grounded. In trouble? I'm not meant to go out and stuff. As like, a punishment.'

'No— No! You are with me! You are with Opa! It is okay,' Opa insisted.

'Noo, see— Cos if you tell Ilhar that you said I could be out, she's gonna ground you, too!'

'I am not worried about your mother,' Opa chuckled, waving his hand dismissively.

'You should be,' Becky took in a sharp breath of air. 'She's like. In charge and stuff.'

'Ah. The alpha?' Opa snuggled tighter against the tree. 'She seems the sort.... Well. You can stay with me and sleep, and I will talk with her when we wake up. Or you could go back home now. In which case I offer you my wishes of good luck.'

Becky gave a nervous chuckle. 'Thanks. I'm gonna need it to survive this one....'

Opa gave a knowing nod and, burying his face under an arm, immediately began to snore.

For a moment Becky shuffled from foot-to-foot. Then she spun around and took the form of a deer as she sprinted back towards town.

Isa was going to *kill* her.

And even though the night out had been worth it, Becky still wasn't looking forward to being scolded.

It was probably best just to get it over and done with. It wasn't undeserved, after all. She'd broken... yet another promise to her ilhar— Honestly, at this point, Becky was surprised that Isa still trusted her at all.

She'd be lucky if by the end of this she didn't end up with bars on her windows....

Becky slowed to a trot as she arrived back in town, and decided it might be worth it to pass by the strip mall on her way home.

They needed bread. And Isa might not be as furious at her if she did something thoughtful....

Luckily the bakery was open and Becky was able to get a loaf of bread for the house (and a muffin for herself). She decided that it was probably best to walk through town as a person and not an animal, even if she looked like an absolute mess, and stumbled back home.

She flipped herself over the back fence and— *Oh!*

She jumped back to avoid stepping on one of her cousins who was asleep on the ground next to the gate.

Scanning the backyard, Becky saw that most of the family who had shown up yesterday were laying in the backyard asleep, though a few faces (such as Marta) were missing; presumably to be found in the guest room.

Careful not to step on anybody, Becky made her way across the yard and to the tree that led up to her window. She scaled it and slipped into her bedroom...

where she found a very unimpressed-looking Isa sitting on her bed.

Isa watched Becky with tight eyes as she quietly closed the window and then let out a loud, disappointed sigh through her nose as Becky turned back to her.

Becky swallowed, feeling her ears press back and her face flush hot with embarrassment. 'I'm sorry Ilhar I just—'

Isa raised a hand, closing her eyes and turning her head away in a very clear motion that silently said; *I don't want to hear it.*

And Becky went quiet, biting her lip.

Slowly, Isa's hand closed until it was just her pointer held out; which she aimed at Becky as she turned back. 'I am letting this one go,' she said, clearly forcing her voice to sound softer than her anger wanted it to be. 'Because it was a very important day yesterday, and I'm still *very* proud of you.'

Becky nodded, shuffling sheepishly as Isa wagged her finger.

'But this is your *last* chance, do you hear me?' Isa warned. 'One more lie or broken promise, and I'm scruffing you like a cat and putting a tracker in your neck. Am I clear?'

'Yes, Isa,' Becky mumbled, her eyes darting to the floor.

'Am. I. Clear.'

'Yes, Isa,' Becky repeated, louder.

'Good,' Isa lowered her hand. 'One more chance.'

'Mhm.'

'One more.'

'Yes, Ilhar.'

'I can't handle any more lies, Becky.'

'I know, Ilhar.'

'I can't.'

'I know....'

'Do you?'

'Mhm.'

'Mhm?'

'Mhm.'

'Mhm....'

The pair fell quiet, then, as Isa let out a heavily sigh and looked away from her daughter; her eyes slowly gazing around the bright pink room.

'I... got bread for you?' Becky said slowly, holding up the loaf for her mother to see.

Isa stared for a moment before giving another sigh and rising to her feet. She took the bread, pecking a kiss on Becky's forehead, and then headed for the door. 'I love you, Rebecca.'

—END—

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