

Bijou's Bébés

By C. Jade Wyton

Bijou is a mother mimic with five babies, all named Bébé. It can't call them anything else— If it does, it might love them more than it already does. And that would be no good, because it has to give them all up in a few months. A few... months? It's supposed to be a few months, isn't it? So why are its people... bringing in new people to look at them...? Oh. Bijou doesn't like this. Bijou doesn't like this at all!

Contains some mentions of animal neglect.

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Bijou had five babies, all named Bébé.

It couldn't name them anything else. Because then it would love them all too much. And if it loved them too much, it would be too hard to say goodbye.

*Lick, lick, lick, lick, lick.*

Bijou licked its babies on their heads, one Bébé at a time, until they had all been licked.

They were good babies.

Bijou was glad that it had them.

It had been a very naughty thing, escaping from its house when its owners had left the door open.

It wasn't meant to go outside. It was meant to stay inside. Where it was safe and warm and it could only transform into the things its people showed it.

Because it was only supposed to transform into things it was trained to; so that it didn't mess up during the mimic shows that it was displayed in....

But Bijou had gotten out, and seen so many good things to transform into— And when it had come across another mimic, a very handsome mimic who lived in a construction zone and enjoyed turning into paint tins of varying colours, it had dared to turn into a... a....

*A wrench!*

Bijou was giddy with the memory.

*A wrench!*

It had turned itself into an ugly rusty wrench. And there was *nothing* its people could do to stop it!

The two mimics had started planning a life together, before Bijou made the mistake of trying to get food out of a wire square.

A cage-trap that had captured it! And then it had been taken back “home.”

Bijou didn't like its “home.”

Too much was expected of it.

Too much poking and prodding.

And meals that were far too small, to keep it at its “breed standard size.”

*Stupid.*

Its people were stupid.

The rules they made it live by were stupid.

And it was glad it had its babies.

It was glad, even though it was sad it was going to have to give them up when they were weaned....

But that was a long way away. Because they were only three months old, now. And even though Bijou's stupid people were trying to make them eat solids already, they would still be drinking Bijou's milk for another two months.

*Lick, lick, lick, lick—*

*Chirp!*

Bijou paused its licking as one of its Bébés stirred.

It was its smallest Bébé; the runt of the brood. A brave and naughty little thing that loved to play and bite and that always asked Bijou to tell it stories.

Bijou loved its smallest Bébé a lot. Too much, perhaps. Just like with all of its Bébés.

*Chirp?*

*Lick!*

*Chirp!*

Bébé gave a happy trill as Bijou licked it again, and it leapt to its feet and began bounding around the sectioned-off part of the lounge room that Bijou's people had made for it to nurse its babies in.

It ran from one end of the space to the other, picking up and dropping toys as it did, before finally returning to its mother and giving one of its sleeping siblings a hard push out of the way so it could nurse.

The sleeping Bébé didn't mind little Bébé's shove; though it itself stirred and yawned and stumbled to its feet so it could move to Bijou's other side.

Then, just as Bijou's little Bébé finished nursing and ran off to play again, there was a knock at the front door.

*Strange*, thought Bijou. *Its people usually didn't have guests on dimanche.*

Bijou's people both quickly hurried to the door, warmly greeting two more people— An elf and a human, both who looked tired and ragged and a little bit sad.

They talked, though Bijou paid them not-much-mind as they mentioned *America* and *their daughter's birthday* and *flying back out tomorrow....*

Not until they were led to the room where Bijou and its babies were; and Bijou felt... *uneasy*.

Not because of these new people; but because of its own....

*Bébé!* Bijou trilled, attempting to call back its littlest child but only managing to stir the rest.

*Maman?*

*Awake?*

*Waking up?*

*People?*

*New people?*

*Maman?*

*Who are they?*

*Strangers?*

Bijou licked the four babies buried into its side and chirped again for its

littlest Béb  to come back to it.

*No! Too much fun!*

Was the very naughty response.

Bijou licked the other B   s again, giving a nervous huff as the new people were encouraged to step over the barrier and come into the mimics' space.

And its B   s felt its anxiety, and all gave their own nervous little whines as they pressed tighter into Bijou and tried to understand what was happening.

'They're still very small,' the human woman pointed out. 'You said they're *how* old?'

'A year. Their father was a smaller breed than Bijou, so this is as big as they're going to get.'

*Lies!*

Bijou gave a low growl, before anxiously licking at its babies again.

That was all lies!

Bijou's B   s were only three months old. Not a whole year! And Bijou's partner had been three times its size! Big and strong and warm and protective!

Bijou's B   s were *not* fully grown!

The hum the human woman gave was tentative, like she didn't fully believe Bijou's people. But she looked like she was too tired to think about it further and so just gave a nod and looked to the elf man.

'What do you think, Ken?'

The elf clearly didn't like being put on the spot and for a moment he looked panicked. Then he stammered: 'I-I think we have to bring *something* home for Becky. Or she will be heartbroken even more than she already is!'

The woman gave an exhausted-but-agreeing nod before looking to Bijou and its babies and crouching down.

'*Pspsp*,' she kissed at the air, and held out an open hand towards Bijou.

All of the B   s that were cuddled into Bijou let out nervous whines and pressed tighter into its side.

'Hm.'

*Squeak! Squeak squeak squeak!*

Bijou's smallest B    emerged from the plastic play-tunnel, chewing on a rubber cupcake, and froze when it saw the new people in its space.

*B   ! Bijou chirped. Come here!*

B    stayed still, staring at the new people with wide eyes.

*B   !*

B    dropped the cupcake and continued to stare.

'*Pspsp*,' the woman held out her hand to B   , who sniffed the air curiously. 'Hello there. You're a pretty one, aren't you?'

Bijou called for B    again, but went ignored as B   's eyes fell on the elf man.

It gave an excited chirp, jumping in place a few times before rushing forward.

It ran straight past the human woman and scaled the elf's leg— Much to his dismay as he gave a surprised cry and froze completely still; looking like he was terrified he was going to hurt tiny little B    if he even breathed too hard.

'Oh, Ken!' the woman laughed as B    reached the elf's face and licked at him. 'She likes you!'

Bébé gave a trill, and turned into the longest form it could (a downscaled sock-monkey) and attempted to wrap around the man's neck so it could lick affectionately inside his ear.

*Friend! Bébé chirped. Friend! Friend! Lick lick lick! Little Bébé lick friend!*

Bijou tensed as the new people examined its baby.

'It has blue eyes,' the woman pointed out. 'That's unusual, isn't it?'

'Yes, we think it has some pigment issues,' Bijou's person explained— *Finally, something that wasn't a lie!* 'But it won't affect its health....'

The four people continued to talk about Bijou's littlest Bébé, and Bijou didn't like the words they used.

It was clear to Bijou that these people were wanting to be Bébé's new people— Or, more, they wanted their own baby to be Bébé's new person.

Bijou wasn't sure how it felt about this.... Though, it *did* like some of the questions they were asking. Thoughtful questions. Caring questions. Questions that showed they wanted Bijou's littlest Bébé to be happy and healthy and well-looking after....

But Bijou didn't like its own people's answers. Lies, a lot of them. Making it seem like raising Bébé would be much easier than it would. Making it so the new people wouldn't be prepared....

Then, the elf took out his wallet, and Bijou rose to its feet as they exchanged a handful of paper money for a small carry-box with holes in it.

*Wait! No! Now?! That wasn't right!*

Bébé was still too young! Bébé wasn't old enough to leave!

Why were they taking Bijou's Bébé *now*?!

'Aw, little thing,' the elf gave Bijou a sympathetic look, and gently removed Bébé from his ear to hold it down to Bijou. 'Say goodbye, oui?'

Bijou wasn't ready— *Bébé wasn't old enough!*

But as the kind-hearted man gave Bijou a soft pet on its head, Bijou realised that there was nothing it could do.... Its people had lied, and said Bébé *was* old enough, and it wasn't their fault that they didn't know the truth.

*At least they seemed to really, genuinely care about Bébé.*

So it licked Bébé on its little head and made it promise to be a good friend for the new person it was going to. Then, Bijou backed away so the elf could put Bébé in the box.

He was careful. Very gentle. And he asked for something soft to put in with Bébé so it could be comfortable— Thoughtful! Very thoughtful.

Bijou let itself relax a little.

Bébé would be okay with these people.

That was clear to Bijou.

*Though....*

Bijou didn't like that its people had lied to get Bébé a new home.

What would they say to other people —maybe not-so-thoughtful people— to get Bijou's other babies homes...?

It didn't like those thoughts, so while all of the people were distracted with Bijou's littlest Bébé, it skittered over to the rest of its Bébés and gathered them up in its mouth.

Instinctively they all went quiet as Bijou tucked them protectively under its

tongue.

Then, Bijou trailed the new people to the door; changing shape into a shoe that it wasn't supposed to turn into and quietly tucking itself aside by the shoe-rack so it wouldn't be noticed.

It waited patiently as the people all said goodbye to each other, and then slowly edged towards the door as it was opened for Bébé's new people to leave.

The woman headed out quickly. But the elf paused at the door, holding it slightly ajar as he turned back to ask one last question about Bébé's care, and Bijou saw its chance.

It slipped out between the elf-man's legs, hurrying into a bush and turning into another forbidden object; a garden gnome. Then it held still. Waiting as the two newcomers made their way to their car. They spoke a moment and Bijou heard them cooing at Bébé; something that brought the mimic a large amount of relief as they drove away.

Then, when it was sure the coast was clear, Bijou sprouted new legs and hurried out of the yard.

The construction zone where its babies' paint-tin papa lived was not far away. Bijou could see the large, half-finished building from here (it had been staring wistfully at it from its window the entire time it had been in its home) and knew which way to run.

—END—

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