

# Bloom

By C. Jade Wyton

*After hearing her pet mimic talk to her, Becky Bloom consulted her therapist and friends over what they thought might have happened. The consensus was a simple one; she wasn't crazy, but had been unknowingly using magic. Probably some sort of druidry. It was a shock, at first, but Becky is quick to embrace the idea. Anything that can bring her closer to Mimi is a gift that she isn't going to waste.... So, now, she is going to try and practice her magic in what she thinks is the privacy of her own room.*

***Contains some mentions of child abuse.***

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Becky lay in bed, one hand on her phone and the other stroking down Mimi's back, thinking about everything that had happened.

She'd had a big day, yesterday. Seeing her therapist, and having him believe her when she'd said Mimi had spoken to her— She'd thought he'd think she was crazy! But he'd just so readily accepted her experience, and even made suggestions to its cause... it had left her in such a state of shock and awe that she'd barely known how to respond to seeing Wendy Shedskin, who had been missing for three months, in the clinic on her way out. And she'd barely even remembered to be angry at Zeke when she'd found him busking on the streets— Though, she'd called out a little white lie at him.... She told him she'd buried his magic guitar in the woods, when it was actually hidden safely under her bed.

She wasn't sure *why* she'd said it to him, but after what he'd done to her friends and family, she figured she was allowed to be a little bit spiteful...

But, *ah!* That was beside the point!

She was too preoccupied with her new discovery to care about much else!

She'd told her friends about Mimi speaking to her while she was at Malinka's house— And she'd also told them about Mr Goodhuman's suggestion that she might have magical powers.

It was so strange to think she might be... *magic*.

Becky lifted her hand, staring at it with a blank expression until Mimi gave a chirp to get her attention and rolled over; desperate for her to replace her hand on its underside.

'Oh, *sorry* baby,' Becky apologised, putting her hand back and scratching at the mimic playfully. 'You're a good girl. I love you so much....'

She trailed off, and looked back to her phone.

She wasn't sure how useful the wikipedia page for druids was actually going to be to her, but.... For now, it was all she had.

It had been Malinka's suggestion that she might be a druid; though the rest of the group had agreed that seemed to be the best match for Becky's newfound abilities.

Becky had asked the wizard-in-training about her thoughts on her new magic,

worried it was something serious like being possessed by a warlock patron or cursed by Zeke's guitar, but....

Malinka had thought Becky's question over for a long moment before determining that Becky sounded like she was inheriting some sort of *druidry*.

It made sense, Becky supposed.

All the time out in the woods.

All her... *animalistic* urges.

Her love of plants. And animals.

Even her last name.

*Bloom.*

It had still been scary, though. And she'd been resistant to the idea— The idea of being something she'd never even considered being before absolutely terrified her. And she'd *hated* that her friends had called her out when she'd had her little hissy fit.

She'd tried to say she couldn't be a druid, because... well, *a lot of reasons!*

And her friends had shot back about her love of animals, and the woods and— And—

And then Adam had pointed out that time he'd caught her eating dirt, and that had completely put her in her place.

It made her mad, because they were *right*.

And then that dumb bird'd had to talk to her, and she'd had to *talk back*.

She'd thought it was just mimicking speech or something, at first. But, apparently, to everyone else but Portia, it was squawking away like a... normal bird would.

*Speak with Animals*, Portia had called it. A magical power that gave the caster the ability to talk to animals, and then the ability to talk back....

Becky scratched Mimi under the chin and felt herself give a weak grin.

As scary as it was, she wasn't going to turn her nose up at something like that. Not if it meant that she could talk to Mimi again, just like she had the other night.

If being a druid meant she could have that power, then she would do it.

Though, she seemed to be having a hard time actually *using* the power....

Becky squeezed her eyes shut and thought *really* hard about Mimi. And the mimic's voice. And how much she wanted to hear it speak again....

'Mimi?'

'*Mrrp?*'

'Damn it... ugh,' Becky groaned, and then picked Mimi up, placing the mimic onto her chest. 'You're such a good girl. I love you.... I'm trying to understand you again, but I don't think it's working....'

Mimi gave an unhappy gurgle, and licked at Becky's collarbone before settling down and purring.

'Yeah, that's how I feel, too,' Becky confirmed. 'Don't worry, though— I'll get this! I spoke to a bird and a lizard yesterday, so it wasn't a one-off thing! Which means it could happen even more— And I might even be able to learn how to *control* it!'

A chirp from Mimi, and Becky gently began to pet it again.

Becky couldn't believe how Portia had made the power seem so... *natural*.

It made her feel better, after all her anxieties throughout the day. To see that

what was happening to her was something other people could do, too.

And now here she was, trying to figure out how to do it again. Though she wasn't having much luck; she'd found more on something called a... *cantrip*, than anything else.

She'd been reading up a lot about *cantrips*, but still wasn't sure she understood exactly what they were.

Reading was still so hard for her....

But, maybe she could....

She closed her web browser, instead tapping on her youtube app.

'Hmm...'

She tried to think of what to search, and eventually settled on something simple:

*druid magic beginner easy cantrip*

The first result looked promising; a video on how to use the spell "druidcraft" to make a flower bloom.

She watched the video, listening carefully to every instruction, and then wasn't sure if she was feeling *more* confident or *less*.

It *seemed* like something she should be able to do, if she really *was* a druid.

But, then.... If she couldn't?

If she *could*?

Either way, the results scared her.

Becky let out a sigh, then, and Mimi did the same before it slid off her chest. It sleepily made its way to its bed under the window to nap— And Becky was finally able to sit up properly.

She supposed she didn't have an excuse for not trying it, now....

Clicking her tongue against the roof of her mouth, Becky climbed out of bed and made her way through the house. Isa wasn't home; she was out buying groceries. And Ken was in the lounge, drawing while the TV played a documentary on dragonborn culture.

Becky ignored both her father and the television, however, and hurried past them to one of the house plants.

It was a small succulent in a little brown pot that Mimi *loved* to turn into; and Becky thought it was perfect!

She picked it up and quickly hustled out of the room; ignoring when her father looked up at her and furrowed his brow.

'Becky?' he called. 'What are you—'

'Nothing, I'm fine!' she called back, running upstairs and into her room again.

She shut the door behind her carefully and hurried into the middle of her room to place the succulent on the floor.

She propped her phone up on a pillow beside it, and replayed the video.

'Okay...' she muttered, taking a breath. 'Deep breath... eyes open... look at the plant... hand up... and... *bloom*.'

Nothing happened.

*Bloom*, she willed again.

'Mm...' she groaned, slapping her hands to the floor in frustration. 'Come on!' Becky gave another grunt, and readjusted herself on the floor before replaying the video. 'Focus.... Will.... Open your mind....'

She took another deep, deep breath, and held her hand up to the plant.  
*Bloom*, she willed it. *Grow.... Be strong. Be beautiful. Be....*  
*Be your best self.*

She let her breath out with that wish; and felt a tingle spinning through her hands.

It felt like when she was so happy she couldn't sit still, and she had to move and jump and dance— But she couldn't! The video said this spell required concentration....

*Concentrate....*

Becky couldn't. Not with that feeling in her hands!

They were too— Too *tingly*!

She felt herself trembling as she tried to focus.

She could do this.

*Be your best self.*

Slowly, stalks began to rise from between the plant's leaves— And Becky let out a gasp as they sprouted and spread.

And then the happy, tingly feeling in her hands spread over her entire body and she couldn't help herself; she let out a happy cry— And flapped her hands in her excitement, spinning around on her knees and slapping her sides happily.

And when she did the flowers exploded with colour— Their growth accelerated from a crawl to a mere moment, as tiny pink buds bloomed into beautiful orange flowers.

'AHAH!' Becky gave a laugh— And more flowers sprouted and bloomed as she did.

There were at least twenty of them, she counted as they opened.

Twenty flowers that had sprung out of nowhere—

No—

Out of *her*!

She laughed again, and another twenty sprouted; eliciting an excited cry from her as she flapped her arms and twirled on her knees in happy circles. 'Oh my god! Oh! Oh my god!'

'*Oh my god!*' a voice echoed from her door.

'Dad?!' Becky exclaimed, flinching as she spun around to face her father.

*How much of that had he just seen?!*

'I— I was just—' Becky flinched again as her father stared at her with wide eyes. 'I-I-I was— Just trying— I thought— I was talking to my friends today about— Some things— And— And I—'

Becky cut off as her father's gaze flicked past her and onto the succulent, and he stared at it for a moment, before she saw his eyes move from the plant to her phone; the tutorial still clearly open and visible, even if it had stopped playing.

Then.... Ken looked queasy.

Like he was going to throw up. Or faint. Or both.

'I was just— Dad, something happened the other day and— And I was talking to my friends and we think that— We think I might be— A— A—'

'*You're a druid,*' Ken finished, quietly. 'I didn't think you....'

He didn't finish his thought. Instead he stumbled back into the frame of the door and slid down it to the floor; a look somewhere between horror and shame

on his face.

‘D... Dad?’ Becky swallowed as he dad stared past her. ‘Dad? Are you alright...?’

He curled up, burying his face in his knees and trembling for a moment before letting out a deep, deep breath. ‘*I’m so sorry,*’ he said. ‘*I didn’t think you’d inherited it....*’

‘Inherited it?’ Becky asked. ‘So it— It’s family magic?’

A nod; though Ken didn’t look up.

‘Why... didn’t you tell me?’

‘I thought it skipped you,’ he said, simply. ‘I didn’t think you’d have to....’ panic, now, as his head snapped up and his voice grew firm. ‘*Is it just flowers?!*’

Becky felt herself flinching a third time. ‘I-It— It—’

‘Oh— No— Becky—’ now Ken looked concerned and hurt; he reached out a hand out towards his daughter and almost toppled over as he hurried to cup her face. ‘No— No, it’s okay. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to snap. You’re not in trouble. I’m not mad at you.’

‘Mad?’ Becky echoed. ‘Why would you be...’ she met eyes with her father, then, as his brow furrowed and his lips grew thin and tight. ‘Dad?’

Gently, Ken let his hands slide from Becky’s cheeks; and he reached for the freshly-bloomed succulent and pulled it close. ‘This is beautiful,’ he said, carefully. ‘Have you done this before?’

Becky shook her head. ‘No I... I haven’t....’

‘*Hmm...*’ Ken let out a long breath. ‘Have you done anything like this before, or...?’

Becky looked away.

‘Becky?’ Ken’s hands cupped her cheeks again. ‘You can tell me anything, I promise.’

‘Mimi...’ Becky began, though she couldn’t bring herself to explain as she glanced to the sleeping mimic.

Ken’s worried eyes darted over Becky’s face as he waited for her to continue— And when she didn’t he let out a sigh, and pulled her into a tight hug. ‘She spoke to you, didn’t she?’

‘*I thought I was going crazy,*’ Becky mumbled. ‘*Why didn’t you tell me?*’

‘I’m sorry,’ Ken replied. ‘I didn’t think it.... I....’ he pulled away again, and motioned to the flowers. ‘Show me?’

‘What?’

‘Show me what you did?’ he said, gently. ‘I want to see it again— You.... You looked so happy when you did it.’

Becky blushed and looked away; fiddling with her hands nervously as she did. ‘I... don’t know if I can.... I mean I.... You— Did you... know that I could have been a druid?’

Ken’s sigh told Becky her answer.

‘Why didn’t you tell me?’ she asked.

‘I.... You know I’m not the best at... *communicating,*’ Ken said. ‘And this... this is a hard thing to talk about.’

‘*How?*’ Becky tried to keep her voice even— But she felt it coming out with an edge of frustration to it. ‘How hard would it have been to just say, “Oh, yes, we *do*

have a history of magic in the family! So if anything weird happens, don't worry! It's probably just that"!'!

'Becky—'

'I thought I was going *crazy!*' Becky exclaimed, tears welling in her eyes. 'I was *so scared!*'

'I'm sorry,' Ken said, pulling Becky close again and planting a gentle kiss in her hair as she leant into him.

'I thought—' Becky took a deep, laboured breath. 'That... that... that there was no magic in our family.'

'There's...' Ken started, then paused. 'It's a long story.... And it.... Have I told you about my father?'

Slowly, Becky shook her head.

'He was a terrible man,' said Ken. 'I... I promised myself I would never be like him. And... I tried. I tried so, so hard to be a good father but....'

Becky felt her father let out a sigh, and echoed it with her own.

'I suppose I have a lot of explaining to do,' Ken said, slowly; and Becky felt his hand run through her hair. 'It's hard, though.... I was hoping I would never have to.... I... I hate talking about it.'

Becky felt her father's embrace tighten, and she shivered.

'But if... you want to know... I'll tell you,' he said. 'Do you want to know?'

'I... think so?' Becky answered, honestly.

'Okay... hm,' Ken took a deep breath, and let it out slowly. 'You remember how I said I used to live in France, yes? When I was growing up?'

'Yeah...?'

'Well. I lived along the border, near Germany,' he told her. 'There was a forest, known as Blackforest. It was... popular among druids. My mother believed in the local religion and... well. My *father* didn't.'

'Your.... So... Grandma was a druid?' Becky asked.

'No,' Ken said softly. 'But she... cheated on my father with one.'

'Oh? *Oh.*'

'Yes...' Ken said, gently brushing his daughter's hair from her face as she gazed up at him. 'I'm... a bastard. And my father made sure I knew it. He hated me. And he hated druids. And he never let me forget that I was born from one.'

'So... are you... magic, too?' Becky asked.

Ken looked very, *very* uncomfortable. 'I... used to be.'

'*Used* to be?' Becky echoed. 'Not anymore?'

'No.'

'What happened to your magic?'

Ken gave a heavy sigh, and looked away. 'My father beat it out of me.'

Becky felt herself give a shiver— And Ken squeezed her tight.

'I promised myself I would *never* raise a hand to you,' he said. 'No matter what you did.... No matter how angry you made me. I promised myself that I was never going to hurt you....'

'Oh...' Becky blushed; recalling all she had done before to try and push her father into a temper. '*Oh*.... I'm sorry, I didn't know....'

'Mhm,' Ken's fingers traced lightly over Becky's cheek. 'Of course you didn't know; I didn't want you to,' he said. 'But... I think you need to know, now.... I'm

sorry I didn't tell you before.... I didn't know anything was happening to you—I'm so, so sorry you had to go through that alone.'

Becky squeezed her father tight; closing her eyes as he squeezed her back.

'But I'm here now, okay?' he said, gently moving Becky so he could cup her face in his hands and kiss her forehead. 'And I will *always* be here for you. For anything you need. Okay? You can tell me anything— No matter how scary, or strange, or *crazy* it is. Okay?'

'Okay.'

Another kiss. And another hug.

The two sat together for a long moment, held together in a firm embrace— Before Becky pulled away and sat up properly, wiping the tears from her eyes and rubbing her arms awkwardly.

Ken's hand found its way under Becky's chin, and he smiled warmly as she met his eye.

'You're my world,' he told her.

'Gross,' Becky replied instinctively.

She immediately regretting saying it— But, luckily, her father just laughed and pecked another kiss to her cheek.

Then, he looked back to the blooming succulent.

'It's beautiful,' he said, taking her hand in his. 'I can't believe you did this. And all on your own! I'm so proud of you!'

'*Hmh*,' Becky felt a weak chuckle escape her. 'Thanks, Dad. That... means a lot to hear.'

'Is this... something you want to do more of?' Ken asked.

'I don't know,' Becky admitted. 'It's all so new. And... different. And I'm really nervous, and I don't know what to think.... I don't know where to *start*.'

'Your school does druid classes, doesn't it?' said Ken. 'Would you like me to call them? I know that you've been struggling with your monk training since your time in hospital....'

Becky swallowed. 'I don't know— I don't want to stop doing martial arts. I just.... *I don't like change*.'

'Neither do I,' Ken admitted. 'And I'm sorry so much of it has been happening lately.... But it's not all bad, is it? You have those new friends— And... Jareth. And you've been spending more time with Adam....'

'Yeah, I suppose,' Becky sighed. 'I don't know, though. I want to learn about this stuff but... I don't want to just *give up* what I already have....'

'Well... maybe I can talk to your teacher, and see if you can do both?' Ken suggested. 'Would you like that?'

Slowly, Becky nodded. 'I think so...?'

'It's your decision,' Ken said, softly, and took Becky by the hand. 'Take all the time you need to decide, okay? And... Rebecca?'

'Yes, Dad?'

'I love you.'

—END—

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