

Bonne Nuit, Mon Trésor

By C. Jade Wyton

Kenneth Bloom is very worried about his daughter, Becky. There has been a lot on her plate, as of late. And she came home with bruises which only made Ken more anxious about her.... The more she tells him about what has been happening around town, the more anxiety Ken feels. And when she begs him a heartbreaking favour, he's not sure he can promise to go through with it.

Contains mentions of violence and animal abuse.

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Becky had come home bruised.

Apparently she had tried to communicate with a simulacri—a type of mimic? Or a parasite to mimics? Ken couldn't quite remember Becky's explanation— and it had attacked her.

*It had been her fault, she'd told Ken. She wasn't being careful. She'd wildshaped into something smaller than it when she knew it was aggressive and it had lashed out at her when she did. It had been completely her own fault.*

Her own fault?

Her own fault?!

Ken couldn't believe it!

She'd tried to reassure him; the bruise was only so big because she'd turned into something so small when she'd gotten it. It really wasn't that big of a deal.

*Load of rubbish! That bruise was from her hip to her chest all up one side! That was a big deal!*

Ken stopped pacing to run a hand through his hair, letting out a long sigh as he scratched at his scalp in frustration.

The more Becky had told him about what had been going on, the more horrified he'd been!

This simulacri creature was from the massive calamity (a mimic the size of an entire shopping mall, Becky had explained) that had the Erklings up in arms about the town's destruction. It had been put in the house of an old mayor (now known as the Murder House) by the woman who had kidnapped Helena's brother (and apparently somehow caused all of the problems with the people trying to hurt the town this past year). It had tormented the old mayor into suicide (*tormented* a man to *SUICIDE!*) before being taken in by the Historical Society, who were considering euthanising it.

*Good riddance, Ken thought, returning to his pacing. He didn't care if this horrid thing was capable of speech and as smart as a small child— It was a danger to his daughter!*

If it got out, as Becky said it had been trying to, Ken would hunt it down and kill it himself! He wasn't going to let that monster lay another hand on his daughter!

He'd march down to the Historical Society and put that creature in the ground

right now if he knew where the Historical Society was located!

But he had no idea. And Becky had refused to tell him when she saw how worked up he was.

*Ugh! It was all too much!* Ken flopped onto his bed and buried his face into his pillow, letting out a long, mournful whine as he did. *He couldn't stand to see Becky putting herself at risk like this! He needed her to be safe!*

He wished he could whisk her away from town and just wait out this whole mess. But he knew she would never come.... At least not without a horse-sized sedative in her system.

*Or maybe he could ask Victor for some Adam-sized sedatives....*

Ken lifted his head and shook it, clearing his mind of the thought.

He couldn't do that. She would *never* forgive him. She would hate him *forever* if he forced her to leave. If he took her away from her friends when they needed her most.

But....

But he *needed* to know his baby was safe....

*Ping!*

Ken's phone went off and, sluggishly, he reached for his bedside table where it lay.

It was Becky, texting him privately. A very rare thing, even now that they were getting along again....

It was a picture of Don napping, his head folded over his back like a sleeping giraffe.

**Becky:** look

**Ken:** He is very cute.

**Becky:** ye

**Becky:** mimi wont let me go neer him

**Ken:** Oh?

**Becky:** she is saying he is 2 sleeepy bcuz he has been up laate 2 many night s in a row

**Becky:** an that i ned 2 let him sleep

**Ken:** That is very sweet of her.

**Becky:** ye

Becky didn't say anything else, so Ken waited a moment to put his phone down.

That *clearly* wasn't all she had to say; she *never* texted him privately just for pictures like that! She would usually put those in the family chat—

**Becky:** dad?

**Ken:** Yes Becky?

**Becky:** im scared

Ken was immediately on his feet, stumbling out of his room and crossing the hall to Becky's own.

He forgot to knock, but Becky didn't seem to mind; she just looked up at him from where she sat on her bed, surrounded by her pile of pillows and plush toys with a blanket tightly around her shoulders.

Mimi was in her lap, purring so loud Ken could hear it from the door, while Don was still sound asleep at the foot of the bed. One of Becky's movies was

playing (one of those terrible, poorly-made eyesores) though the volume was down low.

‘Bébé?’ he asked, softly.

Becky wiped her eyes. ‘Hey, Dad.’

A quiet moment passed as Becky looked back to her television; though it looked more like she was staring past it.

‘Becky?’ slowly, Ken joined his daughter in bed. He wrapped his arm around her, and let her pull her blanket around him and settle against him. He could see again, now, the awful bruising along her body. ‘Are you alright?’

Becky shook her head, before burying her face into Ken’s side. ‘*It must be in so much pain,*’ she whispered.

‘Hm?’ Ken rubbed his daughter’s arm. ‘What must be?’

‘The mimic.’

Ken had to hold back a sigh. *He shouldn’t have expected her to be emotional about anything else....*

‘She starves it,’ Becky sniffed loudly. ‘Then overfeeds it with the wrong sorts of meat—’

Ken knew “meat” meant *people*.

‘Then she starves it again,’ Becky’s voice broke. ‘And it’s full of parasites. Awful ones. And it’s so big it spends more time sleeping than awake, just to cope....’

Ken heard Mimi give a miserable murmur, and looked down to see it licking Becky’s hands.

‘I don’t understand how you could force something into such a miserable life,’ her bottom lip was trembling, now, as she scratched between Mimi’s eyes. ‘And now, because of how bad an owner *she* is, we might have to kill it.’

*Becky might have to... kill a mimic?* Ken swallowed hard at that. *He couldn’t imagine it....*

Becky *lived* for mimics. Killing one would *destroy* her...

‘I know it’s the right thing to do,’ Becky continued. ‘If we can’t figure out how to keep it under control and make it healthy. But it still... hurts.’

Ken nodded, and kissed the top of his daughter’s head. ‘It is a very hard thing to do,’ he agreed. ‘Is there not... anyway else?’

Becky shrugged. ‘Adam is trying to make a shrinking potion,’ she said. ‘But he’s one of the few people who seems to want to try to save it, instead of just killing it outright. And, like... I *get* it. It’s a risk to the town. And people lives should always come before animal lives, but....’

Becky trailed off again, hanging her head, and Ken squeezed her as he felt her begin to tremble.

‘Even if shrinking it *does* work, the poor thing is going to be traumatised,’ she mumbled. Then, after a long pause, she sighed. ‘Dad?’

‘Yes, mon bébé?’

‘It’s happening on Sunday. And... it would make me feel better if Mimi and Don were somewhere safe,’ Becky said, softly. ‘It’s eating away at me. The idea that if I fail they might....’

Becky gave a shudder, and Ken held her tight.

‘*It’s making me crazy,*’ Becky whispered. ‘I think.... I need to *know* that

they're somewhere safe.'

'Becky, what are you—'

'*Please leave town!*' Becky blurted, and Mimi gave a surprised, upset trill and began bouncing around the bed. 'Take Mimi and Don, and go somewhere else! Go *anywhere* else!'

Ken was too stunned to answer. He felt paralysed as Becky wrapped her arms tight around him and sniffed into his chest.

'*Please,*' she begged. 'I need to know my babies are safe.'

*She needed to know her babies were safe....*

Ken took in a trembling breath as Becky's words echoed his own heart.

He needed to know *she* was safe.

'Come with us,' Ken begged back. 'Please. Come with us. We can go somewhere safe *together*.'

'I *can't*,' Becky sniffed. 'I could never forgive myself if I left everyone to fight on their own.'

'I could never forgive myself if I left *you* behind,' Ken retorted, taking Becky's hands and squeezing them tight. 'You're *my* baby! I need *you* to be okay.'

'I can't promise that...' Becky mumbled. Then, as Mimi's upset trilling woke Don and he gave a concerned honk, she sat up and wiped her eyes. 'No, boy. I'm okay. You go back to sleep.'

Don honked again, seemingly in protest, before wobbling over to Becky and pecking at her face.

'Good boy,' Becky sniffed. 'Yes— Good boy. I'm okay. I am.'

Ken's heart sunk as he watched his daughter comfort her pets.

She loved them. As much as he loved her.... They really *were* her babies, and if she felt even *half* the anxiety about them as he felt for her....

'Becky...' he started, pausing to lick his lips as his daughter's ear twitched attentively. 'I.... I'll.... I'll talk with Isa about it, alright?'

Becky's entire body relaxed and she gave an exhausted nod. 'Thank you.'

'Mm,' Ken let out a long, slow breath through his nose. 'But I don't think she'll want to leave without you, either.'

'I know,' Becky mumbled, laying back against her father.

Ken could feel just how much tension had left her body, and let his own shoulders go slack as he wrapped his arm around her again.

He held her close as her two mimics purred loudly and settled on her legs. And he kissed the top of her head as she closed her eyes and sniffed.

Then he heard her snore. So he carefully (very, *very* carefully!) lay her down properly and slipped his arm out from underneath her.

He turned off her television, and turned on her air conditioner, before quietly creeping to her door.

He glanced back, and wiped a tear from his eye.

'*Bonne nuit, mon trésor,*' he whispered as he switched off her light. '*Je t'aime plus que le monde.*'

—END—

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