

Bully

By C. Jade Wyton

Becky Bloom has never liked Christmas. It always reminds her of her parents, and how little time they had for her when she was young. This year she is in a particularly foul mood, which can't help but to take out on others.... And when she realises the girl she likes finds her outbursts entertaining, she only feels encouraged to continue her terrible behaviour.

Contains depictions of bullying and harassment.

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Becky was fuming.

It was only early December, but everything was decorated for Christmas.

Every yard she saw had *at least* one string of lights along their fence and roof. Most were halfway through setting up more intricate displays. And the strip mall was even worse; almost every shop had something in their window, declaring their love of a stupid, frivolous holiday that meant *nothing*.

Even in school she couldn't get away from it. The halls were decorated from roof to floor in *festive* hangings and print outs.

It was all ugly. And it was stupid. And Becky couldn't stand it.

Especially since her father was *insisting* on trying to plan something for her birthday.... Insisting on being a part of it, like he and her mother hadn't forgotten about it every year for the first half of her life.

Like they hadn't just *left* her behind, again and again, every single year after coming home to celebrate the holidays.

They had said it was the only time they could get off work. That their Christmas break was too short and they had no other choice but to leave. That they stayed as long as they possibly could, but they couldn't be away from work more than a few days. Not at such a busy time of year.

No excuse was good enough.

Becky found it impossible to believe that they couldn't extend their yearly stay by just *three days*, even *once*.

Their priorities were clear. And Becky wasn't going to let her dad get away with abandoning her just because he felt *guilty* about it.

Becky ripped down a ring of holly from the wall as she turned the corner and dropped it in the waste-bin as she passed; ignoring the offended cries of a freshman student as she did.

*They could get over it.*

Becky gave a sniff as she approached her locker.

That stupid tabaxi, Baloney, was in the way. Going through his own locker directly above hers and blocking her from her things.

'*Move!*' Becky demanded, thrusting her fist into the locker beside her own with a loud *BANG* that caused everyone around her to jump.

Baloney let out a cry and stumbled back; spilling out half the contents of his

locker along the floor as he did.

Becky sniffed with distaste and yanked open her locker. She threw the science textbook she was carrying into it with far too much force before yanking out her english folder and slamming the door shut again.

Then, as she turned, she tripped on one of the goblin students. She didn't fall, luckily, but her things went skidding across the floor and she let out a frustrated growl.

'Ow! Oh, jeez, I'm so sorry I— Oh—' they cut off as they turned and saw who they had run into. 'Oh, no....'

'Toast,' Becky muttered with a snort.

'B-B-Becky!' Toast stammered, sweat visibly forming on his forehead as he looked up at the half-elf. 'I-I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to—'

'Pick it up,' Becky growled. 'Now.'

'Y-Yes! Of course!' Toast hurried after Becky's folder, pencil case, and phone, and quickly gathered them all into his arms. 'I swear I didn't mean to—'

Becky didn't wait for Toast to finish before she snatched her things back from him. She checked her phone for cracks before stuffing it in her pocket, and then slipped her pencil case into her folder before looking back down at the anxious mess of a goblin in front of her.

'Uh...' Toast swallowed. 'Are we... good?'

Becky narrowed her eyes, noticing the horrible red-and-green Christmas sweater Toast was dressed in. 'Hmp,' she grunted. 'That sweater looks terrible on you.'

'Uh.... Is that a yes?' Toast asked, meekly.

Becky grabbed Toast's sweater by the back of the collar and gave a hard yank; pulling it off the boy in two tugs and then throwing it across the hall. Then, she turned back to him. 'Yeah,' she drawled. 'We're good.'

'O-Okay,' Toast squeaked as Becky stepped over him. 'Thank... you?'

Becky didn't bother to respond as she continued down the hall. Even when she heard several of the other students comforting Toast; she didn't bother to turn around.

'You alright, Toast?'

'Y-Yeah....'

'Hmp. It really is December, isn't it?'

'Yeah....'

'Goddamn grinch.'

Becky bit back her furious retort and kept walking.

*Grinch, huh?* she thought to herself. *Whatever. She'd been called worse things before.*

Becky slowly made her way to class, shouldering aside anyone that didn't give her a wide enough birth as she went.

She skulked into the classroom and then looked around to find a seat— Only to see Mattel tapping the chair next to her own.

Becky's heart leapt as she met the girl's eye, and she swallowed nervously.

*Next to Mattel?*

She'd never sat *directly next to Mattel* before.... Only slightly off to one side.... But....

‘Come on, Becky!’ Mattel chirped. ‘Sit with us!’

‘Uh...’ Becky hesitated.

She was still in such a terrible mood, she didn’t want to....

Well. She did.

But she didn’t.

Not when Mattel’s other friends, Jamie, Stacy, and Chanel, were there.

She didn’t like the way the girls spoke to her (especially Chanel, who treated her like she was some sort of threat), and knew she wouldn’t be able to keep her temper if she had to sit with them....

‘*Beeeecky!*’ Mattel sung. ‘Come on, now. Don’t keep me waiting! We have *lots* to talk about today!’

‘Uh... I... sorry,’ Becky managed. ‘I don’t feel like talking, today.’

‘What?’ Mattel gave a disbelieving scoff. ‘But, you *always* want to talk!’

‘Not today, sorry,’ Becky mumbled, looking away with a scowl. ‘I just... want to be alone for a bit.’

‘Hmhm...’ Mattel gave a tentative hum, watching Becky closely, before tapping the seat again. ‘Sit!’

Becky wanted to.

She really, *really* did.

But she also didn’t want to ruin whatever tiny chance she might have had at being able to ask Mattel out— And in the mood she was in, she was sure to ruin it.... So, instead, she simply sighed, shook her head, and made her way to the back of the class.

There was only one seat, and when Becky saw who it was next to she felt herself scowl.

She should have just said yes and sat with Mattel. That would have been better than sitting next to *Roadkill Romero*....

But it was too late, now. Becky had said no. She couldn’t go crawling back now, could she? That’d be even more humiliating than sitting besides Roadkill.... *Who was taking up more than his half of the table*, she saw....

Becky gave a grunt as she reached her seat and threw her things down heavily— Then, when Romero acted like he hadn’t heard her do so and didn’t move his things out of her space, she leant back in her chair and kicked his pile of loose pens to the floor so she could put her feet up.

She ignored Romero’s cussing and cast a glance to Mattel, letting out a breath of relief when she received an approving nod.

*Act cool*, she told herself. *Just keep acting cool*....

‘How would you like it if *I* knocked *your* things down, bitch?!’ Romero’s threat was immediately followed up by him reaching for Becky’s binder— And then a cry of pain as she stomped on his hand.

Mattel let out a laugh and turned back to her friends, and Becky felt her chest flutter.

*She’d made Mattel laugh? Mattel had never laughed at anything she’d done before!*

Becky felt herself give a smile— And immediately felt it fall as she received a text with a familiar tone.

*Adam?*

Why was Adam texting her at this time of day?  
She pulled out her phone and read the message.  
**Adam:** did you take toast's jumper??  
**Becky:** ya  
**Adam:** becky  
**Adam:** that's awful  
**Becky:** so?  
**Adam:** why would you do that to him?  
**Becky:** he got in my way  
**Adam:** becky...  
**Becky:** it fine its just toast  
**Adam:** toast is NICE  
**Adam:** he doesn't deserve that  
**Becky:** whatevs  
**Adam:** no not "whatevs"  
**Adam:** that was really awful to do  
**Becky:** WHAAAAATEVVVVS  
**Adam:** beck  
**Becky:** i do wat i WANT  
**Adam:** not when it hurts others you don't  
**Becky:** ya i do y shuld i care?  
**Adam:** are you ok? what's wrong?  
**Becky:** wat  
**Becky:** nothing s wrong  
**Adam:** obviously it is or you wouldn't be acting like this  
**Adam:** you care about others  
**Becky:** no  
**Adam:** you care about people  
**Becky:** no i dont  
**Adam:** yes you do  
**Adam:** you're a good person  
**Becky:** shut up  
**Becky:** liar  
**Adam:** what's wrong?  
**Becky:** bite me  
**Adam:** is it because of christmas?  
**Becky:** adam  
**Adam:** if there's too much going on with your dad you can come to mine  
**Becky:** adam i am gon na be nice 2 u cos i love u  
**Becky:** but if u dont back of i am gong 2 lose my mind  
**Adam:** ok  
**Becky:** LOSE IT  
**Adam:** sorry  
**Adam:** i'll back off  
**Adam:** but i'm here if you need to talk ok?  
**Becky:** thank u  
**Becky:** but i won't need 2 cuz no thing is rong

‘Miss Bloom?’ an older voice called from the front of the room and Becky looked up to see her English teacher, a scrawny old human man called Mr Du Plang.

‘What?!’ Becky snapped at him, perhaps a little more aggressive than she’d intended to.

He responded with surprising calm. ‘Phone away, please.’

‘Bite me,’ Becky retorted, much to the amusement of Mattel and her friends.

‘Phone away,’ he repeated. ‘Or I’ll have to confiscate it.’

‘I’d like to see you try, *old man*,’ encouraged by the snickers from the front of class, Becky found the words leaving her mouth before she’d realised what she was saying. ‘Come on! Come and get it! I dare you!’

‘You’ve just earned yourself a week of detention,’ Mr Du Plang said firmly.

‘Cool, I’m not doing that,’ Becky replied nonchalantly. ‘What are you gonna do? Drag me there?’

‘I’ll call your father,’ Du Plang replied.

‘Go on, then! Call my dad!’ Becky scoffed, opening a video on her phone just to make her point. ‘He won’t do *shit*.’

‘Alright, then,’ Du Plang heaved a sigh. ‘Class? I want you to start on chapter five of the required reading until I get back.... Becky? Are you sure you want this?’

Becky responded by blowing a very loud raspberry and turning her phone’s volume up as Mr Du Plang left the room. She gave a victorious grin as he did; which she cast towards a very pleased-looking Mattel.

‘God, you’re such a bitch,’ Romero growled, and Becky’s grin turned to a scowl as she side-eyed him. ‘Does being insufferable run in your family, or is it just you?’

‘You’re one to talk, Roadkill,’ Becky scoffed back. ‘Anyway, didn’t you hear the teacher? You’ve got some *required reading* to do. Might want to get started on that. You wouldn’t want to be stuck in detention with me, would you?’

‘I think I’d rather die,’ Romero gave a disgusted grunt and pulled out his book.

He and Becky proceeded to ignore each other; Romero casually flicking through his work, not fully paying attention, and Becky watching videos and flicking through social media.

Then, Becky received another message— And felt herself blush as she saw who it was from.

She cast a glance up to Mattel, who had turned in her seat to grin at Becky.

**Mattel:** You’re in a funny mood today... 😏

**Becky:** sorry

**Mattel:** No I like it

**Mattel:** Trouble maker 😏

**Becky:** o?

**Becky:** u like it?

**Mattel:** Yeah I do

**Mattel:** It’s funny

**Mattel:** But, maybe that’s just because it’s you doing it

**Mattel:** You know? 😏

‘Oh...’ Becky felt her blush growing deeper, and she looked to Mattel again, who gave her a wink before hurriedly putting her phone away and turning back to

sit in her seat properly as Mr Du Plang returned.

Without a word, the older man walked over to his desk and sat down, folding his arms comfortably and watching the class as they read.

Becky was happy to be ignored as she continued typing on her phone.

She hated English class, anyway. All that reading.... And they taught a lot of useless things. Like words for words to describe what type of words they were— Who cared?

Literally.

Who cared?

It was stupid and dumb and Becky didn't *care* about “adverbs” or “nouns” or whatever they were....

Why couldn't they teach *useful* things. Like how to stop words from moving around? *That* would be something worth teaching!

Honestly, it was pretty shitty that they left that for kids to figure out on their own....

'*Rebecca Bloom, please come to the principal's office,*' a voice spoke over the loud speaker.

Becky ignored it, and opened Bejewelled, completing two levels before—

'*Rebecca Bloom, please come to the principal's office,*' the voice repeated.

Then her phone went off.

It was Adam, asking what she'd done.

She ignored it, and sniffed.

'*Rebecca Bloom,*' the voice was slower, this time. '*You need to come to the principal's office, immediately.*'

'You should go,' Mr Du Plang chimed in; though he didn't take his eyes off the papers he was grading. 'Before she gets mad.'

'She?' Becky echoed. 'What do you mean, *she*?'

'Your father wasn't home,' Du Plang responded simply. 'Isa answered the phone. She didn't sound too happy....'

Becky felt her blood run cold.

*I... Isa?!*

Just as the drow's name began to sink into Becky's brain— Her voice crackled to life in the speaker, and the entire classroom jumped in fright.

'*REBECCA BLOOM!*' Isa snapped furiously. '*You have TWO MINUTES to get your butt in the car, or ELSE!*'

'Oh— Oh my god—' Becky leapt out of her seat, almost knocking the table over as she gathered her things and bolted out of the classroom.

She'd never, not once in her life, had the guts to discover what Isa meant with her “or else” threats— Not once.

*And she certainly didn't want to find out today!*

—END—

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