

Don Flamingle

By C. Jade Wyton

A new mimic has come into Becky Bloom's life; a small feral lawn flamingo mimic that her family has nicknamed Don Flamingle. It is a surprisingly friendly creature that has quickly fallen in love with Becky's treasured Mimi, and though Becky can't let it into the house due to its neurotic nature she feels some form of responsibility over it and allows it to follow her (and Mimi) to the local pet shop to buy some new beds.

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The mimic was following her again. Though, she couldn't blame it. She had Mimi with her today and that thing had been *obsessed* with Mimi ever since it first saw her.

Becky cast a glance behind her and watched the thin-legged little mimic rushing after her. It zig-zagged through the streets, panting loudly and dodging people's feet as it stumbled under its own top-heavy weight.

It looked very silly and drew a lot of attention— Much to its own dismay, as every time someone looked down at it, it gave a fearful cry and veered wide around them.

Becky gave a heavy sigh as a car drove by and the creature froze in fear; pretending to be an inanimate object. Becky decided to wait for the mimic to catch up....

It had only been a day and a half since the animal had followed her home, but the creature had already bonded with the family and seemed very affectionate. Even with its high-strung nature.

It had become especially close with her father— Which was interesting, given his usual avoidance of animals. She supposed that the pair of them just had so much anxious energy between them that it all cancelled out....

Last night being a prime example. Becky had gone to get her father for dinner and found his study door shut and his window open; the creature sitting on his sill and panting and drooling as it watched him work, Ken's half-eaten lunch placed at its feet for it to eat (though it hadn't touched it).

When she'd asked about the mimic, her father had jokingly referred to it as Don; mentioning something about one celebrity or another that she didn't know....

But the name had stuck. As had the own creature's name for itself; Flamingle.

It was obviously trying to call itself a flamingo, but Becky was *not* correcting something so cute!

So Don Flamingle had gotten a name, and now Becky just couldn't bring herself to take it back to the colony. It seemed like such a cruel idea to force it somewhere it was obviously going to be unhappy and scared.

It had followed her there yesterday when she'd gone to meet with the historians again, and as soon as it recognised where they were it had cried in fear and run off, and Becky had come home to find it standing by the front door,

waiting for her.

She figured it seemed happy enough living in the shed. And the bite marks on its back were already starting to heal....

She just wished that she had somewhere for it inside where it wouldn't hurt itself or try to mount Mimi....

Ah.

Don was *finally* taking a step.

Slowly.... Slowly....

It put its leg down on the ground....

And then it bolted down the street again at top speed until it had scampered all the way into Becky's legs and knocked itself onto its back.

'You don't *have* to follow us, you know,' Becky huffed, putting her hands on her hips as the creature rolled back to its feet looked up at her.

It did a nervous little jig, bouncing from one spindly leg to the other, before rushing around behind Becky and chirping happily at the backpack-carrier she wore.

Mimi trilled back excitedly, and Becky felt it jumping around in its carrier and scratching at the plastic window bubble.

She was almost *glad* she couldn't understand the mimics' trilling, today. Some of the things the pair had already said to each other made her cringe with second-hand embarrassment.

Though, not understanding Mimi *was* going to make buying it a new bed a little harder....

She supposed they would be doing what they used to do, before Becky could speak with animals— But it was still a shame.

Learning to talk to Mimi had been the best gift of Becky's life.

'Don,' Becky said, clicking her tongue to get the mimic's attention when it didn't respond. 'Perch.'

She crouched down and held out her forearm, tapping her sleeve lightly as Don cocked its head.

'Perch,' Becky repeated, before gently scooping a hand underneath Don and placing it on her arm. 'Perch. Good boy. Perch.'

She gently put it back on the ground, and it gave a confused snuffle.

'Perch,' Becky said the command again, tapping her arm.

Don perked up, and shuffled around again, before jumping up at Becky's arm and— Missing entirely and landing on its back.

'Good try! You almost did it,' Becky pet the animal, and after it stood back up she lowered her arm to try and make the jump easier. 'Perch.'

Don managed to get a foothold this time and scrambled onto Becky's arm; wrapping its legs around her like little belts in order to get a grip.

'Good boy!' Becky cooed, pulling a treat out of her pocket and offering it to Don. 'Such a smart boy! Yes you are!'

Don shook itself out proudly, licking the treat out of Becky's hand and chewing it for a moment before accidentally dropping it on the ground.

It leapt off Becky's arm after the food, licking at it and missing twice, before finally managing to scoop it up and choke on it.

Becky pet its back as it gave a wet cough and sprayed spit across the

pavement. Then, it smacked its lips, rightened itself, and trot back around Becky to peck at the plastic window that held Mimi.

Becky gave a half-chuckle as she felt Don leap onto her back and perch on the bag above Mimi. She could feel him drooling down her neck and winced, but didn't move him as she stood up and started back down the street.

'*Brrp!*' Mimi trilled happily. '*Brr! Brrroy! Brrroyfriend!*'

Ah.... Becky's magic was flaring back up, and she wasn't sure what kind of conversation she was about to come into.

'*Prrrr!*' Don snuffled. '*Prrrrrrretty! Pretty! Pretty pink Mimi!*'

'*Handsome Flamingle,*' Mimi responded. '*Mimi likes Mimi's Flamingle. Flamingle is handsome. Yes. Yes. Lick! Lick Flamingle.*'

'*Pretty Mimi,*' Don said. '*I like my pretty Mimi. My pretty Mimi is special. Yes. My pretty pink Mimi. I love my Mimi.*'

Becky couldn't help but giggle at the conversation; drawing the attention of the liquor store owner, Raymond, as she passed him cleaning his shop window.

He gave her a look and she felt herself blush.

'They're in love,' Becky explained, motioning to the cooing mimics that hung on her back.

'Lucky them. Must be nice,' Raymond responded, turning back to his window. 'Heh.... You know, I had to take my last boyfriend into the woods and threaten to have my mother skin him alive, if he didn't stop giving me shit....'

'Ah,' Becky gave a knowing nod, remembering Raymond was the son of the hag.... *Was that a secret?* It felt like a secret. 'Yeah. You know, I think if my mum was still around she would have skinned Mattel.'

'Oh, most definitely,' Raymond grinned. 'She always had a temper. I think she was looking for an *excuse* to snap, some days. If Barbra was alive, Mattel *wouldn't* be.'

'You knew Mum?' Becky asked, her ears flicking up curiously. *She didn't know Raymond knew her mother....*

'By extension. I preferred not to talk to her, because she had a personality like yours. But your father used to live next to Romero's mother,' said Raymond. He laughed as Becky took in a sharp breath. 'That's right! If your mother didn't have such *expensive* tastes, you would have lived next to my godson.... Just drink that in for a moment.'

Becky did. And she didn't like the thought.

Living next to *Romero....*

'Who knows what would have happened,' Raymond gave a humoured sniff and took on a playful, mocking voice. 'Maybe you two would have been friends. And maybe you wouldn't have trashed my store.'

Becky gave an awkward, almost pained, laugh.

'Run along now, Bloom,' Raymond's tone returned to normal and he waved a dismissive hand. 'Something Familiar closes soon. You want to get Mimi that new bed while you can.'

'Um, yeah,' Becky wasn't sure how he knew she was buying Mimi a bed— But Raymond always seemed to know *everything* that was going on, so she didn't question it and instead waved a goodbye and hurried away.

She made her way quickly to the pet store, Something Familiar, and paused.

*Don wasn't used to people; it might be good to warn it that this was a people place.*

'Don?' Becky said, gently, to get the animal's attention. 'Flamingle?'

*'I am Don Flamingle!'* Don chirped happily. *'AH! I love having a name! Yes I do! A special name from my special Mimi's colony! MY colony!'*

Becky chuckled and reached back to pet Don. 'I'm going inside. There might be people inside. Don't be scared of them, okay? Just stay close to me and don't bite anyone.'

*'I don't bite,'* Don confirmed. *'I never bite. No, no. Never bite. No.'*

'Good boy,' Becky cooed before pushing her way inside.

The bell above the door gave a jingle and Becky heard two familiar voices fall quiet.

'Ah! Becky!' the store owner, a tabaxi she knew as Mr Muffins, clapped his hands together in greeting.

'Ah.... *Becky...*' the shop's assistant, an elf called Jaques, folded back his ears and gave the mimic on Becky's shoulder a worrisome look. 'And... Mimi...? That's.... That's Mimi, right? She doesn't look like she usually....'

Mimi gave a loud chirp of greeting from its carrier, and Jaques eyes widened.

'You got a second mimic?!' he asked, his voice cracking.

'You got a second mimic?!' Mr Muffins echoed, much more excitedly. 'May I see it?'

'Uh, yeah, he's a little skittish though. Just like, be aware of that,' Becky warned, scooping Don up and holding it out to the tabaxi. 'Don? This is Mr Muffins. He's very nice. Say hello to Mr Muffins.'

*'Ooooooh....'* Don gave a fearful whine, and began to melt into an unrecognisable pink blob in Becky's hands. *'Sharp teeth.... Long claws.... Please do not bite me.... I am a good omega....'*

'Oh, Don! No, it's okay, buddy,' Becky comforted, lifting Don and trying to hold him close to her chest to keep him from slipping out of her hands. 'Mr Muffins isn't going to hurt you. He's a friend. *Friend.*'

*'Oooooh.... So scary....'*

'Well, I can't say I've ever seen a mimic do *that* before!' Mr Muffins laughed. 'Is it alright?'

'Honestly, I dunno,' Becky shrugged. 'He, like, followed me home the other day and he's just... like this, I think. It seems like he was bullied a lot in his colony— I think that's *why* he followed me. Cos he like, didn't really have a place. But like. Yeah. He's really friendly once he knows you're not gonna hurt him.'

'I see, I see. May I hold him?'

'Uh, sure,' Becky said, carefully passing the whining blob to the tabaxi. 'It might help him realise you're not going to do anything.... Just be gentle with him.'

'Of course I will,' Mr Muffins reassured, gently stroking a hand across the almost-liquid mimic. 'What a good little man you are! So, Becky? What are you in for today? Treats? Toys?'

'Mimi dragged her bed into the bathtub,' Becky said, simply. 'We tried to dry it out, but it's just been too cold and it ended up growing... *something* on it. Hah. So we decided she needed a new one.'

‘And you brought her in to choose?’ Mr Muffins gave a knowing nod, gently massaging the space behind Don’s eyes until the mimic began to solidify again. ‘Well, we just got a new shipment in! Nice warm ones for winter.’

‘Nice, I’ll take her to have a look,’ Becky giggled. ‘Hopefully she doesn’t take two hours to choose like last time.’

‘Hopefully not,’ Mr Muffins replied, humoured. ‘But if she does, don’t worry. I’m staying late anyway.’

Jaques gave Becky a panicked look as she pulled Mimi’s carrier off her back, and Becky paused for a moment.

‘I’ll wait until you’re in the back room?’ Becky suggested.

‘Thank you,’ Jaques let out a breath and retreated towards the back of the store. ‘I’m sorry, I know you said she likes me but I just... can’t handle the biting.’

‘No, I understand!’ Becky called after him. Then, she unzipped Mimi’s carrier— And Don’s head immediately shot up, completely solid again as he let out a wheezing breath and struggled out of Mr Muffins’ arms.

‘*Ooh! Pretty pink Mimi is coming out!*’ it gurgled, circling Mimi’s carrier with excitement. ‘*My pretty pink Mimi! Out of the carry-box! Yes!*’

‘*Mama is letting Mimi out!*’ Mimi chirped. ‘*So that Mimi can find things Mimi likes....*’

Mimi trailed off as it climbed out of its carrier and came nose-to-nose with Don; seemingly forgetting where it was and instead giving a happy chirp and bouncing in place.

‘*Mimi’s Flamingle boyfriend is here!*’ Mimi trilled. ‘*Sniff! Sniff sniff! Love love love!*’

The two mimics began circling each other, sniffing, before Mimi affectionately began to lick between Don’s eyes and purr.

Becky gave them a moment to groom each other before tapping on her leg and calling for Mimi. ‘Come on, girl! We need to get you a new bed!’

‘*Yes! Yes! Mimi’s new bed!*’ Mimi trilled, breaking away from Don and hurrying after Becky. ‘*Mimi will pick the best bed! Yes, yes!*’

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The process of choosing a bed took Mimi at least an hour.

The mimic had to try *every* bed in the size it wanted. Even beds of the same make; just in case one was *slightly* more comfortable than the other.

Mimi had many restrictions for its bed, however, which helped quicken the process; only beds the size of a chair cushion or smaller (they were the most “snuggly” size). And only circle or square beds (no ovals or rectangles! Mimi wanted its bed to look the same from *all* sides). And only in colours it liked (it had to match the rest of Becky’s room!).... No elevated beds.... And only the soft fluffy material....

By the end of it, Mimi had narrowed it down to two identical beds. She climbed in and out of them as she tried to figure out which bed it wanted more, before looking up to Becky and giving a huff.

‘*Mimi cannot choose! Mimi likes them both,*’ Mimi groaned. ‘*Mimi wants them both. Mama buys Mimi both? Yes? Yes. Both!*’

‘Okay, you can have both,’ Becky laughed, scooping both up and giving a relieved sigh. ‘What about you, Don? Do you want a bed?’

‘Bed?’ Don cocked his head. *‘I do not know that word. What is bed?’*

‘Nest!’ Mimi chirped. *‘Soft, warm nest for Flamingle! Yes. Yes! Mimi’s Flamingle needs a bed!’*

‘A nest? For me?’ Don began to tap its feet in excitement. *‘Mimi’s alpha Becky is helping me make my nest?! Oh! Oh I am so happy! I love alpha Becky! No alpha has helped me make my nest before! Only stolen it! Oh! I am so happy!’*

‘Go on, boy,’ Becky giggled. ‘Go find one you like—’

Don was already leaping into the biggest bed on the shelf and snuffling around at its centre. He circled once. Then twice.

Three.

Five. Seven times.

Then it settled down, giving a contented sigh and panting heavily.

That was going to be a pain to carry home, Becky thought, biting her lip. She’d have to call someone for help.... Not Jareth, he didn’t have a car; just his bike.... Maybe Adam would be free?

Either way; she couldn’t tell Don no. Not with how excited it was— And not after it had drooled all over the bed already.

‘Is that the one you want?’ Becky asked.

‘Yes! I like this nest,’ Don trilled. *‘Very soft. With lots of room for babies to share!’*

Not that you’ll be having any, Becky bit her tongue, not vocalising her thought.

Neither Mimi *nor* Don were suitable for breeding, let alone breeding *together*. She loved Mimi with every fibre of her being, but the mimic was too disobedient and bullish (at least to anyone but herself). And Don seemed far too neurotic.... It was not a good mix; she could only *imagine* the behavioural problems their brood would have! Any proper breeder would chide her just for even *considering* letting it happen—

‘Aww,’ Becky felt her heart fluttering as Mimi leapt into the bed and curled up beside Don.

‘Boyfriend,’ Mimi purred, nuzzling into Don’s side.

‘Pretty Mimi,’ Don gurgled back, placing its head over Mimi and shuffling closer.

‘Oh, aren’t they precious?’ Mr Muffins chuckled from behind Becky. He motioned to the two beds she had before holding out his hands to take them. ‘Just those two?’

‘And the big one,’ Becky told him, letting him take the beds for her. ‘Though, like, I think I’m going to need to call someone to help me take it home.’

‘No problem,’ he gave a nod. ‘I’ll put these ones behind the counter and ring you up for everything when you’re ready to leave, shall I? Just in case you find something else you need.’

‘Awesome, thanks!’ Becky gave Mr Muffins a wave, then pulled out her phone. She searched her conversations for Adam, and then sent him a quick text:

Becky: at strip maul culd use a lift if u r free

Becky: i will by u lanch

Adam: yeah I have some time

Adam: it's a little late for lunch though

Becky: DINER

Adam: you'll buy me an entire diner?

Becky: ye like wat u want

Becky: auntie wan tee or sum thing else

Adam: i could go for some yuantanse

Becky: ncie

Adam: what you needing a lift for?

Adam: buy something too heavy to get home on your own?

Becky: not heby just big

Becky: but ye

Adam: haha!

Adam: sure i'll come get you

Adam: what shop?

Becky: sum thing family liar

Becky: familier

Adam: got it! be right there :)

Becky: ♥ luv u

That was easy!

Becky gave a happy hum and put her phone away, grateful that Adam was always so willing to help her.

He was *such* a good friend—

'Don, *no!*' Becky exclaimed as Don rose to its feet and attempted to climb on top of Mimi. She scooped both of the mimics up, one in each hand, and held them apart. 'We are in *public!*'

'*Mama! No! Let Mimi be seeded!*' Mimi gave an unhappy cry as Don whined and began to melt.

'Ew,' Becky responded, completely and utterly stunned by what the mimic had just said. 'Ew! Don't say it like *that!* Oh my god, Mimi! *No!* That's *literally* the worst way to say that!'

'*LET MIMI BE SEEDED!*'

'No!'

Mimi opened its maw wide and let out a loud, unhappy scream, shifting into a boot and flopping out of Becky's hand and onto the floor.

Don continued to melt.

'Is everything alright?' Mr Muffins called from the counter.

'Yeah,' Becky sighed back, scooping Mimi up and placing it in its carrier.

'Just... Mimi being herself. Aren't you?'

Mimi made a fart noise before turning into a pillow and settling down. '*Mimi will get Mimi's way. Mimi always gets Mimi's way....*'

'No you don't,' Becky laughed, zipping up the carrier. Then she sighed and struggled to hold up Don. 'Alright, and what about you?'

'*Please. Please do not bite me,*' Don whined, his oozing body shifting as he slid down Becky's arm and onto the floor to mope. '*I did not mean to make the alpha Becky angry. Please do not bite me. I am small. I am a good omega. I did not mean to be bad and naughty. Please do not bite me.*'

‘It’s okay, I’m not going to bite you,’ Becky promised, stroking Don along (what she thought was) its back and ignoring Mimi as it gave a gurgle and demanded to be let out. ‘I won’t ever bite you. Even when you’re naughty. Okay? You’re a good boy. But you can’t mount Mimi... especially not *here*.’

Don let out another whine and became an even flatter puddle. ‘*But my Mimi is so pretty....*’

‘I know,’ Becky comforted.

‘*Mama’s just jealous,*’ Mimi trilled, a cheeky note in its voice. ‘*Because Mama’s had Jareth for a long time, but Mama’s never had a brood.*’

‘I’m not jealous,’ Becky said, her brow furrowing. ‘I don’t want a... *brood*.’

Both mimics gave confused trills, and Becky sighed.

‘Okay, look,’ Becky rolled her eyes. ‘I will let her out again, but if you try and mount her I’ll put her back in the carrier, you understand?’

‘*Pretty Mimi is being let out?*’ Don let out a snort, and reformed so that it could tap its feet in excitement. ‘*My pretty pink Mimi!*’

Becky sighed again, wondering if Don had understood what she’d said— But unzipped the carrier anyway and let Mimi climb out.

‘Behave yourself, Mimi,’ Becky warned her mimic, stroking it down its back as she did. ‘I don’t want to have to put you away. I love having you out!’

‘*Mimi loves being out,*’ Mimi responded with a gurgle, and allowed Don to lick her side. ‘*Mimi thanks Mama for letting Mimi out. Now Mimi can groom handsome Flamingle.*’

Becky gave a nod and a sigh, and then looked to Mr Muffins as he approached.

‘How are they doing?’ he asked.

‘They’re weird,’ Becky answered, humoured but honest. ‘And... horny.’

‘The pain of a social animal that can’t be desexed,’ Mr Muffins said, mock-solemnly.

‘*Mm,*’ Becky nodded.

Then, she turned back to the mimics as they cooed to each other. Their voices were getting less and less audible; her magic was subsiding again....

‘Does Don know how to be anything but the flamingo?’ Mr Muffins asked. ‘I know Mimi has always been quite talented... she’s changed at least three times since getting here! What about him?’

‘Um... I’m not sure! I haven’t seen him change shape, except to like, melt...’

Becky gently reached out and stroked a hand down each mimic’s back in turn.

‘Don? Can you change forms? Change?’

Don gave a confused chirp, and cocked his head. Then, Mimi licked him and gave a confident trill before turning into a scarf.

Don looked like it understood, then, and hunkered down as if bracing itself.... Then, it began to shapeshift; its small pink body oozing and transforming into....

Another lawn flamingo.

An obviously different lawn flamingo from what he was before. But still a lawn flamingo.

‘Um.... Hah, good boy!’ after a moment of hesitation, Becky gave a laugh and pulled out two treats. ‘One for Mimi. One for Don.’

Mimi ate its treat happily and then, giving another happy trill, shapeshifted into a matching lawn flamingo and began to playfully bounce around Don.

Don danced in place with excitement— Until the shop door sounded and the mimic spooked and froze completely still; posing with one leg up and its neck bent in an S-like curve.

‘Becky?’ a familiar voice called. ‘You here?’

‘Oh, it’s Adam!’ Becky exclaimed. ‘Hi, Adam! I’m at the back!’

‘Your lift home, yes?’ Mr Muffin clapped his hands when Becky nodded. ‘Ah, perfect! And just before closing time! I’ll ring you up, shall I?’

—END—

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