

# Don't Say That

By C. Jade Wyton

*Kenneth Bloom has lied to his girlfriend, Isa'vanna Valstille, and he's having a hard time keeping up the façade. Especially now that he's receiving texts from their daughter, Becky, explaining the extent of the terrible situation she has put herself into. He can't do it— He can't keep it up! And now Isa knows; and he's broken her heart....*

***Contains mentions of horror themes, emotional distress, and relationship problems.***

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*"am i autism?"*

Ken had to read Becky's text four times before putting his phone down and laying flat in his chair by the hotel's pool, his palms pressed so tight against his eyes he felt them start to water.

Why the *hell* was she asking that *now* of all times?! Wasn't she currently *inside a giant man-eating mimic*?!

Why was she asking if she was....

*Autism?*

Ken removed his hands from his face stared at the sky.

Huh.

*Autism.*

That... would explain... a *lot*.

About Becky.

About *himself*.

And... perhaps a little bit about Barbra, too....

But— But why was she asking this *now* of all times?!

Ken had been sitting here all day, worried sick but trying to hide it from Isa, and Becky was... asking him about *autism*?!

Sure, he'd been waiting anxiously for any sort of text to make sure she wasn't dead, but... *this* was not what he was expecting!

Slowly, Ken picked up his phone again so he could reply to his daughter.

**Ken:** I'm not sure, bébé. Why are you asking about that?

**Becky:** ring worm said i am

Ken took in a sharp breath.

**Ken:** Ringworm?

**Becky:** ye

**Becky:** thats just his name tho he not actullya ring worm

**Becky:** he is tentcle guy :)

**Ken:** What?

**Becky:** tentalcal guy

**Becky:** tantatal

**Ken:** Becky are you inside the mimic??

**Becky:** ye he lives here

**Ken:** What.

**Becky:** hold on

Becky then sent through a selfie; one so surprising it made Ken sit up straight with his eyes wide.

She was in a Dairy Queen (a fucking *Dairy Queen*?! ) with her friends clearly visible behind her. They were sitting at the tables, looking uncomfortably at cups of icecream that sat in front of them (except, seemingly, for a gnoll-girl who was enthusiastically eating them; and Malinka, who was holding the armadillo Don had brought into the house just a few days ago).

Most shocking, though, was the frightening tentacle-creature that Becky had her arm over. It was huge, and writhing, and black, and just overall *horrifying*.

The name “Ringworm” certainly suited that thing....

Then, Ken looked closer at the picture, flicking his glasses down so he could see it more clearly.

Becky looked *terrible*.

She was having a horrible time. He could see it in all over her face. The bags under her eyes. The frizz in her hair. That fake smile she always did; he’d seen it so much while she was dating Mattel that he could recognise it *anywhere*....

He’d been right to be worried.

Ken gave a long sigh before biting his lip and messaging Becky again.

**Ken:** Ah. I see. And he thinks you have autism?

**Becky:** yea he says he nos every thing! coz he is a tenta guy

**Ken:** I see.

**Becky:** ye

**Ken:** Bébé, are you alright? How has the plan been going...?

**Becky:** o no im doing TEARABLE

Ken let out a long breath; he hadn’t expected anything else.

**Becky:** its a hole ecosystem in hear an d there r more thin just 1 big mimic their is little 1s all other

**Becky:** and we r doing 2 destro y it :(

**Becky:** but it give us no choice people lifes need matter more then animal

**Becky:** also we found romeros soul

**Ken:** What

**Ken:** His SOUL?

**Becky:** yea his soul

**Becky:** some1 took it out of his body nd shit

**Becky:** i didnt no u culd DO that

**Ken:** I didn’t know Romero had a soul to do that with.

**Becky:** lol ye that 2

**Becky:** any way

**Becky:** just want ed u 2 no i am not ded yet

**Ken:** Please don’t say “yet”

**Becky:** i g2g plan things with aothers

**Ken:** Promise me you’re not going to die

**Becky:** i cant promise i not die

**Ken:** Becky don’t say that

**Becky:** but i CAN promise if i do die it will b the wya i want 2 die

**Ken:** Becky

**Becky:** surrounded by mimics a nd bit ing the obsulute SHIT out of what ever is taki ng me out

**Ken:** Becky please don't talk like that

**Becky:** th ey r gonna go 2 dr for RABIES shot cos they r gona thinj im got rabies im gonna b biting so much!!

**Ken:** Becky PLEASE

**Ken:** I don't want to lose you

**Becky:** i dont want 2 die dw

**Becky:** i will do every thing in my powerr 2 avoud it

**Ken:** Ok. Just. Please try and get out of there alive. I couldn't bare it if you didn't.

**Becky:** i promise i will try

**Ken:** Thank you

**Becky:** dad?

**Ken:** Yes, bébé?

**Becky:** no matte r wat happen, i want you 2 no

**Becky:** i love u

**Ken:** I love you, too

**Becky:** i hav all ways loved u

**Becky:** even wen i said i didnt i was lying and rong

**Ken:** I love you too

**Becky:** i love u

**Becky:** pls do not forget that?

**Ken:** I won't

**Becky:** pro mice?

**Ken:** I promise

**Becky:** thank u

**Becky:** by dad

**Ken:** Goodbye, Becky

Letting out another long, heavy sigh, Ken dropped his hand down to his chest and waited for (*hoped* and *prayed* for) another reply from his daughter.

But it didn't come.

He received no new message. And soon, his screen dimmed and turned itself off.

And just like that, he was back to that horrible, horrible waiting....

Waiting, and worrying, and trying to pretend that everything was...

*everything was....*

'Ken?' Isa's voice floated over from the water, and Ken looked up at her. 'Are you alright?'

Ken realised he was crying, and quickly wiped the tears away and rolled onto his side as Isa pulled herself out of the pool and hurried over to sit on the edge of his chair.

'Ken?' she asked, brushing the hair from Ken's eyes and leaning over him to kiss his cheek. 'What's wrong?'

He couldn't tell her.

He wished he could.

He wanted to.

But he couldn't— Not until Becky told him it was okay....

Or, if she... *died*.

Ken took in a long, trembling breath at the thought and felt Isa's embrace tighten.

'Ken?'

'*I'm sorry*,' Ken whispered.

'For... what?'

Ken bit his lip.

'Ken...? Why are you sorry?'

Ken rolled out of Isa's arms so he could stand and pace.

'What? Are you cheating on me?' it was clearly a joke, as Isa half-laughed in disbelief that Ken could ever do anything so terrible to her....

So when Ken gave Isa a mournful look, her nervous smile fell and her eyes flashed with a deep horror.

It was very, very clear something had clicked and everything was piecing together into her mind.

*She knew.*

'Kenneth Bloom, *please* say you're cheating on me!' she blurted, rising to her feet and earning confused looks from another couple who were clearly trying very hard to not be caught eaves-dropping. 'Say you're having an affair. Tell me that it's not— *Please* tell me that it is *anything* else!'

'It's... *Becky*,' Ken admitted.

Immediately, Isa had him by the shoulders; gripping his vest tight to hold him in place as she pulled him so close their noses touched.

'Don't you *dare* say that!' she snapped. 'Don't you *dare*!'

'She asked me to take you, and Mimi, and Don out of town—'

'*Don't you say that—*'

'She wanted you to be safe,' Ken took in a laboured breath as tears escaped his eyes. 'I knew you would never leave without her. Not if you knew....'

'If I knew what?'

Ken's jaw trembled.

'Knew what, Ken?' Isa repeated. Then, when Ken didn't answer, she gave him a hard shake and snarled; '*What is happening to my daughter?!*'

'The calamity—' Ken managed to stammer out. 'She and her friends are— They're trying to stop it— She's with them now—'

Isa released Ken and ran back into the hotel.

'Isa! Isa, wait!' Ken called, trailing after her as she weaved through the other patrons in her hurry to return to their room. He caught up to her as she pushed her way into the elevator, and squeezed into the small crowded room with her.

'Isa! Please! Just listen to me, mon amoureuse—'

'Don't you dare *mon amoureuse* me!' Isa snapped, spinning on her heels and giving Ken a hard shove into the elevator door as her eyes welled up and her voice broke. 'Don't you *dare*!'

'Isa, please, just let me explain—'

'No!' she snapped, causing the other people in the elevator to awkwardly avert

their gazes. 'I don't want your excuses, Ken!'

'Isa—'

The doors opened and Isa pushed her way out into the hall.

'Isa! Please!' Ken begged.

Isa ignored him (and the pair of mimics who stopped dancing around the hall as she approached) as she stormed to their room and threw the already-opened door wide.

'Isa, please, just— *Listen* to me!' Ken cried as Isa began throwing her things into her suitcase. 'Please! I didn't *want* to leave Becky behind!'

'But you *did*!' Isa exclaimed, slamming her suitcase shut and rounding on Ken, who backed out of the room as she advanced on him. 'You let her put herself in *danger*! You let our daughter put herself in *danger*!'

'I didn't *let* her, Isa!' Ken argued, feeling himself sweat as he was backed into the wall. He was acutely aware of the people in neighbouring rooms peeking out to watch Isa shout at him. 'I— I— She would have done it no matter what I said! You know her! Nothing I did could have stopped her!'

'You could have at least *tried*!'

'I *did* try! I tried to talk her out of it but she wouldn't listen— All I could do was make sure *you* would be safe!'

'She could *die*, Ken!' Isa shouted, her tears finally making their way down her cheeks. 'She could *die*!'

'I know!' Ken cried. 'I know—'

'Our *daughter*!'

'I know!'

'If *anything* happens to her, Kenneth Bloom, I swear I'll— I'll— UGH!' Isa cut off with a furious shout, turning and picking up one of the small, decorative tables that lined the hotel hall and throwing it into the wall. Then, she turned back to Ken and snapped; 'Keys! *Now*!'

Ken fumbled through his pockets and, with trembling hands, held out his car keys for Isa.

She made a grab for them— But was too slow as Don gave a loud honk and, with a mighty leap, snatched the keys from Ken's hand and bolted down the hall.

'DON!' Isa shouted, taking chase of the mimic. 'Don Flamingle you get back here *right now*!'

Don ran faster, leaping into the elevator as it opened and causing several concerned shouts as he ran to its side and began repeatedly slamming his head against the *close door* button.

'DON!'

The inhabitants of the elevator were too stunned to stop the doors from closing, and Isa ran into the metal double doors with a loud *bang*, and then another as she slammed her fist against it and screamed.

Then she fell to her knees; letting out a mournful sob as she slid down the door.

Slowly... carefully... Ken edged towards her. Until he could kneel down beside her and gently wrap his arms over her as she began quietly weeping.

'*I'm sorry*,' he whispered into her hair. '*I am. I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry....*'

—END—

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