

# Don't Call Me Chichi

By C. Jade Wyton

*After turning herself into a dog and getting attacked by a raccoon, Becky Bloom finds herself being accidentally kidnapped by her ex-girlfriend, Mattel Masters. Until now, Becky had always tried to see the best in her ex's intentions. But after seeing how rancid the woman is behind closed doors, Becky is desperate to escape her again.*

***Contains descriptions of animal abuse/neglect, kidnapping, homophobia/transphobia, racism, and some sexual content.***

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It had been a stressful week.

After the mess the Fall Formal had become, Becky was really in need of some time to relax.

She had had to move her therapy appointment up just to deal with everything— And even then, she'd still almost felt too scared to leave the house to go.

*Every time she went out something seemed to happen.*

It had taken Jareth almost half an hour to coax her out of her room; it was only the promise of taking a picnic together on the way home that had managed to push Becky's nerves aside and get her out.

And, then, the session had been extremely emotional.

She'd only meant to mention what had happened with the vampires to Mr Goodhuman. About Portia's stint in the drug den, the dog attack, and then the invasion of the formal— But that had led to a long, exhausting outburst that had her blubbering *everything*.

How it had been up to her and her friends to save the town, over and over and over. And how the pressure of that was driving her insane.

She'd found herself talking about the incident with that Zeke man (or was it Zombi? Adam had mentioned something about him going by *Zombi* now) at the music festival. How he'd almost drained the life out of everyone, and her and her friends had to fend him off and save the *entire town*.

And then, finally, she'd blurted about almost strangling Romero to death. The most horrible, violent, *evil* thing she'd ever done.

She hadn't meant to bring it up, but it had come out of her in a rambling word-vomit that left her a trembling and crying mess.

She was convinced in the moment that Goodhuman was going to report her to the police, or have her locked away back in the ward— And she would have thought she deserved it, after the horrible thing she'd done.

But, instead he'd stayed calm, and spoken to her softly.

*She had been acting in self-defence*, he'd told her.

She'd been protecting herself, and people she loved, from someone who's reckless behaviour was causing them harm.

He'd echoed a lot of what her father had told her, when she'd confessed her actions to him; her regret and guilt was proof she was a good person who was acting out of desperation and not for fun or pleasure. And even if she'd felt what she perceived as a *good feeling* in the moment, it had simply been the relief at the safety of her friends.

Goodhuman had told her that she felt things very strongly— Which she couldn't deny. That was half her problem; whenever she felt a feeling, good or bad, it would overwhelm her sense and consume her entire being. And then she'd act out on it, and do reckless things.

So they'd talked about managing her feelings. Trying to develop a method of looking at things from an unbiased point of view, before taking action....

It wasn't going well.

Becky still found herself acting on impulse. Like just the other day, she'd heard Malinka was still grounded at home and *not allowed to use her phone*.... She'd felt so overwhelmingly sad to learn the reason Malinka hadn't been replying to her texts, that she had climbed through her friend's window at twelve at night with a care package.

Malinka had been very confused, as had her parents.... On the plus side, after the third late-night visit from Becky, Malinka seemed to be allowed her phone back.

Becky just couldn't imagine how much it would suck to be stuck at home *without* being allowed a phone or computer or anything of the sort.... Even those few months after her accident when she'd had her phone broken and had stayed at home; she'd still had her laptop, and her TV, and her gaming consoles to keep her entertained.

And she'd still been able to sneak off into the woods whenever she'd wanted to.... Something she'd been doing more and more, since finding out she was a druid.

*Druid.*

It was still so strange to think of herself as a druid.

She didn't know the first thing about being a druid... she couldn't wait for her druidry classes to start. She needed them. *Desperately!*

She couldn't keep googling every weird little twinge of magic she felt.... She kept getting webMD results instead of actual information on spells. And she was 99.9% sure that accidentally making it rain in her own bedroom was *not* a sign of terminal illness....

Becky heaved a sigh.

Speaking of google.... She opened up the browser on her phone and searched: *druid spell beginner -druidcraft -goodberry -entangle*

Hmm....

Thunderwave. Gust. Cure wounds....

Wildshape?

Becky sat up, feeling the damp grass of the woods attempting to cling to her as she did.

She could learn how to *shape-shift?!!*

Holy shit.

If she could shape-shift....

She could understand Mimi so much better.

Having any type insight into her baby's most magical, amazing ability—

*She could do that?*

*Maybe?*

She skimmed the page, quickly.

Yes! Yes!

Any druid could learn it! It wasn't a special thing related to only *some* families— It was something *all* druids could learn, if they tried hard enough!

By god— She was going to try! Right now! She was going to try and shape-shift!

*Ohhh*, she couldn't *wait*!

Becky screenshot the page detailing wildshape, and opened up her chat with Adam.

**Becky:** adam

**Becky:** adam

**Adam:** what?

**Becky:** [1 image attached]

**Becky:** 🐼

**Adam:** no

**Becky:** yes

**Adam:** NO

**Becky:** im gonnna try it

**Adam:** DO NOT

**Adam:** that is WAY too advanced for you

**Becky:** ill b fine

**Adam:** becky you barely have druidcraft under control yet

**Adam:** i'm really excited for you but i don't think you should be doing more advanced magic until you've had at least SOME classes

**Becky:** ok u r making sense but also

**Becky:** shut up

**Becky:** lmao ill b fine

**Adam:** famous last words

**Becky:** at lest i will b famus lol

**Adam:** becky i swear to god

**Adam:** at least say you're at home and not out somewhere on your own

**Becky:** im at the lake

**Adam:** BECKY

**Adam:** please do not make me come and get you

**Becky:** no it ok now u no were i am u can come get me if i dont get back 2 u in like 20 mins

**Adam:** \*screams\*

**Becky:** ok bye bye ilu adam u r the best kiss kiss

Becky closed the conversation with Adam, then, and ignored the several texts he sent her as she opened the wildshape page back up and read through it as thoroughly as she could manage.

'Mmhm...' she mumbled, before switching over to YouTube. 'Wild... shape... tutorial...'

Ah! Perfect!

Becky rearranged her things so that she could rest her phone against her backpack, and watched through the tutorial.

It didn't seem so hard. It was about *feeling* things— Something she did a *lot* of.

*Feel... small.*

Becky closed her eyes tight, and took a deep breath.

*Small. Like an animal.*

*Like a cat.*

*Conceptualise yourself as what you want to be....*

*Small.*

*Cat.*

*Furry.*

*Cat.*

*Cute.*

*Cat.*

*Cat....*

*Cat....*

Becky opened her eyes, and looked down at her hands.

Still an elf.

*Dammit!*

Okay. That was okay. She'd try again.

Deep breath.

*Cat.*

*Cat.*

*Small.*

*Small....*

*What if something went wrong?*

Becky swallowed, and pushed the thought to the back of her mind. Again, trying to imagine herself as a cat.

*Cat.*

*Cat.*

*Small.*

*Small.*

*She was small.*

*She was a cat....*

*She was nervous about doing this wrong—*

*No she wasn't!*

*She was a small fluffy animal!*

*What if she couldn't do this?*

*She was a small, cute little animal....*

*She was doubtful....*

*She....*

Becky let out her breath as a sigh, and flopped over in the grass.

Maybe Adam was right, and she shouldn't be doing this without taking some classes first.

*Eh.*

Well. It's not like it worked, anyway.  
She should let Adam know she was okay.  
Becky sighed again, and reached to her phone—  
And couldn't pick it up; as her hands had vanished into tiny, little red paws.  
'What?!' Becky barked, leaping to her feet and immediately tripping over the  
clothes that now lay loosely on the ground below her.

What what what—  
She looked over herself, and gasped when she saw she'd turned into a small,  
furry mess.

She'd done it?!  
Oh, yes! She'd done it!  
She was a— A dog!  
Not what she'd expecting, but she'd *done it!*  
She'd wildshaped—  
What was that?!

Becky caught a glimpse of something out of the corner of her eye, and turned  
her head to see what it was. But as she turned it vanished, so she kept turning,  
chasing the strange, furry thing around and around and around until she craned  
her neck forward and sunk her teeth into it—

And yelped as she felt a sharp pain in a body part she didn't realise she had.

*Tail!*

She had a tail!

'*Oh my god!*' Becky yipped, rushing after it again. '*No! No! Come back! I  
wanna look at you! Wait! I wanna see what you look like! Come back, tail!  
Come back!*'

Her tail, of course, did not listen.

It was too busy wagging, and being fluffy and curly and attached to her back  
end, to even think about holding still.

And Becky was far too excited to stop chasing it— So for about five minutes  
straight, she ran in circles around herself, trying to get a look at her tail.

She chased it, and chased it, and chased it— Until she collapsed into a panting  
heap in the grass.

Well. That was fun!

Heaps of fun!

She was so so so proud of herself for managing to wildshape!

But, it had been a while. And she could hear her phone going off with Adam's  
ringtone. She should turn back and text him, let him know she was okay....

Turn... back....

How?

Was it the same way she'd...?

Hmm... maybe....

*Human.*

*Elf....*

*Half-elf.*

*She was a half-elf.*

*She was a person.*

*She was not a dog....*

*Not... dog....*

*Half-elf....*

Becky opened her eyes.

*Uh-oh.*

Uhhh... that was okay.

That was fine.

Adam knew where she was. And by what she could see from the messages popping up on her phone, he was already on his way to check on her. So... all she had to do was sit and wait.

Just sit here, snuggled down into her pants, and wait....

Hmm... she could go for some snacks.

She had a sandwich in her bag, didn't she?

Becky sniffed around her backpack.

*Ooh, she could smell it!*

That was new and different! Being able to smell so good!

Oh her sandwich smelt good.

It had ham. And cheese. And avocado.

She could still eat bread as a dog, right? That wouldn't be a problem?

*Eh.* It should be fine. Wasn't like it was chocolate or anything.

Carefully, Becky took the zipper of her backpack between her teeth and began to tug. And tug. And tug.

It was very hard to open, with how small she was; but she eventually got it and squeezed into her pack to search for her food.

*Oooh!* She had orange slices, too! Isa must have slipped those in her bag before she left!

Becky pulled out the little ziplock bag of orange slices and began to pull at the top with her teeth.

Again, it wasn't easy to open— But, again, she eventually got it.

She could feel her tail begin to wag as she picked up a slice and chewed on it.

It was much harder to chew than usual, with her mouth being so small.

Actually *everything* seemed to be harder, with her small size.

That was okay, though. Adam would be here soon to pick her up, and she would be able to get on her laptop and look up a tutorial on how to turn *back* from wildshape—

*'Hey! Hey, dog!'*

A shrill-but-raspy voice hissed from somewhere in the bushes, and Becky twitched her ears and turned to see who was talking to her.

It was a raccoon.

A large, grey raccoon. With straggly fur and bared fangs.

*'Ah, hello!'* Becky yipped, feeling her tail beginning to wag. *'I'm Becky! What's your name—'*

*'Step away from the food, dog,'* the raccoon interrupted. *'I want it.'*

*'Oh?'* Becky licked her lips, swallowing the last of her mouthful. *'Oh, well, you're welcome to share—'*

*'I don't want to share!'* the raccoon growled, his coat fluffing out as he made himself look bigger. *'I want it all....'*

*'Well, that's not fair,'* Becky replied, simply. *'These are mine. I brought them*

from home—'

'Don't talk back to me, dog!' the raccoon interrupted again, slowly rising to his toes. 'Your owner's nowhere in sight! And you're just a teeny, tiny little lapdog!'

'What? Owner?' Becky paused, then smiled. 'Ooooh! This is all a misunderstanding, see? I'm actually a drui—'

Before she could finish explaining, the raccoon launched itself at her.

It all happened so quickly, Becky could barely register what was going on— She got maybe one or two confused yelps in before the raccoon began chasing her through the clearing and down the trail away from the lake.

Then, she tripped, and fell off the trail and down a steep incline. By the time she reached the bottom she was sure she'd hit every single rock on her way down.

'Ow...' she whined; looking up and seeing that the raccoon had given up the chase and not followed her down. 'Rude.'

Hm....

How was she meant to get back up?

The hill was far too steep for her to climb with her little dog legs....

What breed was she, anyway?

Becky craned her neck to examine herself.

A little red lapdog... fluffy.... with a curly, feathered tail....

Pomeranian? No. That didn't feel right. Her fur wasn't that poofy.

Papillon? No. She was too red for that....

Hmm....

Becky perked up her ears, and looked down at her paws, and spun in circles as she examined herself....

Oh.

Oh no.

She was a fucking *chihuahua*?!

A small, yappy, bug-eyed little creature that was famous for being loud and biting everything that came near it?!

Ugh.

She couldn't even deny that it *suit*ed her.

Chihuahua.

At least chihuahuas were cute.

Did Jareth like chihuahuas?

He liked dogs, she knew that. He always wanted one, but.... He always talked about *bigger* dogs. Like dobermans or bulldogs or staffies....

Would he think her turning into a chihuahua was too... girly? And stupid?

She hoped not.... Because she wasn't sure how long she was going to be stuck like this.

And what... what if....

What if she *never* turned back?

What if she was stuck as a dog forever?!

Oh.

Oh no.

Oh no no no no no no noooooo!

If she was stuck as a dog she'd be a *dog*!

And Jareth couldn't date a dog!

That would be *illegal!*

But she wasn't born a dog, she was born a person— Would that make it different?

Oh, oh god—

What if she stayed a dog and Jareth had to break up with her?!

She didn't want that! She didn't want Jareth to break up with her!

Jareth was the best thing that had happened to her in *years!*

She couldn't lose him to being a dog!

If she stayed a dog then— Then— Then *best* case scenario, Jareth might still visit her on the weekends, and scratch her behind the ears, and call her a cutie pie but—

But she didn't want to be *a* cutie pie. She wanted to be *his* cutie pie!

Oh, god, she was freaking out! She was *freaking out!*

She had to get— She had to get home! And get on her laptop! And— And google how to turn back into a person!

And if she couldn't find it on google, she'd message— She'd make a tweet or something and ask for help! There were druids on Twitter that could help her! They'd helped her get the basics on speaking with animals, and how to make the sounds of birds yelling not so overwhelming— They could— They could help her with this!

Becky felt herself panting as she ran through the underbrush towards town.

*Why were her legs to GODDAMN SHORT?!*

She couldn't get over half of the fucking rocks to make it to the trails she knew! She had to *guess* which way she was going and—

Ugh! She couldn't stand it! Everything was so different from down here!

She just had to get home!

Home, home, home!

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Becky had been running for hours. By the time she finally managed to find her way out of the woods and to the edge of town, she was exhausted.

She'd somehow looped around the town, to the opposite side....

God, she was so tired.

Too tired to run.

So she slowed to a walk, and trudged along the pavement at a snail's pace.

She could see the sun starting to set on the horizon....

Maybe she should have stayed near the lake trail and just— Just barked her head off while she waited for Adam.

That would have been smart! He would have heard her, and known it was her! Because she said she was using wildshape.

Then he could have picked her up and taken her back to her bag and chased off the raccoo—

Oh.

*Ooooh... no....*

What if he thought that raccoon was her?

What if he picked up the raccoon and took it home and gave it to her dad and



then when she showed up as a dog they didn't believe it was her and the raccoon got to be her and have her room and her life and— And— And *what if Mimi loved the raccoon more than her?!*

The thought was so despicable it made Becky's entire body shiver, and she had to lay down for a minute to compose herself.

*It was going to be okay*, she reassured. *Wildshape wasn't forever! It was just a temporary thing.*

*Wasn't it?*

But what if— What if she'd gotten stuck *forever*?

Oh— Oh no! Katie didn't like dogs! Would she have to stop being friends with Katie?!

Becky shivered, and whined loudly.

'Oh? Hey there....'

Becky's ears twitched at a familiar, high voice that spoke from behind her— And she slowly, *very* slowly lifted her head to see.... Mattel Masters.

Her ex-girlfriend.

*Oh, no....*

The bad news just kept piling up....

Becky felt herself give another whine.

'Hey there,' Mattel mumbled, glancing around. 'Where are you from?'

Becky swallowed, nervously licking her lips, and rose to her feet.

She and Mattel hadn't left each other on the *friendliest* of terms... but....

She'd always tried to think the best of Mattel, even when nobody else would— And maybe this would be a chance for Mattel to prove her right! If Mattel helped her now, maybe everyone would see that she was more complex than they thought— That she was more than just *Becky's nasty ex*.

Maybe they'd finally see what it was that had drawn Becky to her in the first place! That good, sweet, helpful girl underneath everything else!

'*Mattel? Okay, Mattel! I know this must be like, really weird? But I need your help!*' Becky barked. '*I've been going through a lot lately, and I may or may not have made a bit of a mistake.... Are you listening? Mattel? Do you.... You don't understand me, do you...?*'

'Aw, aren't you a talkative little thing?' Mattel chirped, bending down and scooping Becky up in one hand before she could protest. 'Come here. Hey— Hey, don't struggle, now. Stay still.'

'*Mattel! Please— Ow! Don't hold me there, that hurts!*' Becky exclaimed, trying to wiggle out of her exes grip. '*Mattel! Those are my ribs!*'

'Hey, come on— I'm trying to help you,' Mattel huffed. 'Stay still.'

*Ugh....*

Becky breathed a heavy sigh and, knowing it was useless to try and get out of Mattel's grip, went limp and let the woman look her over.

Once she was a person again she'd have to teach Mattel how to hold a dog properly....

'Good girl.'

The familiar words sent a shiver up Becky's spine, and she felt herself beginning to tremble as her nerves shot up again and her anxiety spiked.

*Oh, god! This was her ex!*

This was her ex! And her ex had no idea that she was a dog! And was saying things she used to say in bed— *Oh god this was weird!*

This was weird!

This was really *really* weird!

‘Hmp. You’re cute. Where’s your collar?’ Mattel gently ran a finger behind Becky’s ear, scratching her in a way that was weirdly pleasant.... Then she spun Becky around in her hand sharply, and Becky let out a quiet yelp as she was examined. ‘Those scars look old.... You a stray, hm...? Yeah? You all alone?’

‘No!’ Becky yipped, wiggling in Mattel’s uncomfortable grasp. ‘No, Mattel! It’s me! Becky! I just need to get home so I can get on my laptop and figure out how to fix this!’

Mattel gave a warm smile, then. One Becky hadn’t seen in a long time.... One that used to stop her heart and make her blush— And even now, it made her fall quiet as her tail wagged cautiously.

‘No collar.... No tags...’ Mattel said softly. ‘Not even a desexing tattoo.... I bet you don’t have a chip either, do you? Hm.... Come on. I’m taking you home with me.’

*Uh-oh....*

Becky swallowed nervously as Mattel used her free hand to clear some space in her purse— And then Becky found herself uncomfortably deposited in it with Mattel’s things. Keys poked into her hip, a hairbrush tangled in her tail, and she struggled to put her feet down without slipping on lipstick tubes....

She was able to keep her head out to breathe and see where she was going, at least....

‘You’re such a good girl, aren’t you?’ Mattel said, petting Becky between the ears. ‘So well behaved! What happened to your old owner, hm? Did they leave you behind for some reason?’

Becky tried to duck away from Mattel, but found herself trapped by the purse’s strap.

*This was weeeeird....*

‘I know what being left behind is like,’ Mattel said gently. ‘It’s happened to me twice just this year! It’s not fair, is it?’

Oh, no.... Mattel was *projecting*....

Becky took a deep breath.

*Maybe she could slip out of Mattel’s purse and run?*

Maybe....

But she was so tired....

And the ground was so far away....

And Mattel wasn’t being so bad.... Maybe a little rough, but she’d never had a pet before— So how was she supposed to know how to handle one?

Ugh. Becky was too tired to think....

So, instead, she rested her head on the side of Mattel’s purse and tried to ignore the sickly feeling she was getting in her stomach from the constant swinging motion.

Luckily it didn’t take Mattel too long to get home.

Unluckily her mother, Chloe-Anne Masters, was waiting for her in the living room. And she was furious.

‘Where have you been?!’ she hissed, poking an accusing finger at her daughter. ‘You were meant to be home over an *hour* ago! You missed your father’s interview!’

‘The bus got held up,’ Mattel huffed, attempting to step around her mother. Becky could tell she had her eyes locked on the hall that lead to her bedroom.... ‘It won’t happen again.’

‘You say that every time!’ Chloe-Anne growled. ‘And still, you’re *always* late!’

‘Ugh... whatever,’ Mattel grumbled, trying again to get around her mother.

Chloe-Anne grabbed her daughter by the wrist as she passed, and pulled her back— And Becky felt hot white rage shooting through her.

‘*Leave her alone!*’ Becky snapped loudly, pushing herself half-out of Mattel’s purse and growling.

‘What is *that thing?*!’ Chloe-Anne reeled back at the sight of Becky.

‘She’s a dog,’ Mattel sighed heavily, picking Becky up in one hand again and showing her off to her mother. ‘I found her. She was like. Abandoned or something.’

‘Those scars are horrendous,’ Chloe-Anne’s nose scrunched up in disgust. ‘And she’s *filthy!*’

‘She’s well behaved,’ Mattel defended, slipping Becky back into her purse. ‘I’ll give her a bath or whatever. She’ll be fine—’

‘I will *not* have that *creature* in my house!’ Chloe-Anne’s voice began to rise, and Becky flinched as she made a wide motion with her hand. ‘Get rid of it *now!*’

‘No! She’s mine!’

‘Not under my roof she’s not!’

‘You mean not under *Daddy’s* roof!’

‘You father will agree with me!’

‘No—’

‘He’ll take one look at her and throw her out!’

‘No he won’t!’

‘Yes he will. She’s disgusting!’

‘*You’re* disgusting!’ Mattel retorted.

Immediately, Chloe-Anne’s hand found her daughter’s cheek with a loud *CRACK* and Mattel stumbled back a step.

Becky felt herself cowering as she shrunk down into Mattel’s purse.

*Oh god— She knew Mattel’s mother was bad but— But she’d never seen her HIT Mattel before!*

*And, by the way Mattel simply stood back up and rubbed her cheek, it looked like this wasn’t the first time....*

Chloe-Anne turned, her voice screeching furiously through the house. ‘Carter! CARTER! Get in here and deal with your daughter!’

Becky closed her eyes and trembled as Mattel’s mother continued to shout for her husband. She tried to block the sounds of the fighting out but, then, she was lifted from the purse and presented to Mattel’s father.

‘Ah, this little beast, hmm?’ Carter gave a curt hum and took Becky; holding her in an even *more* uncomfortable position than Mattel had as he examined her.

Becky found herself *begging* for him to decide to get rid of her— If she was lucky, he may just put her outside, and she could run home—

‘Ah, Chloe, let her have it!’

*What?!*

‘What?!’

‘It will look good for us,’ he chuckled. ‘Rescuing a dog off the street— The public *eats* that up.’

Mattel’s face lit up. ‘So— I can keep her?’

‘I don’t see the harm in it,’ said Carter, handing Becky back to Mattel.

‘Thank you, Daddy!’ Mattel cried, throwing her arms around her father.

Becky almost shrieked as she was swung around.

*Mattel did not know how to handle dogs!*

‘Ugh!’ Chloe-Anne growled before turning to storm off. ‘A filthy broken dog for a filthy broken queer.... *Fitting!*’

*Oooh....*

Oh she did not just call Mattel a....

*Ooh....*

Becky felt her tail tucking between her legs as Mattel pulled away from her father.

‘Ah... don’t listen to her,’ Carter sighed, fixing his daughter’s hair. ‘No matter what, you’re still my little girl. Even if you are.... *Hmp.*’

‘Daddy...’ Mattel’s voice dropped, and Becky could hear the hurt in it.

‘No, no. It’s alright,’ Carter put a reassuring hand on Mattel’s shoulder. ‘After all! It could be much worse. You could be a lesbian. Or a transsexual. You can still marry a man, when it comes down to it! Whatever this little bi-curious phase is, I’m sure you’ll grow out of it.’

*Uuuuuuugh...!*

Becky felt like she was melting.

He did not just *say* that!

‘*Yeaah...*’ Mattel drawled, and Becky could feel she was uncomfortable, too.

‘Well, um... I should go give her a bath.... I’ll be down for dinner when it’s ready.’

‘Alright,’ Carter pecked a kiss on Mattel’s cheek before ushering her off. ‘And try not to work up your mother, would you?’

‘I won’t,’ Mattel answered with a sigh, and made for her room. ‘Love you, Daddy.’

‘I love you too.’

It was awkward.

It was *far* too awkward.

Becky couldn’t handle how awkward it was—

And it only got worse as Mattel got to her room and began to mutter under her breath.

‘Can’t believe he compared me to a trans person,’ she huffed bitterly, causing Becky’s ears to twitch. ‘Gross.’

*Don’t...* Becky thought, feeling her fur beginning stand on end as Mattel pushed her way into her on-suite. *For the love of god, Mattel, don’t.... Don’t....*

‘Ugh!’ Mattel kicked the bathroom door closed, and carelessly put Becky on the floor. ‘I’m not a *weirdo!*’

Becky let out a heavy sigh as Mattel began to run the bath.

*There it was....*

She'd thought Mattel was better than that....

Mattel echoed Becky's sigh before leaning back and letting the water run for a minute.

She looked tired, Becky thought. Very tired....

Maybe she didn't mean it.

She had a habit of saying things she didn't mean, when she was angry. Becky knew this. She was sure that Mattel was just mad at her father and—

'God, could you *imagine* if I was a freak like Orson?'

Becky felt her fur standing on end again, and couldn't hold back an angry bark. '*Orson is a good man!*' she barked. '*Don't talk about him that way!*'

'Yeah, I know right?' Mattel scoffed, scooping Becky up placing her in the bath.

'*I'm not agreeing with you!*' Becky barked— Before feeling Mattel scoop a handful of warm water over her. '*Uhhhh Mattel... what are you doing?*'

'Hold still, sweetie,' Mattel mumbled, running her hands over Becky's sides.

'*Nooooooo! No! No! No! No! NO!*' Becky gave a yelp and tried to scurry away from her ex. '*This is weird! This is weird! Stop it! I don't like this! No!*'

'Come on, hold still,' Mattel ordered, gripping Becky a little too hard around the middle. 'You're *filthy!* I have to get you clean.'

Becky grumbled as she was held firm and still. '*Stop.... Dear god. You don't know how to handle animals at all.... You're lucky I'm not an actual dog, or I'd like, totally have bitten you by now....*'

'Hmhm...' Mattel gave a half-hum, half-sigh. 'Ugh. God. Worse than Orson—I'm just imagining if I was *Isa!*'

Becky felt a low growl escape her throat.

*What?*

'Imagine being trans, a drow, *and* old!' Mattel scoffed. '*And* a servant on top of that! I think I would just, like, kill myself if I was in that situation!'

'*Oh, that's it!*' Becky let out a snarl, and tried to climb out of the bath. '*I've had enough of you, you rancid bitch! I'm going home! Everyone was right! You're disgusting! DISGUSTING!*'

'Okay, okay, I get it,' Mattel chirped. 'You're tired of the bath. Hold on, I'll get you out.'

'*I'm not tired of the bath! I'm tired of YOU!*' Becky yipped furiously. '*Put me outside! I'll make my own way home!*'

Becky felt every inch of her body trembling as Mattel scooped her up again.

She couldn't believe she'd *ever* thought she was in love with this rancid, racist, transphobic piece of shit!

'Come on, cutie, let's get you dry,' Mattel hummed, pulling out her hair-dryer.

*Oh, you don't know anything about animals....*

Becky let out a long, long sigh— And then got hit with a burst of warm air.

*Ugh.*

She closed her eyes as Mattel began to dry her off, and willed with everything she had to turn back into her normal self.

*Please turn back.*

*Please.*

*Turn back.*

*Turn back into an elf.*

*Please.*

*Please.*

*For the love of god.*

*Turn back.*

*Don't let me be stuck like this.*

*PLEASE....*

Becky opened her eyes, and looked down at herself.

She was still a dog.

'Hmm...' Mattel picked her up, then, and carried her out of the bathroom.

'You need a name.'

'No I don't!' Becky barked back.

'What about... Dixie? No. You don't look like a Dixie.'

'Becky! I'm Becky! You know me, Mattel!'

'Missy?'

*Oh... god... no....*

'Oh! I know!'

*No....*

'Chichi!'

'NO!'

'Aw,' Mattel grinned, and set Becky down on her bed. 'You love it!'

'Mattel! I swear to god!' Becky yapped. 'I swear to god! If you don't let me go I am going to eat every single makeup brush you own!'

~~~~~

It had been the most uncomfortable three days of Becky's life— Four, if you counted the day that Mattel had picked her up.

It was awful. She needed to get home. She needed her *medicine!* She swore she could already *feel* the affects of being off it for so long.

She was anxious. And irritable. And couldn't seem to focus on anything— And Mattel seemed to think it was *cute*. Even when she'd ripped apart a makeup pallet that Becky knew cost over a *hundred dollars*, Mattel had just laughed!

Nothing Becky did seemed to get through to Mattel that she was a person— UGH! Maybe all of those feelings weren't from her lack of medication, but from having to *live with Mattel*.

Any sort of positive feelings she'd had for Mattel had completely vanished now that she'd seen how *rancid* this woman was when she thought she was alone....

And, somehow, Mattel had it in her mind that Becky was happy, and playful, and loved being *stuck* here!

Ugh! She was going *insane!*

She hated having to sleep on the floor! But her only other option was sharing the bed with Mattel. Which, while Mattel wanted it, Becky thought that she would rather *die*.

She couldn't.

She couldn't!

She would *never* live that down!

She would never live *any* of this down, honestly....

She was shitting in the backyard, for god's sake!

The only sense of solace she had was that Mattel hadn't forced her be naked for the almost-week she had been stuck as a dog; the day after picking her up, Mattel had taken her to the pet store and gotten her several little jumpers.

It was weird, Becky thought, to put clothes on a dog. But that was the one thing wasn't going to complain about.... Even if the horrible little tutu she was currently wearing was ugly as shit.

The worst part of the second day, in particular, was seeing Marilyn in the pet store when Mattel took her— And Marilyn not recognising her, no matter how much she barked for help.

*God damn that bimbo!*

Becky huffed a sigh, and rolled over; trying to ignore Mattel as she gossiped with her friends.

At least she'd finally gotten to try dog food, like she'd been craving the past two or three months....

But it got boring, fast.

Plus, knowing that Mr Goodhuman was going to be disappointed in her made her feel... sad.

Would he be disappointed in her?

She hadn't given in to her impulses— She was literally a dog, and that was the only thing she was given to eat.

Besides a grape, which she was too scared to try. Because she knew grapes were toxic to dogs.... Though, as she heard Chanel snort a laugh, she wished for a moment that she *had* had the guts to poison herself.

'Chichi!' Mattel's voice suddenly sung out. 'Come here, girl! Come here!'

Becky ignored her.

'Come here baby!' Mattel called again, before her feet hit the floor and she hurried over to where Becky was laying.

*Please, god, let me spontaneously combust*, Becky prayed as she was picked up and carried to the bed. *I will never ask for anything ever again. Just set me on fire and let me die. Or better— Set Mattel on fire. Please set Mattel on fire. Kill us both.*

'Aw, what a little cutie!' Stacy giggled. 'Can I hold her?'

'Yeah, sure,' Mattel said, dropping Becky into Stacy's lap like she was a toy and not a *whole living creature*. 'Ugh, so. Like. I'm still kinda pissed about the formal.'

'Oh, I know right!' Jamie groaned. 'All that work, only for that stupid tabaxi to push Helena out of the way?'

Becky's ears pricked up, at that.

They were talking about Malinka, and how Malinka had saved Helena from a horrible, humiliating prank that Mattel had set up during the formal.

*A bucket of blood and leeches, tipped on her in front of everyone....*

'Was still pretty funny to see the cat get covered in it!' Chanel laughed. 'It must have taken *forever* to get out of her fur!'

'Hah! Yeah! I bet she had to *lick* it off!' Jamie replied.

'I bet she enjoyed it!' Stacy cackled. 'I heard her dad's a *serial killer!*'  
Butcher, Becky thought with a grumble. *Malinka's dad's a butcher. And even if he was a bit rude, he was harmless....*

'Her fur's probably still all gross from it!'

'Her fur was probably gross to begin with!'

'Hah! Yeah! Well, what do you expect? I hear she's friends with Becky!'

Becky lifted her head to look at the girls as they all giggled.

*Bitches.*

'God, Mattel!' Chanel scoffed. 'I still can't believe you *dated* Becky!'

'Ugh, Becky wasn't that bad,' Mattel gave a huff, and rolled her eyes. 'I mean, she was fine on her own. It was those friends of hers! You know? They were like, manipulating her into hating me and stuff.'

God, Becky *wished* that were true.

'You've seen what they've said on social media, right!' Mattel scoffed. 'In like, Becky's streams and stuff? They won't even let people mention me by name! It's because they know if they do, Becky will like. Remember how great I was.'

'Yeah.'

'Totally.'

'They're such whores.'

'Yeah!' Mattel stuck her nose up, then. 'I mean. I could totally get Becky back if I wanted to! At least like. As a rebound until Guillmero comes to his senses.'

'Aw, you don't want Becky back forever?' Stacy asked, stroking her hand down Becky's back. 'I kinda liked her. She was funny.'

'In a weird way,' Jamie agreed. 'A little loud, though.'

'Yeah.'

'Hmp...' Mattel pursed her lips and looked away from her friends. 'Maybe I might have taken Becky back if she hadn't gone completely *insane* and stuff. But like.... You've seen her! She's completely lost her mind! She posted a video— *She* posted it! Not someone else making fun of her— *She* posted a video of herself eating *grass!*'

Becky almost laughed.

She'd posted *several* videos of herself eating grass, thank you very much!

'Oooh, yeah,' Stacy grimaced. 'You mean that one where she was like, rating the taste of all different types of grasses from different yards and comparing them to grass from the woods?'

'Yeah, that one,' Mattel groaned. 'Like. It just *sucks*, you know! I worked so hard on her and stuff! She was *almost* normal. Like. I invested *so much* into her, and she left me for *one* comment! Talk about over-sensitive.'

*Over-sensitive?*

Becky let out a growl (which Stacy seemed to think was directed at herself, as she removed her hands from Becky and let her climb off her lap) and angrily licked at her lips before beginning to pace the bed.

*Not being racist made her over-sensitive?*

'That's where I went wrong, I think,' Mattel huffed. 'It's like. A waiting game with teaching Becky things. You gotta ease her into *everything* or she freaks out, and I just *assumed* it was something she didn't have an opinion on. Like! How was I supposed to know she supported the undead and stuff? If I'd known I



would have eased her out of that awful mindset and taught her the *right* way to treat them!’

Becky folded back her ears and flopped over, not wanting to hear the rest of the conversation but not having a choice.

‘But like, then I found out she was *friends* with that Franken-*thing* and everything suddenly made so much more sense! Like. No wonder she was so defensive! He was obviously tricking her into caring about him so that he could like, use her or whatever. Because honestly, I can’t believe that anyone in their right mind would ever go *near* that creature, let alone be *friends* with it!’

Becky let out another long, low growl.

*Speaking of making sense....*

So much of her relationship with Mattel was *starting to make sense....*

After hearing what Mattel had already said to her friends, Becky finally understood what everyone had been trying to tell her.... All those times she’d felt confused, and anxious, and like she could never do anything right— It was all Mattel, gaslighting her into second-guessing everything she did!

And Mattel had made her feel like that on *purpose*.

It made her sick to her stomach.

‘Maybe I *could* try again with her,’ Mattel said, her voice raising in pitch as if it was an intriguing prospect. ‘It might make Guillmero jealous. And even if it doesn’t at least I’ll have Becky back, you know? A win-win.’

‘You really think you could get Beck back?’ Jamie asked.

‘Uh, yeah! Look at the messages she’s been sending me,’ Mattel giggled, then, and handed her phone to her friends. ‘She’s been so worried about me! And I’ve been letting her *sit in it*. Like. I bet you that if I messaged her tomorrow, she’d *jump* at the chance to talk to me! And then, like, it wouldn’t be all that hard to make her leave Jareth again. I already made her cut him off once before.’

Becky felt her fur standing on end.

*Mattel wouldn’t dare mess with Jareth... would she?*

‘Oh my god, if she does break up with him— Dibs,’ Jamie giggled.

‘Ew, gross!’ Mattel reeled back. ‘You really want orc dick? *Second hand* orc dick?!’

Mattel’s tone made Becky want to be sick. Or cry. Or both.

How *dare* she talk about Jareth that way!

How *dare* she talk about *any* of Becky’s friends at *all*!

She could feel herself trembling as the conversation continued.

‘I mean, yeah. Have you *seen* him? I bet it’s *huge*.’

Becky covered her ears with her paws, trying desperately to muffle the conversation— Though it didn’t change anything.

*Stupid paws!*

*Stupid, useless paws!*

‘Hah! Well, you know,’ Stacy gave a humoured sniff. ‘After Mattel gets Becky back—’

‘*If* I decide I want Becky back, you mean, I haven’t decided if I want to or not—’

‘Then it shouldn’t take too long for him to get over her. He’s an orc after all. They’re basically animals, you know.’

Becky felt her lip curling, and tried not to let the snarl that was building in her chest escape her.

‘Yeah, *exactly*,’ Jamie said in a dreamy voice. ‘That’s what’s so hot about it. They’re so... *primal*, you know?’

Becky actually gagged, at that— And Mattel gave a gasp.

‘Aw, Chichi, are you okay? What’s wrong? Is your tummy upset?’

Becky trembled as she was picked up and examined. She tried not to let her temper get the better of her as Mattel scratched her behind the ear.

‘Poor baby....’

‘Do you think Jareth’s rough in bed?’ Jamie continued. ‘Ugh, what am I saying? Of *course* he is! He’s an orc *and* a barbarian! He probably *savages* Becky every night!’

‘Ugh, no,’ Mattel sighed, and put Becky down on a nearby pillow before retreating back to her place with her friends. ‘Becky’s a massive baby about that stuff. She can barely take a strap! It’s always *too deep* or *too hard* or whatever. There’s no way Jareth’s rough with her.’

‘Aw,’ Jamie gave a disappointed sigh. ‘Well. Maybe I could get him mad and have hate-sex or something.’

‘HAH!’

*Oh, that was it!*

Becky couldn’t handle it anymore.

She had to do something —anything— to stop this conversation.

*Anything!*

But what— What could she do?!

‘Heh,’ Chanel gave a laugh. ‘I bet Becky takes it like a dog.’

‘Oh, she does,’ Mattel confirmed. ‘It’s her favourite position.’

*Oooh....*

Okay.

Okay....

She was a *dog*.

Yeah!

Sure as *shit* she was a *dog*!

She was currently, *literally*, a *whole fucking dog*.

And if Mattel was going to treat her like one?

Then *fine*.

She was going to *act* like one!

‘Uh... Mattel?’ Stacy gave a nervous cough. ‘I think Chichi’s peeing on your pillow.’

‘EW!’

‘No— Chichi!’ Mattel gasped, and lunged forward. ‘STOP THAT!’

Becky gave a snarl, and bared her teeth at Mattel in warning.

*Shut. The hell. Up!*

‘Don’t you snarl at me!’ Mattel snapped. Then, her hand met Becky’s cheek, and she slapped her. Hard. And Becky felt even hotter rage fill her body. ‘I said— *AH!*’

Mattel gave a shriek as Becky retaliated, and all of her friends leapt off the bed and backed away.

‘OH MY GOD, SHE BIT ME!’

Becky only realised what she’d done when Mattel clamped her hand to her wrist.

She’d bitten Mattel.

Hard enough to draw blood.

A *lot* of blood.

*So much blood....*

Oh... it felt *so good....*

‘What is your *problem?!?*’ Mattel snapped, her voice breaking as she grabbed Becky by the collar and hefted her off the pillow.

Becky gave another snarl and aimed another bite at Mattel; only to be dropped on the floor and given a firm kick.

‘STOP IT!’ Mattel kicked out again as Becky aimed a third bite at her ankle. ‘Get outside! Get outside right now!’

The second kick hurt more than the first, and Becky instinctively turned and bolted down the stairs and to the half-open back-door.

It was raining, she realised with a jolt as ice-cold water stung her eyes and nose— Though when she turned to rush back inside she was blocked by Mattel at the door.

‘You can sit out here until you’re calmed down!’ Mattel snapped, throwing down a large plastic container; which she then kicked onto its side. ‘I don’t know what’s gotten into you but you *cannot* snarl at me and bite people!’

Becky rushed forward and took shelter in the container as Mattel continued to scold her.

*At least Mattel had been humane enough to put a blanket in it....*

‘You’ve been *so good* until today!’ Mattel sighed. ‘I don’t want to have to get rid of you but if you do that again I might have to! So you think about what you just did, okay? Because it’s *not* on!’

‘*Fuck off!*’ Becky barked. ‘*I hate you! I want to go home!*’

‘Hey, stop that!’ Mattel ordered, pointing a finger firmly at Becky. ‘Look. I’ll let you in for dinner, okay? Just. Calm down or whatever.... *Jeez....*’

‘*I HOPE YOU DIE!*’ Becky screamed.

‘Oh, my god,’ Mattel growled back. ‘You are so lucky Daddy isn’t home! If he knew you bit me he’d have you put down!’

Becky let out a loud, vicious shriek as Mattel shut the back door— And then didn’t stop shrieking.

She screamed, and howled, and barked, and bit at the blanket and tore at its edges, until it had stopped raining and she had exhausted herself and had to lay down and catch her breath.

As she caught her breath she simmered.

She could hear Mattel and her friends inside— Mattel’s window was open, and when she looked up she could see them sitting together and chatting....

Hmm....

For the first time since she had turned into a dog, Mattel wasn’t paying attention to her....

*Get out of here, Becky!*

*Now!*

*Now's the time to escape!*

Becky leapt to her feet at the thought, and sprinted across the yard to a secluded corner. She desperately began clawing at the ground at the bottom of the fence.

*Dig!*

*Dig!*

*Dig!*

Mattel's house was on a corner! She knew this! There was no neighbour on this side! Just street! All she had to do was dig!

*Dig!*

*Dig!*

*DIG!*

Becky dug.

She dug and dug and dug.

Until her toes hurt and dirt clogged her nose.

*Light!*

*She could see light from the other side of the fence!*

*Just a little more!*

*Just!*

*DIG!*

'Chichi?' Mattel's voice sounded from the back door, and Becky's heart began to race even faster. 'Are you calmed down, now? Do you want to come back inside— *Chichi!*'

Just as Mattel let out her upset cry, Becky broke through the other side of the fence and forced herself through onto the street.

*She was free!*

*She was out!*

'Chichi! No!'

Becky heard Mattel running back in the house, and knew she was looping around to the front door.

*Oh, god no!*

Becky let out a yelp and began to run as fast as she could down the road.

*Run!*

*Run!*

*Oh god, RUN!*

Becky bolted across the wet footpath; feeling blisters starting to form on her feet from the cold as she did.

She ran, and ran, and ran!

She could hear Mattel down the street as she turned a corner and—

'*ORSON!*' Becky let out a loud yelp as she saw the drow. '*ORSON! HELP ME!*'

'Hm?' Orson gave a confused hum and turned around— Just in time for Becky to leap up at him.

She jumped, higher than she'd ever managed to jump before, and Orson caught her with a confused cry.

'What the fuck?!'

'*Hide me! Hide me!*' Becky yelped, scrambling around in Orson's arms and making her way into his sleeve. '*HOT DOG! TELL ORSON TO HELP ME!*'

*'Becky?!'* came the voice of Orson's familiar, Hot Dog. *'Becky is that you?! Everyone's been worried sick! Where have you been?! Why are you—'*

*'Tell Orson to hide me!'* Becky cried, snuggling tight against the stoat and shivering. *'HELP ME!'*

*'SHH! SHH!'* Hot Dog shushed Becky. *'Aite! Aite! Calm down! Calm down or whatever you're running from will hear you!'*

*'Whoa, okay,'* Orson gave a confused sniff. *'Hot Dog? You good in there? What's going on?'*

*'Tell him to help me,'* Becky whined. *'Tell him it's me!'*

*'Okay, calm down,'* Hot Dog repeated. *'I can't talk to him, he's not a druid! All I can do is let him know something's up. Just... give me a minute!'*

Becky let out another whine as Hot Dog clambered out of Orson's sleeve and up towards his owner.

*'You okay, Hot Dog? What the hell was that—'*

*'ORSON!'* Mattel's shrill voice cried from down the street, and Becky flinched and cowered; grateful for Orson's giant coat. *'DID YOU SEE MY DOG?'*

*'Your dog?'* Orson repeated, sounding stunned. Then, he coughed, and Becky felt him shift. *'Little red thing?'*

*'Yeah!'*

*'Nope,'* Orson said with surprising calm. *'Didn't see it.'*

*'Oh, don't you fucking start with me, you—'*

*'What happened to your hand?'*

*'None of your business!'* Mattel snapped. *'Where the fuck's my dog?!'*

*'I think it went that way,'* Orson lied, and Becky felt him turn and point in a random direction. *'Squeezed under that hedge, there.... Probably going to have to talk to the owner of the house if you want to get in the yard. Might want to do that now, before it gets too far....'*

*'Ugh,'* Mattel scoffed, her voice growing fainter as she walked away. *'You're no fucking help!'*

*'I literally told you where your dog went!'* Orson replied, mocking offence. *'Jeez. Ungrateful, much? Whatever! Not my problem....'*

Orson turned and walked away, leaving Mattel behind, but Becky couldn't stop trembling.

Even when Hot Dog slipped back into Orson's sleeve and tried to comfort her, she couldn't stop trembling....

Even after a good five minutes of Orson walking down the street, with no sign of Mattel behind them, she was still trembling....

*'Alright, I think we lost her,'* Orson let out a heavy sigh, and Becky flinched as his hand appeared in his sleeve and he began to search for her. *'Come on out, little guy. You're safe now.'*

*'It's okay, Becky,'* Hot Dog said, nudging her. *'You know Orson. He's nice.'*

Slowly, Becky shuffled forward until Orson was able to get ahold of her.

He carefully slipped her out of his coat and adjusted his grip until he was holding her comfortably.

*'Chichi,'* he read off her collar. *'What a shitty name. No offence.'*

*'None taken,'* Becky replied with a low grumble as Orson looked her over.

*'Fucking hell,'* Orson commented, tracing a finger over one of her scars. *'Did*

Mattel do that to you? Bitch is so rank, I wouldn't be surprised if she did! Is that why you bit her?'

*'I bit her because she is a racist cunt!'* Becky replied— Much to the amusement of Hot Dog, who clambered up to Orson's shoulder.

'Hmm...' Orson cast a glance at the stoat and furrowed his brow. 'What is it, buddy? Something wrong?'

*'Yeah, yeah,'* Hot Dog squeaked. *'You gotta take her to Jareth! JARETH.'*

Becky felt her tail starting to wag.

*Please, yes!*

Slowly, Orson's eyes turned to slits. 'Hm.... I'm getting... Slader visit vibes off you. You want me to take her to Benny?'

*'Close enough,'* Hot Dog replied.

*Benny!*

Becky had almost forgotten that Orson was Benny's boyfriend! Oh! And he was going to take her to Benny's house— To *Jareth's* house!

Oh, thank god!

Oh.... Oh thank god....

'Aw, you're trembling. Poor thing,' Orson comforted, carefully slipping Becky into one of his pockets. 'Well. An enemy of Mattel's is a friend of mine. Come on. I know a place that'll make you feel better. Greasers and bears; food constantly being dropped on the floor. You'll love it!'

She *did* love Jareth's house.

'Just stay quiet in case we pass Mattel again, alright?' Orson ordered gently. 'Alright.'

~~~~~

Becky was still tense when she arrived at the Slader house.

Tense, but giddy.

After three, four days trapped with Mattel, she was finally somewhere *safe*.

Somewhere she could let her guard down and relax.

Jareth and Benny had been her friends since forever— They were good people. And there was no way they were going to hurt her.

Even if....

Even if they didn't recognise her.

Becky swallowed.

What would happen if they didn't recognise her?

Would they keep her?

Or would they... have to get rid of her?

She knew that Jareth's parents never let him get a dog, but....

Maybe if she was actually there, in front of them, she could change their minds?

Oh, she hoped so....

Orson knocked on the front door, and then immediately entered without waiting for a response.

He was greeted by Benny.

'Hey, Orson! What are you doing—'

*'BENNY!' Becky yapped, struggling to clamber out of Orson's pocket.*  
*'BENNY! BENNY! IT'S ME! BENNY! I LOVE YOU, BENNY!'*

'I stole Mattel's dog,' Orson said, flatly, as he pulled Becky out of his pocket and handed her to the orc. 'Not a clue what Mattel did to her, but she was terrified. So I wasn't about to give her back. Plus, Hot Dog said something was up so. You know.'

'Awww,' Benny let out a long coo and very, *very* carefully took Becky. His hands seemed even bigger than they normally did— But he was even gentler than usual as he handled Becky in her tiny form. 'She's so small! Look at her. Hello. *Hello!* You seem so familiar, don't you? I know we've never met before, but it feels like we have— It's kinda weird, huh.... Maybe I've seen you on walks or something?'

*'I love you, Benny,'* Becky whined as she let out a long, relieved breath.

Benny was so gentle. And warm. And soft....

'Ah, poor thing's exhausted,' Benny commented, lifting Becky against his chest so that he could hold her steadier. 'Dealing with Mattel all day must be so tiring, huh?'

*'You have no idea...'* Becky responded, pressing her head against Benny's chest. *'God, I love you, Benny. You're so soft. Never put me down....'*

'Naw,' Benny pecked a kiss on the top of Becky's head, and then turned and made for the couch. 'Come on, Ors! Let's watch something.'

'Yeah, sure,' Orson responded, trailing Benny and flopping on the couch beside him. 'How's Jareth dealing?'

*Jareth?*

Becky perked up her ears.

What did Orson mean?

'Not good, honestly,' Benny replied with a sigh. 'Still freaking out about Becky.'

'Still haven't found her?'

'Nope.'

*Yes, you have,* Becky thought, her tail slowly wagging with the joyful thought.

'Man, that's worrying,' Orson said. 'I know she's gone AWOL before, but never like *this*.'

'Yeah, it's killing Jareth,' Benny replied, adjusting his grip on Becky so that he could gently run his thumb over her ears.

*God that felt nice....*

'I mean. She's always been a little bit crazy, you know,' Benny continued. 'Scattered. Forgetful. Everywhere.... But this....'

'Yeah.'

'Yeah,' Benny gave a heavy sigh. 'I'm really worried that she's hurt or something.'

*'I'm fine,'* Becky whined. *'At least... Now I am....'*

'She just hasn't been the same since Mattel,' Benny gave another sigh, and Becky looked up at him, perking up her ears. 'Oh, you know that name, huh? Mattel?'

Becky gave a low growl— Which amused both the boys greatly.

'Hahah! Me too, girl, me too!' Benny laughed. Then, he trailed off. 'Becky...

she changed. When she was dating Mattel.... Honestly, I thought we'd lost her. You know? Like. We'd always been friends and she'd always been weird and a bit of a bully, but then she started dating Mattel and I thought that she might have actually started to *hate* us.... And herself. I'm really glad they broke up.'

*Me too*, Becky thought.

'But she's still really messed up from it, you know?' Benny continued. 'I don't know how Jareth does it, honestly. I like her a lot, but think if I was dating her I'd have lost my mind by now.'

'*Hmm*,' Orson gave a nod, and gently put a hand on Benny's shoulder. 'Yeah. From what I can see she's very full-on.'

'Yeah....'

'She'll be alright, Benny,' Orson reassured. 'They'll find her.'

'I hope so,' Benny said.

Then, the front door slammed, and Becky's ears perked up as she heard the familiar sound of Jareth's footsteps.

Heavy boots, trudging... slower than usual....

Becky's heart sank.

'*Hey*, Jareth,' Benny called softly. 'Where you been?'

'Becky's house,' Jareth replied from near the door; and Becky heard him taking his boots off. 'I went over to make sure Mimi ate something— She was refusing to eat for Isa, so I had to help....'

*Oh, Mimi....*

Becky felt herself give a whine, and dropped her head miserably onto Benny's chest.

'So... no news on Becky?'

'No,' Jareth replied, his voice breaking in a way that threatened to break Becky's heart.... Then, he appeared in the lounge room doorway. 'She can't keep *doing* this to me! My heart just can't take it! And so soon after Portia— And the— I just— I don't know what I'm going to do if we can't find her! I can't bare the thought of it—'

Jareth met Becky's eye, and he fell silent.

And Becky felt her tail give a wag.

*He knew.*

She saw it in his eyes as his jaw dropped and his shoulders fell and his hand twitched—

*He knew who she was!*

'Oh, yeah, Orson stole Mattel's dog—'

'*Becky?!'* Jareth blurted.

'*YES!*' Becky cried, leaping off Benny's chest and bolting into her boyfriend's arms. '*JARETH! OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD! I MISSED YOU SO MUCH! I MISSED YOU! OH MY GOD I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU RECOGNISED ME! NOBODY ELSE HAS! OH, I LOVE YOU!*'

'Becky?' Benny echoed. 'Jareth, are you okay? That's... that's a dog.'

'She was practising *wildshape!*' Jareth cried at his brother as he scooped Becky up and squeezed her tightly. 'Oh, fuck! I thought I lost you!'

'*I THOUGHT I LOST YOU, TOO!*' Becky barked. '*Jareth! Oh my god, Jareth! I can't believe it's you! I'm so so SO happy to see you!*'



‘She was.... Wildshape?’ Benny gave a confused mumble. ‘Becky turned into a... dog?’

‘Where have you *been?!?*’ Jareth exclaimed, pulling Becky away from himself and holding her in the air. ‘What are you *wearing?!?* Is that a collar?!’

‘Oh, *fuck,*’ Orson breathed, covering his mouth. ‘Oh.... Oh, Jareth. I think you need to sit down before you read that—’

‘*Chichi,*’ Jareth read, quietly. ‘Ma... *MATTEL?!?*’

Becky flinched at Jareth’s angry cry, and felt her tail tucking between her legs.

‘*I swear, Jareth! I didn’t go to her by choice! I wasn’t cheating on you or trying to make you mad I just—*’

‘Did Mattel *kidnap* you?!’ Jareth exclaimed, his eyes going wide.

Slowly, Becky gave a nod.

‘Oh. My. God,’ Jareth growled. ‘Did she— Did she *know* it was you?’

Becky shook her head.

‘Oh, my god!’ Jareth let out a long, exhausted breath as he collapsed onto the couch beside his brother and Orson. ‘Oh my god. Did she just— Take you?! Thinking you were an actual dog?!’

*Yeah....*

‘And she didn’t check if someone owned you?!’

*No....*

‘What the *fuck!?*’ Jareth groaned. ‘What the *actual* fuck.... That must have been so awful!’

*Yeah....*

‘Did she at least treat you good?’ Jareth asked. ‘Please say she did.’

Becky let out a whine, and curled up in Jareth’s lap.

‘Fuck! I’ll kill her!’ Jareth hissed. Then, when Becky flinched, he gently placed his hand over her. ‘Aw, babe. I’m so sorry.... I’m sorry. I’m not mad at you, I promise. I was just so worried....’

‘Uh, Jareth?’ Orson gave a cough. ‘If it’s any consolation? Becky bit the absolute *shit* out of Mattel’s arm. I saw it. It looked pretty bad.’

Jareth sighed loudly and looked down at Becky. ‘You bit Mattel?’ he asked, a twinkle in his eye.

Becky wagged her tail.

‘Hah, good....’

—END—

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