

Guilty Getaway

By C. Jade Wyton

Kenneth Bloom has lied to his girlfriend, Isa'vanna Valstille, and he feels guilty about it. So, so guilty.... More guilty than he has felt about most things in his life. But he had to lie to her. He had to! She never would have come with him, to the safety of a hotel far away outside of town, if she knew that their daughter had begged him to do it. And he feels guilty about that, too— Leaving his daughter behind to protect the town from the horrible danger it is in, while he runs away with the rest of their family.... But she'd begged him to do it. And if he can do just this one thing right for her, after years of mistakes, then he will.

Contains depictions of anxiety/guilt, and some sexual content.

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Ken had never hated himself more than he did in this exact moment.

That horrible feeling of self-loathing that had followed him since childhood—that awful, awful feeling he thought he might have finally been free from— had reared its ugly head again and was battering around inside his brain.

He had *lied* to Isa. Told her that he wanted to spend a romantic week away with her to relax and de-stress after all that had been happening. That Becky would spend the time at Jareth's house, and he would make sure she was safe and medicated....

Ken wished that Isa hadn't seemed so enthusiastic about spending time with him. It made his guilt at least seven times more putrid.

That he had told Isa he had done it for her; instead of the truth that it was for *Becky*.

That his helping of putting the suitcases in the boot of the car wasn't a genuine attempt to be gentlemanly, but a way of secretly bringing his daughter's mimics along.

And that the choice of a hotel more than three hours away *wasn't* because it was the "nicest one he found," but that it was the hotel of the furthest reasonable distance away that allowed pets, so when they would inevitably retrieve their things and find that Don and Mimi had "accidentally" gotten into the boot while Ken had packed he might be able to convince Isa they didn't have to go home.

He hoped that when Isa realised what was going on (and he knew she *would* realise before they went home, because she was a very smart woman and he was a terrible liar; a terrible, anxious, sweaty liar) that she wouldn't drown him in the pool.

He was glad she had fallen asleep during the drive. It had given him some time to break composure and quietly worry about Becky.

He knew, deep in his heart, that it was the right thing to do. But he couldn't stop his brain from berating him for it all.

Telling him how terrible he was.

As a father.

As a boyfriend.

As a *person*.

He was desperately trying to remind himself, as he gripped the wheel of his car and turned into the hotel parking lot, that he *hadn't* left his daughter behind to die. That she had *asked* him to go, because knowing her family was safe would help her get through this horrible ordeal.

*Deep breath*, Ken told himself as he parked and leant over to gently nudge Isa awake. *Smile. Stay calm.*

Isa gave a moan, and a sniff, before stiffly sitting straighter and rubbing her eyes. 'Ken? Are we there already?'

'Oui mon amour,' he said softly. 'We are here.'

'Oh, how long was I asleep?'

'Two hours,' Ken gave a nervous chuckle. Then he pecked a kiss on Isa's cheek and undid his seatbelt. 'Let's go sign in; you will sleep better in a bed.'

'Yeah,' Isa, seemingly too tired to notice Ken's nerves, echoed his laugh and climbed out of the car. 'I hope Becky's doing okay....'

'She will be fine. She is with Jareth,' Ken lied, joining Isa at the front of the car and taking her by her hands.

Her rough, beautiful hands. Hands that had tended to him and his family and cared for his home when he wasn't capable....

He couldn't help but bring them to his lips; which Isa found amusing as she returned the kiss onto Ken's nose.

'Come on,' she cooed, making to lead Ken to the hotel. 'We can get our luggage out tomorrow.'

Ken had to fight the urge to suck a hiss of air through his teeth as Isa suggested it.

He absolutely could *not* leave their luggage in the boot of the car! Don and Mimi were in there!

And he couldn't leave them in the boot overnight— It would be torture for the poor animals! He already felt bad enough that they had been stuck in there during the drive. Mimi had probably already used his carry-bag as a litter box. And Don would be thirsty. And they would both need their dinner, soon!

'Uh... *no*. Maybe we should get them out,' Ken said, desperately searching his brain for an excuse (*any* excuse) to open the car boot. 'I, uh. I need. My... pyjamas. Or I won't be able to sleep.'

It wasn't *technically* a lie. There were *very* few times Ken could manage to get to sleep without his pyjamas— Never mind that he didn't think he would be getting *any* sleep tonight.

But Isa still furrowed her brow, looking confused for a moment before her eyes softened and her lips turned to a grin as she leant in close to Ken and whispered; '*If we sleep tonight....*'

Her tone sent a shiver up Ken's spine and he swallowed and blushed.

*Oh, Isa.... She was going to kill him....*

'But... my... pyjamas,' he managed.

Isa hesitated. And for a moment Ken thought she was going to sigh.

But then she laughed.

Genuine and full of love, she laughed and pressed a kiss into Ken's cheek.

‘Okay,’ she giggled, taking his keys and pressing the button to unlock the boot. ‘We’ll bring them in now.’

The sound of Isa’s laugh was usually the most wonderful thing. But now it made Ken queasy as his gut churned and bubbled in anticipation of what was about to happen as Isa made her way around to the back of the car and lifted the boot door—

Mimi leapt out of the the car with an excited trill that was echoed by Isa’s surprised shout.

‘Mimi?!’ Isa cried as she stumbled back into Ken’s arms. ‘Oh! Oh my gods! What are you doing here?! *Mimi?!*’

Isa was clearly too stunned to react properly as the mimic squat down to urinate on the asphalt— Though, as Mimi finished and shook itself down, Isa seemed to come to her senses and quickly scooped the critter up.

*Honk!*

Don gave a cry from the boot and clumsily leapt out into the carpark. He barely landed on his feet, stumbling for a moment before rushing over to Ken and scaling him to sit on his shoulder.

‘Brrp!’ Mimi trilled loudly.

‘*Huwnk!*’ Don replied before he gave a snuffling noise and nuzzled Ken’s cheek.

Then Isa turned to Ken, and he thought his heart might break from the look on her face.

She was disappointed.

She was so *very* disappointed.

She looked like she was ready to *cry*.

She had been excited for a nice, quiet, romantic week alone with Ken. So that she could have a break from looking after everything.... And now....

‘Oh, mon amour, it’s okay,’ Ken took Isa’s free hand and squeezed it tight. ‘We can ask the hotel if they can stay with us, hm?’

*Ken knew the answer would be yes; he’d made sure it would be before booking in....*

Isa shook her head and pulled her hand out of Ken’s so she could get a better grip on Mimi as it wiggled. ‘We have to take them home,’ she said. ‘Becky will be worried. She’s probably panicking about where they are, right now....’

‘Oh, mon amour, no,’ Ken comforted. ‘It is okay. We can call her. She will understand if they stay here with us. It is only a few days, hm? I’m sure it will be fine!’

‘Ken...’ Isa sighed again. ‘They’re not going to behave.’

‘No, no! I’m sure they will!’ Ken urged. ‘Look! Mimi didn’t even go to the toilet in the car. She held it in! She is a good girl. A very good girl!’

Mimi gave an agreeable trill and tried to lick at Isa’s face

‘If she was a good girl she wouldn’t have hidden in the boot in the first place,’ Isa retorted, gently shifting the mimic so its tongue couldn’t reach her.

‘Well... maybe she did not hide,’ Ken gave what he hoped was a sheepish shrug, and tried to push away the crushing guilt that came with the lie he was about to tell. ‘Don would not hide and be naughty like this, and he is in the boot as well. They probably jumped up right in front of me, you know! And I must not

have seen them. Off in my own world.... You know, the other day, Becky came up right next to me to talk and I didn't notice her until she touched my shoulder? I think this was my fault. They were probably very upset to be locked in the boot so long!

Isa's shoulders slumped as Mimi gave a joyful chirp and licked at her again, and Ken felt his heart twist.

'We can still have a good time together,' he reassured, putting an arm around Isa and gently pressing their foreheads together so he could gaze into those beautiful red eyes. 'I *promise* we can.'

'Mm...' Isa gave a tentative hum as she thought it over. It was clear she didn't want to leave, and after a long moment she relented. 'Okay.'

'It will be fine, hm?' Ken reassured again, pecking a kiss onto Isa's lips before attempting to retrieve their luggage.

'Aw, Ken,' Isa moved to help Ken as he fumbled and dropped a bag on his foot. 'Honey, let me—'

'No, no! I have it!' Ken quickly brushed Isa off. 'Don't worry!'

It was the least he could do for her.

He'd dragged her all the way out here on a *lie*. The absolute *least* he could to make it up to her was to make sure she did as little work as possible.

'Hm... I suppose I'll call Becky,' Isa decided as she began searching her pockets for her phone. 'I'll meet you inside?'

'Yes! Meet you inside!' Ken confirmed. 'I love you, mon amoureuse!'

'I love you too, Ken,' Isa replied as Ken hurried inside. 'See if they have some pet crates so we can keep them separate!'

'Okay!' Ken agreed.

'*Huwnk!*' Don protested, pecking at Ken's face as he headed for the front desk.

'I know, I know. You have been *very* good,' Ken praised, pausing so he could let go of a suitcase and free up a hand to scratch between Don's eyes. 'I am so proud of you for staying quiet during the drive. You and Mimi are both very good. Very, *very* good....'

Don purred loudly as Ken picked up the suitcase again and continued to the service desk.

'Hello?' Ken asked softly, offering the warmest smile he could manage to the young girl (she barely looked older than Becky!) who sat behind the desk in uniform. 'I am, uh—' Ken jerked back as Don tried to stuff his head into Ken's mouth. 'I am— Kenneth Bloom. I have— Room— *Don!*'

The girl laughed, clearly amused by the mimic's behaviour, as she hit several keys on the keyboard in front of her and glanced to her screen. 'Ah, yes. Bloom. We have you here.... You didn't check you were bringing an animal.'

'Ah, yes, well, it was unplanned,' Ken lied. 'We have two mimics. And they hid in with our things. I hope it isn't too much of a problem?'

'Oh *dear*,' she grinned and shook her head. 'Two of them? That can't be easy!'

'No, it is not,' Ken chuckled back. 'But they are lovely things, hm? Cannot get rid of them! Even if they are little *creatures*.'

'I know what you mean! I have a cockatoo...' the girl trailed off as she typed some things into her computer, then she pulled a keycard out of a drawer. She swiped it once. Twice. And then nodded and smiled and offered it to Ken. 'There

we are. That should work. Room two-thirty-five. I made a note about your pets, so that should all be fine.... May I?’

The girl held up her hand, clearly wanting to pet Don, so Ken nodded.

‘Yes! Of course. He’s friendly,’ Ken told her, leaning in so she could scratch him under the beak. ‘The other one is... hm....’

‘Aggressive?’

‘No...’ Ken said, slowly. ‘Not *aggressive*. Just thinks biting is a fun way to play. She was taken away from her mother too young.’

‘Ah, never learnt her manners!’ the girl nodded. Then her eyes widened. ‘Ooh, is that her? She is *beautiful*!’

Ken turned to see Isa approaching, and tried to push down his guilt enough to smile at her. ‘Isa, mon amour! Everything is okay with Becky, yes?’

Isa nodded as she reached Ken and pecked a kiss on his cheek. ‘Becky’s fine,’ Isa confirmed. ‘I asked her if she needed us to bring Don home, but she said he could use the holiday.... That *he* could use a holiday! That girl, I swear!’

Ken’s heart felt lighter as Isa gave a humoured snort. She was clearly feeling a little better, after talking to their daughter, and it made Ken’s guilt feel less like a hundred bricks crushing down on him and more like *fifty* bricks crushing down on him.

‘Well, in her defence, Don *has* been working *very* hard!’ Ken joked, reaching up to run a hand down Don’s back. ‘And has been learning a lot of things.’

‘Yes,’ Isa rolled her eyes and grinned. ‘Like how to open the cupboard doors to search the kitchen for *sponges*!’

Don gave an excited honk at the word “sponge,” and began to tap his feet on Ken’s shoulder.

Ken wasn’t sure why the mimic was so fascinated with kitchen sponges. It definitely wasn’t the taste of food, like Marilyn had suggested, because Don would take clean sponges too....

‘Can I pet you, cutie?’

Ken winced as the girl manning the front desk held out a finger for Mimi; who gave a low growl and a warning nip.

‘Ooh! Oh, that’s okay,’ she said softly, pulling her hand back. ‘Not wanting to be friends?’

‘No, sorry, she doesn’t do well with strangers,’ Isa confirmed. ‘She used to, but... well. Some people don’t make good first impressions, *do* they?’

Mimi trilled happily as Isa held it up and nuzzled her nose between its eyes.

‘I’m sorry to hear that,’ the girl gave Isa a knowing look. ‘Well. So. Is there anything else you need?’

‘Uh... crates?’ Ken remembered. ‘These two are not allowed together unsupervised.’

This time it was Ken who received the knowing nod. ‘Ah. Yes. Understandable. We have some in the back. Just give me a moment!’

The girl quickly retreated through a door behind her, and Ken cast a glance to Isa.

‘Are you alright, my love?’ he asked gently. ‘I’m so sorry....’

Isa nodded. ‘I’m fine. It’s not your fault.’

*Oh, if only she knew....*

The guilt came crashing back down onto Ken a million times heavier than before.

And then the girl was suddenly back; carrying two small animal crates, litter-boxes, and water bowls.

‘Oh, perfect! Thank you!’ Isa beamed, propping Mimi on her shoulder so she could accept the items. ‘What room are we in?’

‘Two-thirty-five,’ the girl answered. ‘I hope you enjoy your stay.’

‘We will, thank you,’ Isa responded, hooking the animal crates under an arm before nudging Ken gently. ‘Come on. Let’s head up now, I think I need to lay down.’

‘Oh! Yes! Of course!’ Ken fumbled with the suitcases before hurrying after Isa.

He trailed her to the elevator and let her push the buttons (he’d already forgotten their room number) before edging closer to her so he could peck a kiss on her cheek....

Though, he should have expected it to have been interrupted by Mimi’s tongue.

‘Eugh! Mimi!’ he exclaimed, pulling back as the doors opened.

‘Who said romance was dead?’ Isa joked, making her way out of the elevator. ‘This way, Ken.’

Ken hurried along, almost tripping over himself as he pulled the suitcases behind him.

It didn’t take them long to arrive at their room. It took less time to get from the elevator to the door than it took for Ken to fumble the keycard out of his pocket and attempt to insert it into the reader.... He was feeling so scattered and anxious that he dropped it.

Twice.

And then, much to Ken’s humiliation, Don slid down his arm and grasp the keycard between his teeth; awkwardly stuffing it into the reader and unlocking the door with a *beep*!

Isa gave a snicker of amusement; but then immediately seemed to realise how terrifyingly *smart* Don had just been and her face fell into a half-impressed, half-horrified expression.

‘*Next he’ll be opening jars,*’ she mumbled, gently ushering Ken into the room before following him in and closing the door. ‘Alright, you two. I’m going to set your crates up in the bathroom. That way we *all* have some privacy, understand?’

‘Brrp!’ Mimi chirped.

‘Gruhp,’ Don groaned.

‘Good. Ken? Are you still good with the bags?’

‘Oh, yes! Of course!’ Ken nodded, dragging the suitcases over to the side of the soft-looking double bed and hurriedly opening them to pull out their things—Their toiletries, and nightwear, and the book Isa had been reading....

*Hm....*

Ken examined the front cover slowly.

*What an interesting-looking novel....*

‘Alright, the two little monsters are away!’ Isa gave a laugh and closed the bathroom door behind her, and Ken realised he had completely spaced out for much longer than he’d thought as Isa began to tug off her clothes and deposit

them on a nearby chair. 'We can finally *relax!*'

'Uh... yes,' Ken agreed; knowing full well he wasn't going to be able to relax in any way, shape, or form until he heard from Becky tomorrow. He hesitated for a moment as Isa undressed, before realising he didn't want to let on that anything was amiss and quickly taking off his own clothes.

Isa lay down on the bed, the plush mattress dipping underneath her, and let out a long contented sigh as she stared at the roof.

She was so beautiful.

Ken climbed into the bed next to her, and lay by her side.

He gently trailed his fingers along her arm, admiring every single mark in her skin with awe.

How had he gotten so lucky?

How had he ended up so blessed that he had found someone so wonderful?

And not just once— But *twice*.

Twice, the universe had sent him a perfect woman who he could love and, most amazingly, who loved him back.

How was he worthy of this?

Oh, what had he done to deserve Isa?

To be loved by such a wonderful, loving, beautiful, capable woman?

*And he was lying to her.*

Ken swallowed, feeling the guilt return, and rolled over so his back was to Isa.

He didn't deserve to even *look* at her, right now....

But then Isa rolled over too and lay her arm over Ken so she could pull him close.

She kissed his back before curling into him; pressing her skin firm against his and letting out a long breath as she lovingly brushed the hair from his eyes.

It made Ken's entire body shiver, and he found himself pressing back against her as her fingers trailed his freckled skin.

'You are a handsome man, Kenneth Bloom,' she said. 'How did I get so lucky?'

Ken's heart jerked and he swallowed.

She wasn't lucky to have him— He was a *curse*....

Another kiss; though this one was shorter as Isa seemed to realise something was wrong.

'Ken?' she asked, gently. 'Are you alright?'

He wasn't.

Gods, he wasn't!

He felt horrible. Horrible and guilty.

He had betrayed Isa's trust— Was *still* betraying her trust, with every second that passed!

But he couldn't tell her that. No matter how much he wanted to.

Because then he would be betraying *Becky's* trust.

Gods, he was stuck between a rock and a hard place!

Isa kissed Ken again, her grip on him tightening. 'Ken?'

Ken swallowed, hating that Isa's touch against his skin felt so wonderful— He didn't deserve it.

He didn't deserve *her*.

He didn't deserve to feel good in any way. Not right now!

But....

But *Isa*.....

He had promised her a week of love, and romance, and peace. And she was just too wonderful and perfect for him to let her down.

He couldn't let her down.

*She* deserved to enjoy herself, even if he didn't.

Ken rolled over, scooping an arm around Isa as he did and flipping her on her back so that he could climb on top of her.

She let out a surprised giggle as Ken buried his face into her neck and began to kiss her.

The giggle turned to a moan as all of the tension left her body and she closed her eyes, letting Ken spoil her as he trailed his lips down from her neck, over her chest, all the way down and past her stomach—

*'HUWNNK!'*

Ken jumped in fright as a very loud, happy honk sounded from his side and he almost fell backwards off the bed in his hurry to sit upright.

Isa gave a heavy sigh as Don leapt up onto the bed and wobbled over to the couple; panting happily with his tongue lolling out the side of his oversized mouth.

*'Hello, Donavan,'* Isa grumbled as Don licked her ear. *'So it's not just doors you can open, hm...?'*

—END—

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