

I Want To Beat Up Santa

By C. Jade Wyton

Becky thought she was doing better. After half a year of therapy, she thought she was happy again— But now, with her usual holiday blues and the trauma of having saved a friend from being kidnapped both on her mind, she finds herself breaking down again.

Contains depictions of mental illness and violence.

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Becky was so glad that Malinka was safe.

It had been a terrifying thing to hear her friend had been kidnapped. And it had been even more terrifying getting her back.

But nobody else was going to save her—

*She hadn't expected the prophecy Orson saw about the crows to have turned out so differently.*

He'd said they'd have the chance to change it and save the town from being destroyed, but.... She hadn't expected the crows to save *them*.

Not after everything that had happened.

*Hm...*

Becky thought she should probably be talking to Malinka more now that she was back, and safe, and all that, but....

But it was just so *hard*.

Christmas was coming up again. And Becky had begun to realise she wasn't as okay as she'd first thought she was....

That horrible anger was bubbling up inside her again and she didn't know how to stop it.

She was lying to her dad and Isa about talking to her aunt. Well... not *lying* lying. But they had no idea about it and that *felt* like lying....

And then to top it all off, Adam had left the country to go to his family reunion, and she already missed him so much....

She'd skipped school twice that week, and Isa was not happy about it. But Becky thought it was best with how her mood was.... If she went she was sure to pick a fight. Besides, it was only a few days until the Christmas holidays. So it wasn't *really* that big a deal....

*Yes it was.*

But not for the reason she kept telling herself.

It wasn't Christmas that had her head so muddled this year....

*She'd killed the man on the roof.*

Her skin crawled at the thought.

She'd known she was capable of killing someone. She'd known ever since her fight with Romero— But she'd comforted herself in the knowledge that she hadn't been successful. That Romero was still alive. She wasn't a murderer.

But the man on the roof....

He'd tried to *shoot* her friends. With a *gun*.

What was she supposed to do? He had kidnapped Malinka. And was going to shoot Adam and Wendy— She had to do something, *anything*, to stop him!

She hadn't *meant* to break his neck.

Just knock him down. Push him off the roof.

But he fell wrong.

And then that was it....

What had happened hadn't actually sunk in until the adrenaline and shock of the rest of the day had worn off and she'd lay awake in bed, realising what that horrible *crunch* sound he'd made really was.

She'd cried for hours in Isa's arms, too incoherent and ashamed to explain why she was upset.

She couldn't tell them.

She couldn't tell them that she'd hurt someone *again*.

They'd be so disappointed in her....

*He would have died anyway when the crows came*, Becky tried to reassure herself. *At least what you did was faster. Less painful than being eaten alive....*

It didn't help, much. So she tried to remind herself she'd saved Malinka. And that other tabaxi man, Bojangles. The one who'd been kidnapped alongside Malinka.... She'd used her magic to help him stay alive after the crow attack.

*She'd killed a man.*

She'd saved her friend's life.

*She would do it again if she had to.*

'Becky?' Ken's voice spoke from the hall, and Becky looked up from her phone to look at her dad. 'Mon chou...? How are you?'

'*Hmp*,' Becky gave a grunt instead of answering, and went back to scrolling her social media.

Her father sighed and sat down beside her on the couch. 'Becky?' he cooed, reaching out a hand to brush her hair from her eyes. 'I'm really worried about you. You've been... *tired*. Since the incident with Malinka.'

'Hm,' Becky gave a half-grunt, half-hum in response, and pulled away from her father's hand.

'It's Wednesday,' he said softly. 'Do you want to draw with me?'

'No,' Becky answered in a huff. She regretted her tone immediately, as she saw the hurt look her father gave her, and so repeated herself softly. 'No, thank you.'

'Would you mind if I did some drawings?'

Becky shrugged. Then flinched, as her father kissed the side of her head and turned on the television.

It was the drawing show they usually followed together. The sound of it was... *hm*.

Becky wasn't sure how to feel as her father began to follow along with the instructions, so she went back to her phone.

Most of her group chats were dead. Nobody was posting in any of them, except for the one with Katie, Jezabeth, and Marilyn.

They were making Christmas plans together. Talking about exchanging gifts, meeting up, maybe having dinner.... Jezabeth tagged Becky, asking if she was interested in joining them.

Becky left the chat.

It wasn't that she didn't *want* to talk to her friends, or spend time with them, or give them things they liked....

It was just that the idea of doing any of those things *right now* made her want to gouge a hole in her head and scoop out her brain with a spoon.

'What do you think?' Ken asked, softly.

'Hm?' Becky looked up, and was surprised to see the show was already over and her father was finished his art. *Had it been thirty minutes already?*

'Mon ange? What do you think?' Ken repeated.

'It's... good,' Becky decided. 'I like the colours.'

'Thank you!' Ken smiled wide, looking so excited Becky thought someone might think he'd won the lottery.... 'Are you sure you don't want to—'

'No,' Becky said, curtly. 'I *don't*.'

Ken's face fell, and he heaved a sigh as he turned back around.

Becky shifted uncomfortably in her seat as she watched her father begin pack up his things.

*Why was she doing this?*

She thought she was over being mad at him.

She *wanted* to be over being mad at him.

She knew and understood everything that he had done to hurt her hadn't been intentional. That he loved her. And he wanted her to be happy.

So *why* was she getting so angry at him again?

It was like all her anger at herself was bubbling over, and now she had to be angry at someone else just to stop her head from exploding.

Which was *stupid*. And she *knew* it was stupid. But she couldn't help herself!

She was mad at herself. And at her dad. And at Christmas, too.

*Fucking Christmas!*

Something about this time of year made every part of her body and brain ache with anger and rage and— And grief.

*She missed her mother.*

Becky pushed the thought aside, and instead looked up at the TV as her father began to flick through the channels.

Christmas show, after Christmas show, after Christmas show....

*They never stayed for your birthday.*

Becky pulled her legs up, tucking them under herself as she tried not to think about the bubble of anger growing in her chest.

*They came home for Christmas. But couldn't stay for your birthday.*

Becky felt her grip on her phone tighten, and her breathing grew heavier as she stared directly down at her home-screen.

*Not even once.*

The bubble was growing, and no matter how hard she tried to swallow it, she couldn't.

*They cared about the holiday more than they cared about you.*

'No they didn't,' Becky whispered aloud to herself.

'Hm? Pardon?' Ken turned to his daughter. 'Did you say something—'

'I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU!' Becky felt the bubble burst as her father spoke, and she threw her phone across the room with a shout.

‘Mon dieu!’ Ken exclaimed, falling off his chair as the phone slammed into the bookshelf and bounced to the floor. ‘*Becky!*’

‘Don’t “*Becky*” me!’ Becky snapped.

‘B-But it’s your name—’

‘*I know it’s my name!*’ Becky cried.

‘Wh— I don’t— Uh—’ Ken looked around, panicked, as Becky rose to her feet and threw the pillow she’d been laying on against the wall.

‘STUPID!’ she screamed, before turning and punching the couch. ‘Stupid phone! Stupid chair! Stupid house! Stupid *holiday!*’

‘*Rebecca!*’ Isa cried, hurrying into the room from the kitchen and grabbing Becky by the wrist. ‘Stop— *Stop!* What’s happening?! What’s gotten into you?!’

‘*I hate this!*’ Becky snapped. ‘I want to go home!’

‘What are you *talking* about— You *are* home!’ Isa exclaimed, trying to hold Becky firm as the girl struggled against her.

‘*I know that!*’ Becky cried. ‘*I know* I’m home! But I don’t want to *be home!* I want to *go home!*’

‘What do you *mean?*’ Isa asked, looking completely and utterly lost. ‘*Rebecca*, what does that *mean?! Where is this coming from?!*’

‘I hate Christmas!’ Becky declared. ‘I want to beat up Santa!’

‘Becky, you’re being irrational—’

‘*YOU’RE IRRATIONAL!*’ Becky finally pulled out of Isa’s grip. She gave a furious shout, and grabbed the first thing within reach—a framed photo of her mother—and threw it to the floor.

It shattered.

The glass.

The frame.

Everything went everywhere, and the room went quiet. Only the sound of Becky’s laboured breathing through grit teeth was heard....

Then, Becky realised what she’d done, and there was a loud *thump* as she fell to her knees.

‘*What did I do?*’ she breathed.

Ken reached out a hand. ‘Becky, it’s okay—’

‘What did I *do?!*’ Becky repeated loudly, grabbing at the broken glass and splintered wood and trying to put it all back together. ‘I’m sorry! I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean to— I’m sorry!’

‘Becky— Stop!’ Isa exclaimed, grabbing Becky’s hands and pulling them away from the mess on the floor. ‘You’ll cut yourself! It’s just the frame! It’s just the frame. The photo’s alright. We’ll get a new frame. It’s okay!’

‘I broke it!’ Becky cried, pressing her face into Isa’s shoulder. ‘I didn’t mean to, I just— I— I’ve gone backwards! I’m terrible again!’

‘No you’re not, Becky,’ said Isa.

‘Yes I am!’

‘No, you’re not,’ Isa repeated. Then she wrapped an arm around Becky and pulled her up, guiding her to her feet. ‘Come on. It’s okay.... Dinner’s ready. Come have some. You’ll feel better after you’ve eaten.’

‘No,’ Becky whined. ‘*I won’t.*’

‘Yes you will,’ Isa said softly, gently leading Becky towards the door. ‘Come

on.... *Ken!* Leave the glass alone. You'll hurt yourself.'

Ken gave a short whimper, pulling his hand away from the photo of Becky's mother that lay under the pile of shattered glass.

The hurt on his face was clear as he looked up at his daughter, and Becky felt twice as awful as before.

*She was terrible.*

No matter what she did, or how hard she tried, she always ended up hurting everyone....

*What was the point in even trying anymore?*

—END—

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