

Phone Call

By C. Jade Wyton

Becky Bloom is shaken by the sudden collapse of one of her classmates. Her caretaker, Isa, suggests that she call the boy who collapsed in order to check on him. So, she does. Skipping school the next day, Becky gets in contact with Adam Frankenstein— And finds herself enjoying the conversation more than she thought she would.

Contains some mentions of abuse.

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Becky sniffed, wiping her eyes and pulling anxiously on her seatbelt. She couldn't believe what she had just seen— That giant boy with the patchwork skin, *Adam Frankenstein* had— He'd— He'd collapsed in the middle of class and— 'Breathe, Becky,' Isa said, softly. 'It's alright. Take a deep breath.... Then what happened?' Becky did as instructed, and wiped her eyes and nose again. 'Miss Hood— She took them— Adam's bolts! And he— He got really dizzy, and sick looking, and collapsed. And— And they made everyone leave the room and— He— Is he *dead*?! Isa, did he die?!' 'I'm sure he's fine,' Isa said, not actually sounding all that sure. 'I've met his fathers before, once or twice, and they're... they're smart men. Doctors. Did you know they were doctors?' Becky shook her head. 'They are?' 'Yes,' Isa confirmed. 'And from what I heard the other parents saying, they'd already picked Adam up before I got there— So I'm sure that they've got him somewhere safe, and that he's getting the treatment he needs....' Again, Isa didn't *actually* sound so sure. Becky wiped her eyes again— *Why was she crying?* She didn't even.... She didn't even *know* Adam! *Another sniff.* She shouldn't be so shaken by someone she barely knew getting hurt, but.... 'Why don't you call him, later?' Isa suggested. 'What?' Becky was taken aback. 'Give him a call— I'm assuming you have his number, yes? You always somehow seem to have *everyone's* number....' 'Uh... yeah....' She *did* have Adam's number. Becky felt herself blushing as she remembered how she'd gotten it.... It had been the first time she'd ever seen him; the first day into her Freshman year of school.

He'd towered over the other students, looking much older than he actually was.... If it hadn't been for the nervous look he had as he stuffed his backpack into his locker, Becky would have assumed he was a teacher.

It hadn't been all that hard to get his number for her collection. She'd just taken his phone from his hand while he'd been texting someone; holding up a finger to silence him as she copied it down into her own.

Then she'd simply thrown it back to him, and watched him catch it with surprising ease (though, as she later found out, he was on the baseball team and well-practiced at catching things) before walking away.

Everyone had called her crazy and brave for having the guts to just "*snatch something out of that 8-foot tall monster's hand!*"

But, really, it hadn't been that big a deal. When she'd been travelling with her dad, she'd dealt with loxodons.... Loxodons who worked in *fashion* and thought they were *the shit* (when really, they were just *shit*)....

A tall guy who looked like he'd faint if you yelled "boo" at him wasn't intimidating at all, in her opinion.

All that said, though... she'd never actually *done* anything with his number.

His weird looks and strange size.... He'd quickly been dismissed to the bottom of the social ladder. And, so, Becky never had any reason to contact him. Even after becoming a cheerleader for the school, the most she'd spoken to him was handing out water bottles after matches.

He'd never seemed anything but nice, though. Which for Shadow Oaks was a refreshing change....

*When had Becky gotten to her room?*

She jolted into reality and glanced around; suddenly in her bedroom, surrounded by pink walls and colourful pillows and many many plush toys.

'*Oh thank gods,*' Isa mumbled, letting her arm drop from Becky's back— Obviously having been gently guiding the girl. 'Are you alright, Rebecca? You... zoned out. It really worried me.'

'*Hm...*' she gave a hum and sat down at her desk. 'Yeah, sorry. I'm just.... Today was a *lot*.'

'Yes, I can imagine,' Isa sighed. 'I have to go talk to your father, alright? Oh— Becky, don't make that face. I have to tell him you came home early— Hm.... *Becky,*' Isa shook her head, and gave a weak smile as she pet the girl's head. 'Try and relax, okay? Play a game or watch a movie, okay?'

Becky nodded, waving to Isa as she was left alone in her room— Then she turned, flipped open her laptop, and opened a chat with her friend Jareth.

She read his newest messages to her and grinned—

*Yes, she did want to meet up tonight.*

*And yes, she did want it to be in the woods.*

She sighed, and leaned back in her chair, thinking about Jareth.

They'd been friends for such a long time— Almost as long as she could remember. They'd met just a little bit before first grade and started hanging out at the local park.... It was Becky's decision to be friends, she remembered. Being a cootie-fearing boy, Jareth hadn't actually *wanted* to spend time with a *girl*. But then, as they got older, things... *changed*.

Becky bit her lip, feeling herself blush.

She may have lost her virginity with the goal of pissing off her dad, but that didn't mean she wasn't happy that Jareth had been the friend that she'd trusted enough to take it.

He'd always been there for her.

He'd even somehow convinced his parents to take him to the airport to meet her as she got off the plane, when she'd come back from France with her father....

It had been the best surprise she'd ever gotten; coming out of somewhere scary and lonely and cold, to be met by someone so wonderful and important to her.

*Adam collapsed today.*

The thought pushed it's way back into her head, and she shivered and sat up straight again.

That distraction hadn't lasted long....

And Jareth wasn't replying to make another one.... Hmp. He was probably still in class.

Becky sighed and played with the trinkets on her desk.

Then, something warm and fuzzy rubbed against her ankle, and she grinned and picked up the plush bear that chirped and wiggled happily in her grasp.

'Hey, baby!' Becky sung to her pet. 'Hey there, stinky Mimi!'

'Mrrp!' Mimi gave a loud chirp, and licked at Becky's wrists.

'Yeah, I know,' Becky gave a heavy sigh and carried the mimic to the bed. She flopped over and lay it gently on her chest, then sighed again. 'I'm being all sad again, aren't I? It's cos something really scary happened at school today.'

'Trr?' Mimi cocked its head, then shifted into a scarf and slithered into the curve of Becky's neck.

'Yeah, someone got hurt,' she said, bending her head at an awkward angle so she could nuzzle Mimi. 'Really bad. And I don't know if he's okay or not.... I know you don't understand me, but.... Yeah.'

Slowly, Becky looked back to the roof and sighed.

'Isa said I should call him,' Becky said. 'Should I?'

'Brrp!'

'Yeah, you're right! I should!' Becky agreed (with herself, or with Mimi, even she wasn't sure) and dug into her pockets for her phone.

She searched for Adam's contact until she found the two emojis she had assigned to his number.

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She was always better with pictures than she was with words— Words always tried to dance. Or leave.... She wasn't sure how people got them to behave....

But that didn't matter right now; she was calling Adam!

She rung the number, and let it ring.

*Ringin'.*

*Ringin'....*

*Ringin—*

'Hello,' a very tired voice—one that most certainly did not belong to Adam—answered. 'This is Adam Frankenstein's phone, Igor speaking. Adam can't come to the phone right—'

'Hi,' Becky interrupted. 'Is Adam dead?'

‘What?’

‘Is Adam dead?’ Becky repeated. ‘Or can I talk to him?’

‘Um.... My... apologies,’ Igor managed. ‘Adam can’t talk right now. He’s sleeping— Would you mind calling back later? We’ll be giving him his phone when he wakes back up and—’

‘He’s asleep?’ Becky interrupted again.

‘Yes,’ Igor responded. ‘He’s just been through surgery and—’

‘But he’s not dead?’

‘No, he’s not.’

‘Cool.’

‘Um.... I’m sorry, are you one of his friends?’

‘No,’ she answered. ‘Anyway, thanks! Bye.’

Becky didn’t give Igor time to reply as she hung up and let out a deep breath.

Adam wasn’t dead.

He was alright.

That was good to know.

She could finally let herself relax.

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Becky had spent half the night out with Jareth before Mr Slader had caught the pair in the woods and dragged them home by their ears.

Luckily for Becky, Isa had been out (where, Becky didn’t know) and it had been her dad who’d answered the door.

So, of course, she hadn’t gotten into any trouble and had simply snacked on some fruit and put on a movie.

Now, though, she was regretting staying up so late.

She was so, so tired.

Isa had yanked open the blinds and pulled all of the blankets off her bed; forcing her to face the disgusting morning sun.

‘Becky, breakfast!’ Isa called from the other room.

‘*Hng...*’ Becky groaned, and rolled over to try and bury her face into her pillow.

‘Becky!’

Becky ignored Isa’s shout.

‘BECKY!’

Slowly, Becky forced herself to sit up. She wiped the sleep from her eyes, looked at her clock, and groaned; before glaring at the sun out her window. ‘Fuck you, six AM. Kill yourself.’

Then, a shadow cast from her door and she looked up to see Isa leaning in.

‘*Rebecca*,’ Isa said, firmly. ‘I need to go. I’m going to be late— Get dressed, eat breakfast, and get in the car!’

‘It’s fine,’ Becky yawned. ‘Just go without me.’

‘*Rebecca*, you can’t stay home—’

‘I’ll walk!’ Becky made a wide motion with her hand, then sighed when Isa glared at her. ‘I’ll be out of the house before seven. *I promise.*’

She was lying through her teeth, of course. She had no intention of going to

school, today.... But Isa didn't need to know that.

She just had to keep her cool. Not let her true intentions show as the drow stared her down.... Her eyes unseen behind her thick, cover-all sunglasses....

'Hmm...' Isa let out a long, judgemental hum. 'Mmm.... Okay.... Okay. I trust you,' turning for the door, Isa began to readjust her hair. 'Breakfast is on the table. Make sure you eat it before it gets cold.'

'I will!' Becky promised.

'And then right to school.'

'Right!' Becky agreed, giving Isa a wave. '*Byyyyyyyyye* Isa!'

Becky waited until she heard the front door close; then she stood up and made her way downstairs and into the dining room.

She marched straight in, ignoring her father as he looked up and jumped in shock.

'Becky? Honey? I thought you left already— *Put your clothes on!*' Ken exclaimed, averting his gaze. 'Oh, god— Don't do this *again*—'

'It's *fine*, Dad, I'm gonna eat in my room!' Becky let out an exasperated groan, and picked up her plate.

'Becky you really should eat at the—'

'No.'

'O-Okay. Just— Put on a shirt.'

'What?' Becky put her spare hand on her hip and stuck her nose in the air. Happy to be getting a reaction, she stepped closer and spoke loud and slow. 'Does my body scare you, Dad? Do you think I should be ashamed of it?'

'Becky,' Ken let out a heavy sigh. Then he took his glasses off and put his face in his hand. 'Becky, you know I don't think that, I'm just— *Please*.'

'Well, since you said *please*,' Becky teased, backing away. 'See you later, Dad.'

'Becky—' another sigh from her father, and he finally looked up to her. 'Mon bébé.... I love you.'

Becky blew a loud raspberry, and turned around to head back to her room.

She ate breakfast quickly, dodging Mimi's playful attempts to steal from her, and then put her plate on the floor for the mimic to lick clean.

'Good girl,' she said, laying back in her bed and picking up her phone from her bedside table.

She flicked through her messages, giving a sniff and replying to less than half of them. Just the ones from people who *actually* mattered.

Jareth, Jezzibeth, Benny, Katie, Marilyn—

Then, she checked Spellbook and....

Hm. Apparently Adam hadn't come back to school, yet. It wasn't surprising, of course, after he almost died.... But it seemed like the rest of her classmates weren't aware that the almost died had an emphasis on the *almost*, and they were talking about if Miss Hood was going to go to jail for murder.

Hm....

Becky ran her thumb over the side of her phone.

That Igor man had said to try to call back later....

No— No!

Becky looked away and slumped over.

She couldn't check on Adam *twice*!

She knew he wasn't dead, so she didn't have to check on him again!

That would be weird! She was popular, and he was a weirdo!

Though... he *was* on the baseball team.

Becky looked back to her phone.

Wasn't it, like, her *responsibility* as a cheerleader to make sure everyone on the sports teams were okay?

Stop it! she told herself. *You can't just call him! Think of your reputation!*

What are you doing— Stop! Don't press call—

Too late.

Her fingers disobeyed her brain, and she found herself pressing the speaker button and laying on her stomach as she waited for Adam to pick up.

Ring.

Ring.

Ring—

'Hello...?' answered a very tired, very confused voice that —this time— definitely belonged to Adam. It had that weird deepness to it that Becky had thought made him sound like he should be narrating books. 'Uh... this is Adam? Who is—'

'Hiiii Adam!' Becky sung— Her voice instinctively taking on a high, sweet tone as she spoke. 'Wow, you sound like *shit!* Are you doing okay? Yesterday was, like, *super* bad! Everyone thought you were dead and stuff!'

'Uh.... No I'm— I'm fine. Who.... Who is this?'

'Oh, right— It's Becky! You know. We're in math together and stuff.'

'Becky? Becky *Bloom*...? From... from the cheer squad?'

'Yep! That's me!' Becky confirmed. 'Are you okay? You sound, like, *really* tired.'

'I am,' he answered. Then he gave a long groan. 'Why do you... why did you call?'

'What?'

'Why did you call me?'

'Cos you're like, hurt and stuff?'

'Yeah but... you're Becky Bloom. *Becky Bloom*.'

'So?'

'So?' Adam scoffed. 'Last year I saw you stuff one of the goblin students into their own backpack and leave them on the bag rack!'

'Yeah but like— He wasn't like, gonna *die* from that, you know? It was just to scare him and stuff!' Becky retorted, confused. 'You got like. Really really hurt and stuff! And it made me worried.'

'You were worried about me?' Adam sounded like he couldn't believe his ears. '*Becky Bloom*... was worried about *me*?'

'Well, duh!' Becky shot back, knowing she sounded offended. 'You make it sound like I'm some sort of heartless monster, or something!'

'Oh... no, no. I just— You're popular, you know? I don't... I mean, even the unpopular kids don't talk to me. Of all the people to call me, I just wasn't expecting... *you*.'

'Hm... I mean, I *guess* that's fair,' Becky gave a sniff, and rolled over onto her back. 'The hierarchy is pretty vicious, huh? I mean, if people even *thought* that I'd

called to check up on you.... Well. It wouldn't do me any good, let's just say that. So you better *not* tell anyone about this call, you hear?'

'Uh... huh... okay I... won't,' Adam hesitantly agreed. 'But if it's... such a risk for you, then... then why'd you call me?'

'I dunno,' Becky answered, honestly, and began to trace a finger in circles along her sheet. 'I didn't really think about that. I was just, like, worried and stuff. And like— I dunno. You've always seemed really nice.... Like. I've seen you in the halls, and with the baseball team. And you're always doing good stuff like helping people. I like the energy you bring to school, so... I dunno. I was worried.'

Silence.

Becky couldn't tell what kind it was, but from the quiet, confused mumble on the other end of the phone; she guessed it was *stunned*.

'Um... so...' Becky gave a cough. 'Are you like, are you gonna be in school tomorrow?'

'Mm, probably *not*.'

'Oh... right. Right. Uh— Do you need your work or, whatever?' Becky asked. 'You're one of those nerds, right? You get all the good grades and stuff? I can give you like. Copies of homework and shit. Just don't tell anyone that I did, if I do!'

'N... No, my dads are... handling that for me,' Adam said, his voice rising with confusion again. 'Wait, so you— *You like my energy?*'

'Um, yeah. I do,' Becky answered.

'Is that why you've never bullied me, before?' he asked.

'That, and you're *huge!*' Becky answered, trying to make her joking tone clear. 'I mean... I can't shove you in a locker, can I? They just don't make them in your size.'

Adam seemed to get the joke. Weak, tired laughter sounded from the other side of the phone, followed by a short cough and the sound of him shifting in bed.

'It'd be funny to see you try,' he commented.

'Eh. I doubt you'd fit. Though, I could probs totally beat you up,' Becky bragged. 'I'm tough, you know. All that martial arts and stuff. I'm *really* good at getting people on the ground— I bet I could floor you, you know?'

Adam laughed louder at that. And Becky could hear that, even through his obvious exhaustion, it was hearty.

'I could, totally!' Becky continued, grinning widely with the knowledge that her jokes had made Adam feel even *slightly* better. 'And don't say I couldn't just because you're big! I beat up *orcs*, you know! You just gotta get them —BAM!— one good hit in the right place! Back of the knee, crotch, throat— And they basically *always* crumple and cry.'

'You're not scared I'd get ahold of you, first?'

'Nah!' Becky retorted. 'I'm small and wily! Like a ferret! You'd have to like. *Bend down* to catch me and stuff. So that'll slow you down! Then *boom!* There go your knees, and you're on the floor!'

Another laugh, followed by a cough, and the sound of Adam flopping down heavily against what Becky assumed was his headboard. 'You know, for a popular kid, you're really weird.'

'You take that back!' Becky gave an exaggerated gasp. 'I'm not weird, *you're* weird!'

‘And yet... you’re talking with me,’ Adam retorted.

‘True. Maybe I *am* kinda weird, on the inside,’ Becky giggled. ‘But don’t tell anyone.... Hah. You’re fun to talk to. I never would have guessed you were this much fun to talk to— *Hey*, you’re on the baseball team, right?’

‘Yeah?’

‘Yeah! So like. You like sports and stuff, yeah?’

‘Yeah.’

‘Thoughts on football?’ Becky asked.

‘Not allowed to play it,’ Adam responded. ‘Risks popping my stitches.’

‘Ah, that sucks— But you still have an *opinion* on it, right?’ Becky asked. ‘Like. I mean. You’ve seen the team, right? *Hot*.’

‘I try not to judge a sport by how *hot* the players are,’ Adam chuckled. Then, he gave a small sigh. ‘Mm....’

‘Oh— Oh! I can hear it in your voice! You think a footballer is hot! Which one?’

‘What— No—’

‘What, *yes!*’ Becky shot back. ‘I am like, the *best* at picking out who likes who, and you like someone! Fess up, *who is it?*’

‘I... don’t know you well enough to tell you,’ Adam said, slowly. ‘Actually. I take that back— You’re *Becky Bloom*. I know you well enough to know what you do with that sort of information!’

‘Hm? And what do I do with that sort of information?’ Becky asked, curiously.

‘You *share it*,’ Adam snorted. ‘Remember that poor Miltoast kid? And that girl he liked—’

‘Yeah? I did him a *favour!*’ Becky retorted. ‘He wouldn’t tell her, so *someone* had to!’

‘She rejected him in front of everyone!’

‘Yeah? And? Now he can move on,’ Becky rolled her eyes, even though she knew Adam couldn’t see it.

People were so weird about crushes— Just *tell* them! Get it out of the way. That’s what she always thought of it, anyway.

For a moment, the pair were quiet.

Then, finally, Adam spoke.

‘Wait,’ he said. ‘You’re being serious? You actually think you did him a favour?’

‘Yes?’ Becky replied, exasperated. ‘How was that *not* a favour?’

‘Hm....’

‘What?’

‘Everyone thinks you did that to hurt him,’ Adam said.

‘What— No!’ Becky gasped, feeling her cheeks burn hot. ‘I was *helping* him! He was being a baby, and not being direct, so *I* was direct for him! That’s like, the *only* way to ask someone out, you know! That’s how I’ve asked out every single one of my partners, you know! And it’s either a yes, or a no. And then you know. We either bone or I move on. It’s like, whatever.’

‘Huh,’ Adam sounded genuinely surprised. ‘I mean... I guess. But still, it wasn’t your place to tell her.’

Becky didn’t understand what Adam meant by that, so she just rolled her eyes

again and flopped down into her pile of pillows. ‘Ugh, *whatever....*’

More silence.

This time, broken by Becky.

‘So.’

‘So?’

‘Baseball!’

‘Uh, yes?’

‘You gonna be at practice, on Thursday?’

‘N.... No,’ Adam answered.

‘Whoa, wait— Like. You’re not coming Thursday, *either?*’ Becky gasped, and rolled over. ‘Oh my god!’

‘I won’t be at school for a while,’ Adam said.

‘What, like, a week?’

‘Uh....’

‘Two weeks?’

‘Probably more?’

‘*Three weeks?!*’ Becky gasped. ‘Oh my *god!* That’s like. Almost a month!’

‘Yeah,’ Adam gave a heavy sigh. ‘I don’t know when I’ll be coming back— *If* I’ll be coming back. If my dads let me.’

‘What— No! You *have* to come back!’ Becky exclaimed. ‘You’re the best player the baseball team has! If you leave, who’s gonna hit all the home runs? And— Like— Who’s gonna help the short people reach the top shelves in the library?! I can’t do that! It’ll ruin my reputation and stuff! But, like, *someone* has to do it!’

A chuckle came through the phone, and Becky frowned.

‘I’m serious. You can’t go. That’ll like, upset the entire school *ecosystem!*’ Becky scolded. ‘You *have* to come back! If your dads don’t let you come back I’ll find out where you like, live and stuff, and I’ll *fight* them!’

Another chuckle, a humoured sniff, and a whisper that almost didn’t come through. ‘*You’re so fucking weird....*’

‘Shut up!’ Becky retorted with a snort. ‘*You’re* the weird one!’

Her snort was echoed— Not from the phone, but from her side, as a scarf-shaped Mimi gave a growl and reared up at her phone like a snake about to strike.

‘Are you growling at me?’ Adam asked, humoured.

‘What— No, that’s just Mimi,’ Becky picked up her mimic, and wrapped it around her neck. ‘She’s like. My pet and stuff.’

‘Oh, like a dog?’

‘Mimic,’ Becky corrected.

‘Shit— I’ve never seen a mimic before,’ Adam said. ‘Is she cute?’

‘What do you mean *is she cute?!*’ Becky scoffed. ‘Of *course* she’s cute! All mimics are cute!’

‘I dunno, some are kind of creepy—’

‘No they’re not, they’re *all* cute!’

Adam snorted a laugh. ‘Alright.... I have a hamster.’

‘Fuck, for real?’ Becky gasped. ‘I *love* hamsters! They look like mochi balls!’

‘Mochi?’

‘Yeah! I just— It just makes you wanna pop them in your mouth, doesn’t it?’

Becky giggled. 'They curl up, and look all round and soft, and it's like— You're just *possessed* with the urge to swallow them!'

'I... have never been possessed with the urge to eat Nicholae, no,' Adam replied.

'*His name is Nicholae?!*' Becky exclaimed, letting out a loud, involuntary squeal.

'Yeah,' Adam laughed. 'I can send you a photo— Can I see one of Mimi? I can hear her chirping, she sounds really cute.'

'Oh my god, *yes!* Show me your boy!' Becky exclaimed. Then, she leapt out of bed and grabbed a nearby shirt off the floor. 'Oh, wait— Wait! I'll do you one better!'

Becky threw on the shirt, and then sent a video chat invitation to Adam.

'Uh—'

'Accept it, coward!' Becky chided.

'Um, okay,' Adam muttered before he appeared on her phone screen.

He didn't look well. He looked pale, with washed out skin and deep bags under his eyes. And his hair was a mess....

'Wow, you look like shit!' Becky blurted.

'I *did* almost die,' Adam said, simply. 'I think that gives me a free pass to look like shit.'

'You know what, fair,' Becky nodded. Then, she tickled Mimi's side, making the mimic wiggle. 'This is Mimi! Say hi, Mimi!'

Mimi let out a chirp, and licked at the phone.

'Good girl!'

'Aw, she's really cute,' Adam chuckled. 'Nicholae is over... there. Hold on—'

Becky waited with baited breath as Adam turned his phone around and attempted to zoom into a large tank across the room.

'I can't get up to get closer, sorry,' he said. 'But can you see him in the wheel?'

'Yes!' Becky squealed, ignoring Mimi as it began to drool over her neck. 'Oh my *god* he's so cute! He looks like a funky little oreo! Like you could like, dunk him in a cup of milk!'

'I will have to ask you to refrain from eating my hamster,' Adam gave a laugh, and turned the phone back to himself. Then, his brow furrowed. 'Are you wearing pants?'

'Nope.'

'Uh....'

'What? Is that like, a problem or something?'

'I mean... I... guess not? It's sorta... weird, though?'

'How's it weird? I'm in my own house!'

'You're video calling with me?'

Becky paused for a moment.

Hm.

She'd never video called with anyone but her partners, before....

'Huh, yeah. Maybe it *is* weird,' she admitted— Though made no effort to get dressed, and simply settled down comfortably. 'Oh well.'

Adam just looked bewildered.

Then, Becky heard footsteps by her door, and rolled her eyes as her father

poked his head in.

‘Becky?’ Ken asked, confused. ‘Aren’t you meant to be at school?’

‘Yeah, and?’ she scoffed, side-eyeing him. ‘What? You gonna make me go?’

Ken stared at her for a long moment... before stepping back and quietly closing the door.

‘That’s what I *thought*,’ Becky snorted.

‘Uh... who was that?’ Adam asked.

‘Oh, just my dad,’ Becky chirped. ‘He’s weird.’

‘You... talk to your dad like that?’

‘Yeah? Don’t you?’

‘No,’ Adam answered, simply.

Then, more silence.

Silence....

Silence....

More silence....

‘So.... You’re on the baseball team!’ Becky chirped. ‘I’ve seen you play and you’re, like, really good!’

‘Oh, thanks,’ Adam gave a weak smile. ‘That means a lot to hear.’

‘You know, I always thought you looked cute in your uniform.’

‘Cute, like—’

‘Not that kind of cute,’ Becky interrupted. ‘No offence. You’re not my type.’

‘None taken, you’re not my type, either.’

‘Fair,’ Becky chuckled. ‘You *are* cute, though.’

‘Really? You think so? You’re not just messing with me?’

‘No? Why would I lie about that?’ Becky asked. ‘If I thought you were ugly I’d say so! And I’d tell you exactly what I thought was ugly about you; then you could go fix that thing and look better!’

Adam looked taken aback, for a moment. ‘Ah... well... that... explains a lot.’

‘A lot of what?’ Becky asked.

‘Uh... nothing,’ Adam shook his head. ‘You actually think I’m cute? You don’t think I look like... some twenty year old man?’

‘Oh yeah, you do,’ Becky replied. ‘Definitely! But like. Twenty year old men are cute. And besides, I know what it feels like to look older than you are! Like. When I was twelve, everyone always thought I was older and stuff!’

‘Really?’ Adam asked.

‘Yeah, it sucked,’ Becky responded. ‘Bunch of weird old men kept hitting on me! Does that ever happen to you?’

‘Uhhh... *no*...’ Adam responded, carefully. ‘Not.... I don’t get *hit on*.... Mostly just yelled at.’

‘Ah, that sucks,’ Becky replied. ‘But also, like, you’re so *big*. Can’t you just, like, fight people who yell at you? That’s what I do!’

‘I don’t like to fight,’ Adam told her.

‘Really?’ Becky asked. ‘I love it.’

‘Yeah, I know,’ Adam chuckled. ‘I’m pretty sure the entire town knows you love to fight.’

‘Heh, yeah.... Ah, though, I see your point. You’re too cute to be scary.’

‘What?’

'You're too cute to be scary!' Becky repeated. 'You remind me of, like, a really soft fluffy dog. Anyone who's scared of you is weird.'

'You.... Really?' Adam asked, looking completely bewildered. 'You're not scared of me?'

'No. Why would I be scared of you?'

'Cos I'm a huge monster, with big hands, and I'm stitched together out of the parts of dead bodies?'

'I mean. That's nothing. You're just, like, some guy.... And you act like just some guy,' Becky gave a shrug. 'I mean. If you wanna see scary, you should go behind stage at a catwalk! Watch a bunch of leonin drag queens literally *clawing* each other's mane extensions out over a dress! *That's* scary!'

Adam's lips grew taunt, then, and his eyes widened. 'That... *does* sound scary.'

'Yeah! Especially when you're like. Twelve. And they don't care that you're twelve. And will literally throw a table at you for accidentally dropping a makeup pallet.'

'Ooh....'

'Yeah....' Becky drawled back.

'You must have been terrified.'

'Pfft, *no!*' Becky scoffed her lie and straightened up. 'I said it's scary compared to *you*, not that *I was scared!* Cos I wasn't scared! I've never been scared once in my entire *life!*'

'No?' Adam looked humoured, now.

'No!' Becky agreed. 'I wasn't! I wasn't scared of them! And I'm not scared of you! I'm not scared of *anything*—'

'*REBECCA BLOOM!*'

Becky let out a shriek and almost launched her phone across the room as Isa's voice sounded from downstairs— Followed by her footsteps stomping up towards the bedrooms.

'WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPLAIN TO ME WHY I JUST RECEIVED A CALL FROM YOUR SCHOOL SAYING YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR CLASS?!'

'Oh no— Oh shit— Shit— Shit!' Becky fumbled with her phone as it spun in the air. She barely managed to catch it and —ignoring Adam's laughter— bolted for her window. 'Shit shit shit— AH!'

She finally managed to undo the latch and slip halfway out into the tree— Only for Isa to grab her by the back of her shirt and drag her back inside; depositing her in a heap on the floor.

'Um... ' Becky froze, and looked up at the drow who stood menacingly over her. 'Hey, Isa.... I was just—'

'I thought you said you were walking to school,' Isa muttered, cutting Becky off mid-sentence.

'Uhhh— Yeah, I.... Uh....'

'You told me you'd be out of the house before seven. And I believed you. You lied to me, and you broke my trust, Rebecca.'

'Um... yes. I... did.... Uhh.... *Sorry?*'

'I'm disappointed in you, Rebecca.'

'I know, it's just that I... uh.... Hey! I did as you suggested!' Becky fumbled with her phone again, and held it up for Isa to look at. 'I called Adam!'

‘Ah, well. I’m glad you’re okay, Adam,’ Isa said, taking Becky’s phone. ‘But Becky has to go. She’ll have to call you back later. You see... she’s *grounded*.’

‘Okay,’ Adam replied, still snickering. ‘I guess I’ll see you around, Becky.... This was fun. Weird, but fun.... Bye.’

Adam hung up, and Becky swallowed as Isa pocketed her phone.

‘Uh.... *Sooooo*...’ Becky gave a cough. ‘Scale of one to ten. One being the lowest, ten being the highest.... Just *how* mad are you at me—’

‘Eleven.’

—END—

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