

Spaghetti

By C. Jade Wyton

Becky Bloom is getting much better at cooking. Isa has been a good teacher to her— And today, the drow thinks its time for Becky to take the next step on her cooking journey and make dinner on her own. Things start a little shaky, but Becky feels her confidence building as muscle memory kicks in and she cooks a very decent spaghetti. Then, however, she receives two very different shocks.

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Becky watched as Isa pulled out all the ingredients they'd be needing to prepare dinner together.

Mince. Pasta. Cheese. Salt. Oil.

A small collection of herbs and extra vegetables.

And the pasta sauce Becky had helped make the day before.

She'd been cooking spaghetti with her mother at *least* once a week, if not twice. It was more than they used to make it, but Isa called it a "confidence food"; something that was easy enough to make but utilised enough different skills to bring up her confidence when making other foods.

Yes, she could make mac and cheese; she knew how to boil pasta properly now!

And, yes, she could make a pizza; she'd learnt how to slice vegetables and mushrooms and how to grate cheese!

'Alright, we have everything!' Becky bounced around Isa cheerfully. 'Sooo now we, like, boil the water, right? Measure the salt, mix it in, and while it's boiling, chop the veggies and brown the meat!'

Isa gave a grin, and nudged Becky playfully. 'You're really getting the hang of this, aren't you?'

'Yeah! I think so!' Becky beamed.

'Hm,' a light chuckle escaped Isa, as she pulled out the pans and chopping board they would need. 'You know, Becky. I think you're getting so good at this, that you're ready to move onto the next phase of making spaghetti.'

'Next phase?' Becky hesitated, her eyes widening in surprise. 'What's the next phase of making spaghetti?'

'Making spaghetti, *on your own*,' Isa said, cheerfully, placing the last of the kitchenware on the bench and making towards the lounge. 'I'll be in the other room. Give a shout if you need me.'

'What?! No!' Becky exclaimed, hurrying after Isa and catching her at the kitchen entranceway. 'No, no, no! No no *no*! I can't do this on my own!'

'Yes you can,' Isa reassured, putting a hand on Becky's cheek. 'You've come such a long way, and you're a better cook than you give yourself credit for.'

'No I'm not!' Becky argued as a kiss was pressed into her forehead. 'You're, like, giving me too *much* credit! I'm gonna mess this up! I *will*!'

Isa gave another chuckle, and stepped out of the kitchen.

'I believe in you, Becky.'

'I don't!' Becky whined, watching as Isa vanished into the lounge. 'Isa! *Isa!*'  
'You'll want to get that the water on soon!' Isa called from around the direction of the couch under the window. 'You don't want to still be cooking when Jareth gets here!'

*Dammit!*

Isa was right.

Becky didn't want to humiliate herself by cooking in front of Jareth; it was embarrassing enough when he would compliment the half-burnt things she'd serve him, *without* him witnessing the actual act of her messing it up....

Becky hurried back to the bench, and took a deep, nervous breath.

Water and salt.

Start with water and salt.

Pick up the tablespoon measure, and use three spoons of salt for two bags of pasta....

*Done.*

Becky let out her breath.

That wasn't that hard. And not that different from when Isa was in the room with her, gently reminding her to—

*Shit*, she'd forgotten to flatten the scoops of salt down....

'Isa?' Becky called.

'Yes, Becky?'

'I measured the salt wrong!' she called. 'I forgot to flatten the scoops!'

'How many scoops?' Isa asked. 'And did you already add the water?'

'Three! And yeah!' Becky answered.

'Add a couple more cups of water,' Isa said. 'It will take a little longer to boil but it will cook fine!'

'Okay!' Becky felt her shoulders relax as she did as instructed.

A little more water, with a little more salt. That made sense!

Put it on to boil, and... chop the extra veggies.

Some mushrooms, and onion, and a little bit of garlic— Two cloves, Isa had said last time.

Two... *cloves*.

This whole thing was the clove, wasn't it?

That felt like a *lot* of garlic....

Should she use the whole thing, or....

She cut the garlic in half, and paused as it split into many more smaller pieces of garlic.

*Hm....*

'Ilhar?' she called out again.

'Yes, Becky?'

'Is a clove the big bit of garlic, or all the little slices that come out of it?'

'The big piece of garlic is the head, remember?'

*Right!* Becky felt herself nod. 'Oh! Yeah! And the cloves are the little pieces inside it that look like orange slices!'

'Yes! See? You know this!' Isa praised.

'I know this!' Becky echoed, not quite *fully* believing it, but feeling a little more confident than before.

She minced the garlic (though maybe not as well as Isa could have done), and put it aside so she could start on the mushrooms.

As she was finishing with the mushrooms Becky heard her father's voice in the lounge, and twitched an ear to listen as he and Isa began to discuss her.

*'She's... on her own!'* she half-heard Isa explain.

*'Really?'* Ken replied. *'That's... I'm so proud of....'*

*'Me too.'*

Becky felt herself blush.

Isa didn't seem to think it worth mentioning that Becky had already called out for help twice— Instead she just beamed and continued praising her daughter.

And the praise continued the entire time Becky was cooking. As she chopped the vegetables, and browned the meat, and mixed in the sauce, and put the pasta in the boiling water—

The entire time she could hear her parents talking about how proud they were of her.

Then, as Becky was draining the pasta, the loud sound of a motorbike revving outside cut through her parents' conversation, and Becky heard Isa give a scoff and stand up; already preparing to scold Jareth before he had even knocked on the door.

Becky's blush only deepened as she thought about Jareth.

He was going to see (and taste!) her first meal made completely on her own, and that felt... overwhelming. She was so self-conscious about how it was going to turn out!

She already knew she'd done a few things wrong throughout the process; putting things in at the wrong time, and cooking it on too high a heat at first... but she tasted the sauce again, and let herself relax.

It was fine.

Maybe she'd used too many mushrooms, but otherwise it tasted really good!

A second motorbike revved, and Becky felt her ear twitching as she snuck another mouthful of sauce.

Jareth must have invited Benny— A third and fourth bike pulled up, and Becky choked.

*Jareth's parents had shown up?!*

She let out a long, miserable groan, and quickly threw the pasta in the pot with the sauce to mix together.

Isa must have called and invited them all, while Becky was cooking.

*Oh, no.*

*Nooooooooooooo....*

It was embarrassing enough cooking for her *own* family, let alone *Jareth's* family!

Becky quickly grabbed the grater and the cheese, and began to shred the block onto a clean chopping board.

*At least she was almost done....*

*'Mama?'* Mimi's voice chirped from the doorway, and Becky glanced behind her to see her two mimics skittering into the room.

It was clear Don was nervous about something. He had his head in his mouth, gnawing on it anxiously as Mimi gave him comforting licks and urged him into

the kitchen.

*'Pretty pink,' Don mumbled into his own face. 'Prettiest pink. I am so lucky. Mimi is the prettiest pink.'*

'Baby? Everything okay?' Becky asked, putting down the grater.

*'Does Mama hear Mimi's voice today?'* Mimi asked.

'I understand you,' said Becky as she scooped the last of the grated cheese off the chopping board and into the bowl. 'What's up?'

*'Mimi's Mama loves Mimi,'* Mimi said, its legs twitching as it pressed against Don.

*'My pretty pink Mimi!'*

'I adore you,' Becky said. 'You are my whole world.'

*'And Mimi's Mama loves Mimi's Flamingle.'*

*'Mimi is the prettiest pink.'*

'Of course I do!'

*'Mama must not get mad at Mimi and its Flamingle,'* said Mimi, causing Don to gnaw his head faster. *'Mimi's Mama must be happy for Mimi and Mimi's Flamingle.'*

*'Pretty pretty pink. The most pretty pink.'*

'Whaaaaat are you talking about?' Becky asked, slowly, turning around to look at her pets. 'Why would I be mad? Have you done something?'

*'Mimi has decided that it wants Fuzzy to be its maid of honour at it and Flamingle's wedding,'* Mimi said, simply.

The bowl of cheese hit the floor with a loud *THWUNGKP* and cheese scattered over the tiles as Don let out a terrified *honk* and stuffed his head deeper down his own throat.

'Babe? What happened?' Jareth's voice called from the lounge, growing closer as he called out. 'What was that?'

*Oh, god, no— He was going to come in and see the cheese all over the floor!*

Becky fell to her knees, attempting to scoop up what cheese Mimi hadn't already scooped down.

*Jareth was going to see the mess she had made!*

'Babe are you alright—'

'GET OUT!' she cried, much louder and firmer than she'd meant to.

Though it had the desired effect and Jareth, who had barely taken one step into the room, shot backwards so fast that Becky hesitated for a moment, worried that she'd accidentally blasted him out of the kitchen with a burst of magic. But then she let out her breath as Mr Slader gave a loud laugh and started teasing his son, and knew that she hadn't just launched her boyfriend backwards with an accidental Thunderclap spell.

'You alright there, son?' Mr Slader chuckled. 'She give you a fright?'

'She is *just* like Barbra!' Mrs Slader commented.

Becky quickly collected the last of the cheese and stood up, placing the bowl on the bench and pushing it right to the back.

*Fuck, she needed to grate more cheese, now!*

She quickly washed her hands and pulled another bowl out of the cupboard, before glancing back to Mimi and Don.

'Okay. Okay. Can you, like, say that again, baby?' she asked. 'I think I

misheard you.'

*'Mimi said that Mimi wants Fuzzy to be Mimi's maid of honour at Mimi and Flamingle's wedding,'* Mimi explained, licking its lips clean of the cheese it had managed to steal.

*'Your wedding?'* Becky echoed.

*'Yes,'* Mimi chirped. *'Mimi and Mimi's Flamingle are going to get married. Like in Mama's movies.'*

*'I, uh...'* Becky hesitated. *'I think you have to be over eighteen to get married? And... you're only sixteen— And Don's only thirteen. So, like... can you get married?'*

*'Mimi is a mimic,'* Mimi grumbled. *'And Mimi remembers Big Mimic telling Mimi that Mimi was still a baby. Big Mimic said that Mimi would be a baby until Mimi was five. Then Mimi would be an adult. Mimi has turned five more than three times. Mimi is old enough to be three adults.'*

Becky clicked her tongue at the mention of this "Big Mimic." She'd heard of it a few times since learning she was a druid. A large, dumpster-shaped mother mimic that looked after Mimi when she had escaped, once, many many years ago....

*'I am an adult,'* honked Don, still chewing on his head. *'I am old enough to get married. My pretty pink Mimi told me about being married. I like the sound of being married. Especially to my pretty pink Mimi. Yes. Yes. I want to marry my pretty pink Mimi!'*

*'Uh... right,'* Becky bit her lip, and finally began grating more cheese. *'Well... maybe... we can, uh... talk about this sometime later?'*

*'Mimi is the prettiest pink,'* Don honked to himself. *'Mimi is the most pretty pink I have ever seen. Mimi is my pretty pretty pink mate! The prettiest pink mate!'*

*'Mimi wants a big wedding,'* Mimi chirped, skittering over to Becky and tugging on her pants leg to try and keep her attention. *'Just like in Mama's movies. Mimi wants all of Mimi's friends there. And Mimi wants all of Mimi's friends to know that Mimi's Flamingle is a very special Flamingle. Very special. Special special!'*

*'Oh.... Okay,'* Becky managed, still feeling very stunned.

It was a sweet reason for Mimi to want to get married— But Becky still couldn't believe that Mimi knew what being married even *was*.

*'Uh... and what's... Don want?'*

Don paused for a moment before very, very slowly removing his head from his mouth. *'I would like Ken to be my best man.'*

*'Ah,'* Becky gave a nod, and put down the grater. *'Hm.... Uh.... Do you want me to... ask... him... if he would like to be...?'*

*'Yes please,'* Don honked, stuffing his head back into his mouth. *'Please please.'*

*'Mimi wants Jareth to come!'* Mimi chirped loudly.

*'And Benny! I would like Benny there!'* Don pulled his head out of his mouth again and began to hop from foot-to-foot with excitement. *'And Grigori!'*

*'And Mimi wants Jareth's Mama to make the food!'*

*'Can Jezzibeth bring Applesauce?'*

*'Mimi wants a hat to wear!'*

*'I-I would really like it if the flowers were pink!'*

*'Mimi wants Mimi's Mama to walk it down the isle!'*

*'Please no balloons though they are too scary!'*

*'Mimi would like Isa to plan Mimi's party!'*

*'Can Jareth come to mine?'*

'Oh— Okay! Hold on! *Okay*, I'll uh— I'll talk to Dad and Ilhar and, like... see what happens?' Becky promised, scooping the cheese into the clean bowl and casting a glance out of the kitchen.

This was going to be a *very* strange conversation to have over dinner....

—END—

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