

The Dream

By C. Jade Wyton

After a stressful day, Becky Bloom finds herself stuck in a strange dream. On the verge of consciousness but not quite awake she feels every move of her bedmate as he tries to comfort her— Though she doesn't know it's him. And, even with his gentle whispers and tight embrace, her dream soon turns into a nightmare.

Contains mild horror/surreal themes, emotional abuse, and unreality.

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Nothing was right.  
Everything was wrong.  
Becky knew she shouldn't be here.  
Not in the woods.  
Not in her car.  
Not again.

*At least there was no blood....*

She tugged against her seatbelt— And it tightened around her, pulling her close into the embrace of the chair and whispering something she couldn't make out.

More whispers, from her other side— And a shadowy figure in the corner of her eye.

She tried to see it, but it shifted with her vision, keeping itself well-hidden before climbing in the back seat of her car.

Becky turned to face it, awkwardly rolling under the weight of her seatbelt as the chair mumbled for her to *go back to sleep*. By the time she was able to crane her neck enough to see the backseat the figure had already climbed out and was circling the car again.

'Hello?' she tried to undo her seatbelt, but instead of undoing it gave her a warm squeeze. 'Who's there?'

More whispering for her to sleep, and something pressed into the side of her head— And she wiggled away from the giant mosquito that had appeared.

'You're alright,' the mosquito told her, its voice familiar but garbled.

'No, I'm not. I'm busy. I have to go—' Becky stated, before being cut off as the mosquito bit her face again.

It didn't hurt, she realised.... And let herself relax. It was more like a tickle, than anything.

'You're okay,' said the mosquito.

The shadow appeared in the corner of her vision again, and she jolted as she tried to catch sight of who it was.

But the seatbelt just tightened again and told her to relax.  
Relax?

*Relax?!*

How could she relax?!

She was trapped in her car!

She grabbed at the belt around her, and tried to tug it away— Hurriedly struggling to undo the buckle or yank it over her head.

*'Hey— Hey—'* the belt responded. *'Calm down—'*

Then the passenger side door opened and the shadow sat beside Becky, who took in a gasp and froze.

It was in the corner of her vision, now. Right there. And she was too scared to look.

The seat garbled at her again, gently brushing down her hair, before the shadow beside her huffed loudly.

*'Get out of the car, Becky,'* it told her in a high, familiar voice that made the hair on her arms stand on end.

*'M-Mattel?'* Becky asked— And the chair she was in gave a disappointed sigh as she turned to her ex. *'What are you doing here?'*

*'Waiting for you,'* Mattel answered. *'We're going to be late, again, Becky.'*

*'Sorry...'* Becky's seatbelt tightened again, as if trying to pull her away from Mattel. *'I didn't mean to—'*

*'Just get out of the car, Becky,'* Mattel interrupted.

*'I'm trying—'*

*'Just get up!'*

*'I can't—'*

*'Get up, Becky!'*

Becky tried to get up. She did. But all she seemed to be able to do was roll over in her seat. Over and over, she rolled and rolled.

*'Becky!'*

*'Stop yelling at me!'* Becky exclaimed, causing the seatbelt and chair to hug her close. She turned in the seat again and pushed against it, and thought she was starting to come loose. *'I'm trying! It's just that—'*

Mattel cut Becky off with a loud huff. *'It's always excuses with you, Becky.'*

*'I'm sorry.'*

*'I'm sick of you never prioritising me!'*

*'I do!'*

*'Then get up.'*

*'I'm trying!'* But it won't— Let! GO!' Becky gave the chair one more final push. A hard, firm one. And the seatbelt came undone and she was finally able to stumble out of the car. It was cold, without the seatbelt's embrace. The air pricked her skin and she could feel herself start to shiver.

*'See? You were just being lazy,'* Mattel gave a dramatic eye-roll, and then a wide hand-motion around herself. *'Now clean up this mess or I'm going home.'*

Becky gave a heavy sigh, and looked around her bedroom.

Dirty clothes and dishes lay about the floor. On her desk. On her bedside table.

Nothing was clean.

Everything was filthy.

Covered in dirt and food and clothes.

‘I just don’t know how you can let it get like this,’ Mattel tutted. ‘All you have to do is take the plates out.’

‘But there’s so many—’

‘More excuses,’ Mattel sighed, and shook her head. ‘I’m just trying to help you, you know. I don’t know why you can’t just *do* things when they need to be done!’

‘Mm,’ Becky looked away, rubbing her arms and curling up to try and stop the chill from cutting into her. ‘I’m sorry.’

Another huff from Mattel, and something warm was pulled over Becky’s body.

She leant back to press into its source, and felt something embrace her gently. Whatever it was touched her cheek, and she started to turn to it— Only for Mattel to give yet another attention-seeking huff, and for Becky to turn back to her instead.

But she was gone.

Everything was.

Becky’s room was empty— Stripped of everything except the walls and wooden flooring.

And a phone sitting on a table that belonged in her high-school science room.

*Odd....*

It began to ring, so Becky picked it up.

‘Hello?’

Silence.

‘Hello?’

‘Bonjour!’

‘Grandma?’

‘Oui!’

‘Um.... Hi—’

‘Qui est là?’

‘What?’

‘Qui est là?’

‘I don’t know what you’re saying.’

Her grandmother hung up the phone.

Becky thought it was odd, to receive such a call, and put the phone back in its place on the table.

It began to ring again, and Becky hesitantly answered.

‘*Bonjour?*’ she tested.

It hung up on her again with a loud click.... And then rang again.

‘Hello?’

‘Bonjour!’

‘Bonjou—’

They hung up again.

‘*Mother fucking....*’ Becky muttered as it rang again. ‘Stop calling me!’

‘Heh...’ a familiar voice chuckled. ‘Another scream queen....’

‘Romero?’ she couldn’t hide the confusion in her voice.

‘Left you a gift. Enjoy, bitch.’

He hung up on her.

‘*Fucker,*’ Becky mumbled to herself as she put the phone down.

Gift, huh?

She looked around the room.

Yep. There it was. A small box with a ribbon on top....

She reached for it, and it seemed to come closer for her to take.

The lid slid off easily, revealing a tiny armadillo.

This was Romero's pet, wasn't it? Tex?

It gave a wheezing cough, before throwing up a mouthful of snot and bile.

Disgusting....

Then, another hacking sound came from behind her and she turned to see another Tex. This Tex was about five times Becky's size; so big it had to hunch to fit in the room.

It hacked again, and again, then it threw up a pile of dead bodies— Both human and animal.

'Oh my god!' she exclaimed, trying to scramble backwards but being stopped by the invisible embrace. *'What the fuck?!'*

Another lot of *hacking* and *wheezing* and a second pile of bodies was expelled to the floor, sliding over the floor other like raw fish on ice, until they reached every inch of the room.

Becky pushed back again as another sound filled the room.

Loud, mournful moaning.

It echoed through Becky's ears and she felt herself beginning to tremble as the bodies around her rose to their feet.

'No—' Becky gasped as they turned to her; their soggy, rotting flesh sliding down and off their bones to *splatter* on the floor. 'Oh my god— No— No!'

She gave a cry and began to struggle; pushing herself as far back into the force as she could in her attempt to keep away from the undead creatures that began towards her.

'Get away from me!' she cried. 'Get away!'

A garbled voice came in response.

'Leave me alone! Please! No! Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me— *Get away from me!*'

Becky kicked out at the creatures, but missed.

'Help!' she cried, kicking out again. 'Help me! Someone! Someone help! Isa! Dad! Anyone! Help!'

Becky lashed out again; and the force tightened around her, holding her in place.

More garbled voices echoed around her as she struggled against the invisible hands.

'No— No— Let me go I have to— Get away!'

She turned to the force, then, and lashed out with her hands; digging her nails into the air and clawing at the invisible thing until it released her and she could run—

She needed to get out of this room!

*She took a step backwards—*

A falling sensation took her over, and she opened her eyes just in time to see Jareth reaching out for her.... And then she saw the side of his bed, as she hit the floor with a *thump* and gasped in pain.

She lay for a moment, barely noticing Jareth as he stumbled out of bed and

tried to help her sit.

‘Becky?’ he asked. ‘Are you alright?’

Becky wiped her eyes, feeling a strong dizziness spinning through her head. ‘Where... am I?’

‘My place,’ Jareth answered gently. ‘You were having a dream.... A nightmare, I think....’

‘Your place?’ Becky echoed, groggily looking up at him. She stared for a moment, thinking something was off— Before slowly reaching out and putting a hand on his cheek and tracing the four long-but-shallow marks in his skin. ‘Did I....’

‘It’s fine,’ he mumbled, putting his hand on hers and holding it tight. ‘I’m fine. Are *you* okay? It was like you were fighting for your life! What was that?’

Becky furrowed her brow, trying to recall what the dream had been about— But the harder she tried to think about it, the faster it faded away.

‘I don’t... remember,’ she answered, honestly, and tried to blink away the darkness that was creeping back to the corner of her vision.

She didn’t want to go back to sleep.

But she wasn’t sure she had a choice.

Her head dropped down as the darkness crept in, and she lifted it again and struggled to open her eyes— Only to find she didn’t have the strength to hold it up and she drooped again; falling forward into Jareth’s arms.

‘Oop, oop, I got you,’ he said, scooping her up and laying her back in bed. ‘Alright. You’re good. You’re... uh. You’re fine.’

He pressed against her, then, and pulled up the blanket— And Becky used what was left of her strength to roll over so she could curl into his chest.

‘*Okay*,’ he muttered, his voice unsure as he kissed her cheek and sighed.

‘Alright.... You go back to sleep. I’m right here. Nothing’s gonna get you, okay?’

‘*Mhm*,’ Becky replied, closing her eyes and doing as she was told. ‘Good... night....’

—END—

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