

Whale Sung Dreams

By C. Jade Wyton

Becky Bloom has always suffered from nightmares, for as long as she can remember. And tonight is no different. She has a terrifying guilt-dream about the things her girlfriend has talked her into doing, and after waking up, she finds she's given little comfort for it.

Contains descriptions of unreality, bullying, violence, horror and gore, and emotional abuse.

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It was a bright, sunny day in Shadow Oaks High. Whales sung outside, side-by-side with the birds, but Becky couldn't quite catch the tune. They swooped through the sky, playing in the clouds, before landing on a nearby tree and joyfully hopping from branch to branch.

Becky wished she could go out to join them in the sun, but the teacher today was a beholder, and she didn't dare sneak out when he was watching. He just had too many eyes; he was sure to see her climb out the window. And then he would make her eat the jar of cockroaches that sat on his desk.

And Becky didn't like the taste of cockroaches.

So she looked down at her maths textbook, where the numbers were having their business meeting, and watched as they chittered and chattered to one another. The scalene triangle gave a sneeze, dropping its business briefcase, and was handed a tissue by the SIN fraction that sat beside it.

Something warm breathed on the back of Becky's neck, and she smelt floral perfume; though when she turned there was nothing there.

'Becky?'

Becky turned around again and looked to Mattel. She was sitting across from her, where Becky's textbook had been just moments before, and had a lettuce and tomato sandwich in her hand.

'Mattel!' Becky greeted, cheerfully.

'Mhm,' Mattel grinned, ripping her sandwich in half and offering the smaller part to Becky. 'Wanna share?'

'Sure,' Becky accepted the half-sandwich, and took a bite.

For a lettuce and tomato sandwich, it tasted a *lot* like a pillow.... But Becky didn't complain. It was sweet of Mattel, to share with her!

Becky looked down to her half-sandwich, and realised it was actually one of her socks.

*Why was she eating her sock?* How odd.

'Becky! Come on, we'll be late!' Mattel called from the classroom door.

'Coming!' Becky called back. She slipped her sock and shoe back on her foot, and rose to her feet to follow Mattel.

Her girlfriend vanished out of the room just as she reached to door, so Becky followed; exiting the classroom and finding herself under the bleachers with

Mattel and her friends.

A whale zipped past her head, letting out a beautiful mourning tune as it did, before floating over to a figure that sat, half-hidden, in the shadows.

Becky squinted, and saw it was Helena Hitchcock. Her heart tightened, and she took a step back, hoping Mattel hadn't seen the poor girl, but—

'HELENA!' Mattel jeered, grabbing Becky by the wrist and pulling her over. 'What've you got there, huh? What're you drawing?'

Mattel yanked Helena's sketchbook out of the girl's hand and began to flick through it. Her friends leered over her shoulders as Helena skittered back in fear; seemingly she wanted to run and leave her sketchbook, but was also unable to bring herself to do so. And Becky couldn't blame her; she knew how important someone's art could be to them.

'Oooh ew! They're so *creepy*!' Jamie exclaimed, mock-gagging.

'Groooooossss!' Stacy echoed.

Chanel just gave a disgusted grunt, and circled around to block Helena's exit. 'Where do you think you're going?'

'N-N-N—'

'Becky!' Mattel chirped over Helena's stammering. 'Honeeey, *look* at this! Tell me what you think!'

Becky looked to Mattel, who held up Helena's sketchbook and flicked through the pages to share it with her.

Each page was filled with swirling black dust that flowed like living ink on the page.

Becky thought it was quite impressive, that Helena was able to make a blank page come so completely to life... but when Becky eyed Mattel she knew what she was *supposed* to say.

'God, Helena, why are you so *weird*?' Becky scolded, putting her hands on her hips and turning to the cowering girl. 'Why can't you do *normal* things? Like a *normal* girl?'

'Yeah!' Mattel agreed, closing Helena's sketchbook with a *thwump* and giving a haughty sniff. 'Why can't you get it through you stupid, thick skull, hm? God. You're such a *freak*.... Becky? Honey? I think she needs us to teach her a lesson!'

Becky hesitated, hearing that.

She didn't want to... but a glance at Mattel, who raised her brow and nodded towards the girl trapped between Stacy and Chanel, and Becky felt her body moving without her telling it to.

She took Helena by the hair and dragged her out from under the bleachers, into the now-empty hallway, and threw her into a wall of lockers.

Helena crumpled to the ground in a terrified, hyperventilating heap.

Mattel was laughing as Becky stood over Helena.... Though all Becky could do was swallow.

It was for the best, wasn't it? Helena didn't act normal. And you *had* to be normal. Or you would get hurt, or hurt others... right? Just like....

Becky swallowed as she thought of her mother's words.

*A normal, plain, regular girl. Who likes pink. And flowers. And puppies.*

That was what *she* was. And that was what *Helena* was *supposed* to be, too.

If everyone was normal, then everyone would be okay. If everyone just did

normal things, then they would all be safe and happy... just like she was.

Just like she was.

She was safe and happy and normal....

She was safe and happy and normal....

*She was safe and happy and normal....*

And she was just making sure that everyone else would learn to act more normal, too. That's all this was. If she didn't let them be weird, then they would *have* to be normal. And then everyone would be safe and happy.

*Everyone would be okay.*

So why did she feel so *guilty* about it?

Mattel's lips met Becky's cheek, and Becky let herself relax.

Mattel knew better than she did; being normal came so *naturally* to her.... If Becky followed her example, and did as she said without question, she would be fine. She could trust Mattel to make these choices for her.

'I don't think she's quite got it, yet,' Mattel whispered. 'Show her, Becky.'

Becky nodded to Mattel before bending down and scooping Helena up by the front of her shirt.

She lifted her, high off the ground, and pulled her back, preparing to slam her into the locker again—

'Rebecca, put her down!' a familiar-but-unfamiliar voice snapped, and Becky dropped Helena, who hit the ground and disappeared into a black cloud of dust.

Becky whirled around, looking for the source of the voice, and found that the school had vanished and she was now standing in the park by the swing-set.

'Rebecca,' the voice came again, and Becky turned to see a figure sitting on the nearby bench.

*Her mother?*

Yes... that made sense. Her mother used to *always* sit on that bench.

'Rebecca, we talked about this,' her mother said. Her tone was soft and even, but there was an underlying note of disappointment. 'No biting.'

'You're dead,' Becky blurted, ignoring her mother's scolding. 'What are you doing here?'

'I'm your mother,' her mother retorted, and Becky knew that this was true and correct and therefore made perfect sense. 'You haven't listened to me, Rebecca. I'm very disappointed.'

'I *have* listened to you!' Becky felt her ears burn hot at her mother's accusation. *Hadn't listened?!* It made Becky's entire body tremble. 'I *always* listen to you!'

'No biting,' her mother repeated. 'No snarling. No growling.'

'I wasn't biting,' Becky argued. 'Or snarling! Or growling! I was being normal! Just like you told me to be!'

Her mother's eyes grew weary then, and Becky thought she didn't look well....

*She was sick again, wasn't she? Just like last time.*

'This is what you wanted, isn't it?' Becky asked, her eyes filling with tears. 'I'm strong, and I'm normal, and nobody hurts me!'

'But you hurt them,' her mother said, softly, her expression pensive and disappointed. 'No biting, Rebecca.'

Then her mother grew thinner, and paler; like her sickness was worsening all

over again.

‘Biting is wrong.’

Her hair thinned, and her eyes sunk in, and she reached out for Becky with a trembling hand.

‘It hurts people.’

Becky took a terrified step back as her mother’s form began to rot away in front of her; but the woman grabbed her by the arm.

‘Rebecca,’ she said firmly, her flesh peeling away to reveal the bone underneath. ‘You need to try harder. *Promise* me you will try harder!’

‘I— I— I—’

The last of the flesh fell away from the woman’s face as she gripped her daughter by the shoulders and cried; ‘*Promise me, Rebecca!*’

Becky let out a shriek and sat bolt upright in bed; almost knocking Mattel off the side as she scrambled back into the headboard with a loud *thump*.

Mattel let out her own cry as she struggled to stay on the bed. ‘Becky?! What?! What happened—’

‘My mum!’ Becky exclaimed. ‘She was melting! It was awful! All of her skin rotted and fell off and she was so angry and I— I— She— She was—’

‘Oh my god. *Oh*, fuck, Becky,’ Mattel heaved a sigh, her entire body deflating with relief, before she dragged herself to Becky’s side and wrapped an arm around her girlfriend. ‘It was a dream. Calm down. You were just dreaming again.’

‘I can’t— I-I-I—’

‘*Shh*,’ Mattel shushed, pulling Becky into her chest and stroking her hair. ‘Calm down. You’re not hurt.’

Becky took in a shaky breath as Mattel yawned and buried her face into the top of her head. ‘It was— It was *so* scary.’

‘*Mhm*,’ Mattel hummed, her exhaustion clear as she gave a loud sniff and another yawn. ‘It was just a dream. Calm down....’

Becky took another deep breath and tried to steady her breathing as Mattel let out a heavy sigh. ‘S-Sorry,’ Becky breathed, wiping her eyes. ‘I-I-I just—’

‘*Mhm*,’ Mattel hummed again, clearly still half-asleep. ‘You’re fine. Just... mm.... Go back to sleep.’

‘I— I can’t,’ Becky swallowed. ‘What if I have another dream? I-I don’t want to—’

‘Don’t be silly,’ Mattel told her. ‘You’ll feel better in the morning.... Just get some more sleep and you’ll be fine.’

‘I...’ Becky bit her lip. *Wasn’t Mattel listening? Sleeping was the entire problem....*

A kiss was pressed into Becky’s cheek before Mattel slid off her side. The woman turned to her bedside table, upping the volume on her phone as it played a loop of whale song, before laying back down. ‘Go back to sleep.’

‘But— But what if I have another— Another bad dream—’

‘You won’t.’

‘But it was so *awful!*’ it almost came out as a sob. ‘It was— She was— Melting and—’

‘*Don’t think about it,*’ Mattel mumbled into her pillow. ‘*You’ll only upset*

*yourself more.'*

'But I-I-I-I just—'

'Becky, I'm tired,' Mattel sighed, pushing herself onto her elbows. 'I have to get up early and I just.... Hm... *ugh*, I'm sorry. Come here,' she said, holding out an arm to invite Becky under the blanket with her. 'Come on.'

Slowly, Becky lay down and edged towards her girlfriend. She let Mattel wrap an arm around her and pull her close, and let out a shaky sigh as she was embraced tightly.

'I'm sorry. I don't mean to be so short,' Mattel apologised. 'You're not feeling good. I know. I'm so sorry, come here. I'm here. I'm here.... You're okay....'

Becky felt Mattel's hand run through her hair, and let out a heavy sigh.

*Mattel meant well*, Becky told herself. *She just didn't understand. Nobody understood....*

Her entire life, Becky had suffered sleepless nights and terrifying dreams, and there didn't seem to be any sort of explanation as to *why*....

When she was young the dreams never made any sense; they were just nightmares that featured *nothing*. Nothing situations, inspired by nothing that had ever happened to her— Things that she never understood after waking up.

Like the time she'd dreamt of a snail trying to steal her teeth to make a robot. She'd been too scared to go into the garden for *months* after that dream. And she wasn't completely sure her fear of bugs hadn't stemmed from that night.... Even though she knew, now, that it was completely ridiculous.

And her dreams now were so, so much worse and realistic; things that had actually happened to her. Things that *could* happen to her.

Real things.

Real fears....

'*I want to go home*,' Becky mumbled into Mattel's neck.

'Hmm?' Mattel blinked, and breathed in heavily; waking herself from the brink of sleep again. 'What?'

'*I want Isa...*' Becky admitted, and immediately felt Mattel heave a sigh.

'And *that's* the problem, right there,' Mattel said with a yawn. 'She babies you. You're not learning to deal with things on your own.... You know. When *I* was a kid, and *I* had a bad dream.... My... my parents...' Mattel paused, and sniffed, obviously trying to keep herself from falling asleep again. 'They'd send me back... to bed. So that I would learn... to handle it on my own....'

'I—'

'You're nineteen, Becky,' Mattel said, her voice firm even though her eyes were closed. 'It's *weird* for you to crawl into bed with the maid after a bad dream. You need to learn to deal with it yourself. *Like an adult....*'

Becky swallowed, curling deeper into Mattel.

*She was right, wasn't she?*

Becky *was* too old to be having bad dreams....

'Go back to sleep, Beck,' Mattel sighed. 'You'll feel better in the morning....'

'Mm... okay,' Becky mumbled, letting Mattel pull her close. 'I... I love you....'

'I love you too, hon,' Mattel gave one last yawn and rested her head on top of Becky's, slowly drifting off again.

Becky waited until she felt the woman's breathing even out —until she heard

the light snore that meant Mattel was in a deep sleep— before she gently eased herself out from under her girlfriend's arm and sat on the floor beside the bed.

She slowly unzipped her bag, trying not to make a noise, and pulled out her phone.

She flicked the switch, turning it to silent mode, before unlocking it and looking through her contacts on social media....

Nobody was online. Unsurprisingly. It was close to four in the morning and she'd be more concerned if anyone else *was* up....

Though, sometimes the Slader brothers were awake this late....

She opened the group chat she had with the two of them, and sent a message:

**Becky:** hey, eether of u akwae?

She was surprised, pleasantly, to see both of their icons light up, a little green dot next to each of them.

**Jareth:** Yeah, what's up?

**Benny:** Yeah you ok?

**Becky:** i had a bad dream

**Jareth:** What about?

**Becky:** my mom

**Jareth:** Oh

**Benny:** 😊 You ok?

**Becky:** no

**Jareth:** Aw Beck

**Becky:** she hated me

**Jareth:** She didn't hate you

**Benny:** Noooo Becky she didn't

**Becky:** if she saw me now she wuld hate me

**Jareth:** No

**Benny:** No she wouldn't

**Jareth:** I promise she wouldn't

**Becky:** she wuld

**Jareth:** Becky she loved you

**Benny:** Yeah she loved you SO much it was actually kinda scary

**Jareth:** Do you need us to come over?

**Becky:** no

**Becky:** i meen yes but like

**Benny:** Yeah we have nothing better to do and can be there SO fast

**Becky:** u cant

**Jareth:** Why?

**Becky:** im at mattels

**Jareth:** ah

**Benny:** Ew

**Becky:** she still doesnt know we r talking again

**Jareth:** ah

**Becky:** yea

**Benny:** Oof

**Jareth:** Is there anything we can do to help?

Becky paused for a moment, gently tapping her fingers to the back of her

phone as she thought....

**Becky:** culd u pik me up from the park?

**Jareth:** Yeah I can do that

**Benny:** Of course

**Becky:** the 1 near mattels house

**Jareth:** Sure

**Becky:** i just want 2 go hom e

**Benny:** She can't give you a lift?

**Becky:** no

**Becky:** she told me 2 go back 2 bed

**Benny:** 😞 😞 😞

**Becky:** that i had 2 learn to deal with it like an adult

**Jareth:** Oh my god

**Benny:** Yikes!!!

**Jareth:** Beck are you ok??

**Becky:** and like she was rite

**Benny:** NO??????

**Becky:** but it still feels bad tho

**Jareth:** Becky she absolutely was NOT right!

**Benny:** You're allowed to have bad dreams?? What the fuck

**Jareth:** Yeah what the FUCK

**Becky:** no no she didnt mean it in a bad way

**Benny:** 😞

**Jareth:** How else could she have meant it??

**Becky:** no like

**Becky:** im not explainin g it rite

**Benny:** Oh Becky...

**Becky:** just

**Jareth:** Beck that's not ok for her to say

**Becky:** pls pick me up?

**Jareth:** Ok

**Becky:** i wan t 2 go home

**Jareth:** Ok we'll be there soon

**Benny:** The park?

**Becky:** ye the park

**Benny:** Are you there now?

**Jareth:** You're not waiting alone are you??

**Becky:** no im stil at mattls

**Becky:** im baout walk there

**Jareth:** Are you sure its safe to walk to the park on your own?

**Becky:** ye its fine

**Becky:** litrally nothin g ever happens in. this part of town

**Jareth:** Okay

**Benny:** Mmm

**Jareth:** We'll meet you at the park

**Jareth:** Just be safe ok?

**Benny:** Yeah do NOT get murdered!

**Becky:** pro mice i wont

Both boys' icons greyed out again, and Becky leant back against the bed with a heavy sigh.

She knew Mattel would be mad at her for sneaking out— *Furious*, if she found out it was to meet the Sladers, but.... She just wanted to go home.

She *needed* to go home.

She needed Isa....

—END—

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