Xestobium rufovillosum

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1586.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	General (non relationship-focused)
Fandom:	Psychonauts
Characters:	Lucrecia "Maligula" Mux | Nona Aquato, Ford Cruller [Psychonauts], Razputin "Raz" Aquato
Additional Tags:	Angst, Body Horror, AU, No Beta We Die Like Men, Mild Hurt/Comfort, Cross-Posted on AO3
Language:	English
Series:	Part 6 of Arthropoda
Stats:	Published: 2023-02-02 Words: 1,444 Chapters: 1/1

Xestobium rufovillosum

by DragonWolf

Summary

Messages delivered to the only one who can receive them.

Notes

Originally posted on ao3
Posted to Fanfiction.lol archive on 09.11.26

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

Like a clock hidden somewhere in the floorboards.

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

Something tapped on the wood, making just enough sound to rouse the old woman out of her already light slumber. Darkness greeted her, with just a hint of first pink showing through the window of the cabin.

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

The noise was quiet, only apparent because of the complete silence of the middle of the night.

Lucretia rose from bed, careful not to wake her partner.

The quiet ticking continued, rhythmic and impartial. It felt like an omen.

She understood that she wouldn't be able to go back to sleep anyway and so elected to go outside.

The world outside their little cabin was silent. Lake Oblongata was still, no wind bothering its surface. A light fog hung in the air, blanketing everything in a comfortable embrace.

She looked out over the water.

Tick. Tock. Tick.

Something felt off. Something wasn't right. She squinted slightly.

Tock.

A ripple ran over the surface.

Tick.

Water reached out to her.

Tock.

Something was wrong. The lake felt agitated, worried about something, but unsure of what. Thin familiar hands, barely formed, stretched out towards her in weak, unsure movements before falling back beneath the surface.

The tapping noise had stopped.

Instead there was a different sound.

"Lucy?"

Ford's voice was drowsy, just barely woken up. It called out to her from the doorway of their cabin.

"What are you doing out here?" He asked her, curious but not concerned.

She stayed silent. The water seemed to settle, but under the surface it was wrong. It was worried.

"Lucy?" Ford repeated, walking up to her "Is everything alright?"

It wanted something but it wasn't sure what, the feeling so faint as if coming from far away.

It was familiar now that she concentrated on it.

It was fear.

It was scared, though not of her.

It was asking for help.

"No" She finally said with a finality that would've made her vince had she heard it from someone else "Something happened"

Ford's eyebrows knitted together, worried "Something?"

"I don't know, Crully" The emotions in the water were getting messy now, unsure of what they are supposed to be, and so she couldn't glean any information, not even where they were coming from "I can't decipher it, but something is going on and it's not good"

The old man straightened up, blinking the clinging sleepiness out of his eyes in a hurry "What do we do?"

"I cannot tell where it's coming from" Lucretia muttered "too many voices talking all at once"

"It might be wise to go back to Green needle Gulch and see what we can do from there"

She hummed, lost in thought for a moment. If this was a cry for help, it was most likely from someone in her family. She loathed to imagine something bad enough to cause this happening to one of them, but she had no other leads on the situation.

They had equipment at the Motherlobe. They'd be able to track where the call was coming from there.

They had to hurry.

She turned away from the lake as it continued to reach out to her and grabbed hold of Ford's hand "Ok. Let's go, Crully"

The world disappeared. For a singular moment everything was quiet, no stimuli getting through.

Then they were in her house in the Green needle gulch.

And the fragile, worried quietness was gone.

It was like a shockwave, the call from before amplified a hundredfold.

If it was a whisper before, a confused mess of quiet voices and feelings, now it was more like screaming. The voice, if you could even call it that, was hurt, and angry, and confused, and a lot of other things.

Water stirred into a burling mess outside.

Ford clamped his hands over his ears next to her. Lucretia concentrated on the noise, letting it wash over her, following the half drowned call for help. It was coming from everywhere, all the water in the immediate vicinity writhing in pain, but if she squinted hard enough she could find the original source.

It was coming from somewhere along the river in the woods, a more or less solid psychic signature fluctuating around there.

She recognized it immediately.

"Oh, turnip" She managed, her voice barely audible.

Ford opened his eyes slightly to peer at her, worried. He got what she meant after a second or so.

"Razputin" he whispered.

The voices were so loud.

They had to find him.

“He’s at the river” she forced herself to say through the noise “We need to get to him”

“I don’t think we can teleport there” Ford mumbled “I can’t tell exactly where he is, there’s too much interference”

“We’ll have to run then, come on” she grabbed hold of his hand, tearing it away from his ear, and pulled him forward.

And so they ran.

The noise changed at some point just after they got to the woods. The intensity died down, and though the feelings stayed they became slightly more muted, with confusion overpowering most anything else.

Something met them at the edge of the river.

It seemed malformed, a mess of watery shapes and limbs, unsure of what it was supposed to be. It looked insectoid, its face dripped with red.

The call was coming from it.

"Oh, Pootie," Lucretia stood still. Her eyes stung "What happened to you?"

The thing that used to be her grandson great nephew swiveled its blind face towards her and paused. As she reached out to it she felt no recognition. There was only confusion and pain and nothing underneath.

Its emotions leaked out through the broken wall that normally surrounded the boy's mind, unrestricted and raw.

She approached it "You'll be ok, my little turnip" She assured it, feeling like she was lying through her teeth.

"Lucy" Ford attempted to call for her to stop, but his protest died halfway. She didn't pay mind to it.

The thing stood in its place but the noise seemed to be calming down. Lucretia didn't stop.

She raised her hand towards its face. It seemed more curious than anything as it stooped down towards her and pressed its face into her palm. The water was cold but solid.

"You're ok" She lied "You're ok"

It didn't think. But it believed her.

The noise was gone.

It retreated into the river.

And then there was nothing.

The sound of approaching footsteps could wait. Everything could wait.

She stared at the water.

There was nothing.

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The day was overcast and slightly moody but overall pleasant. The wind was mild and rippled the surface of the water gently every so often.

Raz squinted at it slightly, considering if the idea he had was worth trying.

"I don't know if you can understand me" He started, not taking his eyes off the gentle waves "But I need you to do something for me"

It rippled towards him slightly, just enough to distinguish itself from the natural waves. So it was listening. Good.

"I don't fully know if this is a thing that you can actually do" He faltered a bit "or, well, I can do, it's weird, but you get me"

A wave rose slightly up the beach towards him, dampening the sand to a dark brown, before recreating. He continued.

"I need you to carry a message for me" He let his hands drop to his knees to steady himself "I need you to find my Nona and let her know that… " He paused for a moment "that i'm ok. And that i'd like to see her"

Another wave rolled in, a few inches away from touching him where he was kneeling on the sand.

"They should be somewhere on the west coast" Hopefully "but just try your best"

A small ripple seemed to rise and fall as if nodding. He smiled at it.

He put his hand out and an incoming wave flowed around his fingers, though he only felt a slight cool sensation and not much else. He tried his best to will it to do what he asked of it.

Now all he had to do was hope it worked.

The sky churned lazily, not letting direct sunlight through. Even so his chest felt a little bit lighter.

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And somewhere on the west coat thin, fragile hands made of water pulled on an old woman's shawl. Not hard enough to move her, but persistently enough to get noticed.

She knew what they meant the moment her eyes landed on them.

A smile touched the corners of her mouth.

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