

The world contained many wonders, some threatening and some harmless. Fidget was deciding which category her discovery should be classified under but right now she was branding it as 'nuisance'.

It had been her fault, while off on her own the orange furred nimbat had grown tired and rested on a tree bough, her long, pointed tail slipping off the branch during her nap and falling into what started her predicament.

The flora around these parts was more active than anywhere else in the world, thanks in no small part to the magic that suffused the area. Some of the plants had grown toothy maws on extending, viny necks, big enough to swallow a bird. Others had wiggling vines that absorbed the magical essence in the air, still others remained that gently baited smaller insects closer, whether for simple pollination or for a carnivorous snack. It was into one of these latter most plants that the nimbat's tail had dipped. Fidget had been sound asleep as it gently sucked the tip, mistaking it for a dragonfly or perhaps some flying worm.

The plant's suction had raised the cup-like pod up, slipping the tail in deeper with each attempt until it had enough of a grip that a sudden pull tugged the precariously balanced Fidget off her perch. She awoke with a start, limbs flailing as she felt herself falling. "Eeeep!!"

Her wings beat rapidly to try to catch herself before she struck the ground, though her plummet stopped suddenly as she felt a soft, pliant pressure catch her lower half. She looked down to see the pale blue shade of sturdy petals around the widest part of her hips.

Her legs and tail had fallen into the trapping flower which kept trying to pull. She grunted, "What? Oh, uh, thanks for the catch, I guess!" She said, blinking as she made sense of how she'd fallen. Her legs wiggled as her knees tried to work their way out, but the inside of the flower was slick and slippery, confounding her attempts. The plant relaxed its stem a little and suddenly she was pitched forward, hanging from the flower but not slipping out!

"Get off me you stupid plant! I'm not food!" She yelled, squirming and pushing at the floral lip over her hips. Her wings flapped as she tried to prise herself loose from within. The sucking of the plant was doing its best to pull her deeper inside but even so it was not strong enough to breach that lip. Instead it worked in tandem with the thick fit to hold her in place like some arboreal mermaid. "Gnnnnr. Stoppit!" She chirped, eye scrunched up from the exertion. She stretched the stem as best as she could, before her arms flew forward to grab the branch she'd used as a bed, missing it by a hair.

"Oh for-. Dumb flower, you can't even swallow me!" She chided, catching her breath with her arms folded angrily over her chest. A few seconds more, hanging upside-down from the bulb and she started to flap again, pulling up to the branch.

This time her hands caught it and she tried to pull, hearing the plant's thick stem creak and feeling what she hoped was progress at her waist, though it was so small she could well have been imagining it.

Her grip started to weaken and with a scraping tug she was forced to let go, screaming as she fell back toward the ground. The lowest point of the plant stem's bounce had stretched enough that she nearly thwacked against the grass below before it bounced back up, sparing her from a concussion.

With her arms stretched out Fidget could just touch the grass now but she needed an even longer break to recuperate. "Stupid flower! If Dust was here he'd slice you into a bouquet!" She threatened. Though, knowing him, he'd probably take great care to prise her out without damaging the plant.

Another pout crossed her lips as her arms folded over her chest, the image more comical than she likely meant to be, swaying in the air. She bent over, staring at the flower's stem and the body of the main plant. It definitely was a carnivorous one, swallowing small bugs into that bulb, even disguising itself next to very similar flowers. The other flowers were darker blue, lacked the bulb and were likely just using the insects that flew by for pollination. It was just her luck that her tail had found the lone abnormally big flower in the bunch.

While she studied the plant, trying to see if there was a point of stem she could fly toward and try to bite, she didn't see the slithering shapes in the grass below.

Instead a small touch at the back of her head was the first thing that alerted her. "Gah! What? What now?" She said, looking up and going cold. "S-s-snakes?!" Though her guess was misplaced, the grass had been masking a sea of wiggling, magic-siphoning tendrils that were all questing toward the nimbat. "Ah! No! Stupid plant, pull me up, pull me up!" She said, even trying to wiggle deeper inside the floral cup!

The deep motion reminded the plant that it had caught something and the stem straightened a little more. Yet it slowed and stopped, Fidget having to use her tiring wings to keep herself away from the animated bed below. "Oh, crumbs." She huffed when she reached her limit and fell down.

The tendrils were already high enough to meet her and the round ends pushed into her fur, running up her back and down her front at the same time, one arm flailed to batter them away as the other guarded her face, both ended up wrested from her control. The tendrils latched on and hugged the flailing hand while those rubbing ones already upon her slipped in slow coils pinning her arm. It wasn't even intended as binding, the plants had just detected that Fidget herself was highly magical and thus they ached to cover her with as much surface area as possible.

With her arm trapped in place over her mouth the nimbat was at least protected from tasting the plants but it also meant she couldn't bite, her one possible remaining line of defense pinched from her control.

The tendrils were fighting Fidget just as much as they were fighting themselves to get the most exposure to her body. Curling on each other, crossing over, sometimes as much as three turns thick. The pulling weight kept her close to the ground, with more tug added with each passing second. Her chest was soon smothered in writhing green and then her wings were plastered to her back; between the coils that had caught her torso and the ones that rolled over the top.

Lower coils pushed against her face, flattening down one ear as they slowly circled over Fidget's head. "Geht Ommph!" She yelled into her pinned elbow but the plant was naturally deaf and mindless, merciless in its simple quest to drink fresh energising magic.

The stem of the plant that gripped her was creaking again as it was pulled low, suddenly low enough that the stem bent like a twisted straw, the obstruction cut off the sucking flow and the displaced nimbat finally tumbled free of that first trap, straight into the worst of the tendrils. She tried desperately to find the ground again, her tail lashing, orange thighs kicking and heavy white paws scuffing the floor.

Above the waist she was totally buried in the squeezing green, when more tendrils grasped her left foot she let out one agonised groan of annoyance, realising she was defeated even if she defied it for the following minutes. All she could hear was plantlife creaking and rubbing on itself as it swallowed the majority of her body, pinning her tight against the ground. One lone ear stood free from her head and her tail and right foot had landed outside of the tentacle's reach, still kicking and twitching whenever the tendrils squeezed her in their bid to chase the others away.

"Dssst, Ahrah! Anywhmm!! Hllmh!" She called out, pitifully. Was this really how her adventurous life was going to end, swarmed by tendrils that didn't even mean any harm? Her last hope was that when the vines had drunk their fill they'd let her go before she was too exhausted to fly away.

The squeezing pulses abated a while later, the tendrils touching Fidget settled down to be a more stable pressure, while those who had been shoved aside rose back into the air, looking for uncontested magic to drink.

The poor nimbat's signs of life had dropped away, only the occasional grunt or kick of the free foot showing she was still there. "Oh, what's this?" A voice called, pinching the furry ear between two fingers, then rubbing over the exposed paw with a thumb. The tension he felt was followed by an indignant squeak that swiftly turned to a plea. He let go of Fidget, pulling out a

knife which he ran along the ground, severing the viney plants that held her, gathering them up and stuffing them into a pouch.

The relief of rescue washed over Fidget and she felt all the more tired for her struggles, mumbling out a barely audible. "Thank you."

"Oh, you're welcome. Though I wouldn't thank me just yet." The voice said, chuckling darkly but Fidget had lost consciousness before he'd finished speaking, missing the ominous implications.

The figure scooped the fallen Nimbat up in his hands, cradling her in his arm as he returned to his home. He'd come out to pick the magic infused plants but had found something much better.

His home was more of a hovel, a tiny corner devoted to his living necessities while the rest of the place was decked with bottles, plants, -both harvested and growing- and potion making equipment. He slung the pouch of fresh tendrils to the edge of his desk before clearing aside space enough to deposit the fallen Fidget. He rolled her onto her front, lifting her chin up before stepping away to gather some twine.

He hummed a jaunty tune under his breath as he began to tie Fidget up. He started with the wings, looping the twine over her chest and then back over the wings, compacting them and pressing them down. Several looping strands kept them secure with low risk of damage. Next he set his eyes on her arms, folding them behind her back.

A boxtie was slowly and methodically crafted, the twine kept taut without being too tight, this bind was meant to last after all. He was careful to keep his handiwork firm as he bound over Fidget's elbows, then under her shoulders and finally he tied the forearms together. She kicked in her sleep and her newest captor stroked her cheek with gentle fingers, coaxing her to calm for a bit longer.

The ankles were bound to each other, then bent upward so that he could tether them to the nimbat's thighs. Still more rope was wound down the centre of her feet, binding them in place and then with Fidget packed together, he ran one last cord between the foot-bind and her arms, slipping it up while being slow enough to avoid burning friction.

With that, the unconscious nimbat was drawn into a hogtie. Satisfied with his work, the figure reached onto a shelf, pulled down a bottle with a glowing liquid within and used his fingers to coax Fidget's mouth open.

He poured the liquid into her mouth, nourishing her as the concoction encouraged her magic energy to recover.

Lifting her by the rope, he pulled her out to the back of his shack. Using the anchoring ropes that held her legs to her torso he suspended her between two hooks. Finally he dug out a plant pot, it contained a carefully reared and raised member of the same plant family that had

trapped poor Fidget before. Fresh shoots were forming where he'd trimmed them the previous week, with one excessively long tendril still intact which immediately started to drift to Fidget's body.

He smirked as it wrapped against the bared fur but he wasn't there to watch. He returned to his hovel, beginning to distill his latest concoction.

"W-what's going on?! Not another one!" A panicked cry sounded later. "Help! Someone, help me!!"

The alchemist grimaced, focused carefully on the brew before him, he had to take it off the heat the moment it bubbled, he didn't have time to see to that. "Pipe down!" He shouted.

"Hey?! Can't you hear me? Help!" She yelled, spirit returned, "Get off you stupid thing. Whoever's there, get me out of here right now!" She demanded.

The alchemist ground his teeth as he looked around, seizing one of the cork stoppers for his potions. He stormed out to the back, pinched the Nimbat's cheeks in one hand and stuffed the cork into her mouth. "Mnnngh?! Hmmhg!"

"Shut up!" He said, giving her a push that sent her swaying before running back to his craft. The liquid was roiling, the few seconds he'd spent had ruined the mix. With a growling grunt he turned the heat off and took the potion out back, tipping the contents away.

"Phuh!" Fidget spat the cork out. "What's the big idea? Get me out of this vine!" She yelled. "Wait, what? Ropes? Y-you tied me up?!"

The alchemist harrumphed as he gathered the cork from the floor, "Oh what I would give for a muting potion right now." Stuffing it back in and then looping the twine to pin it in place. "Shut up, creature." He repeated. "I want your energy not your comments."

Despite the cork in her teeth Fidget was not wont to be silent. She squeaked in growing indignation, her tail flailing as she squirmed against the plant and ropes of twine but the alchemist stormed back to his dwelling, the door slamming shut behind him.

Within another hour, Fidget had worked the gag out of her teeth and was squealing again at full volume.

The alchemist punched the table. "Right, forget this." He stormed out and stared at Fidget, eye to eye.

"Who the heck do you think you are? Let me go right now!" Fidget yelled.

"Shoulda just stayed gagged, nimbat." The alchemist said.

“Oh puh-lease, untie me at once or you’ll be sorry!” She demanded.

He reached to the vine, tugging on it until it released its grip then he pulled the ropes up to hold her free of the hooks. “You know, I was gonna let you have a nice long life. You’re a rare find, something to feed the magic-drainers and help me make the most exquisite potions. Hell, with the money I’d make I’d have even bought you a nice cage or something, but you just had to be insufferable!”

“Cage? What? You were just gonna keep me?!”

“I saved your damn life!” He yelled back. “Or did you think the drainers would stop once you were asleep?”

The snap quelled her, dangerously subservient thoughts thinking it was kind of fair enough before her logic rose up. He could have asked, not just acted however he pleased! “Where are you taking me?” She yelled when she realised her captor was carrying her off.

“Back where you came from.” He growled in a tone that stirred fear in her.

The glade she rested in loomed into view but the man kept walking into the woods stopping upon a new and different flower, one Fidget had been sure to skirt when choosing a resting spot.

The large red maw had wicked and sturdy looking thorns around it like teeth, already the thing was flexing as if biting the air. “Never seen what happens if these eat magical creatures, maybe it’ll make a new reagent.” The alchemist said.

“W-wait, we can talk about this! That thing will eat me, like, *really* eat me!” She squeaked, ears flagging as she quivered in panic.

“Yep.” He said, tossing her forward without another word.

“Nooooooooo, help!” She squealed as she arched into the air, landing on the thick pillowy lining of the maw which shut behind her, leaking sticky juices as soon as she landed.

“Fidget!” A voice yelled, a familiar one. It was Dust!

“What the- who are you?” The alchemist said but his question was answered by a dashing figure and a slash of a blade. He let out a cry as he slumped onto the ground.

Dust ran to the plant, stuffing his fingers into the maw, trying to pry the thorns apart but they’d interlocked without enough space.

“Dust, help, it’s itching!” Fidget squealed, her cry met with a whistle of metal as her friend lopped off one end of the plant. He shoved his hand into the opening, groping until he had

a grip of her folded legs and then pulled. The nimbat slid out and felt a sudden cold deluge as Dust tipped a water flask over her to wash off the worst of the liquids.

She sputtered and shook as he sliced her bindings away, lifting her up in a warm, comforting hug. "It's okay, you're alright now. I've got you." He soothed.

"Wh-where were you, you big dummy." Fidget said, tears brimming in her eyes as true relief came, even greater than the misplaced calm when she thought she'd first been rescued.

"You were the one who flew off, look, I'm sorry if it was something I said. Do you need me to clean you up? Is the plant-slime all gone?"

"I'm fine! Let's just... get out of here!" She huffed.

He gave a soft chuckle as he nodded, the alchemist was lying in a heap where he'd fallen but Dust saw no signs of life. He shook his head, he wasn't so cruel as to finish him off but after how he'd treated Fidget he felt no compulsion to lend a hand. He ran off with his partner, as fast as the wind could carry him.

The alchemist groaned when he was sure that they'd both left. His hand clutching a healing potion secreted in his sleeve for such an emergency. With great effort he got it up to his lips and drank, rolling onto his back afterwards. "Maybe I should just stick with flowers." He thought before he closed his eyes to give his body time to heal.