

OCTOBER 120

NARRATOR

So... October and Fish are still missing after their confrontation with the snakes... And I've sort of been combing through Herovia in my spare time, trying to find them. But nothing.

However, I did notice something kinda interesting... Do you remember Crab Crab MD? Yeah, the guy the snakes sent after October and Fish. And they did the whole train chase thing and then they all got captured by Manfred and they ended up in Area 52... Where I missed the unicorn, yes, that's established, but more relevantly, October and the crab bonded, escaped together, and grew along the way. So, speaking of him...

[zzp]

Crab Crab's clinic

NARRATOR

In the humble boggy town of Warm Puddle... Below the water, where the Herovians can't bother everyone... A nice country doctor prepares his clinic. The water is slow, the surface pocked by raindrops far above. Looks chilly. And silty, the ground looks sticky too, but the current is mild so it stays down low in the water. Silt? Uh... Do you know what sediment is? Okay, then for our purposes it's... Thin sand.

Anyways, we're way below Moist Bog and the train station. Like, significantly deeper. Loads of room down here.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Okay, maybe this will work.}

NARRATOR

Crab Crab M.D.'s got a hammer in one beefy claw. Artistic squiggles are painted in broad strokes across a large banner nailed to the railing of a sweet little house-clinic. A can of nails sits on the porch.

CRAB CRAB MD

{It can't be any worse than the bake sale idea.}

NARRATOR

He half-walks, half-wafts up onto the porch platform and then scuttles into the business house. The first room looks like a waiting room. A pile of waxy magazines sits on a low table. Crab seats himself behind the counter. It's empty aside from him.

(CONTINUED)

This is kind of all I've got, so let's just fast forward...

[Ffwd]

Through, uh, still empty, empty, wait!

[click]

A customer appears! A client? A patient! It's an eel.

EEL

Hello, do you do edible arrangements?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Excuse me?}

EEL

I lead the catering committee for the barn dance and I thought a tasty little bouquet would be just the ticket to finish off the table.

CRAB CRAB MD
{Ma'am, this is a medical clinic.}

EEL

Medical clinic? Well it used to be a florist. So maybe you could check in the back...?

CRAB CRAB MD
{There are no flowers here.}

EEL

Well you should consider getting some flowers, it's unwelcomingly sparse in here. I almost didn't come in at all, Mr...?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Doctor. Crab Crab MD.}

EEL

Doctor! You're that new fellow renting the rock on the edge of town, aren't you?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Yep.}

EEL

Well welcome to Warm Puddle! You're certain you have no flowers?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Yep.}

EEL

Too bad. I'll find my edible arrangement somewhere else then. See you at the dance.

CRAB CRAB MD

{What dance?}

EEL

What Dance? Well even if you're living out under that rock, surely you've heard of it. The Beavers host the most wonderful Flounder's Day dance every year! It's the social event of the season!

CRAB CRAB MD

{I didn't know that. I don't really know anyone yet.}

EEL

Oh. Well, you should come. Maybe you can meet someone there and stop being so depressing.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'm not depressing...}

EEL

Yes you are. And this whole clinic is rather upsetting... So I'm leaving.

[watery door jingle]

CRAB CRAB MD

(Sighs crab-ily)

Habi

NARRATOR

Crab Crab slumps into a chair as the eel slithers out.

[watery door jingle]

--But quickly perks up as a shrimp swims in.

HABI NERA

You know, a two for one special isn't really a great draw card for medical care...

CRAB CRAB MD

{What?}

HABI NERA

I mean you're the only clinic in town. Ever since the humans pushed us underwater medicine's been pretty scarce. You have no competition. How have I only *just* discovered this place?

(CONTINUED)

CRAB CRAB MD
{Well I only opened up recently.}

HABI NERA
Anyways, that's enough free advice. I need some inhalers.

CRAB CRAB MD
{Really! Wonderful!}

NARRATOR
Crab Crab MD hops out of his seat, scuttles over to the reception counter and fumbles with a clipboard.

CRAB CRAB MD
{I'm Crab Crab MD. Could I have you name for my files?}

HABI NERA
My name is Habi Nera.

NARRATOR
Nera? That was that shrimp's name, right? The one in the gross human suit... Yes! Mario Nera!

CRAB CRAB MD
{Could you fill out this form?}

HABI NERA
Sure.

NARRATOR
Crab hands Habi Nera a clipboard with a couple of sheets of kelp paper on it to fill in.

HABI NERA
November 2nd 96... They/them... Shrimp...

CRAB CRAB MD
{So you need an inhaler?}

HABI NERA
Yeah, I've got asthma. So do 16 of my siblings, so they'll probably be around here soon enough.

NARRATOR
17 shrimp babies with asthma? Yeah. I think this is one of Mario's kids.

CRAB CRAB MD
{Follow me to the examination room.}

NARRATOR

Habi hands Crab Crab the clipboard and follows him through a doorway into an examination room. They sit up on the table as Crab holds a claw up to their gills.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Breathe out, hard.}

NARRATOR

Habi breathes in deeply...

HABI NERA

(wheezy shrimp cough)

NARRATOR

...while Crab monitors the water flow.

CRAB CRAB MD

{What are you using now?}

HABI NERA

We've got the house sealed against floating particles mostly. And recently we've been getting by with some land inhalers.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I see, I see... Deep breath}

HABI NERA

(deep breath) My breathing is mostly okay, a lot of my siblings have it rougher than me. I'll probably bring them here. You're okay with kids, right?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yeah, I'm great with kids.}

HABI NERA

Great with kids? That's good. My dad's got a lot.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Big family?}

HABI NERA

Oh yeah, *big* family. Dad's a little overwhelmed. I actually went to business school so I could help him out with the family farm, but... He never listens to any of my ideas.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Well I think you have good ideas.}

(CONTINUED)

HABI NERA

Thanks, I think I have good ideas too.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Your dad doesn't?}

HABI NERA

He's just stubborn. I'm trying motivate him to get out more. Enjoy life.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I could use some of that...}

HABI NERA

You're new in town, right?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yep.}

HABI NERA

Where are you from?

CRAB CRAB MD

{I used to have a clinic on the surface.}

HABI NERA

You had a clinic on the surface? How long did that last before the humans kicked you out?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Not long. It's tough up there.}

HABI NERA

So what have you been up to? Did you have a clinic somewhere else?

CRAB CRAB MD

{No... I was... Doing things?}

HABI NERA

Doing... *things*? That's not a suspicious answer.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'm not proud of my past}

HABI NERA

Alright. I won't pry. But couldn't hurt to put yourself out there. You seem kind of lonely. Plus it'd help your business.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'll think about it.}

(CONTINUED)

NARRATOR

Crab scribbles something on a small piece of kelp.

HABI NERA

You know... My dad's lonely too.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Pardon me?}

HABI NERA

Nothing.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh. Okay. Anyways, here's your prescription.}

NARRATOR

Crab Crab passes the paper to Habi and grabs an inhaler from a cabinet.

HABI NERA

Thanks.

CRAB CRAB MD

{No problem.}

NARRATOR

Crab Crab MD walks Habi out into the waiting room.

HABI NERA

Hey, Doctor Crab, think you could come check out the house? We have our filters set up, but we just rigged up whatever we could, who knows what it's letting through.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Let's make an appointment, where's the book...}

NARRATOR

Crab rustles around the counter, but Habi interrupts him.

HABI NERA

I don't think you need your appointment book. And no offense, but I'm pretty sure you don't have to worry about missing any walk-ins.

NARRATOR

Habi gestures to the empty waiting room.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yeah... Good point.}

HABI NERA

Come on. It'll be quick.

NARRATOR

Crab hesitates, but nods. He scuttles about, not actually doing much but with a great air of closing up shop. He flips the sign in the front window with a flourish. They proceed out the door, Crab locking it and then stashing the key under a decorative pot on the porch.

CRAB CRAB MD

{*mumbling as he closes up*}

HABI NERA

Half the people in town have rented this place at some point, so if you stick around you might want to change the locks.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Good tip}

HABI NERA

Let's go. I'll introduce you to my dad. --And you can check the filters or whatever.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Or whatever--}

HABI NERA

Say, do you like cranBERRIES?

[ffwd]

NARRATOR

Habi leads them up through the water, further from the silty bottom. There are large cloud-like tufts of floating grasses on the surface, casting shadows that deepen as the sun sets somewhere over the water. A little school of fish startles as they swim by, darting away to hide. They make their way further from town.

[click]

Mario's Farm

NARRATOR

They get to a farmhouse, presumably Habi's home. It's huuuge but sweet, with rickety silt filters on the outside. Solidly built. The ground slopes up not too far past the house into a shallower area piled with brown plant matter and bobbing berries.

(CONTINUED)

HABI NERA

So those are the filters and there's more like them on the other side.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh, I see.}

HABI NERA

Hey listen you might kick up some stuff I'd hate to breathe so I'm gonna go inside while you poke around. My dad's around somewhere so you might run into him... Who knows. Bye.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh, that's fine--}

NARRATOR

Habi vanishes inside.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Okay... Let's get to work}

NARRATOR

Crab inspects around the house, prodding things cautiously. He goes around the side and the curtains rustle. Crab looks up and makes eye after eye contact with a bunch of younger shrimp all crammed together to peer out at him through a ground-level window. He blinks and they jet away out of sight.

CRAB CRAB MD

{That's a lot of shrimp babies.}

NARRATOR

He thoughtfully swims up to inspect the upper levels of the exterior, then lets himself fall gently over the house to the other side, eyes on the woven, papery silt filters.

CRAB CRAB MD

{This all looks very impressive.}

NARRATOR

He moves along, seemingly impressed by the filters. He leans in to further inspect them, not noticing--

MARIO NERA

Oof!

CRAB CRAB MD

{Whoa!}

NARRATOR

--That.

MARIO NERA

Oh no, my cranBERRIES!

NARRATOR

Mario Nera came around the corner and bumped into Crab Crab, sending his basket of cranberries flying into the air-- uh, the water.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'm so sorry!}

MARIO NERA

No, I should have been looking where I was going.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Let me help.}

NARRATOR

Crab Crab swims up and starts gathering the scattered berries as Mario grabs the ones closest to him.

Crab Crab floats down and leans over to pick up the fallen basket, but just as he touches it, Mario's nimble pincer brushes Crab Crab's sturdy claw.

MARIO NERA

Oh my-- I--

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oops!}

NARRATOR

Crab Crab quickly pulls back as Mario picks up the basket and starts pouring the cranberries in.

MARIO NERA

Thank you. You're very kind, Mr...?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Doctor. Crab Crab MD.}

MARIO NERA

Oh. Doctor sorry. I'm Mario Nera. This is my farm.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I see! Habi brought me here to--}

MARIO NERA

Oh yes, Habi mentioned a doctor was here. For the filters, right?

(CONTINUED)

CRAB CRAB MD

{Well you did a wonderful job with them.}

MARIO NERA

Why thank you. My wife and I did our best with these filters, but we had to make it up as we went along.

CRAB CRAB MD

{The both of you are very skilled.}

MARIO NERA

My wife was a textiles engineer, she did the bulk of the work figuring it out. Unfortunately, she passed away before she could expand her work beyond the house.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'm sorry for your loss.}

MARIO NERA

Thank you. It's been years since we lost her, but in a way, she's still with us. Every breath of clean water my children take is thanks to her.

Come now, if you've seen enough I'd like to offer you some tea or maybe some dinner. Or here, take a cranBERRY!

CRAB CRAB MD

{I don't like cranberries.}

MARIO NERA

You don't like cranBERRIES?

CRAB CRAB MD

{No.}

MARIO NERA

Well then you've never had a cranBERRY from the Nera Family Farm! Please, try one. I insist.

NARRATOR

Mario thrusts the basket of cranberries toward Crab Crab.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Okay... Fine.}

NARRATOR

Crab crab gently takes one and pops it in his mouth.

CRAB CRAB MD

{This is the greatest thing I've ever eaten!}

MARIO NERA

I told you.

Please, come in. If you're helping my children cope with their illness, then I must repay you.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Okay... I'll stay for a bit.}

inside the farm

NARRATOR

Mario herds Crab Crab into the house, where there's a mudroom. Mario unhooks a hose from the wall and sprays himself to get all the bits of plant off before going inside properly. Crab Crab does the same and they quickly slip into the house proper. The water is beautifully clear in here.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Wow those filters really do work.}

MARIO NERA

I try to give my children the healthiest life possible. They're my world.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Papa!

MARIO NERA

Nina!

NARRATOR

The tiniest, most adorably bright eyed baby shrimp comes zipping through the house to Mario.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Papa's back! (Asthmatic cough)

BABY SHRIMP 1

Papa!

BABY SHRIMP 2

Papa!

NARRATOR

As the tiniest shrimp hugs Mario, a whole herd-- school? I'll look into that-- of baby shrimp come swimming in and join in the group hug. As they break apart, the shrimp babies look at Crab Crab, confused.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

(Cough)

Who's that?

(CONTINUED)

MARIO NERA

This is Crab Crab MD. He was making sure that the house was safe for all of you.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Hello, nice to meet you}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Hi!

BABY SHRIMP 2

Hi!

MARIO NERA

Could one of you bring theses cranBERRIES to the kitchen?

BABY SHRIMP 1

I'll do it!

BABY SHRIMP 2

No! I want to help Papa!

MARIO NERA

Why don't you bring it together.

BABY SHRIMP 1

Yay!

BABY SHRIMP 2

We love you Papa!

NARRATOR

Mario hands them the basket and they all float off to the kitchen. But the tiniest one stays behind.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

I missed you so much today, Papa. You were working for so long!

NARRATOR

He picks her up.

MARIO NERA

Nothing makes me happier than coming back inside after a long day of work to all your beautiful smiles.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

(Adorable coughs)

MARIO NERA

This is Wee Little Nina Nera... She has suffered the most of all my children. We nearly lost her when she was only a baby. But the whole family came together and we saved her.

(CONTINUED)

CRAB CRAB MD
{That's beautiful.}

NARRATOR
Crab and Mario gaze at each other a moment. Wee Little Nina Nera watches them suspiciously.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
Papa...?

MARIO NERA
Is everything alright, darling?

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
Is Doctor Crab your "special friend", Papa?

MARIO NERA
Excuse me?

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
Habi said that you had a special friend now.

MARIO NERA
Habi said what!?

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
Habi said that you had a sp--

MARIO NERA
That's fine, I heard you, darling. Doctor Crab... How exactly did you come to make this inspection?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Some mouthy shrimp kid walked into the clinic, asked for inhalers, and told me to come look over the filters here.}

MARIO NERA
Ah... I see. Pardon me for asking, but do you happen to be single?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Well... yes.}

MARIO NERA
Excuse me for a moment.

NARRATOR
He releases Wee Little Nina Nera and goes out to the bottom of the open entry area, his arms folded.

MARIO NERA

(inhales deeply) HABI NERA YOU GET DOWN HERE RIGHT NOW!

SHRIMPS

(whispery noises)

NARRATOR

There's a great susurration throughout the house as many young shrimp suddenly find other places to be. Susurration? Like, a whispery rustling noise. Habi slowly appears through the banister on the upper landing.

HABI NERA

Hey dad. What's up?

MARIO NERA

Come here right now and apologize to Doctor Crab.

HABI NERA

Apologize? What's going on?

MARIO NERA

Doctor Crab, excuse me a moment.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh. Okay.}

NARRATOR

Mario swims to the upper level, leaving Crab Crab alone with Wee Little Nina Nera.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Papa hasn't had a special friend since Mama died.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh... Uh...}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Do you want to see my sea urchin collection?

[Zp]

MARIO NERA

Habi, I've told you a million times I don't have time for a relationship right now. Not with you kids and running the farm.

HABI NERA

Relationship? Oh were you thinking of dating Doctor Crab? That's a great idea!

MARIO NERA

Don't be smart with me!

HABI NERA

Dad, I love you.

MARIO NERA

Oh, I love you too-- Don't distract me!

HABI NERA

But you really don't need to work as much as you do. I have a business degree now. If you want me to take over the farm one day, now is my chance to start learning. You've done so much for us. Especially since mom died. And as your honoured eldest child--

MARIO NERA

There were 11 eggs in your clutch.

HABI NERA

--I think it's time that we started taking care of you for a change. You deserve it.

MARIO NERA

I told you. I'm not ready.

HABI NERA

Fine, but this Crab guy seems pretty nice. You should give him a chance. Plus he's pretty cute.

MARIO NERA

Habi! He is much too old for you!

HABI NERA

But not for you. Think about it.

MARIO NERA

Wait! You--

NARRATOR

Habi shoots Mario a quadruple fingergun and a wink, and floats backward deeper into the house.

MARIO NERA

That disrespectful little...

(sighs)

This conversation is not over!

NARRATOR

Mario spins around in a huff and sinks back to the ground floor.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

Crab Crab is sitting in the living room with Wee Little Nina Nera and a few other shrimp children and shrimp teens. Nina is showing off her sea urchin collection.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

And this one is named Steve and this one is named Penelope and this one is also named Steve--

CRAB CRAB MD

{And that one?}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Um... That one can also be Steve. But this one is my favourite...

NARRATOR

Wee Little Nina Nera picks up a massive urchin. Like at least thrice as big as her.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

I call it Big Bertha.

BABY SHRIMP 1

Nobody cares about your urchins, Nina!

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Doctor Crab cares!

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yeah, be nice to each other.}

MARIO NERA

Carbo Nera, be nice.

Thank you for putting up with them, Doctor Crab.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh, no problem. They're wonderful.}

MARIO NERA

Yes, they really are. Most of the time.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I didn't mean to cause any trouble.}

MARIO NERA

Oh, you didn't cause any trouble. It's Habi and their... That's just the way they are.

CRAB CRAB MD

{But, I think I'll get going.}

(CONTINUED)

MARIO NERA

Oh. So soon? I was about to start dinner.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

You're leaving?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yes, but it was nice meeting you.}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Okay... Will you be at the Flounder's Day dance tomorrow?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh-- I wasn't--}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Please! It would make me so happy if you were there!

BABY SHRIMP 1

Yeah!

BABY SHRIMP 2

Yeah!

MARIO NERA

We'll all be there. My children and of course... me as well.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'll try to make it.}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Yay!

BABY SHRIMP 1

Yay!

MARIO NERA

Well... If you do make it, I hope I have a chance to get to know you better.

CRAB CRAB MD

{That'd be nice.}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Say bye Big Bertha. Big Bertha says bye.

NARRATOR

Well that was cute. Wanna just-- Yeah I was about to say! Let's skip ahead to the dance. Let me just find this barn...

[zzp. zzp. vrrrrrrr-]

Beavers, beavers, beavers, catering, eel, beavers, dance!

[chk]

Flounder's Day Dance

We made it, along with everyone else in Warm Puddle. It's a barn for sure, but also a beaver lodge. The walls are tightly packed sticks, logs, mud, moss, etc. The scuffed hardwood floor slopes, half-in and half-out of the water, and partiers move back and forth as they please. A crane is playing a one-bird-band on a riser at one end of the hall. A crayfish whips out a fiddle and joins in to much excitement. A large table laden with bog fare is very popular, the centrepiece of artfully arranged roasted breadbox crickets is half-gone already.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Wow... This place is packed}

NARRATOR

Crab Crab MD scuttles in from the water, looking overwhelmed by festivities.

HOPPIN' HOOD

Hey Buddy! Cheer up!

NARRATOR

A toad with a small green cap emerges from the crowd and claps Crab Crab on the shoulder.

HOPPIN' HOOD

Those humans can't stop us from enjoying Flounder's Day!

CRAB CRAB MD

{Right.}

HOPPIN' HOOD

Say don't I know you from somewhere?

CRAB CRAB MD

{I don't think so.}

HOPPIN' HOOD

Hood? Hoppin' Hood? Taking from the humans, giving to the creatures. Fighting the good fight! No?

CRAB CRAB MD

{No.}

HOPPIN' HOOD

Oh well... Happy Flounder's Day!

NARRATOR

The toad bounds off into the crowd, leaving Crab Crab confused and lonely once again.

(CONTINUED)

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
Doctor Crab! You came!

CRAB CRAB MD
{What?}

NARRATOR
Wee Little Nina Nera comes darting out of nowhere toward Crab Crab.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
Papa was sure you weren't coming!

CRAB CRAB MD
{Am I late?}

HABI NERA
Only a little late.

NARRATOR
Nina Nera hugs Crab Crab as Habi comes up behind her.

HABI NERA
Dad! Over here! Crab Crab's here!

NARRATOR
Mario does a full 180 pivot to look over at them. His conversational partner, a bristly-looking rodent in a party bonnet, looks rather insulted.

MARIO NERA
(containing excitement)
Oh he's-- I'll be over in a minute.
(to the toad)
Excuse me Mrs. Muskrat, a friend of mine just arrived.

MRS. MUSKRAT
*muskrat noises

NARRATOR
Mario quickly makes his way over to Crab Crab and his children. He's got a big dad bag in case of child emergencies, but he dressed up a bit. He's looking dapper.

MARIO NERA
Crab Crab, you made it.

HABI NERA
Oh! Did you hear that?

MARIO NERA

Hear hat? I didn't--

HABI NERA

They totally just said kids can win sea urchins if they play pin the eye on the flounder!

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

WHAT!? Can we go?

HABI NERA

Oh, I'll handle this dad, you just stay here with Crab Crab.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

I want more Steves!

NARRATOR

Habi starts ushering Wee Little Nina away, but then pauses and turns to Crab Crab.

HABI NERA

Oh! I made these for you. Business cards.

NARRATOR

They hand a thick stack of cards over to Crab Crab.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh. Thanks.}

HABI NERA

I took the liberty of giving some out already. Okay.
Bye.

(whispering)

Talk to each other.

NARRATOR

They quickly disappear into the crowd with Nina.

MARIO NERA

Habi can be a little controlling sometimes.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh, they're a good kid.}

MARIO NERA

Actually I also got something for you.

CRAB CRAB MD

{You did?}

NARRATOR

Mario reaches into his bag, shuffles past a few toys and pulls out a small basket of cranberries.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Cranberries!}

MARIO NERA

Well you enjoyed them so much yesterday, I thought--

CRAB CRAB MD

{It's wonderful. Thank you!}

MARIO NERA

You're welcome.

NARRATOR

Crab Crab mouths one from the basket, both claws occupied.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Delicious}

MARIO NERA

To be honest... It was actually Habi's idea.

CRAB CRAB MD

{They have great ideas.}

MARIO NERA

Well, a few too many ideas if you ask me.

CRAB CRAB MD

{This one was good, maybe others are...}

MARIO NERA

I see... They told you they think I work too much.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Do you?}

NARRATOR

Crab fits the stack of cards into the little basket, freeing a claw. Mario watches pensively.

MARIO NERA

It doesn't matter. I need to work as much as I work. I have a family to take care of.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Then why does Habi think that?}

(CONTINUED)

MARIO NERA

(Sighs)

I recently spent some time on the surface... And a few of my older children took on some farming duties. But now that I'm back I want to get to work. Habi doesn't understand that I don't have time for me.

CRAB CRAB MD

{But they aren't suggesting you give up time from your family.}

MARIO NERA

But if I'm not working the farm then who is? Habi?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yes. And the other kids.}

MARIO NERA

They're young, let them have their lives.

CRAB CRAB MD

{But what about the smaller ones? Don't you want to spend more time with them?}

MARIO NERA

I still have lots of time to spend with the younger ones.

CRAB CRAB MD

{But not yourself.}

MARIO NERA

But that's not important. I'm a father first.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Okay. That's just my opinion.}

MARIO NERA

(laughs)

I feel like we've done nothing but talk about me. Tell me about yourself. Do you have family?

CRAB CRAB MD

{No...}

MARIO NERA

Oh. Sorry... Where are you from?

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'm from here}

MARIO NERA

From Warm Puddle? I'm sure I would remember you... What year did you graduate? Did you go to Bog Prep?

CRAB CRAB MD

{No, Puddle High. Then I got my degree in Big Water City. But I used to have a clinic on the surface.}

MARIO NERA

What happened to the clinic? Did the humans revoke your license? That happened to us, it made it nearly impossible to sell our produce on the surface.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yes. And then I spent nearly a decade lost, but now I'm back to help the people of Warm Puddle.}

MARIO NERA

Gone for a decade? You must have seen so much of the world!

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh... I don't want to get into that}

MARIO NERA

Oh. Sorry we don't have to talk about--

CRAB CRAB MD

{It's a long story.}

MARIO NERA

I didn't mean to pry.

(beat)

I'm glad you came back. We can really use a doctor around here. You don't know the lengths I had to go to to care for my children's asthma.

CRAB CRAB MD

{It's nice to be back.}

(beat)

{Do you want to dance?}

MARIO NERA

Dance?

CRAB CRAB MD

{yeah}

MARIO NERA

Sure.

NARRATOR

Mario shucks his bag, Crab's little basket resting on top. Crab takes Mario by the claw and leads him to the dance floor. The crane and crayfish are stomping, and the whole room spins, bobbing up and down and moving in circles that expand and contract with the music. Couples whirl energetically, and long hand-holding chains follow complex dance patterns that cycle in and out of the water. Some elders sit near the food table, clapping as Habi twirls Nina, then Carbo, and down a line of shrimp siblings waiting their turn. Crab Crab and Mario come in just as the song ends.

[The song ends and the crowd briefly claps]

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh no, we missed the song.}

CRAYFISH

Alright everybody.

NARRATOR

The crayfish on the stage silences the crowd.

CRAYFISH

Now we'd like to dedicate this next little ditty to all you love-bugs out there. Happy Flounders day.

[super romantic song starts play]

MARIO NERA

Oh. This is--

CRAB CRAB MD

(suave)

{Care to dance?}

NARRATOR

Mario takes Crab Crab's claw and Crab Crab pulls him in tight. They sway slowly to the music.

[Music continues]

Mario leans his head against Crab Crab's. They look peaceful. And happy.

[The song plays out till it's end. Small applause.]

MARIO NERA

That was lovely.

(CONTINUED)

CRAB CRAB MD
{Yeah it was.}

MARIO NERA
For the first time in a long time... I feel like myself. Not a father, not a farmer... Just... Mario.

CRAB CRAB MD
{Me too. I've been alone for a long time. But not anymore.}

MARIO NERA
It's nice to not be alone.

NARRATOR
They sit in some chairs away from the dance floor. Crab Crab takes Mario's pincer in his claw and they sit in a pleasant peaceful--

HOPPIN' HOOD
There you are! I knew I recognized you!

NARRATOR
Crab Crab sits up, converting back into his battle-ready bounty-hunting self as the toad from earlier waves at them.

MARIO NERA
Is that... Hoppin' Hood? You know him?

NARRATOR
Crab Crab stays focused on Hoppin's Hood as he... hops closer and closer to them. Mario's shrimpy eye-stalks flash between the two of them.

HOPPIN' HOOD
Crab Crab MD!

CRAB CRAB MD
{What are you looking for?}

NARRATOR
The toad pulls one of Habi's business cards from his pocket.

HOPPIN' HOOD
I knew I recognized you! We worked together! Remember me? Hoppin' Hood!

MARIO NERA
You *worked* with him? But he's a criminal--

HOPPIN' HOOD
Activist!

CRAB CRAB MD
{Um...}

HOPPIN' HOOD
Yeah, come on, Crab Crab. It's a couple years back now.
I was furthering the cause, sticking it to the Hoo-Man.
It was a job taking out a factory in... Swordsville?

CRAB CRAB MD
{I don't know what you're talking about...}

HOPPIN' HOOD
Sure you do! You took out the guard tower
single-handed.

MARIO NERA
A guard tower?

CRAB CRAB MD
{This was--}

HOPPIN' HOOD
Yeah, it was definitely Swordsville! We kidnapped the
factory owner! Remember? Little guy with a big hat.

MARIO NERA
You kidnapped someone!?

CRAB CRAB MD
{I told you. I was lost.}

HOPPIN' HOOD
We didn't hurt 'em. Just ransom, y'know?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Yes. I remember you. But I've left that part of myself
behind!}

HOPPIN' HOOD
What? You're not a mercenary anymore? You were the best
of the best!

CRAB CRAB MD
{Please...}

HOPPIN' HOOD
I was gonna offer you a job!

CRAB CRAB MD
{Please!}

HOPPIN' HOOD
Fine. You have a gift my friend. It's a shame it'll go
to waste.

NARRATOR
Hood leaves, disappointed.

MARIO NERA
You were a mercenary? That's what you did while you
were away?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Yes...}

MARIO NERA
Well, I'm not sure if I can have a mercenary around my
children.

CRAB CRAB MD
{You're right. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to--}

MARIO NERA
As I said, I'm a father first and that means that--

CRAB CRAB MD
{Say no more. I understand I'll leave immediately.}

NARRATOR
Crab Crab stands and walks away, his head hung low.

MARIO NERA
I'm... Sorry.

NARRATOR
And though he's broad, Crab Crab is lost quickly in the
crowd. Mario looks forlornly after, then retrieves his
bag. He holds the little cranberry basket.

[ffwd, zp]

Back at the clinic

NARRATOR
It's the next morning. Crab is sulking behind the
counter of his clinic.

[watery jingle]

NARRATOR

A salmon swims in.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Hello...?}

SALMON

Hey. Think I could get a dozen tulips?

CRAB CRAB MD

{This is medical clinic now}

SALMON

What happened to the florist?

CRAB CRAB MD

{I don't know.}

SALMON

Oh. Well it should still be a florist!

CRAB CRAB MD

{I don't know what to tell you}

SALMON

I'll be taking my business elsewhere!

NARRATOR

The salmon whips around and powers out the door.

CRAB CRAB MD

{*sigh*}

NARRATOR

Poor guy.

[watery jingle]

NARRATOR

Oh. Habi's here.

HABI NERA

Was that a patient? Did the business cards work?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Nope. Here for flowers.}

HABI NERA

Oh. Sorry.

CRAB CRAB MD

{It's fine.}

(CONTINUED)

HABI NERA

Hey, I heard about what happened... With my dad.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh. I'm not like that any--}

HABI NERA

I know. You told me you weren't proud of your past.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'm trying to change.}

HABI NERA

If you say you're trying to change, I believe you.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Thanks.}

HABI NERA

Well I should be thanking you really.

CRAB CRAB MD

{What?}

HABI NERA

You must've said something to my dad, because he's letting me rebrand the farm.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Oh. That's good.}

HABI NERA

Yeah, I don't how, but you managed to change his mind.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Well, I'm happy for you.}

HABI NERA

And... I bet if you tried... You could change his mind about *other things*.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I don't know...}

HABI NERA

Come on!

CRAB CRAB MD

{I think it's better if I keep my distance.}

HABI NERA

Don't give up. Go talk to him.

(CONTINUED)

CRAB CRAB MD
{I said no.}

HABI NERA
You're the one who said I had good ideas.

CRAB CRAB MD
{Like the business cards? That's what caused this whole mess!}

HABI NERA
Don't blame my business cards. Your past had to come up eventually.

CRAB CRAB MD
{I'm not ready to talk about it.}

HABI NERA
Fine. Do whatever you want.

[watery jingle]

NARRATOR
They both look over to the door as an adult turtle swims in with a little kid turtle.

TURTLE
Hey... I'm looking for--

CRAB CRAB MD
{We don't sell flowers.}

TURTLE
Flowers? No, this is the clinic right? You're Doctor Crab?

CRAB CRAB MD
{What?}

HABI NERA
Yes!

TURTLE
I got your business card last night. I want to make an appointment. My son has a soft spot on his shell.

HABI NERA
Still think they were a bad idea?

CRAB CRAB MD
{Hmph}

TURTLE

So? Doctor Crab? Can you squeeze us in?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yes! I can look at him right now.}

TURTLE

Right now? That'd be great!

HABI NERA

Alright, I'll let you do your thing. Think about what I said.

... And what you said. About my great ideas. You said I have great ideas. And I do.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'll... I'll think about it.}

NARRATOR

Habi jets away as Crab Crab pulls out his clipboard.

Okay... I think I know where to go from here. I've told a story or two in my day... Unicorn excluded, alright, do I ever get to live that down?

[Zp. Ffwd, click]

Back at the farm

NARRATOR

Later on, back at the Nera Family Farm... Mario is sitting outside with Wee Little Nina Nera and a handful of other shrimp kids.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Everyone, I present to you my latest urchin... Bigger Bertha!

BABY SHRIMP 1

Urchins are for babies, Nina!

BABY SHRIMP 2

Big kids like sea cucumbers!

MARIO NERA

Kids! Be nice to your sister! She won that at the dance last night and she's very proud.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Yeah!

(CONTINUED)

BABY SHRIMP 1
Sorry Wee Little Nina
Nera...

BABY SHRIMP 2
Sorry Wee Little Nina
Nera...

MARIO NERA
Good.

CRAB CRAB MD
{Mind if I cut in?}

MARIO NERA
Oh--

NARRATOR
Guess who just showed up? Yeah, I told you I've done this before. All things considered, the timing was pretty good with the unicorn. We missed the fight, but there were other more important things at stake!

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
Doctor Crab! Look! This is Bigger Bertha!

CRAB CRAB MD
{Wow, very impressive.}

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
See, Doctor Crab likes it!

BABY SHRIMP 1
Oh... Doctor Crab is cool.

BABY SHRIMP 2
If we don't like urchins are we not cool?

BABY SHRIMP 1
He *is* a trend-setter...

MARIO NERA
Hello Crab Crab--

CRAB CRAB MD
{I just want to have a quick word.}

MARIO NERA
Um... Okay. Kids could you go in the house?

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA
But I wanted to show Doctor Crab how much bigger Bigger Bertha is than Big Bertha!

MARIO NERA

Just give us a minute.

WEE LITTLE NINA NERA

Fine... Bye Doctor Crab.

BABY SHRIMP 1

Bye Doctor Crab!

BABY SHRIMP 2

Bye Doctor Crab!

CRAB CRAB MD

{Bye.}

NARRATOR

Nina and the others jet away toward the house. One of the older ones tries to steal her urchin, and Nina stabs her with it. Ah, childhood.

MARIO NERA

So...?

CRAB CRAB MD

{I had a good time last night}

MARIO NERA

(sigh)

CRAB CRAB MD

{Until...}

MARIO NERA

I had a good time too. A great time, but--

CRAB CRAB MD

{I just want to explain myself. I've changed and I want--}

MARIO NERA

I understand. And I believe in second chances. I have a criminal record myself. According to the humans, we're all criminals. But it's not about me. I have to think about my children. You've done some violent things, Crab Crab.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I know. And if I heard what you heard, I'd feel protective too, but... I'm trying to be better. Trust me.}

MARIO NERA

I can't just let myself trust you, Crab Crab. I... I can't.

(CONTINUED)

CRAB CRAB MD

{Then let me prove I've changed.}

MARIO NERA

Fine. Tell me. What made you change?

CRAB CRAB MD

{I was a bounty hunter for a long time. And I did some terrible things, I acknowledge that. I was cold and indifferent, because I didn't let myself care about anyone else. I was alone.}

MARIO NERA

That's not enough reason to--

CRAB CRAB MD

{But recently I met two people who fundamentally changed the way I see the world. They showed me how immature I was. How to care about people again, how to help. A human girl and a fish with legs who--}

MARIO NERA

Wait. Did you say a fish... With legs?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yes I know it sounds--}

MARIO NERA

What was the name of the human with her?

CRAB CRAB MD

{October Jones, but let me--}

MARIO NERA

You know October and Fish!?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Yeah... You met them?}

MARIO NERA

Yes! They're the ones who got me the inhalers for my children!

CRAB CRAB MD

{They're the ones who helped me! And taught me to help others!}

MARIO NERA

That sounds like them... Teaching you to help others.

CRAB CRAB MD

{So now do you believe I've changed!?!}

MARIO NERA

(Sigh)

I don't hold your past against you. But, Crab Crab, what's between us... I don't--

CRAB CRAB MD

{This isn't only about my past... It's also about yours. You keep finding excuses to be alone.}

MARIO NERA

No. They're not excuses. I need to--

CRAB CRAB MD

{Let me in.}

MARIO NERA

It's been a long time since I let someone new in my life...

CRAB CRAB MD

{It's been a long time for me too. So let's try together.}

NARRATOR

Crab Crab puts a claw to Mario's face. Mario looks down.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Please?}

MARIO NERA

I don't know what to do.

CRAB CRAB MD

{Change.}

MARIO NERA

I don't know how.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I'll help you. And so will Habi, and your kids, and everyone you let close enough to do it.}

MARIO NERA

How can I trust that?

CRAB CRAB MD

{Trust that I'll bring you toast in the morning, and sit with you at night. Trust that we'll be there for each other, even when we don't like each other very much. Trust that we can sit in a room together and never run out of things to talk about. Trust that no one wants to be alone, not even you. I don't like who I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CRAB CRAB MD (cont'd)

was before, but I want to know everything about you. Because baby, I think you might be it for me. I'm knocking, all you have to do is open the door. Metaphorically; I realize we're outside.}

MARIO NERA

Stop. You had me at Crab.

NARRATOR

Crab Crab smiles warmly then pulls Mario in for a passionate crustacean kiss.

CRAB CRAB MD

{I love you.}

MARIO NERA

{I love you too.}

NARRATOR

I don't know what they said, but it sounded very romantic.

(pleasant sigh)

[Zp, ffwd, click]

Epilogue

A couple days later, at the clinic. Oh wow, it's bustling now. Flourishing, even. There's a beautiful wooden sign hung on the outside of the building, and Habi Nera the PR wizard is standing outside, enticing people in. On the porch, some of Nera kids are running a stand with jams and assorted fresh fruit. I think also some candles? Inside, Mario is sitting at the counter, taking peoples' names. The door to the office opens, releasing a cloud of bubbles, a beaver with a splint, and Doctor Crab Crab MD himself. He waves the next patient in for their consultation. Before he disappears back into the office, he leans on the counter to hold one of Mario's pincers. Mario smiles at him. It looks nice, everyone's happy.

Cute. Okay, I promise that next time we'll get back to Fish and October. Hopefully. Assuming I ever find them. They're very elusive. That teleportation really leaves no trail at all. For now... Let's stop.

credits

HABI NERA

This has been October Jones & Fish with Legs, a fantasy adventure buddy comedy quest adventure! Whoa! No. That does not work. Note: avoid too many adjectives.

Created by Dexter Lavery-Callender, Elisabeth Nyveen, and Zoë Bujold. With music by Alexander Cruz. Featuring the voice talents of... oh wow, that's a lot of people. Can we cut that down? No? Okay (deep breath) [actors in order of appearance], and Elisabeth Nyveen.

Review the podcast on your favourite platform. That's really a great way to support the show and it's not much effort on your part. Say whatever you want. Any press is good press. And of course follow their social media. They finally have a twitter account. Also, you guys have really been under promoting your website: octoberandfish.ca It has some fun bonus stuff like pages from October's journal and character stat cards. Check it out. octoberandfish.ca

Now my self-plug: Next time you're passing through Boggisog Bog, come stop by the Nera Family Farm. Take Exit 106 off the Warm Puddle Highway for a warm, healthy, family welcome. Note to self, tune up the farm's slogan.

Alright, that's enough free advice. Thanks for listening.