



Beautiful

Encanto (2021) · Not Rated · 2457 words

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Fandom: Encanto (2021) Rating: Not Rated Category: Gen

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Relationships: "Abuela" Alma Madrigal & Bruno Madrigal, Bruno Madrigal & Bruno Madrigal's Rats

Characters: Bruno Madrigal, "Abuela" Alma Madrigal, Bruno Madrigal's Rats

Tags: Gifts (Disney: Encanto), Mother-Son Relationship, POV Alternating, POV Third Person, Bonding, Family Bonding, Bruno Madrigal Has Visions, Bruno Madrigal Needs a Hug, Bruno Madrigal Loves the Madrigal Family, Bruno Madrigal-centric, "Abuela" Alma Madrigal Tries, Complex "Abuela" Alma Madrigal, No "Abuela" Alma Madrigal Bashing, "Abuela" Alma Madrigal-centric, Protective "Abuela" Alma Madrigal, Residents of Encanto Village Being Assholes (Disney), but only slightly - Freeform

Words: 2457 Chapters: 1 chapter Status: Complete Published: 2025-07-02

Bruno's Gift has caused him a lot of problems over the years. He had good reasons to avoid using it for over a decade.

But it's not all bad. In fact, as Alma will soon find out, it can even be beautiful.

Fun fact: I have never watched this movie.

Edit: As of 3 July, 2025, I have watched this movie! ☐

I've decided that Bruno's favorite rat is named 'Ratito' as a pun. It means 'little while' (therefore being related to time), but looks like it could be a term of endearment for a rat (it is not), like 'Brunito' is a term of endearment for Bruno. Thoughts?

Bruno sat on the floor of his room, idly watching the sand swirling around him. He hummed, letting his powers move and shift as they would, not looking for any future in particular. The only constant was that the people he saw weren't ones he knew.

He didn't know where they lived, only that they were far from the Encanto. He didn't know their names unless they were spoken in his visions, and sound was quite rare with his Gift. He didn't have the slightest bit of context for what was happening beyond what he saw.

And, most importantly, he didn't have any way whatsoever to tell them about what his powers showed him.

After ten years not using his Gift (though he couldn't avoid the occasional unintentional glimpse or prophetic dream), he'd almost forgotten how nice it could be to just watch without fears or expectations.

He had a few favorites among those whose fates he read, people whose lives he'd try to piece together from their possible futures. But, for the most part, he was entirely detached from these strangers.

Some of the things he saw were horrifying, as he was known for, leaving him regretting his Gift all over again. Others were sweet, or silly, which is what led him to him doing this again and again despite the risk of seeing something terrible. A lot of it was just confusing or mundane.

No matter what, it tended to give him *great* ideas for his telenovelas.

"Ah!" Bruno gasped, excited, sitting up a bit straighter. He focused in on one particular vision, of a woman dancing with a man, flickering between two distinct images. The woman remained mostly stable, with only the slightest changes, but her partner switched between a tall man with an easy smile and a shorter one with shiny hair.

The other visions faded back into the sand as Bruno put all his focus on the dancing woman, trying to decide which man he was rooting for. Her smile was wider with the tall man, but he could've sworn her eyes sparkled with the shorter one. It was a tough call.

Bruno loved the uncertain visions best. He would stare at them for hours, which didn't sound fun to most people — it was usually the same few images repeating over and over again, after all. But Bruno was sensitive to his visions, and the feeling of different futures shifting and changing, becoming more and less likely? There was nothing like it. Nothing like it in the whole world.

Bruno was the only one to feel it. It was just his, no-one else's. *That* was the Gift Casita had given him, and he cherished it despite the downsides.

Bruno almost lost control of his vision when his rats started squeaking urgently. Someone was coming. Pepa was having a date with Felix, Julieta and Mirabel were both at market, Camilo was babysitting some village kids along with Antonio... That left only one person who would enter his room without knocking first.

"Bruno?" Yep, that was his Mama alright.

Bruno counted in his head how many hours it had been since he started this vision session. He could keep it up for even-he-didn't-know-how-long if he just let it dissolve, but if he wanted to keep it... It hadn't been too long, he could still turn it into a tablet if he wanted, maybe with a bit of a headache but nothing too bad. He could check in later to see which guy she picked, though that meant he would miss his favorite part.

"Bruno, are you up there?"

He breathed in deeply, preparing to end the vision before—

Wait, what was he doing? They weren't supposed to be hiding anymore, right? He loved his Mama, but he wasn't going to care what she thought of him anymore. So what if he refused to use his Gift for the villagers but was willing to use it for cheap entertainment? That was his choice, and he was sticking to it!

As the sound of his mother's footsteps climbing the steps reached his ears, he suddenly, desperately wanted to flip up his hood and pretend to be brave Hernando. But that would cover his eyes and disrupt his vision, and he *really* wanted to see who the woman chose, so...

He sighed, letting out the breath he'd been holding, and focused back on the dance. He lost himself to the swirling sands, focusing on the beauty of his Gift rather than his approaching Mama.

"Bru— oh." Alma paused at the top step, eyes wide.

She had come to check on her son, growing worried when no-one had seen him for some hours. She didn't admit it out loud, but she was terrified he would run off again, this time farther than just the walls.

Instead he was sat cross-legged in the middle of his room, surrounded by swirling sand, eyes glowing like eery searchlights. Rats rested on his lap, shoulders, and head, content and unafraid of the whirlwind all around them. Alma could not quite make out the image in the sand, but it looked like... A couple dancing?

She hadn't expected to find her boy in the middle of a vision. For one heartwrenching moment, Alma thought he had changed his mind about using his Gift for the villagers. It would've been unthinkable to her of just the year before, but she did not want him to go back to serving the Encanto with the rest of the family. Now that she truly understood just how badly he had once suffered from scorn and rumor, she did not want him to become the town's scapegoat once more.

But her fears were washed away when she saw his face. His eyes were soft, mouth quirked slightly in a contented smile, his entire body more relaxed and peaceful than she had seen since he was shorter than her knee. Her son looked decades younger,

basking in the green glow of his powers in a way she hadn't known he could — she thought his visions brought him nothing but stress and fear.

(And yet she'd still insisted, time and again, that he glimpse into the future. Had let the villagers insist and plead and demand for years. She was ashamed of the woman she'd been for so long)

"Whose future are you looking at, mijo?" She asked quietly, not wanting to break his concentration, braving the sand to sit next to him.

"I, I don't know their names." Bruno's eyes flicked briefly in her direction, his body regaining some of the tension he normally carried. She hated to be the one to cause it. "They... don't live in Encanto?"

He squeaked it out like a child who had just gotten old enough to read more graphic books and wasn't sure if their parents would be upset at them for liking the tame fights contained within. Like it was a secret he wasn't sure was terrible or not, and he was looking for her approval even while expecting to be told he couldn't do it anymore.

She was surprised he was looking outside their home, but she kept her reaction to a curious hum, calmly asking "Why predict the future for someone you don't know?"

"I don't know, Mami. I just like watching them, I guess." Bruno shrugged, looking away. He took a deep breath, seeming to brace himself, and focused back on the dancing people. At least, Alma was pretty sure that's what they were. She couldn't make out much within the sand, but Bruno stared at it like it was the most interesting thing in the world, not just like he was avoiding her gaze. When he next spoke, his voice was steadier, more confident. "It's peaceful, seeing the future without worrying that someone will get mad at me for what's there, you know?"

He bit his lip, growing nervous again. He looked a bit like he was preparing for a fight he didn't want to have but couldn't avoid "And, and I'm not stopping, and I'm not going to start using it for the villagers again either—"

"Okay." Alma agreed easily.

"—It's my gift and I'll decide what to do with it and— 'okay'?" Bruno blinked, the glow in his eyes dimming, the vision flickering around them. With a panicked yelp that actually managed to startle some of his rats (he'd apologize profusely to them later), he turned his full attention back to the sands, eyes burning bright as ever.

(One rat, Bruno's favorite, barely reacted at all. He was used to his favorite human's eccentricities)

"Is it a good vision?" Alma asked, after a time spent in mostly-companionable silence.

"I don't know." Bruno said quietly, seeming cautiously calmer the more time went on without him getting in trouble. "I think so. I mean, she seems happy, so it probably is."

"Will you tell me what it's about?" Alma asked. Not wanting to repeat her past mistakes of pressuring him into giving visions, she added. "Only if you want to, of course."

'Of course', she says.

Bruno didn't feel very much bitterness very often, surprisingly enough, but he felt a bit in that moment. He breathed through it. His Mama had admitted her mistakes and apologized. And he apologized for disappearing. They were both trying to be better. She'd forgiven him, the entire family had, so he was going to try his best to forgive them in turn.

And! She didn't seem to have a problem with him using his powers for himself! And not the Encanto!

Still, he was, maybe, a little bit worried about her request to know about the vision.

Okay, a LOT worried.

"It won't affect the Encanto." He promised, just in case he hadn't been as clear as he thought about that. His hand trailed across the fur of the rat on his lap, his favorite among his furry little friends, helping to calm his nerves. His Mama nodded her understanding. "W-why do you want to know?"

A part of his brain was screaming at him to just tell her. His entire life, that was how it went. Someone asked him about the future, he answered, he was blamed for whatever that answer was. He was never praised for the good ones, people barely paid attention to those.

(They outnumbered the bad ones. He'd counted.)

But he had a decade of not using his Gift to back him up now. A decade of thinking and figuring himself out. He'd said no to Mirabel before he'd given in, and that had been for a good reason! This was just some strangers dancing, he could keep it to himself if he wanted, he was allowed to not reveal his visions unless it was really important!

...right?

"No particular reason. Just the curiosity of an old woman, I suppose." His Mama answered, smiling at him. A second later, she frowned, making him worried she'd force him to tell her after all. "It's okay, Brunito, you don't have to tell me. I just wanted to know what has captured my hijo's attention so entirely, nothing more."

Bruno opened his mouth, not completely sure what he was going to say, but cut himself off with a gasp. His eyes snapped back to his dancing woman, a giggle escaping his throat as temporal sensations ran along his nerves. *This was it!* His favorite part.

Making a sudden decision, Bruno grabbed his Mama's hand. He couldn't share how it felt, and probably wouldn't if he could, but he could let her see what he did.

Who was he to deny an old woman's curiosity, hmmm?

Besides, he wanted his Mama to see the beautiful part of his Gift. Not just the curse.

Alma sucked in a sharp breath as her son grabbed her hand and the image in the sand sharpened. It was indeed people dancing, a woman and a man. Or, two men? Yes, the image was switching between one man and the other, the woman looking equally happy in slightly different ways with each.

Slowly, the images changed. The people were older, their clothing more casual. The woman and the tall man were standing apart, faces twisted in fury as they yelled at one another, both teary eyed. The woman was laying in a bed, the shorter man standing next to her, both beaming at a small child clutched in her arms.

"Which one will come true?" Alma asked, whispering, worried more than ever about disrupting the vision.

"I don't know." Bruno chuckled, looking and sounding so light. She had wondered for many, many years where her darling baby boy had gone, and apparently he'd been within the sands all this time. "If I had to guess, she's still deciding who to dance with."

They both watched with baited breath as the images flickered. Long minutes passed of the same two scenes, yet Alma found she couldn't look away. She could barely blink.

Bruno gasped, grinning brightly, the glow from his eyes spreading to skitter across his skin. He squirmed as if he was being tickled, the hand not holding hers reaching up to stifle a laugh. The images finally solidified, showing the couple and their child happy as could be.

Bruno let go of her hand, his eyes returning to what passed as normal for him. The sands slowed in their spinning, drifting back down to cover his floor.

(How he loved his little desert, now that his room was in its proper condition again).

Bruno yawned, his eyelids drooping. Alma could see how tired he was from using his powers, but she could see contentment alongside it.

He blinked at her and his expression changed. He looked unsure of himself, even frightened. Her son should never look like that, she decided. She was going to work on making sure he never looked like that again.

"Oh, Mijo," she smiled at him, getting a shaky smile in return, "that was *beautiful*."

Bruno loved his Mama very much, respected her a great deal despite her flaws, but he didn't care what she or the villagers or anyone thought of him anymore. Really, he didn't!

That didn't stop a sliver of his heart from healing when he heard her call his Gift beautiful.

— end of "Beautiful" —