

# Chapter 33

Paul looked around, trying to orient himself.

Even without these last weeks' teleports, Paul had experience with them. But normally, Thomas arrived on or by a bed in a room, in a house. The few times they'd arrived in a place not matching that, Paul had had to fuck Thomas back to functionality.

This was nothing like a bedroom inside a house, but Thomas was still standing. Heading to the entrance of the cavern, where daylight streamed in. The reflected light showed cabinets of rough hewed wood, and a table made the same way against the wall, with a stone ledge covered with cushions acting as a bench. An old couch was on the other side of the living room sized cavern with a bed next to that.

Those and Thomas being ambulatory meant he was used to this place, but why would his best friend have a landing stop in a cavern set up as a hermit's home?

He joined Thomas at the entrance and looked out onto the wilderness. They were in the broken side of a mountain, and through the trees a quad deer looked in their direction, before bounding away.

"This is your fortress," Paul exclaimed, understanding happening.

The rat smiled. "It is pretty solitary up here."

"When you told me about it, I envisioned something more out of Superman's place."

"Never been to the arctic. But yeah, this is where I come when I have to get away from it all." Thomas headed back in and, after admiring the trees for another second, Paul followed him.

Light came at the flick of a switch attached to the stone by the bed, and Thomas grinned when Paul canted his ear. "Solar panels up the mountain with broadcast power. Totally not power-efficient, but I didn't feel like running cables from there to here and advertising where my retreat was."

Thomas took a bottle from a cabinet and poured a few fingers of amber liquid into two glasses, handing Paul one.

"Okay, so what's up?" he took and sniffed the content. "Because I can think of a few other places you could have taken me out for a drink." He sipped the scotch.

"How are you doing?" the rat asked, sipping his drink.

"Haven't we had that talk a few days ago?"

"You mean the one your father walked in on? The one where I was considering tying you to the bed so I could use you to my satisfaction?"

Paul looked away. "I guess that's the one I mean." He headed for the couch.

"That would be where you ran off to your mom. Only to have her end up in the hospital again after your father showed up at her doorstep."

He dropped on it. "You glossed over Dietrich influencing you because of me."

Thomas shrugged. "Not that big of a deal, really." He chuckled as Paul stared at him, disbelieving. "Big, muscular tiger fucking me. Oh, how horrible. However shall I get away?"

"You didn't have a choice."

Thomas raised an eyebrow. “Teleporter here. If there’s one thing I always have, is the choice to run away. I’d have paid for it, and at some point he’d still have fucked me, but I didn’t mind it happening.” He sipped his glass. “I’m happy he redirected my attention. It wasn’t the right time for us, and not the right way.” He tapped his chest. “Which is why I’m wearing this.”

Paul nodded, the reminder he was a radiation hazard not improving his mood all that much, but comforted that his best friend was protected.

He took a long swallow. “You ever get on the dance floor expecting a nice waltz, only for a Bollywood number to erupt? Then, just as you find your footing, it’s a mariachi band taking over, followed by breakdancing, with some salsa through it to make you think you might be able to catch your breath.

Thomas chuckled. “Can’t say I gave; you’re the dancer here. But I get what you mean.”

“That’s what my life has felt like since I agreed to give Shila a ride out of San Francisco Bay.” He watched the light refract in the amber liquid as he swirled his class. “I just want the music to stop, finally have a night where I don’t have to worry what I’m going to wake up to.” He drained his glass, then enjoyed the silence. “Out of curiosity, did you bring Dietrich to my mom’s?”

Thomas shook his head. “I’m guessing he flew. You had an escort, so all he had to do was call Steel Link or Royal to find out where you were heading. The Orrs have jets, and it’s only a couple of hours to get one to Denver and then to Minneapolis.”

Paul nodded.

“I was in France while you were on the bus. Then I was bringing you here.”

“Getting Jacques home? How pissed is he?”

“He’ll get over it. I could have left him in Central America, and then he’d have to explain to his dad why he had to ask to be flown back. That would have gone over so amazingly well.” He sipped his glass. “I also spoke with Firmin’s father.”

“Oh, fuck,” Paul muttered. “I am so sorry. I was so wrapped up in my problems, it never occurred to be available to go there with you.”

Thomas stared at him. “Why would you have to have been there for me?”

“What do you mean, why? He was at the lake because of—”

“Stop,” Thomas stated. “Don’t even think of saying because of you.”

“I was going to say because of what I helped make happen, but—”

“But nothing, Paul. That wasn’t your responsibility. Neither was being there to support me. But I appreciated that you wished you had been.”

“It just feels like one more responsibility I’m running away from.” He looked in his empty glass. “I haven’t gotten the guts to call the families of the men who died at the lake.”

“Then don’t.”

Paul looked up and stared at the rat. “They—” he raised a hand to cut off the protest “—were under my command. That makes it my responsibility to inform their family.”

“That’s bullshit. Which one of them told you that?”

“No one. It’s just—”

“Bullshit, Paul.” Thomas stared him down. “You aren’t part of their hierarchy. You were nothing more than a figurehead for them to say they took part. They’ll have procedures

to deal with this.”

Paul shook his head. “I’m responsible.”

“No, you aren’t. You’re not responsible for any of this, Paul. Look, I love that you helped because of me, but if you’re at the point where the best thing to do for you is walk away. You do that.”

“You have met my cousins, right?” Paul shook his head as Thomas started to protest. “And I’m not leaving you to deal with this alone. How did Firmin’s dad take what happened?” he added to keep his best friend from pushing.

The rat kept his gaze fixed on Paul for a few seconds, and the tiger worried it hadn’t worked.

Then Thomas sighed. “That’s complicated. I don’t know how much you know about it. How much you... remember. Because of his power, Firmin’s always been considered a liability to his family. Then, after Henry, Firmin stopped giving a damn about what they wanted, and that didn’t help how they treated him. He kept saying it didn’t bother him, but I started noticing how, if he wasn’t me, he was someone else. A few months ago, I realized I hadn’t seen him be a badger in at least a year, probably more. I confronted him about it, then took him home to get him and his dad to sit down.”

Thomas refilled their glasses. “That went as well as you can imagine. Plenty of him screaming at me to mind my own business. Chased him around the world.” He chuckled. “I remember a good number of surprised faces when I appeared in a few occupied bedrooms. But I’m more practiced, and my stamina’s higher when it comes to teleportation. He ran out of steam and I brought him back and sat the two of them together. Firmin was back to looking like himself. I left them and hoped they’d talk it out.”

Thomas sat next to Paul and leaned against him. “Found out they did when I brought him the news. Firmin never talked to me about it. After I forced him to face his dad, he became cooler toward me. I never got the sense he hated me, but our relationship was more that of business partners who liked each other than the friends we’d been before.”

He looked in his glass and Paul gave his friend time. A long swallow and Thomas spoke. “His dad was a mess on learning what happened. He’d never had time for Firmin when he was a boy. He was always too busy working for the family. When Firmin’s power came in, he didn’t bother trying to intervene in how he was treated. The family knew best was what he’d always been told. He had no idea that Jacques had orders to kill Firmin if he did anything that embarrassed the Mercier. They spoke multiple times since I intervene. He was working toward making amends to Firmin. Now he won’t get the chance.”

Another long swallow. “And the Mercier were quick to proclaim Firmin a family martyr when news of his death reached them. They don’t have to worry about how having a body thief will tarnish their names, so they are so fucking proud of him now. His dad knows that anything Firmin did was because he was a good man, not because he was trying to prove anything to his family.”

Paul nodded and sipped his scotch. “Yeah. Firmin was a good man.”

Thomas rubbed Paul’s thigh. “Once all this is resolved, he wanted me to visit again. One last time, I figure. He wants to have sex with me in Firmin’s honor.”

Paul barely kept the amber liquid from passing his lips. “What?”

Thomas chuckled. “Sex is how we, as His followers, deal with stuff like grief. Bad

news. Stress.” The hand moved inside his thigh.

Paul swallowed. “Thomas, I think the amulet isn’t working anymore.”

“It’s working fine.” Thomas looked at him. “This is me, Paul. It’s me wanting to have sex with you. I want it because we haven’t in a while and because I think you need to relax. I mean, when’s the last time you got laid?”

“Am I supposed to count all the gifting of the Royal Security men they assigned to me? Or, no offense to Madoc and Trevor, when they fucked me as part of recharging me so I could keep on gifting them?”

Thomas’s eyes widened, and he grinned. “Oh, so it is a gun in your pocket. You aren’t just happy to see me.”

The golden tiger snorted. “You better hope I’m just happy to see you. You don’t want to find out how a gun feels going—”

“How about we don’t go there?” Thomas kissed Paul, pushing back.

The shirts went flying as they kissed. The snap of a string made Paul tense, then hard leather hitting the stone floor almost made him push Thomas off, but as the rat slowed, he realized that no matter what his aura caused now, this had been started of their own free will. He reached back and undid the rat’s tail strap and Thomas was kissing him hard again.

Hand full of ass, he ground against his best friend’s hard cock and Thomas moaned. He tried to turn them over, only to hit the back of the couch.

“I think we should—” Paul was cut off by the dropped of a few inches onto the bed. He grinned. “Show off.” He kissed the reply out of the rat’s muzzle as he rolled him onto his back. Then let only long enough to pull the pants off him. “How come you never figured out how to teleport out of your clothes?”

“Really?” the rat said in disbelief. “Questions?” then the bed was empty, and Paul was shoved forward, landing face first in the pillows. His pants were pulled down only enough Thomas spread his cheeks apart, then Paul moaned as a tongue licked between them, then his hole.

Paul ground against the mattress as Thomas rimmed him, pushing his ass against the muzzle. “Fuck,” he whispered. “I need you to fuck me.”

The rat chuckled, but kept licking, pulling the pants further down until one leg was off and the tiger could spread them.

Thomas slid down, licking the crack, then pulled Paul’s ass up and reached under to bring the balls to his tongue. Paul raised himself to his knees, and Thomas moved under him, turning on his back as he licked the base of his cock, up it, then swallowed it.

Paul cursed and thrust into the muzzle. He hadn’t realized how badly he’d missed having something hot and wet around his cock. Fuck. Now he wanted to bury his cock into the rat’s ass.

Thomas moaned needily, then Paul was pushed to his back, and the rat was climbing over him, panting, his eyes filled with need. He positioned himself, stroking Paul’s cock behind him, then lowered and moaned in satisfaction as the tiger’s cock entered him.

Paul groaned and closed his eyes and Thomas rocked on his hips, loud in his enjoyment. He picked up speed, tightened his ass, gyrated. “More,” he pleaded.

Paul grabbed his hips and thrust. Thomas let out a loud, satisfied sigh, then groaned in time to Paul, slamming his cock inside him.

“Fuck.” The tiger thrust hard, then was still, groaning, his cock pulsating. Then he relaxed and opened an eye at Thomas’s chuckle.

“Seems like you needed this.”

“Fuck you.”

“Already did.” The rat tightened his ass. “But feel free to do it again.”

It was Paul’s turn to chuckle. “I don’t think I can give you a twofer. I’m not like...”

Thomas grinned as the golden tiger trailed off. “Someone’s starting to understand.”

Paul was still hard.

His Society friends could always get it up; no matter how often they came. The only limit was physical exhaustion, and they had magic to get around that when they wanted. Paul had been on the receiving end a time or two.

Thomas let out a yelp of surprise as Paul rolled them over. Then he was back in the rat’s ass, legs over his shoulders and thrusting. He smiled as Thomas tightened his ass and wrapped a hand around the leaking cock.

“Doesn’t seem fair I’m the only cumming.”

Thomas tilted an ear. “It’s not that late in the day. I will get to your all.”

“Good thing you’re Society,” Paul replied, smirking. “Because I’m going to make you cum a few times before you get your chance.”