

## Chapter 59

Chaos was all around Thomas, raised voices and people moving in all directions. His mother was ordering Margays about, even if, when the chaos had started the previous day, they were only supposed to be there to ensure Thomas and his family were safe. Raphael might still be on his way, but that wouldn't stop him from trying to sneak people into the city to capture Thomas before he arrived.

Being recognized as part of the Lewiston bloodline by the whole of the Society gave the elder a lot more power than Thomas thought was good for him.

Boxes were carried to the van outside, along with furniture and appliances. A collie had the fridge over his shoulder, with a badger carrying a box of pots and pan. Thomas hadn't seen Hubert and Jacques arrive, but that means that while he wouldn't recognize him, Firmin was also here, and that was good.

Thomas headed to the closed door ahead of a bear with a stack of boxes as Nadia looked about to give him an order. The only trick to not falling under his mother's orchestrating power was to be already busy doing something, such as, opening the door for someone with their hands full, then stepping aside as the rat on the other side hurried in before the bear walked over him.

"You're back," Thomas told his father, then stiffen as the man hugged and kissed him. When the tongue parted his lips, Thomas overcame the shock, and he moved Eric away. "Damn it, Dad. We talked about this."

"Sorry," his father replied. "I thought that now that your memories are all restored, we'd be good." He looked concerned. "They are all restored, right?"

"Yes, and not one of them included the sex you want us to have." Thomas tried to not sound exasperated. Yes, the memories Henry had given them felt as real as what they had actually lived, but it only took a little studying of them to work out which ones were true and which ones were fabricated. Henry was good, but he wasn't a god. There were always mistakes to be found when you bothered looking. It was how Thomas had gotten Eric to break through the memories Henry had given him and save his son.

But his father didn't seem to have any interest in looking at them too deeply now.

"Dad, Samuel said that he can—"

Eric place a finger on Thomas's lips. "No. I'm not forgetting any of this. I'm not going back to being a father who just saw how his son hadn't made up his mind about the way the rest of his life needed to go and somehow thought that was his fault." He took Thomas's head in his hands and looked him in the eyes. "Thomas, I got to see my son be a man, fight through his fears and the danger, and stand tall. I saw you tell Henry, while he had you in his power, to go fuck himself. You forced me to think, to consider what was going on. You reminded me of what mattered to me, Thomas. I am so proud of you."

Before Thomas could protest, his father kissed his forehead.

"I don't care how long it takes, Son. And if the relationship I know we can have isn't one, you'll ever be comfortable with, that's okay, too. You are a man, you get to make whatever decision you decide is right for you and I will always love you."

He could see in his father's eyes how difficult that was to say, but also the determination to stick to it. Eric would always do what he felt was best for his son, and it made Thomas love his father even more.

"Eric, honey," his mother called, "stop making out with our son and come help."

"Love calls," his father replied. "You still doing what you said?"

Thomas nodded. "Just waiting for the signal."

"Better say out of your mother's sight until then. She will rope you into helping to the point you'll forget about it." Eric swatted his son's ass before heading to his wife. As Nadia opened her mouth to call to Thomas, Eric kisses her hard. Then hands were roaming where they really had no business in public, and he used the distraction to head upstairs.

This might be the first time his father used sex to rescue Thomas from his mother. That was usually her technique when Eric was too focused on helping Thomas with his life.

"You know my family can keep you safe, right?" Kuno said, falling into step with him.

His friend had been hurt when Thomas and his family had accepted the offer from Yating and Yahui's elder instead of the Richard's. Thomas hadn't really voiced an opinion any which way when his family had talked it over. His personal concern was with how he put his foot down with Byrnwood to have the chance to hurt Henry. How, probably, even now that he had all his memories restored, few of the elders who knew about him seem to trust him entirely or see him as anything more than an asset to be kept on the balance sheet for the day they needed him.

In the end, it had come down to the fact that the Xu family was fully integrated with the Guan, so his mother and sister wouldn't feel like the odd ones out.

But there was also a practical reason not to go to the Richards for safety.

"Kuno, Raphael's going to go on the warpath when he finds out I'm gone. If you were the ones keeping me from him, I don't think there is anything he wouldn't do to your family in trying to get me back. And after this little kick hit his balls as firmly as I hope it does, you don't want his retaliation in your family's direction. But we will be back, I promise, Minneapolis is our home, that's why we're having you keep our stuff safe, if not us. This is going to blow over at some point or, from the stories Samuel told me, Raphael's going to piss off someone that forced him to forget about me and we'll be back in our home."

The margay nodded. "I wish I could help. I have all this military knowhow, and I don't get to use it to help a friend."

Thomas glanced at his friend. "How come nearly everyone seems okay with multiple set of memories? Madoc and Gilbert are about the only ones really angry. Even my dad's okay with it."

"Henry took something precious from them," Kuno said. "he gave me skills. I mean, he had me do some horrible stuff with my ice, and I am talking with a shrink about some of the stuff he has me remembering doing, but I'm okay on the whole."

"I'm glad you are, then. As for helping me, the same reason applies. If there's any report of a margay helping, Raphael will use that to declare war on your family, and I will not be the reason that happens."

"It wouldn't be. Whatever happens is on Raphael, not you."

Thomas faced his friend. "So everyone keeps telling me," he replied heatedly. "But Raphael's involved because of my power. I doubt he'd give this much of a damn if all I could do was light up a room with my smile or something. I know that wouldn't have changed what Henry did to you and how you fought against us, but I'm not going to make things worse for you, Kuno. You've already been through enough. Frat brothers keep each other out of harm's way, right?"

The margay hugged him tightly. "You better fucking appear in my bed at some point, otherwise I will hunt you down. I have the skills now."

Thomas chuckled. "You're going to have to move bedroom. I don't have yours as my landing spot." He pulled away. "I need to make sure all my stuff's gone before it's time for things to start."

Kuno nodded and headed back down while Thomas stepped into his empty bedroom.

He checked the closet, as well as the dresser drawers, and found an old card from some collectible thing he vaguely remember from when he was a kid.

He hadn't had a lot to pack. The important stuff was at the frat, and Kuno and the others would see to it they were packed and stored with the rest, once they were allowed there again.

Thomas hadn't been told everything that went into making the decision, but one of the reason he had been told for the frat to be shut down for the rest of the year, and possibly longer, was that the existence of a hidden set of living quarter, where Yahui had been the entire time Thomas had lived there, meant the needed to go over every inch in case the bat had done other things to the building.

It meant that once Sigma Theta Gamma was occupied again, it would probably be an entirely new set of guys there, offering unending sex to a campus that was probably starved for by that point.

A knock made Thomas look over his shoulder. Roland stood in the doorway, looking uncomfortable, and Thomas readied himself for a variation of what had happened with his father. This might be worse, actually. Unlike with his Eric, Thomas hadn't talked with his brother, hadn't found the opportunity to explain things to him. This was the first time they'd done more than walk by one another as they boxed stuff, since his brother had clobbered Thomas.

"I'm not coming in," Roland said resolutely. "I want to, but I'm still sorting stuff out in there." He tapped the side of his head. "But there's one thing I need to tell you."

Thomas readied himself, then nodded. This wasn't going to be pretty.

"I want you," Roland stated.

There it was. "No, you don't. That's just what Henry made you think. That's part of what you have to work out. You're—"

"No, this is me." His brother took a breath. "Yes, what the bat did to me changes things, and yes, I know which of the memories are the ones he gave me and what I experienced, what I've felt. Having to look at all of them's made me realize why I was always so pissed with you. Let me finish, Thomas!"

Thomas closed his mouth on his protest. Once his brother had vented, then Thomas could explain how he was wrong about it.

"Did you know I've seen you naked?"

“You what?”

“It was couple of years ago, you were coming out or the shower, the door to the bathroom was partially open and I saw you. It’s a real memory, Thomas. I saw you in all your glory, and I got out of there, because I felt...” he swallowed. “I didn’t know what I felt, but my body reacted to that memory. What I did know was that discovering jerking off to the memory of your naked brother wasn’t supposed to be how it went. I tried so fucking hard not to think of you those first times. I mean, even then I’d seen the guys in the team showers, so it wasn’t like you were the first naked guy I’d seen, but there was something...”

Roland glanced down at himself and Thomas looked at this brother’s tent too, and fought the images forming in his own head.

“Then there you were, every fucking day, there, within reach, tempting me. I wanted you so back Thomas, but I couldn’t have you and it was driving me insane. And it pissed me off, and I directed that at you. Now, I know it’s not wrong. Not for the group we’re part of. For us it’s perfectly normal, and I believe that too, some of the time.”

Thomas backed against the dresser, needing it to remain standing. Henry hadn’t lied. The bastard hadn’t made his brother want him all these years; he hadn’t twisted Roland to his desires, at least in that way. That means that if Thomas and Roland had talked during those years, things might have—nope, not going there.

Yet? A voice sounded in the back of his mind.

He looked at his bother at the hope and the fear in his eyes, and Thomas ran a hand over his face. “I need to tell you something to, Roland. Return the favor, I guess.” He let out a breath. “I needed you to be straight, because I couldn’t allow myself to act on how I feel about you. What I wanted to do.”

His brother tentatively brightened. “So, this thing between us, it’s not as impossible as I thought?”

“It’s not that simple,” Thomas replied. “For one thing, you’re sixteen.”

His younger brother smirked. “Like that’s stopped anyone else.”

“Yeah, how about we don’t talk about that? Just knowing you’ve been at the frat around those guys is providing my imagination with enough material to drive me crazy. I don’t need the confirmation.” Thomas swallowed. “I also don’t have that set of memories where it’s normal for me to want to have sex with my brother. I have all these people telling me it’s fine, but I still have this upbringing teaching me how wrong it is to want that. Not to talk about how some of those guys will say just about anything to get some tail. The bottom line, Roland, is that yeah, I want to, but there’s a truckload of baggage that comes with that.”

“So I work out my shit,” Roland said seriously, “you work out yours, and we meet in the middle, get naked and have hot and sweaty sex?”

Thomas groaned. “I so did not need that image in my head, Roland.”

His brother chuckled, “too bad, I can’t be the only one with it stuck there.”

“Roland!” someone called. “Stop fucking your brother and get back here. I’m your favorite, remember?”

Thomas opened his mouth on realizing who had spoken and closed in on registering the words. “You and Neil? Isn’t it all stuff Henry gave you?”

Roland nodded. “We’re still working through a lot of it, but we’re finding out we’re okay with a lot of what the bat made of our relationship. Which makes two out of the entire team. How it is that not one of them has started a lawsuit against the school? I have no idea, or how they’re dealing with knowing they aren’t actually gay.” He paused and his expression became sad. “Coach quit because of this. It’s going to make it tough on the team for the playoff. I wish I could be there to help them win, but that’s not worth the shit storm that’s on its way here.”

“Is here,” Madoc said, poking his head between Roland’s and the door frame. Thomas’s bother jerk forward at the slap on the ass the rat gave him. “Shila just confirmed his jet landed at the airport. We need to get going.”

Thomas hugged his brother, pulling him away from the too grabby other rat. “I’ve got to go. Dad will explain.” He followed Madoc down the stairs. “How’s Gilbert?”

“Bitching about being relegated to a distraction, but he and Laurence are in Kansas City. They’re hoping this is done before dinnertime, because they’re already breaking house arrest to help us. They need to be back before either of their fathers realizes they aren’t where they are supposed to be.”

“Do I want to know how the two of them can be here for nearly a whole day and no have anyone realize it?”

“No idea. Maybe the Rowlings aren’t all that great at keeping track of their family member. Ettore is on board and in place. Trevor’s already sent me the plans of the hotel, so he’s more than happy to help Judith’s bother.” He paused, hand on the garage’s handle. “What did your sister do to him? I have never heard of one of

us switching side for a woman.”

Thomas shrugged. “The woman in this family have a habit of getting what they want. You learn not to question it, and stay out of the way when what they want is to have you help with a task.”

Inside the garage, Yating and Yahui waited for them, along with Olavo, Jacque and Hubert, Limbani and a bear, who would be Firming. The badger and collie went over their weapons as if they’d been handling them their entire lives. Which, as far as at least one set of their memories said, was exactly the case. The two of them, along with Kuno and one missing Frat brother, had received the memories of a guy with that lifetime of training.

“Chima couldn’t stay after all?” Thomas asked. “His speed would be an asset.”

Olavo shook his head. “He argued with his fathers, but they were adamant he return immediately. He doesn’t understand why, but something about what Henry did has them freaking out.”

“Won’t your father had a problem with you helping us?” He asked the capybara as a monkey saddled behind him and started undoing the rat’s pants.

“You aren’t going to need those,” the monkey said. “trust me on that.”

“My father is a firm believer in plausible deniability, so he knows nothing of this little adventure I am going on with you.”

Thomas nodded, swatting the monkey’s hands as he started stroking him. “You’ll get to have fun with me on the other side, so hold on until then.” He looked at the bear. “Firmin, are you sure about this? Isn’t this going to put you in hot water with your family?”

“Scalding,” Jacques answered. “This is precisely what they fear you’d do.” He motioned to the bear. “Who ever that is will be who the Lewistons blame, and you will have no worries in the world.”

Firmin rolled his eyes. “I’m switching to Thomas the moment he cum, so don’t tie your cock in a knot. As for the family, I am helping a brother. If they have a problem with that, they can go fuck themselves.”

“Jacques’ only looking out for you,” Hubert said sharply. “That is always what he had done, despite with Henry has us remembering. And you don’t have to worry about any of us, Thomas. Raphael didn’t only hurt one of our brothers, he hurt you and Madoc. So we are all eager to hurt him in return.

Thomas looked at the assembled men, his friends; his brothers, then extend his hand. They took hold of it and his arm, except for one hand, which closed around his cock.

“There’s nowhere else,” Limbani said innocently at Thomas’s look.

“Alright, time to teach Raphael what happens when you kidnap a teleporter’s brother,” Thomas said grimly, “and why he really shouldn’t have spent all those weeks fucking me in on the same bed in the same room. I’ve become intimately acquainted with it.”

The smile his brothers gave him had as much viciousness as Thomas. This wasn’t only about getting his brother back. This was about giving Raphael exactly what he wanted, uncontested control over the Lewiston family. Thomas would give him that by giving any Lewiston who wanted out a way to leave. And if that wasn’t enough, he was going to make sure that the elder understood what a pissed off teleporter was capable of; how not even the hotel he considered his home was safe anymore.

He closed his eyes and focused on that room, that bed, how it smelled and felt while he was used.

“I’m coming Victor.”

A shiver ran down his back, and his chest tightened.