

## CHAPTER-28

“Fuck,” Thomas snarls as he ran. He had no idea where he was going, other than away from them. The question of how they could be here kept coming back, and Limbani’s comment of having seen them parked in this lot brought so many other memories of the monkey claiming to know things. Of him showing up out of nowhere, even when Thomas didn’t know he’d be in that room or that part of the university. The next thought was that it was impossible for Limbani to know where Thomas was, and it was followed by how impossible it was that Thomas could teleport.

Screeching tires made him look over his shoulder as Gilbert’s van rounded the corner, the monkey in the passenger seat pointing at Thomas.

“Fuck it.” Thomas looked into an alley and willed himself there. His chest tightened, the shiver happened, and he slammed into the wall. How could he have forgotten he kept his momentum? He pushed through the pain as he pushed away from the wall and started running again and he heard the van’s door at the other end slam shut.

Good, if they were on foot, there was no way they could catch up to him. He stopped on the sidewalk, searched for a suitable spot, settled on the furthest one, and jumped there, immediately ran.

Even with this being the furthest he’d gone, he didn’t feel tired. This was getting easier.

The van screeched around another corner in front of Thomas this time. The monkey was at the wheel and Madoc in the passenger seat. With a curse, Thomas teleported to the other side, and the van skidded as it tried to stop. He didn’t wait. He ran again, looking for another spot to jump to. He needed to—

Someone tackled him, and Thomas barely stayed on his feet and he got a chest full of the capybara as Olavo closed his arms around him. “It’s okay, you’re safe now.”

Thomas tried to turn his head, but Olavo had an arm around it. "Let go of me!" he yelled in the chest. He tried to teleport out, but as scared as he was, it wouldn't happen.

"We're here to help," the capybara said. "Madoc's elder sent us."

"Let me see," Thomas snarled, pushing against the man's chest, but it didn't matter how strong he was if he couldn't get leverage.

The capybara shushed him as if he was a child and that more than anything else infuriated Thomas. He got a leg behind Olavo's as he heard more people. How many of them were they? He put as much of his relatively meager weight into the push and he was enough to send the two of them falling. Olavo's grip loosened as he hit the sidewalk and Thomas turned his head enough to see the other side of the street and he was there with barely a thought.

He was on his feet and running again, this time helping himself with a series of jumps a hundred feet ahead of him. Let them catch up to him that way.

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Thomas was lost.

Not that he'd had much of a sense of where he'd been at the start of this, but he'd made so many near-blind jumps that he couldn't even get himself back to the Subway, which was the only place he could think of for where Grant might be. Not that he was going to him and dragging the kangaroo into his mess.

He paused next to the dumpster. One jump might not take much out of him, but he'd lost count of how many he'd made trying to evade Limbani and his constant showing up when he had no business knowing where Thomas had taken refuge. He had to admit there was something to the monkey's claims now.

"Ah, come on!" he yelled to the sky as a vehicle came to a screeching stop on the far side of the alley. He looked around the

dumpster and was not surprised to see Gilbert's white van blocking it. Before he turned to run, the side slid open and Madoc and Limbani stepped out, hand raised as if they had a gun to their back.

"We just want to talk, Thomas," the other rat yelled.

He peeked further and saw Olavo behind the wheel. Was that all of them? He looked at the open side of the alley and thought about running—he wasn't sure he had enough strength to keep standing after another jump—and decided not to. Not yet anyway. He'd run enough. Answers would be nice.

He stepped out from behind the dumpster. "Then talk," he called, putting as much bravado as he could muster while locating a spot behind the van. The building to its left had the top of an access visible. Even if he crumpled after teleporting there, he'd be out of sight and he refused to believe Limbani would just know where he was.

Maybe this would let him catch enough of his breath so he could run instead once he was there.

"Look, you don't need to run," Madoc said. "All you have to do is explain yourself to Raphael. He'll understand."

"Who the fuck is Raphael?"

The two of them exchanged a look before looking at Thomas again.

"He's our elder, Thomas. He's the one you ran from."

"I ran from Henry because he was going psycho on me."

They exchange another look, this one confused. Limbani shrugged.

"Did..." Madoc hesitated. "Did someone do this to you?" He sounded hopeful.

"Didn't Chima say you guys did this to me?"

The rat rubbed his face. "Thomas, look, you aren't making any sense. Just come home to Kansas City with us. Raphael had experts on

hand who will be able to figure out what's happened to you."

"No, I'm not going anywhere with you."

"Madoc, you tried," Limbani said and looked beyond Thomas, giving a nod.

It was a mistake. Thomas knew it even as he began turning his head to look where Limbani had, and he mentally cursed himself with all kinds of names for doing it. Not only was it the oldest trick in any show, it meant Thomas no longer had a spot in sight to jump to.

He'd find one the instant he confirmed there was no one there and jump before they could reach him. Except he only got an eye full of a jacket before something covered his head.

Thomas ducked, but it came with him, then a hand grabbed his arm.

Yating said something in his language.

"Don't let him get it off his head," Olavo yelled. "He needs to see to be able to pull a vanishing act."

"What do you think I am trying to do?" the red panda replied. Knocking Thomas's other hand away from his head.

He shoved questions of how the capybara had worked *that* out and focus on getting this bag off his head.

"Stop fighting, Thomas," Madoc said as a hand grabbed his shoulder. Thomas elbowed who that was and Madoc let out a pained oomph. The hand let go. He pushed forward and with a curse, Yating fell, taking Thomas with him. As they landed, Thomas grabbed the fabric bag that was over his head, but before he could pull it off, the panda had grabbed his hand.

"Let go of me!" Thomas yelled.

"No. This is for your own good, Thomas. You need to go home."

"You just wait until I tell Judith about this. She is going to fuck

you up for this.”

“Who?” Yating asked and loosened his hold enough Thomas was able to pull the bag enough for light to come in. He didn’t care what he was looking at, he jumped.

He knew he’d made a mistake as the sensation of weightlessness registered and his body slowly turn and wind picked up around him.

He should have cared where he was looking. The ground became visible under him, very far. Much too far. He saw the alley with his frat brothers seemingly frozen in place. The wind picked up as he accelerated down.

Fuck! He looked around. He needed to jump down before he had too much speed. He might already have too much. He located a parking lot with a large snowbank, prayed nothing was hidden under the snow, and jumped.

The impact hurt and snow flew up as if Gilbert had detonated one of his fireworks in it.

Thomas groaned as he pulled himself out of it, and groaned even more as Limbani, Madoc, and Yating ran out of the alley in his direction. He wished he’d picked a further snowbank to aim for. Next time.

“That was impressive,” someone close said and Thomas looked at Gilbert, approaching. “Limbani called your landing spot within three feet.”

Thomas tried to focus on another spot, but he was exhausted and he hurt.

“Not going to work,” Felix said, grabbing Thomas by the arm. “He saw me do this.” The otter turned the rat on his front and pulled his arms behind him. “And as annoying as he gets about. If he sees something happen, nothing stops it from happening.” Thomas felt ropes go around his wrists.

Brake screeched, and Thomas looked up. Considering the way

his day was going, he expected to see the white van, but an old beaten-up pickup was there. The driver's door slamming shut and a kangaroo stepping to the side, hands on the edge of the tarp covering the truck's bed.

"Let go of him," he ordered, undoing the edge.

"Man," Felix said in exasperation, "go home. You don't want to get involved in this. How did you not see him coming?" he demanded of the monkey, who was looking at the scene, utterly confused.

Grant shook his head, reaching under the tarp. "I'm afraid I can't do that. So I'm going to say this only once. Go back to your Families. That's capital 'F'. As in, I have a good idea who you represent."

"You have got to be fucking me," the otter cursed.

"You're not getting my brother," Madoc said. "I don't care what you've done to him. He'd my family."

"I'm his frat brother, nothing more," Thomas yelled, then screamed in pain as Felix bent his arm. He hoped that was a large caliber Grant was about to pull from the back of his truck because Thomas was reaching the point where shooting at his frat brothers was sounding like a reasonable idea.

"Madoc, you're the strongest here," Felix ordered. "Go kick his ass before he does anything."

The rat took a step just as Grant pulled what he'd been reaching for, and Madoc stopped in his track to stare.

So this Thomas. Instead of a rifle, as he'd expected, the kangaroo held a piece of wood of some sort. No, it was multiple pieces held together by... was that twine?

He and Madoc weren't the only ones staring. Grant had everyone's attention, and Thomas decided he had one chance to get away. He focused next to Grant and willed himself there.

Nothing happened.

Fuck. He couldn't be that tired. If he was going to lose consciousness, he'd rather do it next to the kangaroo holding the stick rather than these people. He forced the sensation, the tightening of his chest, the shiver down his back, and he had to hold it because he wasn't —

The fall of a few feet next to Grant hurt and as Thomas rolled on his back, the light seemed to disappear and he thought he was about to lose consciousness, until he noticed the clouds accumulating over them. Thick and very dark.

"I'm glad you pulled that off, Thomas. Now I need you to get in the truck."

Wind picked up as Thomas reached up and Grant grabbed his arm to pull. Holding on to the side of the truck, Thomas noticed the white van parked down the road and the capybara moving toward them from it.

"He's with them," Thomas said, and Grant glanced in that direction.

As if that was a signal, the other ran in their direction and Grant snapped his attention back to them, raising his stick, staff, rod? What was that thing, Thomas wondered. It was twine holding it together, and nails.

The wind became a roar and Thomas had to focus on his frat brothers who were losing a battle against it. The wind was moving over Grant and Thomas to hit the others as if it was solid.

Except for Yating, who, after staggering back a step, was now moving slowly toward them. The wind wasn't even fluttering his open jacket anymore even if it was pushing the other away.

"Thomas," Grant said. "In the truck."

Thomas stepped around the kangaroo, who moved the staff. It was definitely a staff, the way Grant held it, away from the rat as he staggered toward it before regaining his footing.

“Don’t do this,” Grant told the red panda, who’d reached the truck and was extending his hand for the staff. It wasn’t like he’d reach it. It might be immune to the wind, but there was a pickup between—

Yating stepped through the pickup’s bed.

“Don’t do this!” the kangaroo yelled, and the wind increased.

Thomas stared as the panda’s hand closed over the staff. How could he be in the truck? That was impossible. The tarp wasn’t even reacting to his presence.

There was the snap of a folded leather belt coming together, a flash of something, and Yating was sliding back in the snow, pushing it until he came to a stop, unmoving. Grant cursed, turning his attention toward Olavo, who’d avoided the worse of the wind being further to the side. The capybara threw himself to the ground as the kangaroo raised the staff. Lightning came from the clouds and struck Gilbert’s van.

“That’s going to keep them busy—”

The van exploded.

Thomas stared as realization sunk it. Gilbert’s van. Had there been any fireworks still in it? Considering how much he was reputed to have in there, even if they cleared it, how much gun powder would remain if it wasn’t done by a professional cleaner?

“In the truck now,” Grant ordered, sounding shaken, and Thomas climbed over the driver’s side.

The staff went between them, closer to Grant, and Thomas was careful to stay away from it as they drove away. The kangaroo grabbed the wool blanket and threw it over the staff.

Thomas looked out the back and was relieved to see Yating getting to his feet unsteadily. He hoped there had been no one in the van.

“I,” Thomas began.

“Don’t,” Grant cut him off. “I wasn’t going to let them take you. Even if I was completely wrong about you.”

“Wrong?” Thomas asked. They hadn’t known each other. How could he have been wrong about him? Could he make a jump as tired as he was?

The kangaroo sighed as he looked in the rearview mirror. “I was going to let you tell me what’s going on in your own time, but that’s not viable anymore. If I’m going to continue to keep you safe, I need to know everything.” Thomas opened his mouth, only to close it again at the look Grant gave him. “Absolutely everything.”

## CHAPTER 1.5-28

“Fuck,” Thomas panted as he ran. He had no idea where he was going, other than away from them. How did they find him in the middle of nowhere? Limbani’s clairvoyant powers only worked for getting him laid, but it also wasn’t real... just like Thomas being able to teleport was a figment of his imagination. Fuck. What did the monkey say about seeing them parked-

Screeching tires made him look over his shoulder as Gilbert’s van rounded the corner, the monkey in the passenger seat pointing at Thomas.

“Fuck it.” Thomas looked into an alley and willed himself there. His chest tightened, the shiver happened, and he slammed into the wall. Right. Momentum. He pushed through the pain as he pushed away from the wall and started running again. As he did he heard the van’s door at the other end slam shut.

Good, if they were on foot, there was no way they could catch up to him. He stopped on the sidewalk, searched for a suitable spot, settled on the further one, jumped there, and immediately ran.

Even with this being the furthest he’d gone, he didn’t feel tired. This was getting easier.

The van screeched around another corner in front of Thomas, this time with the monkey at the wheel and Madoc in the passenger seat. Thomas cursed and teleported to the other side, the van skidded as it tried to stop. He didn’t wait. He ran again, looking for another

spot to jump to. He needed to-

Someone tackled him, and Thomas barely stayed on his feet as he got a chest full of capybara as Olavo closed his arms around him. "It's okay, you're safe now."

Thomas tried to turn his head, but Olavo had an arm around it. "Let go of me!" he yelled in the chest. He tried to teleport out, but as scared as he was, it wouldn't happen.

"We're here to help," the capybara said. "Madoc's elder sent us."

"Let. Me. See," Thomas snarled, pushing against the man's chest. It didn't matter, as no matter how strong he was he couldn't get leverage.

The capybara shushed him as if he was a child; that more than anything else infuriated Thomas. He got a leg behind Olavo's as he heard more people. How many of them were there? He put as much of his relatively meager weight into the push and it was enough to send the two of them falling. Olavo's grip loosened as he hit the sidewalk and Thomas turned his head enough to see the other side of the street and he was there with barely a thought.

He was on his feet and running again, this time helping himself with a series of jumps a hundred feet ahead of him. Let them catch up to him that way.

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Thomas was lost.

Not that he'd had much of a sense where he'd been at the start of this, but he'd made so many near-blind jumps that he couldn't even get himself back to the Subway, which was the only place he could think of where Grant might be looking for him. Not that he wanted to find the kangaroo before being sure he'd lost these guys.

He paused next to the dumpster. One jump might not take much out of him, but he'd lost count of how many he'd made to evade Limbani and his constant showing up when he had no business knowing where Thomas had taken refuge. He had to admit the monkey's claims weren't all hot air now.

"Ah, come on!" he yelled to the as a vehicle came to a screeching stop on the far side of the alley. He looked around the dumpster and was not surprised to see Gilbert's white van blocking it. Before he turned to run, the side slid open and Madoc and Limbani stepped out, hands raised.

"We just want to talk, Thomas," the other rat yelled.

He peeked further and saw Olavo behind the wheel. Was that all of them? He looked at the open side of the ally and thought about running... and decided not to. Not yet anyway. He'd run enough. Answers would be nice.

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He stepped out from behind the dumpster. "Then talk," he called, putting as much confidence as he could muster while locating a spot behind the van. The building to its left has the top of an access visible. Even if he crumpled after teleporting there, he'd be out of sight and he refused to believe Limbani would just know where he was.

"Look, you don't need to run," Madoc said. "All you have to do is explain yourself to Raphael. He'll understand."

Thomas scrunched his brow, "Who the fuck is Raphael?"

The two of them exchanged a look before looking at Thomas again. "He's our elder, Thomas." Madoc tried again. "He's the one you ran from."

Thomas shook his head. "I ran from Henry because he was going psycho on me."

They exchanged another look, this one confused. Limbani shrugged. "Did..." Madoc hesitated. "Did someone do this to you?" He sounded hopeful.

Thomas reflexively grabbed the side of his neck as images of Henry with blood-red fangs flashed in his mind. "The entire reason I ran is to keep them from doing anything to me."

The rat frowned and then got a determined look in his eye. "Thomas, that's even more reason for you to come with us. Just come home to Kansas City. Raphael has experts on hand who will be able to

figure out what happened to you.”

Thomas backed away. “No, I’m not going anywhere with you.”

“Madoc, you tried,” Limbani said and looked beyond Thomas, giving a nod.

It was a mistake. Thomas knew it even as he began turning his head to look where Limbani had. He had all the fear in the world, and his heart moving a mile a minute as time seemed to slow down, but the only line of sight he had was the alley wall as his vision slowly panned. No matter what he needed to find a new spot to jump to and do it before they got to him.

The only thing Thomas got to see once he finished his mistake was an eyeful of jacket, and his face was covered. Thomas ducked, but it came with him, then a hand grabbed his arm. Yating said something in his language.

“Don’t let him get it off his head,” Olavo yelled. “He needs to see to be able to pull a vanishing act.”

“What do you think I’m trying to do?” The red panda replied. Knocking Thomas’s other hand away from his head.

He shoved questions of how the capybara had worked that out and focused on getting this bag off his head.

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“Stop fighting, Thomas,” Madoc said as a hand grabbed his shoulder. Thomas elbowed who that was and Madoc let out a pained oomph. The hand let go. He pushed forward and with a curse, Yating fell, taking Thomas with him. As they landed, Thomas grabbed the fabric bag that was over his head, but before he could pull it off, the panda grabbed his hand.

“Let go of me!” Thomas yelled.

“No.” the red panda said. “This is for your own good, Thomas. You need to go home.”

Thomas growled. “Just wait until I tell Judith about this. She’s never going to let you fuck her again.”

“Who?” Yating asked and loosed his hold enough Thomas was able to pull the bag and allow light to come in. He didn’t care what he was looking at, he jumped.

He knew he’d made a mistake as the sensation of weightlessness registered, his body slowly turn, and the wind picked up around him.

He should have cared where he was looking. The ground became visible under him, very far. Much too far. He saw the alley with his frat brothers seemingly frozen in place. The wind picked up as he accelerated downward.

\* \* \*

Fuck! He looked around. He needed to jump down before he picked up too much speed. He might already have too much. He located a parking lot with a large snowbank, prayed nothing was hidden under the snow and jumped.

The impact hurt and snow flew up as if Gilbert had detonated one of his fireworks in it.

Thomas groaned as he pulled himself out of it, and groaned even more as Limbani, Madoc, and Yating ran out of the alley in his direction. He wished he'd picked a further snowbank to aim for. Next time.

"That was impressive," someone close said. Thomas looked up at Gilbert, the armadillo approaching casually. "Limbani called your landing spot within three feet."

Thomas tried to focus on another spot, but he was exhausted and hurt.

"Not going to work," Felix said, grabbing Thomas by the arm. "He saw me do this." The otter turned the rat on his front and pulled his arms behind him. "And as annoying as he is about it, if he sees something happen, nothing stops it from happening." Thomas felt ropes go around his wrists.

Brakes screeched, and Thomas looked up. Considering the way his day was going, he expected to see the white van. Instead, an old beaten-up pickup was there. The driver's door slammed shut a kangaroo stepped to the side, hands on the edge of the tarp covering

the truck's bed.

"Let go of him," he ordered, undoing the edge.

"Man," Felix said in exasperation, "Go home. You don't want to get involved in this. How did you not see him coming?" He demanded of the monkey, who was looking at the scene, utterly confused.

Grant shook his head, reaching under the tarp. "I'm afraid I can't do that. So I'm going to say this only once. Go back to your Families. That's capital 'F'. As in, I have a good idea who you represent."

"You're not getting my cousin," Madoc said, "I don't care what you want with him. He's family."

"Madoc, we only discovered our grandmothers were sisters a few-" Thomas's attempt to use reason was cut off as Felix bent his arm. He hoped that was a large caliber Grant was about to pull from the back of his truck because Thomas was reaching the point where shooting at his frat brothers was sounding like a reasonable idea.

"Madoc, you're the strongest here," Felix ordered, "Go kick his ass before he does anything."

The rat took a step just as Grant pulled what he'd been reaching for, and Madoc stopped in his track to stare. So was Thomas. Instead of a rifle, the kangaroo held a piece of wood of some sort. No, it

was multiple pieces held together by... was that twine?

He and Madoc weren't the only ones staring. Grant had everyone's attention, and Thomas decided he had one chance to get away. He focused next to Grant and willed himself there.

Nothing happened.

Fuck. He couldn't be that tired. If he was going to lose consciousness, he'd rather do it next to the kangaroo holding the stick rather than these people. He forced the sensation, the tightening of his chest, the shiver down his back, and he had to hold it because he wasn't-

The fall of a few feet next to Grant hurt and as Thomas rolled on his back, the light seemed to disappear and he thought he was about to lose consciousness... and then he noticed the clouds accumulating over them. Thick and very dark.

"I'm glad you pulled that off, Thomas," Grant said without batting an eye. "Now I need you to get in the truck."

The wind picked up as Thomas reached up and Grant grabbed his arm to pull. Holding onto the side of the truck, Thomas noticed the white van parked down the road and the capybara moving toward them from it.

"He's with them," Thomas said, and Grant glanced in that direction.

\* \* \*

As if that was a signal, the others ran in their direction and Grant snapped his attention back to them, raising his stick, staff, rod? What was that thing? It had twine holding it together, and nails.

The wind became a roar, and Thomas had to focus on his frat brothers who were losing a battle against it. The wind was moving over Grant and Thomas to hit the others as if it was solid.

Except for Yating, who after staggering back a step, was now moving slowly toward them. The wind wasn't even flustering his open jacket anymore even as it was pushing the others away.

"Thomas," Grant said, "In the truck."

Thomas stepped around the kangaroo, who moved the staff away from the rat as he staggered towards it before regaining his footing. It was definitely a staff, the way Grant held it.

"Don't do this," Grant told the red panda, who'd reached the other side of the truck and was extending his hand for the staff. It wasn't like he'd reach it. He might be immune to the wind, but there was an entire pickup between-

Yating stepped through the pickup's bed.

"Don't do this!" the kangaroo yelled, and the wind increased.

\* \* \*

Thomas stared as the panda's hand closed over the staff. How could he be in the truck? That was impossible. The tarp wasn't even reacting to his presence.

There was the snap of a folded leather belt coming together, a flash of something, and Yating was sliding back in the snow, pushing it until he came to a stop, unmoving. Grant cursed, turning his attention towards Olavo, who'd avoided the worse of the wind being further to the side. The capybara threw himself to the ground as the kangaroo raised the staff. Lightening came from the clouds and struck Gilbert's van.

Grant breathed in relief. "That's going to keep them busy--"

The van exploded.

Thomas stared as realization sunk in. Gilbert's van. Had there been any fireworks still in it? Even if there wasn't, unless he took it to professional cleaners regularly there had to be an untold amount of gunpowder in the cracks and seems.

"In the truck, now," Grant ordered, sounding shaken. Thomas climbed over the driver's side.

The staff went between them, closer to Grant, and Thomas was careful to stay away from it as they drove away. The kangaroo grabbed the wool blanket and threw it over the staff.

Thomas looked back and was relieved to see Yating getting to

his feet unsteadily. He hoped there hadn't been a seventh brother in that van.

"I," Thomas began.

"Don't," Grant cut him off. "I wasn't going to let them take you. Even if I was completely wrong about you."

"Wrong?" Thomas asked. They hadn't known each other. How could he have been wrong about him? Could he make a jump as tired as he was?

The kangaroo sighed as he looked in the rearview mirror. "I was going to let you tell me what's going on in your own time, but that's not viable anymore. If I'm going to continue to keep you safe, I need to know everything." Thomas opened his mouth, only to close it again at the look Grant gave him. "Absolutely everything."

## OUTLINE-28

### Chapter 31

###

Lewiston, Thomas, Grant, Search Squad: Mood: it was a dark and stormy day?

Thomas doesn't give the guys much time to talk, since as a teleporter he can move a very long distance in a short amount of time. His first impulse is to run back to Grant, but he dismisses it as he doesn't want to get the roo involved in... whatever this is. He needs to stop eventually to catch his breath. His control of the microjumps is better, but too many in a short time is almost as bad as sprinting. Still, he can cover a good amount of distance, so he should be...

...the van pulls up to the alleyway he's ducked behind, breaking his line of sight to anywhere of significance he could flee to. Limbani and Madoc exit the van alone this time... and he sees Olavo in the driver's seat... where are the rest of them? Madoc breaks that line or thought as he addresses Thomas, saying that Ralpheal [sis you establish why Henry is using Raphael as cover for getting Thomas back? It's to give them motivation to hunt for Thomas that comes from someone's authority other than his own. Because he's not letting six people leave the city with knowledge of a bat Society member being back at the Twin City frat house. okay, just a coincidence he picked Rapheal, instead of some other elder in the US? No. They picked Rapheal because he has authority over Madoc, and in theory over Thomas as well since he's a rat Society member. Draft Zero certainly had their brainwashing involving them thinking Thomas was a Lewiston all along. It's not a hill I'm going to die on if you think it doesn't make sense, however.] is really upset with him at the moment, but it isn't too late for Thomas to turn himself over quietly. This confuses Thomas, and he might even indicate as such in question. Any conversation they do have is interrupted as Yating jumps him from

behind.

Thomas struggles, and Madoc comes up to him with a bag [what does Madoc intend to do with the bag?] Just put it over Thomas's head as a blindfold. They know less about his powers than Thomas does, but you can bet they are making guess and blindfolding someone feels like a safe guess. not if they are going by what they might have read or watched on TV. I can't recall one instant of someone bring blinded not being able to teleport, it's always been not knowing or seeing the destination. This might work better if they accidentally discover it here.]

[it could be as part of trying to catch him one of them ends up being Thomas and has a scarf or something and as they intend to use it to strangle him unconscious her ducks, it covers his eyes and can't teleport. they manage to drag him to the ground, and part of the scarf shifts and as soon as he can see (the sky) he jumps As long as you can make the scene work. Part of writing the outline involves writing on the fly what my brain can think of for the overall direction and story beat, which isn't always the best idea.] in hand... Thomas's thoughts mostly being that he has to be able to see. He's only been able to jump safely when he can see. The only thing he can lay his eyes onto is the open sky above and...

...mistakes were made, as Thomas is suddenly in a brief moment of hangtime high above the air. His body twists as he start to free fall... he needs to see the ground and reduce the fall distance before...

...he lands with at a very awkward angle. Nothing is broken broken, but it is certainly heavily bruised... and Felix and Gilbert are standing right next to him with a bag and some rope. Things don't look good for Thomas as he can barely stand before he's manhandled again. He's in open terrain again, though, so maybe he can manage a jump if he can

just... not get distracted by the truck pulling up and Grant stepping out.

This seems to throw everyone for a loop, including Limbani[The truck is shielded, so no matter when they find Thomas, he needs to be outside of the truck.], and Grant[this just raised a point for me, I don't think it affects this particular chapter since Grant was in the truck, but I think we need to think about how it would work when two Precog are acting on the same subject in different direction.Hmm... makes me wonder what would happen if Stephan fucked Limbani...]... is confused but in a scowling sort of way. He sees now the people who were chasing Thomas, and they aren't who he expected. Not that Thomas knows this, all he knows is the kindly roo looks at him in stern revaluation, and there is suddenly a question of what he is going to do.

And then people start talking, and it is made clear the guys just plan to knock out Grant and move on. Thomas can't allow that, so he blinks out of their distracted grip towards Grant and... almost falls over. Too many teleports, too short a time on low energy, one resulting in physical battery. The guys close in, and Grant reaches into his the back of his truck to pulls out... length of almost random scrap wood held together with twine and loose nails.

...and when did it get cloudy[is this enough to point the Chamber in Grant's direction? also, does Grant know the Chamber is watching weather patterns looking for him?Yes, and very likely. You have to remember, though, Grant is on the move a lot, and he relies on that to protect him. The fact that they had someone ready to respond to quickly to his presence will surprise him.]?

The wind picks up, along with rolling lightning in the distance, and while the sudden literal change of atmosphere gives the guy pause, it's

just some freak weather... until Grant literally knocks the lot of them off their feet. And from there... well it is not a contest that Grant can hold these guys off. Even heavy hitter like Kuno and Laurence would have trouble messing with him, and they only have Yating[you say they "only" have Yating, but since he can phase, he's actually quite effective here. he can let the wind blow through him as he moves closer to Grant.True. Will need to think what Grant can do against him.Might be plausible to have Yating actually grab the staff and the staff go "nope" and shock him back a few dozen feet. They have Olavo, so they can heal him more efficiently than if they just had sigils.With Thomas seeing that, his attitude toward Grant may shift a little. he might not be as reluctant to explain his situation, since Grant clearly won't think he's crazy Agreed, but we go from this to Grant and Thomas in the car and getting the explanation. So not exactly like there was much stalling aside from catching one's breath and saying "I'm sorry" first.]. So he clears them away, and then lightning rods their van[Also, just remembered that should be Gilbert's van, so it will explode a bit more than it should. Because while they cleaned out the explosives, you just can't get that much gunpowder out of upholstery in such a short amount of time.If you get a chance can you find a picture of what you feel the van looks like?Basic universal white van... tm

<https://www.zimbrickeastside.com/inventoryphotos/2035/1gtw7ahb6k1283387/sp/1.jpg?height=400>I was really hoping it was going to have actual windows at the back <chuckles>I mean... I pictured this van because it was so universal. I'm not married to it, so if you have a counter proposal feel free to make it.I guess the question is what does Gilbert use the van for? is ther a reason he wouldn't want tinted wqindoes in stead of the white pannels on the van?He transports himself and his stuff... which includes explosives. Lots of explosives. He collects/builds explosives like others collect shoes or build ships in bottles. He also considers them a practical tool that should be used.But... yeah. You can still see through a tinted window if you put your face up against the glass... sort of... kind of. So privacy might be a good reason.] to make sure they can't follow, and gets Thomas into his truck before driving away.

\* \* \*

Grant just drives for a bit, with Thomas literally being too tired to speak. Eventually Thomas speaks up, seeking to apologize... and Grant shuts him down. Thomas was in trouble, it was Grant's choice to act. He doesn't need to apologize for anything... what he does need to do is start talking, but obviously the whole "waiting for you to trust me with your secrets"[Phrasing needs work, unless we want to make Grant someone who walks around somewhat meta aware of all the tropes in life. Which we might, his personality is aside from "jaded but still kind" is up in the air.] routine just became nonviable[do you see Grant angry or amused with teh situation? or something else? He just realized he misread his Precog, so how does he react to that?There is a good amount of annoyance that his precog directed him to someone who wasn't a Practitioner, since now he needs to go over it sigil by sigil and figure out where can filter out the this probability and still get the results he wants. But he's old enough to know not to misdirect that annoyance onto Thomas. Grant scryed for someone essential someone new to magic in over their head, and that just happened to describe Thomas. The fact he's not a Practitioner isn't Thomas's fault.].