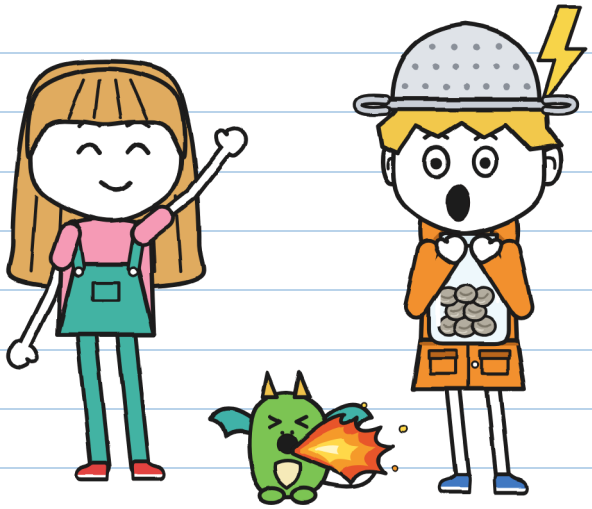
IMPOSSIBLE DELIVERIES · 2

Do Not Open Before Thunder

Lui Eriksson



(Gus's notebook)

SIZE L
Advanced level · 11+

IMPOSSIBLE DELIVERIES · 2

Do Not Open Before Thunder

Text and illustrations: Lui Eriksson

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English version: LinguAula

First edition: 2026

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Second book in the series. The first: "This Package Bites".

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No thunder was harmed in the writing of this book. —J.



And nobody else. —J.

If you find it, don't open it before thunder.



This stamp marks what only happens in the story: don't you do it. If it lasts several pages, it says FROM HERE and TO HERE. In a real storm, page 76 is in charge. —J.

WHO'S WHO



Gus. Saturday courier. Storm chaser (more or less). This notebook is his.



Julie. Counts the seconds between the lightning and the thunder. Writes in green and signs J.



Crumb. Dragon hatchling. Copies everything Gus does. Everything.



Tony. Rides for LIGHTNING. Ten minutes or it's free.



Flora. The gardener at 9 Canal Street. Doesn't sign for stones.



Vera. Looks after dragons at the Dragon House, next door to Flora's. Crumb lives with her.



Mara. Owner of Impossible Deliveries. Wears a witch's hat. Knows more than she says.

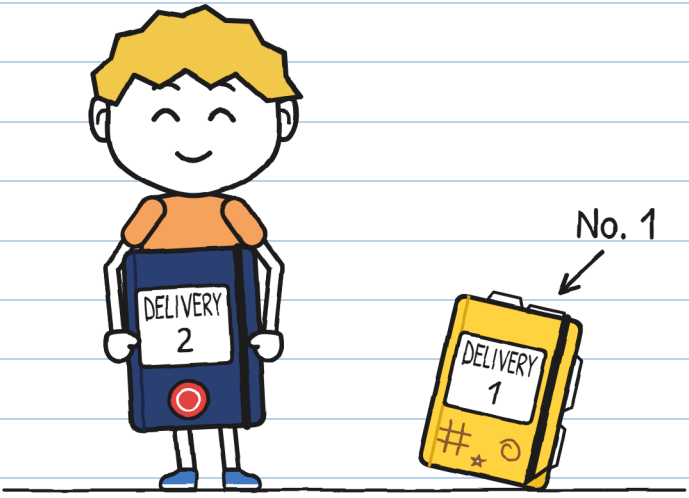


R. Sends the packages nobody can deliver. Nobody says R.'s name.

DELIVERY NOTEBOOK 2
by Gus

OFFICIAL.

"Official" means I read it first. Officially. –J.



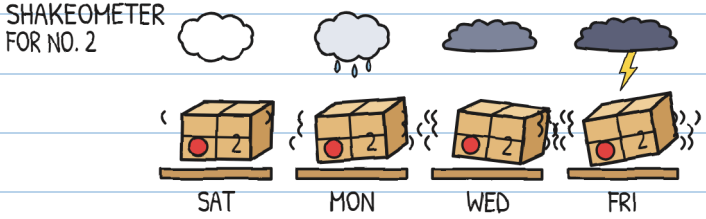
Notebook 1 has run out: it's full. Mara, who owns the shop, gave me this one, with the shop's stamp on the cover. She says official notebooks aren't for doodling in. We'll see.

CHAPTER 1

Storm Chaser

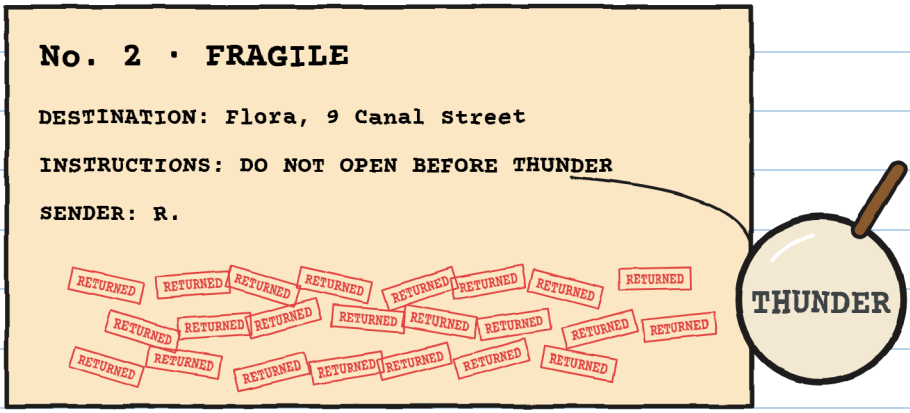
In Mara's shop there's a package that shakes. It has been at it since last Saturday, a little more every day. I have decided not to touch it.
The last one Julie and I delivered was an egg; now it's a hatchling called Crumb who copies everything I do.

In the shop opposite my house, nineteen returns are left. And one of them seems to have got tired of waiting.



It isn't shaking with fear: it's shaking because a storm is coming. On Saturday, at six in the evening. I've checked the forecast six times. —J.

The returns are packages that always come back: unless whoever receives them signs the label in ink that doesn't come off (like Julie's green marker), they fly back to their shelf at dawn. One person sends them all: R.



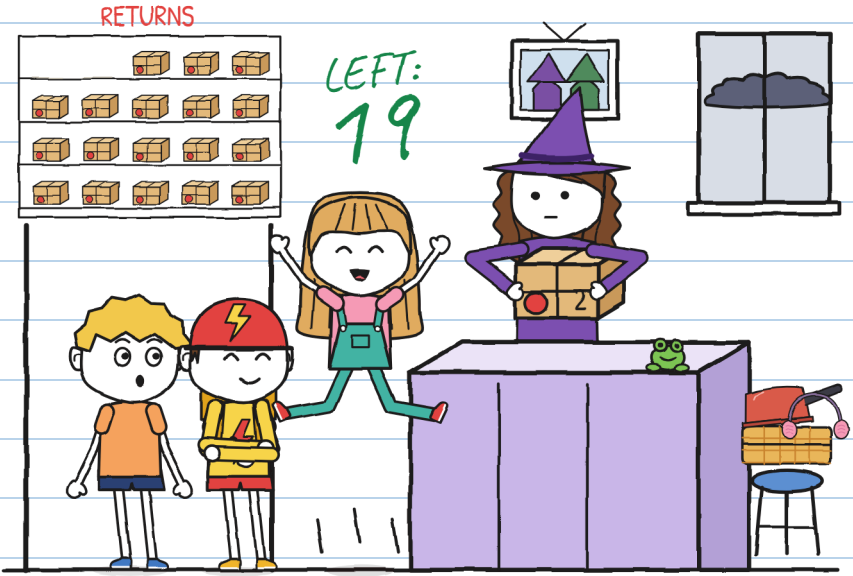
No. 2 had twenty-three RETURNED stamps on it.

Twenty-three. I counted them twice. —J.

"I've taken it myself twenty-three times," said Mara. "Not once in a storm."

On Saturday, at ten, Mara was waiting for us at the counter with No. 2 in her hands. Tony was there too: on Saturdays the three of us are stuck in the shop serving our punishment for delivering No. 1 without permission.

"This one," said Mara, "you three will deliver. This afternoon."

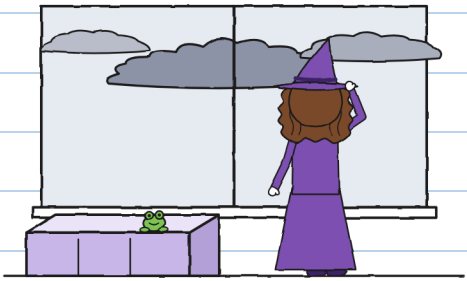


Julie jumped so high that she almost touched the sign that said LEFT: 19.

Mara laid down three conditions, counting them off on her fingers:

1. You leave at five, before the storm arrives, and you stay at Flora's until it has passed.
2. Your families already know, and so does Flora.
3. The rule is the one on the label: it doesn't open before thunder. And it has to be the thunder overhead: faraway ones don't count.

"Aren't you coming?" asked Julie.
"I have things to do here," said Mara, and looked through the shop window at the sky, which was turning grey.



What things? –J.

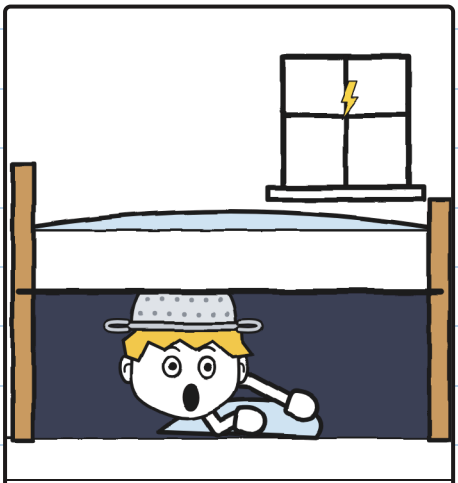
Then Julie looked at me.
"Do you like storms?"

And I said what you say when someone looks at you like that:

"I love them. In my old neighbourhood I was a professional storm chaser."



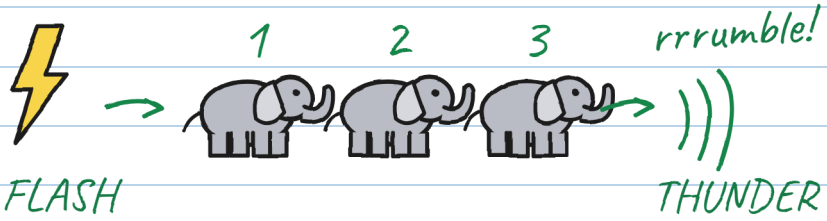
What I said



What actually happened

Professional. From under the bed. –J.

Julie taught me how to count a storm. In my notebook, without asking, as usual:



one elephant, two elephants, three elephants...

1 elephant = 1 second

3 elephants = 1 kilometre (more or less)

0 elephants = OVERHEAD!

↖ That's the thunder on the label.
The faraway ones don't open the package.

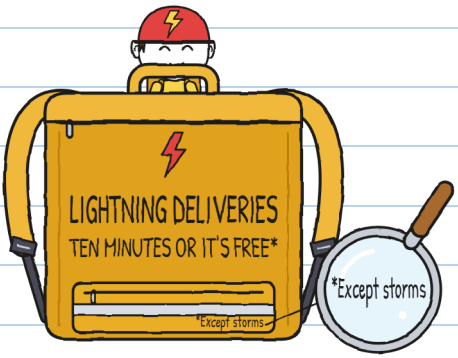
More elephants: that lightning struck further away.

If you hear thunder, even far away: take cover!

What you know scares you less. –J.

I didn't need to count anything, because I love storms. But I wrote it down anyway, just in case.

Tony read the label over my shoulder and showed us the small print on his backpack.
"LIGHTNING doesn't deliver in storms."
"There isn't a storm yet," Julie pointed out.
Tony went over the small print again. It said nothing about "yet". And he came with us.

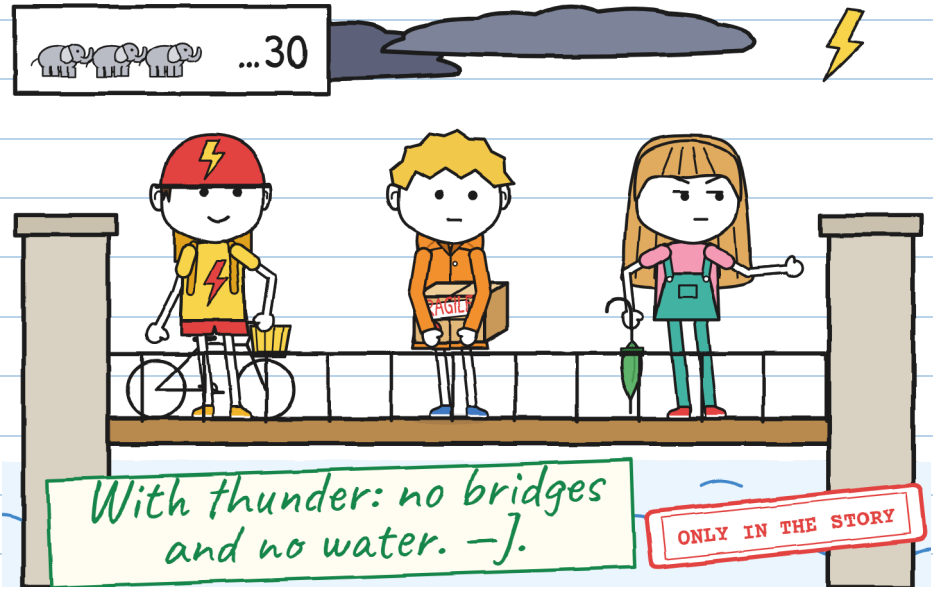


Small print, big excuse. –J.

At five I popped across to my house for my raincoat.
"Wear the orange one," said Mum from the door. "Sure you want to go? You, when it thunders..."
"BYE, MUM!"

"You, when it thunders..." WHAT? –J.

We crossed the Big Bridge, which they raise at night so the boats can pass, under a sky growing blacker by the minute. Halfway over, Julie waved solemnly at the water: she and the canal don't get along.



Far away, the sky lit up. Julie counted thirty elephants before she heard anything.

Rrrumble.

"That lightning struck about ten kilometres away," she said. "The forecast says the storm arrives at six."

"That was thunder!" said Tony. "Can we open it now?"

"That one doesn't open the package," said Julie. "The one on the label is the one that sounds at the same time as the flash: zero elephants. But you can hear it now, and that's enough: take cover!"
We ran all the way to Canal Street. I pretended I hadn't heard any thunder.

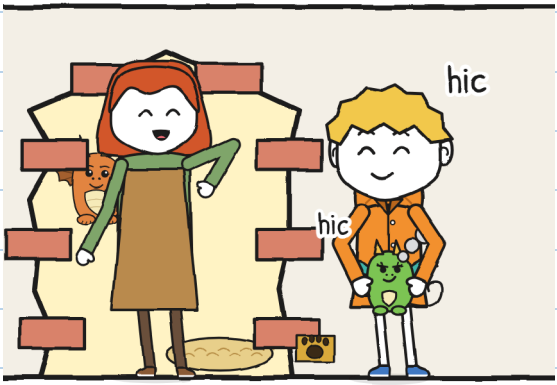
"Was that a hiccup?" asked Julie.
"No," I said. "Hic!"



It's happened since I was little, but only with thunder: every clap sets off hiccups, one every three seconds, and with the storm overhead I can't stop. It isn't fear. My body does it without consulting me.

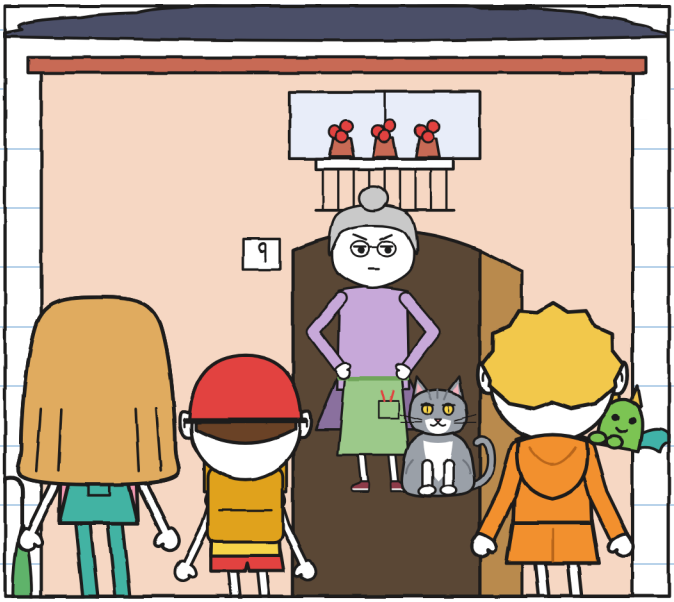
It's called being scared. —J.

Vera was already waiting at the door of the Dragon House, right next to Flora's, with Crumb in her arms: on Saturdays, Crumb goes for a walk with me.
"Only as far as Flora's: it's her first storm," said Vera, and handed her over into my arms. "She copies everything you do, Gus. Everything you feel, too. If she gets scared, don't pull her: she holds on. When the storm has passed, three knocks on the yard wall and I'll come and get her."
"I don't feel anything," I said. "I love storms."



Far off, it thundered. I hiccuped. Crumb hiccuped, and smoke came out of her nose.
"Inside, now," said Vera.

Flora's house is the one with the geraniums: the balcony where a lady watched us two Saturdays ago, when we were looking for the door of the Dragon House. That door looks like a wall.



Flora opened the door before we could knock. She looked at the box. She looked at the sky. She looked at Crumb.

"Vera's hatchling. Don't let her scorch my ferns," she said. "Come in, rain's coming. But I'm warning you: I don't sign for stones."

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Another flash: only one seed was left on the floor. Julie caught it. Seven.

SIZE M · B1
At the next flash only one seed was left, and Julie caught it. Seven.

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Everyone in their own size. Same storm. —J.

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