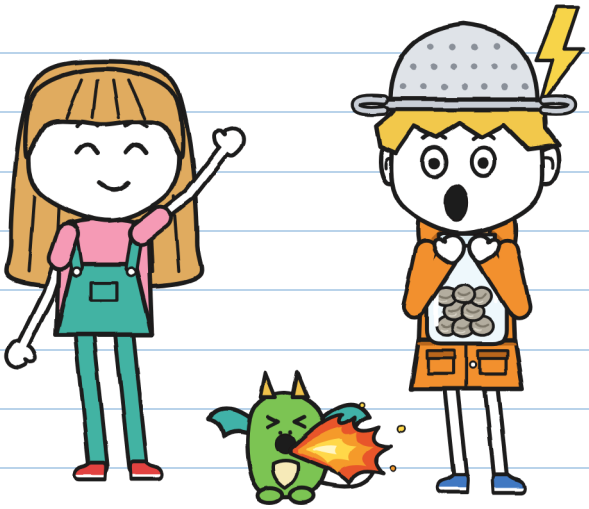
IMPOSSIBLE DELIVERIES · 2

Do Not Open Before Thunder

Lui Eriksson



(Gus's notebook)

SIZE M
Intermediate level · 9+

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Do Not Open Before Thunder

Text and illustrations: Lui Eriksson

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English version: LinguAula

First edition: 2026

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Free to photocopy, for class and for home.

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 do it yourself. 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.

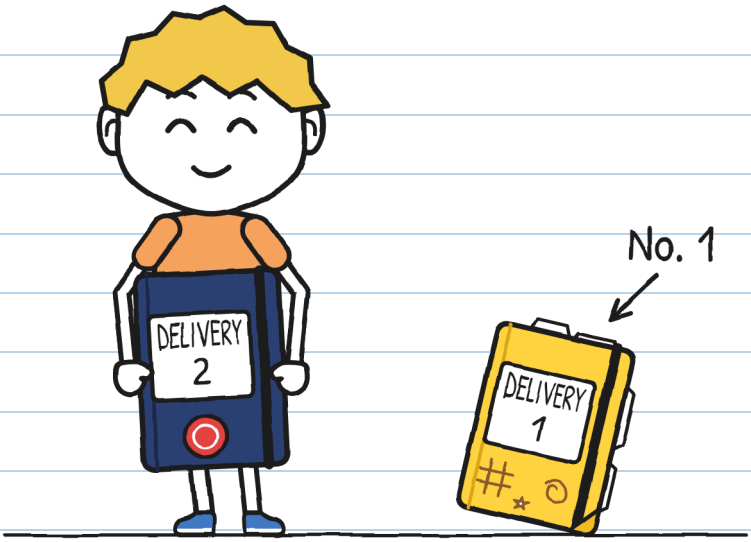


R. Sends the packages nobody can deliver. Nobody says R.'s name.

DELIVERY NOTEBOOK 2
by Gus

OFFICIAL.

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



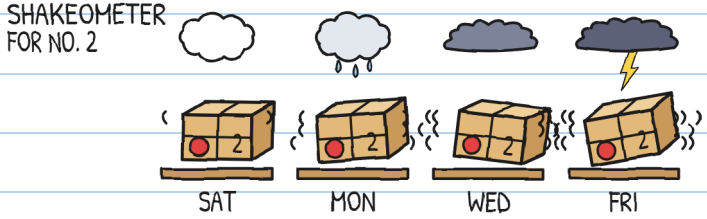
Notebook 1 ran out: it's full. Mara, who owns the shop, gave me this one, with her stamp on the cover. She says official notebooks aren't for drawing in. We'll see.

CHAPTER 1

Storm Chaser

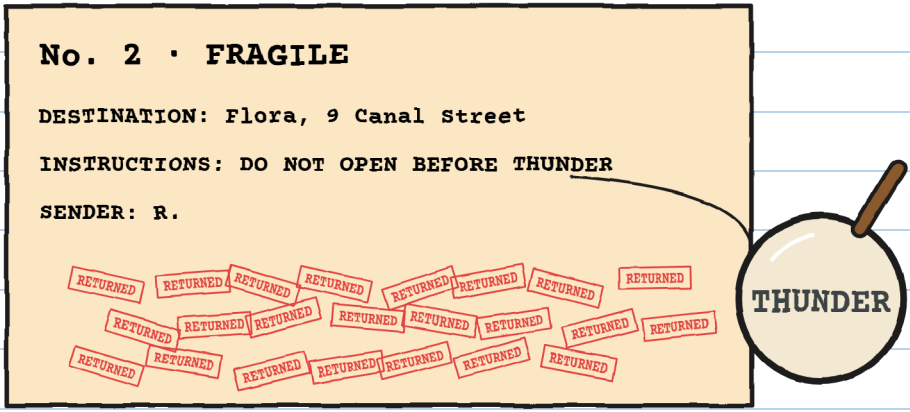
In Mara's shop there's a package that shakes. Since last Saturday, a little more every day.
I'm not going to touch it.
The last one Julie and I delivered was an egg. Now it's Crumb, a hatchling who copies everything I do.

In the shop opposite my house, there are nineteen returns left. The one that shakes is in more of a hurry than the others.



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

Whoever receives a return has to sign the label in ink that doesn't come off, like Julie's green marker. If not, it flies back to its shelf at dawn. One person sends them all: R.



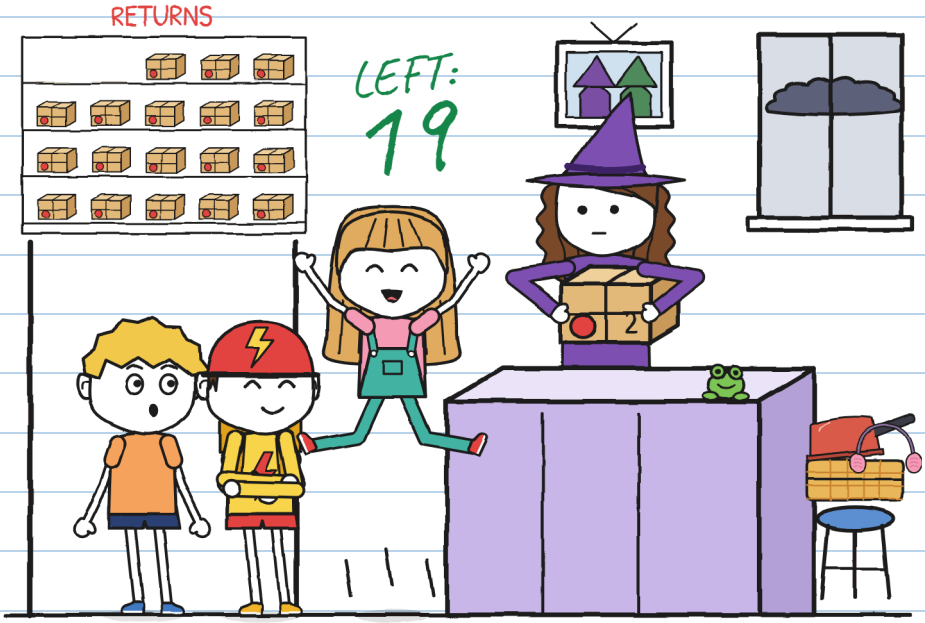
No. 2 had twenty-three RETURNED stamps on it.

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. Tony was there: on Saturdays the three of us are punished in the shop for delivering No. 1 without permission.

"This one," said Mara, "you're delivering. This afternoon."

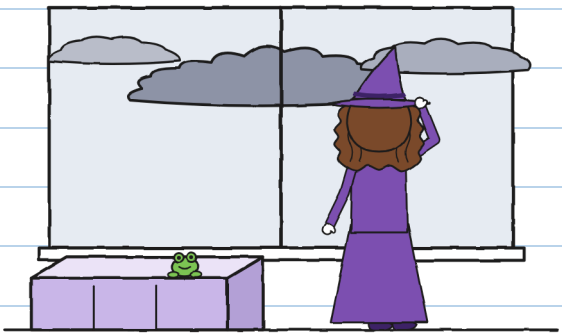


Julie jumped so high that she almost touched the LEFT: 19 sign.

Mara set three conditions and counted them on her fingers:

1. You leave at five, before the storm, and you stay with Flora until it passes.
2. Your families and Flora already know.
3. The rule is the one on the label: don't open before thunder. And the thunder overhead counts, not the faraway ones.

"Aren't you coming?" asked Julie.
"I have things to do here," said Mara, and looked out of the window: the sky was turning grey.



What things? –J.

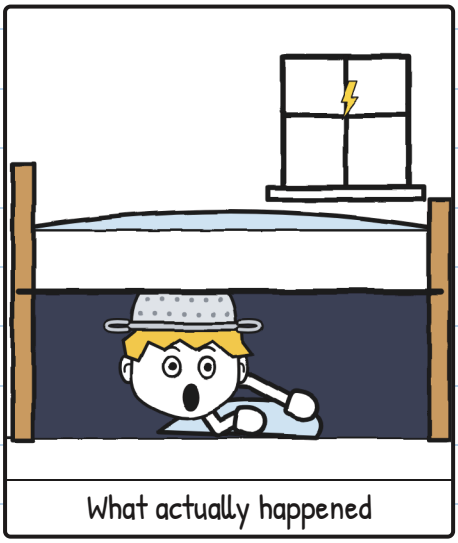
Julie looked at me.
"Do you like storms?"

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."



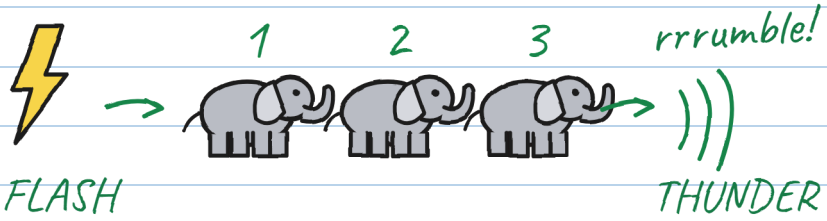
What I said



What actually happened

Professional. From under the bed. –J.

Julie showed me how to count storms in my notebook, without asking, as always:



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.

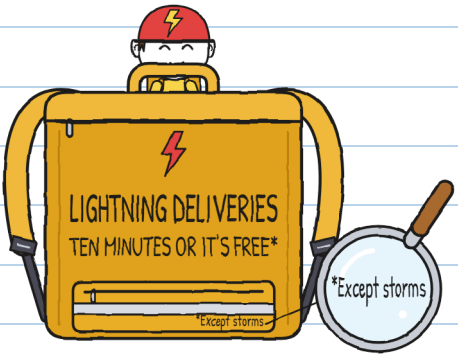
More elephants: that lightning struck further away.

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

What you know scares you less. –J.

I didn't need to count them: I love storms. But I wrote it down, just in case.

Tony read the label over my shoulder.
"LIGHTNING doesn't deliver in storms."
He pointed at the small print on his backpack.
"There isn't a storm yet," said Julie.
Tony read it again. It said nothing about "yet".

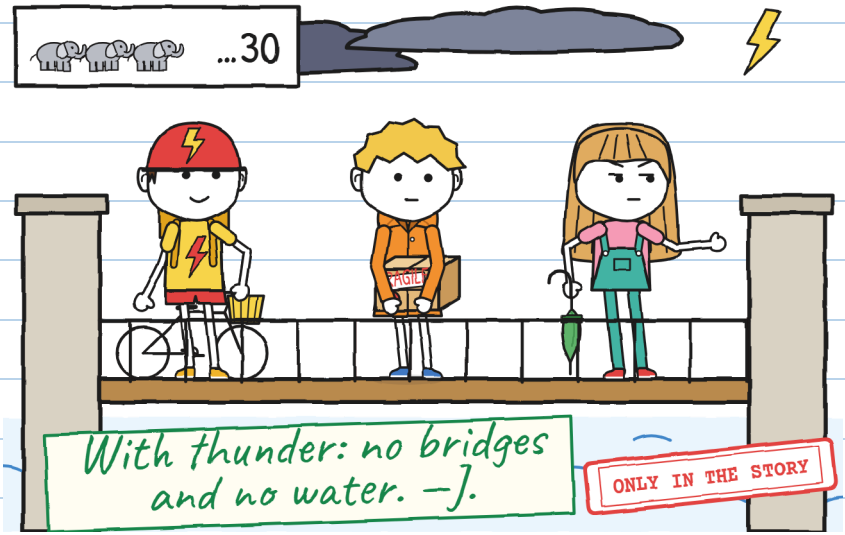


The small print was too small. –J.

And he came with us.
At five I went home to get my raincoat.
"Put the orange one on," said my mum. "Are you sure you want to go? You, when it thunders..."
"BYE, MUM!"

"You, when it thunders..." WHAT? –J.

We crossed the Big Bridge under a very black sky. At night they raise it for the boats. In the middle, Julie waved at the water, looking very serious: she and the canal don't get along.



Far away, the sky lit up. Julie counted thirty elephants until the thunder.

Rrrumble.

"About ten kilometres to that lightning," she said. "According to the forecast, the storm will arrive around six."

"That was thunder!" said Tony. "Do 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 to Canal Street. I pretended to be deaf.

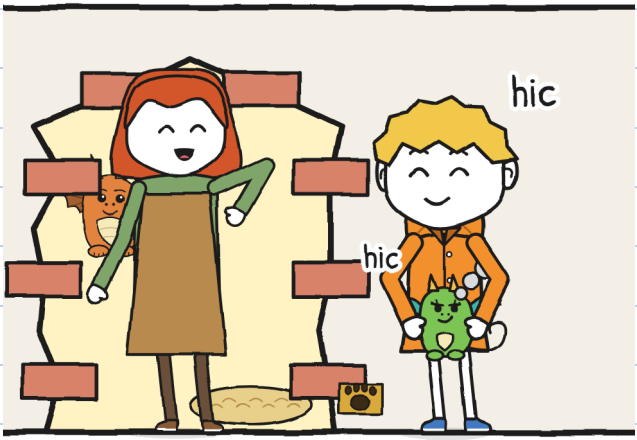
"Was that a hiccup?" asked Julie.
"No," I said. "Hic!"



It's happened to me since I was little, but only with thunder: with every thunderclap, a run of hiccups, one every three seconds. With the storm overhead I can't stop. It isn't fear: my body does it without asking me.

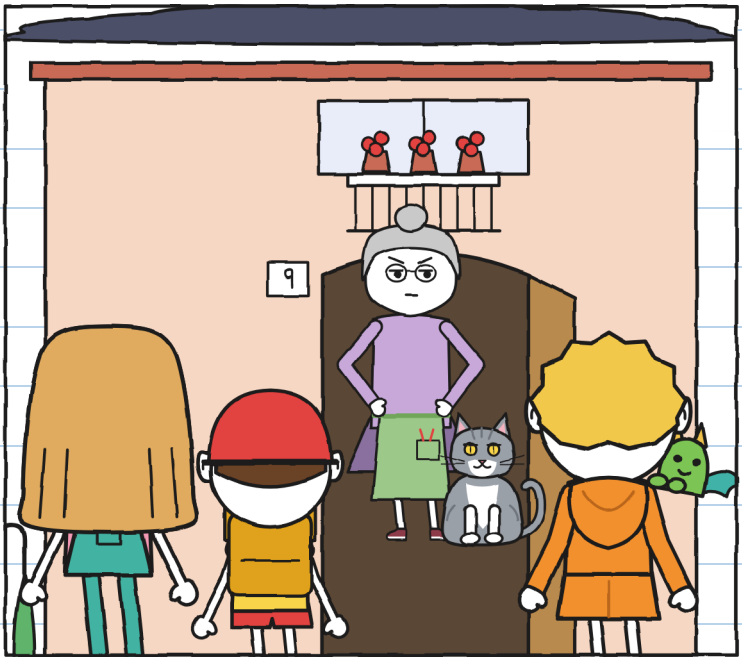
It's called being scared. —J.

Vera, who looks after the dragons, was waiting for us at her door, next to Flora's, with Crumb in her arms: on Saturdays, Crumb goes for a walk with me.
"Today, only as far as Flora's: it's her first storm," said Vera, and handed her to me. "She copies everything you do, and everything you feel. 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 for her."
"I don't feel anything," I said. "I love storms."



Far away, it thundered. I hiccuped. Crumb hiccuped and blew smoke from her nose.
"Inside, now," said Vera.

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



Flora opened the door before we knocked and looked at the box, the sky and Crumb.
"Vera's hatchling. Don't let her burn my ferns," she said. "Come in, rain's coming. And I'm warning you: I don't sign for stones."

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One seed was left on the floor. Julie caught it. Seven.

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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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