

Chaoticus spun at the last moment, there was an explosion of gunfire, and lightning shot out.

Chaoticus flung like a ragdoll across the street, rolling across the sidewalk before springing up and spinning.

“Volt, run!”

Reset’s voice jolted him.

“Right!”

His feet moved of his own accord. To his left he saw a massive violet portal open directly over Chaoticus as he continued to sway trying to orient himself.

*Oh fuck.*

There was a sound like a tornado, an enormous rushing, and water spewed forth from the portal.

*Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh fuck.*

The portal shut off after a couple of seconds. A moment later the first car lifted.

“Volt, go!”

High school gym came back in a moment. Don’t look behind you, it slows you down. Just focus and run.

“Volt!”

He shook his head, and a moment later cold water overtook his ankles. He turned back to see the field cleared by the wave. Cars were overturned and haphazardly scattered in a circle around where the portal had opened. In the center a storm crackled before snapping out of existence. Chaoticus no longer floated, instead stumbling forwards towards Violetta.

“Reset he’s wounded, we’re doing it.”

“We got him, hang on fifteen seconds,” came the response.

*Fifteen?*

Chaoticus wrenched his arm forwards, and a tear of telekinetic storm ripped out of the street at Violetta, spraying rock and foam into a conveniently placed portal.

Volt raised an arm, then let it drop. He’d run out of juice.

“Relax, five.”

Reset wouldn’t be saying that if Volt hadn’t tried something. What could he have tried?

His train of thought was interrupted by something slamming through Chaoticus at bullet speed, the faint afterimage of an electrical tail visible to Volt’s extra sense.

Chaoticus fell in two.

“Brace!”

*Brace?*

He dropped, falling through the ground to land next to Violetta. Spinning he realized he was standing ankle deep in water inside. Broken storefront windows looked out onto the battlefield.

“Sorry, the unknown assailant wants you all. Violetta, Agent is about to be hit,” Reset explained.

Violetta opened a portal onto Agent’s roof. A brief flash showed Agent lifting a rifle and a burst of machine gun fire before it snapped close. Another portal opened on the roof and Agent fell, landing with a roll to spring up, weapon ready.

“Sorry, Reset’s orders,” Violetta offered.

"I had him," Agent responded before slumping. "Bah."

"If Reset says you didn't—" Volt began.

"I know, I know. Violetta, what was that water attack?"

Violetta grinned. "Portal at the bottom of the Hudson. It's quite destructive, not something I can use with any civilians around, or if damage is even a mild concern. Do or die end of the world stuff let's me bring out the big guns, at least when it has a chance to really hurt."

"Ah," Agent replied. "Anyone get Avian?"

"She was under the water when I...I don't know, I'm sorry," Violetta answered.

"She's alive. Hang in there," Reset cut in over comms, slicing through Volt's momentary panic.

Seconds ticked away.

"Is she—" Volt began.

"Hang on."

Volt tensed.

"Go."

Volt leaped out of the building at a sprint, feet splashing through the gently receding waters. Twenty feet from where Chaoticus lay was a black heap.

"Hang on, help is coming."

Ignoring the voice Volt reached the body and turned it over. Limbs flopped about.

*Oh no. No no no no...*

"Volt, step aside, annnnnnd..."

Volt stepped back, and a moment later Liberty and Salve stepped through a portal in the air in front of him.

"Thank you Violetta," Mom said.

*Liberty. She's Liberty in uniform.*

"Okay but..." Salve began. "But how...So I...Got it." Salve kneeled over Avian and held his hand to the side of her head. A faint soft gold glow emanating from it.

"What just happened?" Volt asked.

"I was explaining the injuries he had already found over comms," Reset answered. "You don't want to hear the list."

"I do."

There was a sigh and a momentary pause. "So she has several traumatic brain injuries, including hemorrhaging, three concussions, six broken ribs, a snapped spine, water in both her lungs, the early stages of hypoxia, a smattering of broken bones in her limbs including—"

"Okay, Jesus Christ, I get it. Holy fuck."

They stared in silence as Salve worked. After a minute he sat back and Avian's eyes flew open.

"Shouldn't she be coughing up water?" Agent asked.

"Nah, I healed it away. She still has a concussion and a broken left hand but she can walk off, there are other injured so I have to move on. Come to the Arrowhead in two days, the concussion should have healed given she has powers, and I'll fix the hand. This is a powered diagnosis, so there is nothing else going on, but a concussion is still serious, no fighting," Salve finished, looking between the three. "You are responsible for her." With that he asked Violetta to portal him two blocks South, stepped through, and moved on.

Liberty remained. "What happened in there?"

"We—"

Volt was cut off by a hail of gunfire and the sudden appearance of Blur. "They took it while I helped you. They took it. I looked all over. In a fraction of a second it vanished. Goddammit. God damn you. I helped you and—"

"Blur," Liberty cut across her while stepping between them, "If they took it that quickly they were prepared for you. You leaving probably saved your life."

"There is nothing that can move fast enough to catch me."

"Portals. Teleportation. Lasers. Electricity. Really anything without mass given your limitations. Camouflage traps."

"Okay, okay, I get it. But Doc is gonna kill me."

Liberty stepped forward, clapping a hand on Blur's shoulder. "I won't let that happen. And neither, I assume, will they."

Volt blinked as Liberty's arm swept towards him. "Yeah, I mean, yeah. Chaoticus was going to escape and just make more. Thanks to you we stopped him."

The panic didn't leave Blur's eyes, but it receded a little, along with the waters around them.

"Agent, do you have Avian? I'd like to debrief Volt and Violetta."

Agent nodded, helping her up and getting a portal from Violetta back to headquarters.

"Okay, from the top. What the fuck happened in there?"

Volt sucked in a breath and began talking.