

Flight of the Navigator

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/39343428) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/39343428>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Hermitcraft SMP
Character:	EthosLab (Video Blogging RPF) , BdoubleO100 , Grian
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - The Magnus Archives Fusion , Transcript Format
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of the hermit archives//statement begins , Part 1 of statement begins//of thirteen
Collections:	Hermitcraft x TMA fics
Stats:	Published: 2022-05-31 Words: 2,150 Chapters: 1/1

Flight of the Navigator

by [classics_above_classics](#)

Summary

When you're falling, there must be wind. There needs to be wind. Without it, a fall will inevitably become a crash. You can't catch yourself. Your parachute becomes useless, and no matter which way you flap and freak out and adjust things nothing will ever change. You can't control a thing. You will never be able to control a thing.

Or; Statement of Grian Xelqua, regarding the Midnight Alley, and a daring escape. Audio recording by Etho S. Lab, Head Archivist of the V.O.I.D. Institute.

Notes

i hope to god this is coherent i wrote it all at a party and in the middle of a car ride. but i wanted to get this out now! hope yall enjoy :))

also, this is not-eye grian propaganda. give that man some web

[click]

ARCHIVIST

BDubs? What have you got there, buddy-?

[Door slams shut. BDUBS grunts, setting something down with a heavy sounding thud.]

BDUBS

Absolutely no idea!

Well, it's a bunch of tapes n' a statement in a red box, so... Kind of an idea. But I dunno what's on them, and it's not my job to find out!

ARCHIVIST

Aww, BDubs. Did you save these for me?

BDUBS, audibly smiling

Only the best for you, Ladders.

[A short pause.]

But hey, listen, there's... I dunno, but something feels... creepy about this one. About all the ones we've been getting on tape, really. Like walking into a dark hallway in your house at night when you're hearing weird noises in the walls, y'know? I know these are Grian tapes, and you asked for any of em we could find and all, but are you... *sure* you want to keep listening to them?

ARCHIVIST

These are Grian tapes?

BDUBS

... Right. Got it. Be careful with these, okay bud?

ARCHIVIST

Ah, don't worry about me, Dubs. If this is a dark hallway in my house at night, I just need to turn on the lights! Nothin' to it.

BDUBS

Right. Of course.

Have fun with those, then! I gotta go back to filing. Cannot *believe* this is the stuff you saddle your perfect assistants with...

ARCHIVIST

Delegating terrible tasks is the whole point of assistants!

BDUBS

[laughs] How could I forget!

I'll be seeing you, Etho! Love you to death.

ARCHIVIST

I know. See you later.

[BDUBS walks away. The door closes.]

ARCHIVIST

[quiet exhale]

... A Grian statement. A Grian. Statement.

[Box opens. There is a short pause, and then the quiet rustle of paper.]

Oh my god. This isn't- This isn't just a *recording* from him, is it? This is... This really, actually a *statement* .

Huh. Tape's on. Good! I can start right away. Ho-lyyy heck, BDubs, you've found archivist gold.

Statement of Grian Xelqua, regarding the Midnight Alley, and a daring escape. Audio recording by Etho S. Lab, Head Archivist of the V.O.I.D. Institute.

Statement begins.

ARCHIVIST [statement]

Save the box, would you?

Don't worry, Archivist, this bit isn't really for you. Unless you're the one arranging files, I mean! If you are- ugh. Come on, everyone knows that's what assistants are for! I mean, how important could whether file 010192 is between 071012 and 151213 be, really? The arrangement doesn't really matter.

Yeah, yeah, it's an archive, I know, but really. It's in an archivist's best interests to sort *important* things properly for those who come after. And maybe you'll find some of the bits and bobs important, but trust me. The *really* good bits will be saved just for you.

Anyways, all that aside- I bet you came for a story.

When I was younger, maybe half a decade before I became head archivist, I wanted to see the world from the sky. I loved plane rides- always had, since I was a kid- and when I was on skyscrapers I could lose myself for hours just staring at the city. It's why I got into skydiving, originally, though the statement I made about *that* is gonna have to stay lost. I just... I couldn't help how much I craved it. Seeing the world from the sky.

Have you ever seen something so beautiful? It was so little from up there. It got even smaller as I got higher, enough that I thought I could hold it in the palm of my hand. Buildings thousands of times bigger than me seemed like nothing but toys. Little model sets you could put together and paint in your own home, so small with the wind rushing in your ears and through your hair. Infinite possibilities, a world that was complex and terrifying, all nothing in the face of a little height.

The feel of that swallowed me up. Whenever I was free, I found night flights for my skydiving- the Ely Track offers them weekly, despite what happened to the guy who got hospitalized, you know the one, and I found there was nothing nearly so good for sightseeing. Everything's always lit up in the city, so you can see everything like it's floating in a black void. Like *you're* floating in a black

void.

... I don't remember exactly when it began. It was slow, creeping in bit by bit, but that void followed me home.

Whenever I fell asleep, I dreamed of a city in a black void. It goes like this: I come to in a plane, a wing-patterned parachute strapped to my back. The door slides open, and I look out into the most beautiful city, full of colour and dim light and crooked marble structures. I take a breath, we ascend higher and higher, and I *fall* .

I never looked forward to sleep as much as I did then. Nearly became nocturnal, with how often I looked at the daytime sky and decided "screw this, I'm dreaming night back into existence." I don't care much about the dark, but the *experience* of falling like that, of meeting the stars as you fell and never seemed to get close to crashing into a place straight out of your dreams... I was riding that high as long as I could, and I *revelled* in it.

The place in my dreams was called Midnight Alley. I named it, my dream my rules and all, but I have to say *was*. It felt right, at first. But it got *way* too big to be just an alley, and the name just didn't work anymore. You know how it is. Sometimes... sometimes you sink into something, you fall into it headfirst thinking it's perfect, and then you realize that part of you that loves it has fallen silent.

What could have happened, if I hadn't realized? If I'd just made one different decision, if I'd lost myself fully? I might even still be here, speaking to you. It'd just be for a different reason.

Anyway. Midnight Alley started off small. A few shops here and there, the makings of a marble bank, the edges fading into the black. It just barely made the shape of an alley, really. The longer I dreamt, though- and oh boy did I *dream* - the more it grew. The white building built itself as I approached it, as I soared over its materializing roof. Little paths branched out between new buildings springing up, visible even as the plane entered from different places and as I jumped from higher up. Shops connected to each other, a secret second alley rose in the shadows, and I soared above it all, caught in the arms of the sky.

I began daydreaming, in the times I was awake. The midnight sky crept out into my real world too. Sometimes I stepped into an elevator and my vision blurred, standing me above the alley's menagerie and surrounding me in void. Sometimes I'd go skydiving and seem to hover in the air, time slowing around me as paths spiderwebbed out of the landing lights I was heading for. Sometimes I'd turn a corner and my breath would catch because I was falling, and the stars were blinking into existence one by one. There was a difference, and I could feel it, but I didn't... care. How could the real world compare to that all-encompassing silence? To the world of my dreams?

The alley spread out eventually. Buildings rose around it, always somehow to my liking, and never in a way I could control. Throughout it all, the plane began from higher and higher, and I plummeted from more and more dangerous heights. My senses were filled with nothing but that sight, and the way my fall was always unending.

Bit by bit, though, something just started to feel... off.

It wasn't the Alley, I was sure of that. It was always meant to expand, no matter what, and no matter how complex it got it would always become too small to matter. Besides, the buildings were in the perfect places. And it wasn't the plane either. It was always meant to rise higher.

When I realized it, it was in a daydream, from the top of a skyscraper. I'd been leaning over a fence, and the stars crept in, and I leaned too far and fell off. I'd say it knocked the wind out of me, but

that was the issue.

There was no wind.

When- When you're falling, there must be wind. There *needs* to be wind. Without it, a fall will inevitably become a crash. You can't catch yourself. Your parachute becomes *useless*, and no matter which way you flap and freak out and adjust things nothing will ever change. You can't control a thing. You will *never* be able to control a thing. There was never any wind in Midnight Alley, there had *never-been-* any wind in Midnight Alley. I hadn't realized how far my life had been taken out of my hands until then.

The moment I realized that, I stopped hovering. Because that's what it must have been- hovering, not skydiving or any of the things I thought I was so good at. I stopped hovering and the vertigo hit. My throat was practically scraped raw with how hard I screamed. There was no wind I could catch, no current. I flailed, I screamed, I pulled at the parachute strings- nothing. The parachute exploded out behind me and I thought, *I can't be saved*.

I'd like to say that I prayed. But the truth is, as I fell, all I could think of was the parachute strings. I was grasping desperately for anything, for a lifeline. And I found it in the strings.

When the parachute opened, I felt wind.

I pulled it down as fast as I could. I was *desperate* to save myself, and I knew- unless I did something, nothing would happen. This world didn't care to save me. But I could create my own wind, and just maybe, maybe I could make it save me anyway. I grabbed the parachute, I ripped the edges enough with my teeth to tie them like strings around my wrists and ankles, and I flapped them like they were wings.

And just like that, where there had once been nothing, there was wind.

I didn't feel it when my real body hit the ground. But in Midnight Alley, I landed perfectly. It was the kind of landing I'd done a million times before, even with makeshift wings. Even if I dreamed this again, how could I be scared of the fall? I was the one who controlled how I landed. I was the one who decided whether there was wind.

I woke up in the real world lying in a hospital bed. The building I'd fallen from in reality was *pretty* high. Everyone was surprised I hadn't died, and if I'm honest, I kind of was too. But they swore it looked almost like something had caught me, like a parachute had softened what was meant to be a hard landing. You don't know just how hard I laughed when I heard that.

I still dream of that alley. Of the buildings and the stars and the sky rising above me. But no matter what, my parachute stays full of wind, and I doubt I'll ever need to pull its strings so desperately again.

But I think I've reminisced for long enough now. And I've left you a present, you know. It'd be rude to hog the stage for too long. Think of those tapes as... a themed set, if you want. Everything has the same end anyway. Out of the frying pan and into the fire.

Try not to burn, Archivist.

ARCHIVIST

... Statement ends.

It looks like there's... thirteen tapes in the box, along with this statement! All of them named like they're stories or something too, because of course. *[laughs]* That Grian- the moment I heard his first tape I just *knew* he was a jokey one!

[a moment's silence]

... I think I know when he fell. I saw it, fifteen years ago. I was out getting some coffee, I looked out the window, and some guy was just... plummeting down from this nearby skyscraper. Thought I was just imagining what I saw, but...

Those people were right, when they said it looked like he had a parachute. It didn't look like any real one I've ever seen, though. No parachute's just an outline like a spiderweb.

Aw, dangit, it looks like we're out of time for this recording. Recorder's about to run out of tape. Next time I gotta listen to one of the tapes he left in there. He must have disappeared for a reason, and he said they were important. Maybe they'll help me find it.

End recording.

[click]

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!