

## [ten] the day the future changed

**IT WASN'T UNTIL** Magda shouted them upstairs that Nova and Peter retreated from the basement. When they walked into the living room, they found the TV streaming the announcement from the White House, which had seemingly begun to descend into chaos. Nova sat down on the floor beside Peter, his younger sister planting herself in Nova's lap as they watched, and when Nova saw Erik Lehnsherr levitating a safe into the centre of the field and turn all cameras onto him, she let out a quiet gasp.

"Oh my God, Erik," she whispered.

"You built these weapons to destroy us," Erik began. "Why? Because you are afraid of our gifts. Because we are different. Humanity has always feared that which is different. Well, I'm here to tell you, to tell the world, you're right to fear us. We are the future. We are the ones who will inherit this earth, and anyone who stands in our way will suffer the same fate as these men you see before you. Today was meant to be a display of your power. Instead I give you a glimpse of the devastation my race can unleash upon yours. Let this be a warning to the world. And to my mutant brothers and sisters out there, I say this; no more hiding, no more suffering. You have lived in the shadows in shame and fear for too long. Come out, join me. Fight together in the brotherhood of our kind. A new tomorrow, that starts today."

President Nixon walked out of the bunker and someone called out to him. "Mr. President! Sir!"

They made to stop the president, but he shook them off. "Stand down! I said stand down!" he turned to Erik. "You want to make a statement? Kill me? Fine! But spare everyone else!"

"Very heroic, Mr. President," Erik commended. "But you have no intention of sparing any of us. The future of our species begins now."

Erik pointed the floating guns at Nixon, then one of the Sentinels started running towards them. Erik pulled it apart with his powers, leaving it destroyed and in pieces on the ground, before he turned back to the president, who pulled out a gun, raised it, and fired. Nova let out a loud gasp when she saw Erik's hand fly up to his neck and watched Nixon transform into Raven.

"You used to be a better shot," Erik said.

"Trust me, I still am," Raven replied, knocking Erik out with ease.

She turned the gun on those inside the bunker, and everything seemed to freeze. Nova watched as Raven had a conversation with someone she couldn't see, and when everybody unfroze, Raven lowered the gun, removed Erik's helmet and walked away from the scene.

"He's all yours, Charles."

Peter's mother turned off the television and Nova's shoulders fell. Peter turned to her and placed a hand on her shoulder. "Hey, it's all okay. She didn't kill anybody."

Nova nodded, swallowing hard. "I hope this has changed everything."

"You mean the future?" Peter asked. "That's what this was all about, right?" Nova nodded. "Then I guess we have to hope that it has."

"I... Yeah," Nova said, covering her face with her hands. "Jesus, I'm sorry."

"Don't apologise," Peter said, shooing his sister out of the room. "Go help mom."

"But I don't want to."

"Lorna!"

"Alright, fine," she grumbled. "You're no fun."

When Nova and Peter were alone, he shuffled so he was sitting opposite Nova and took her hands in his. "Hey, it's okay."

"I just... I know Erik," Nova said. "And I know what he's capable of, and I know that no matter what, he's probably never going to change. I guess I had just hoped that... maybe this once, it would be about everyone's agenda and not just his own."

"Well, some people never change," Peter replied. "But what's he like when he's not, uh, you know, destroying everything and threatening world domination?"

Nova smiled. "He's a good guy. He just... gets his, uh, intentions mixed up. He had these ideologies that just don't sit well with everybody, so he and my dad butt heads a lot about it."

"Have you known him your whole life?" Peter asked.

"Since I was six, yeah," Nova nodded. "Uh, it was... '62, I believe, and my dad put together this team of mutants to stop the crisis in Cuba."

"No way, that was actually mutants?" Peter asked. "I remember hearing about that."

"Yeah, my dad was there," Nova said. "With Erik, but before that, Erik was sweet. He just wanted to do right by the mutant population."

"Doesn't everyone?" Peter asked.

"Yeah, but his ideas involved human destruction," Nova said. "Obliterating the entire human race and leaving only mutants behind."

"Oh, jeez," Peter mumbled.

"But he's not all bad," Nova replied. "We spent a week at the house while they were training the younger mutants - Raven and some others - to be ready for combat, and Erik taught me how to play chess and beat my dad."

Peter smiled. "That sounds nice."

"Yeah, it was," Nova replied. "Why are you asking all these questions about Erik? You a fan?"

"Uh, I guess you could say that," Peter answered. "You won't tell anyone if I tell you this?"

"Tell anyone what?" Nova asked. "But no, you have my word."

"I think Erik is my father."

Nova's jaw dropped. "Excuse me?"

"Yeah, my mom once knew a guy that could control metal like he can, and when I asked her about it after getting back from the Pentagon, she acted like she didn't know what I was talking about," Peter replied.

"Wait, so you're telling me that Erik Lehnsherr is your actual dad?"

"That's exactly what I'm trying to tell you," Peter replied.

Nova's eyes widened. "That's insane. No, really, that's so crazy."

"You don't believe me?"

"No, I believe you," Nova assured him. "I believe you. You should tell him."

"Tell him?" Peter gawked. "Why would I do that?"

"Because maybe it'll stop him from being such a megalomaniac," Nova replied.

Peter shook his head. "No, I can't tell him. What if he rejects me?"

"Then I'll smack him," Nova offered.

Peter laughed. "Okay, as funny as that would be, I'm gonna have to say no."

Nova reached for Peter's hand. "Whenever you're ready to tell him, I'll be there with you, okay?"

"You will?" Peter asked.

Nova smiled. "Yes, of course I will."

As they sat there on the living room floor, Peter Maximo had never wanted to be with somebody more than Nova Xavier. She was something else entirely; she didn't see him as a loser or treat him like a freak for being a mutant. She saw him in an entirely different light, and Peter knew that he would move heaven and earth if it came down to it, all in the name of showing Nova that she was loved...

Continue reading next part [▶](#)