

[twelve] up for a jail break

"**CARE FOR SOME COMPANY?**" asked Jean Grey, finding Nova sitting underneath a tree with a book open in her lap, three more piled by her feet.

Nova glanced up at her. "Sure."

"What are you reading?" Jean asked.

"A Tale of Two Cities," Nova replied. "It's one of my favourites by Dickens."

"Really?" Jean asked. "I've never read it."

"You should," Nova replied, closing the book. "Here. Take it."

"But it's yours," Jean said, hesitant to accept.

"But I've read it three times," Nova responded. "Take it, but just make sure you give it back."

"Okay," Jean said, taking the book from Nova and tucking it into her satchel. "Hey, you heard from Peter recently?"

"Yeah, he called last night," Nova replied. "We talked for a while, and he said he'd probably be down in a day or two, which is cool."

"I don't know how you two do it," Jean admitted. "I mean, long distance? It must be hard."

"Yeah, it is, but we don't know any different," Nova shrugged. "It's always been this way, and I don't wish it was any different."

Jean smiled. "That's adorable."

Someone said, "Hey," and caused both girls to look up.

Scott Summers was walking towards them, wearing the ruby quartz glasses that Hank had created for him. Evidently, they had worked, because Scott wasn't setting fire to everything in sight (literally), and when Nova saw his gaze directed at Jean, she felt suddenly awkward, like she was intruding.

"You can see," Jean commented.

Scott chuckled. "Yeah. It's not as bad as I thought here."

"Freak," someone said, as a crowd of people passed.

"Someone should warn the new kid," another said.

"They're still scared of me," Scott said. "Hey! I have special glasses now."

"They're not scared of you," Jean said, as Nova used her power to trip the boy that had muttered the comment. Jean smiled. "Thanks."

"Anytime," she replied.

"You're not the only one who can't fully control your powers," Jean told Scott.

"Wait, so... last night, when the house shook... that was you?" Scott asked.

"Sorry to break it to you, but you're not the biggest freak in the school," Jean said.

"That title is claimed by Miss Grey," Nova said.

"Well, that's a first," Scott said.

Jean smiled, and Nova nudged her pointedly. "What?"

"Go with him," Nova said quietly. "Show him around."

Jean looked at Nova, trying to work out whether she was joking, but when no trace of the emotion crossed her friend's face, Jean sighed.

"Hey, why don't I show you around? Introduce you to everyone else?"

"Uh, yeah," Scott nodded. "That'd be great."

Nova smiled. "Alright, you kids have fun."

"You're not that much older than me," Jean pointed out.

"But I am still older than you," Nova replied, picking up her books and getting to her feet. "Gotta go."

She shot into the air and flew back towards the house. Scott watched her go in awe. "She can fly?"

"She controls gravity," Jean replied. "She likes to make dramatic exits."

"She's cool," Scott said.

"Yeah, she is," Jean agreed. "She was the first person to treat me like everyone else."

"She your friend?" Scott asked.

"Best friend," Jean replied. "But I'm second only to Peter."

"Who's Peter?" Scott asked.

"Her boyfriend," Jean shrugged. "We don't see him much."

"Oh, he live out of town?" Scott asked.

"Yeah," Jean nodded, spotting Jubilee heading into the house. "Oh, there's Jubilee. Come on, you'll love her."

Nova headed into the foyer and was surprised to see yet another familiar face. "Raven?"

"Nova?" Raven asked, smiling at the sight of the girl. "Oh my God, you've gotten so big."

"So I've been told," Nova replied, rushing forwards to hug Raven. "It's been a long time."

"Yeah, it has," Raven said, ruffling Nova's hair. "Last time I saw you, you were barely up to my hip."

"And now I'm taller than you," Nova grinned.

"Not quite," Raven replied. "Oh, Nova, this is Kurt."

"Kurt Wagner," the boy behind Raven said, extending his hand. "Pleasure to make your acquaintance."

"Oh, hi," Nova smiled. "Are you new here?"

"Yes," Kurt replied.

"Could you show him around?" Raven asked. "Please?"

"Sure," Nova nodded. "Come on, Kurt."

She lead the boy away from Raven and passed Hank as she did so. She knew that it was going to be a personal reunion between he and Raven, so she ushered Kurt along quickly. He seemed nice enough, although rather timid. Some mutants were lucky, and their abilities were not always visible, but some were less fortunate and stuck out like a sore thumb. Kurt was of the latter variation, his skin a brilliant blue colour, a tail trailing behind him and claws for hands.

Nova was never one to judge, so she tried to make Kurt feel as welcome as possible. "So, what is it you can do?"

"I believe it is call teleportation," Kurt replied. "You know, it's my first time in America. I'm very excited to see your culture."

"Well, you're not gonna see it here," said a voice just ahead of them. Nova turned to see Scott sitting on the couch, arms slung back lazily.

"The only thing American about this place is that it used to be British."

"This is Scott," Nova said, rolling her eyes. "And that's Jean and that's Jubilee. Scott's new here, too."

"And I'm already up for a prison break," Scott said, getting to his feet. "What do we say we take this blue guy on a little field trip? I'm sure there's a mall around here somewhere."

"What's a mall?" Kurt asked.

Scott chuckled. "What's a mall? Alright, now this is a matter of national pride. Civic duty."

"Scott," Jean said reproachfully.

"What?" Scott asked. "You've been cooped up here for a long time, and the professor's not even home."

"I'd like to go to the mall," Kurt said. "Try it."

"Alright," Scott replied, turning to Nova. "Where does he keep his cars."

"You know, as a faculty member, I'm obligated to tell you that you're not permitted to leave the premises, right?" Nova asked, and Scott nodded. "But as your friend," she nudged Jean gently. "I'm going to tell you to go and have fun, but don't get into any trouble, okay? If you do, it's my ass that's on the line."

"Alright," Scott nodded. "Now that we've got permission—"

"Technically," Nova added. "But if anyone asks, you didn't see me."

"Technically," Scott repeated. "Let's go. Where does the professor keep his cars?"

"Uh, in the garage," Nova replied. "Where else would he keep them?"

"Sweet," Scott grinned. "Let's go."

Nova watched them leave, shaking her head. Oh, to be young and reckless.

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