

## [seventeen] the x-men

**NOVA DIDN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND** why Peter didn't reveal to Erik that he was his father, but she guessed that it was a little hard for him to admit something like that. She turned to Erik again.

"Erik, please!" she begged, his eyes turning to her. "You have to help us."

Behind them, the jet rose into the air, and Nova saw two figures flying towards it. She gasped. "No."

"Go!" Raven shouted. "Nova, go!"

She took off immediately, flying towards the jet. A boy with metal wings and a girl wearing a purple suit beat her to it, and Nova let out a yell. As the boy with metal wings went to jump into the jet through the hole in the roof, Nova slammed into him and sent the two of them free-falling towards the ground. She caught them with her powers, trapping the boy where he was, suspended in mid-air.

"Who are you?" he shouted. "Let me go!"

"Not a chance," Nova replied, propelling herself towards the boy. She kicked him in the chest and sent him shooting backwards towards the pyramid, so hard and fast that he disappeared from view a er a second.

Then she turned to the jet, which was plummeting towards the ground. She flew towards it, in through the hole in the roof, and saw the girl with purple hair approaching her friends.

"Not today," Nova snapped, using her powers to trap the girl, flinging her out of the jet.

"Kurt, get us out of here!" Jean yelled.

Nova slowed down the jet's momentum, but it was already going too fast. With a yell from Kurt, he and the others disappeared from Nova's view and she flew through the hole in the roof, watching as the jet hit the ground and exploded. She hovered above it, watching the flames lick at the sky, before she flew towards the ground.

She didn't know where Scott had gone, but as she landed on the ground beside the wreckage of the jet, she saw a man appear from a purple ball of energy. She took cover behind a ruined house and watched as the man surveyed the scene before him, speaking quietly to himself for a moment before he let out a yell.

"Charles!" at the sound of his voice, Nova flinched. "Show yourself! Charles! Show yourself!"

Nova gasped. "Apocalypse."

As Nova watched from where she was hiding, Apocalypse suddenly started flying through the air in a manner that could only be accomplished by someone super fast. She saw a blur of silver and realised that it was Peter, single-handedly attempting to take on this god

"Peter!" she shouted, running out from where she was hiding.

Peter's foot became encased in dirt, trapping him, and Apocalypse approached him. "Foolish child."

"Hey!" Nova shouted, running towards them, too slowly to reach Peter in time. "Hey, no! Let him go!"

Peter tried to punch him, but Apocalypse caught his fist and twisted his arm painfully. Peter yelled in pain as Apocalypse kicked his leg, and even from where she was, Nova heard the crack of bones breaking.

"Peter!" she screamed, her voice mingling with Peter's cry of pain. "Peter! No!"

Nova's anger blinded her and all she could think about was hurting this man that had hurt Peter. She ran towards him, jumping with her fist raised, ready to slam him into the ground, but Apocalypse caught her by the throat and held her, suspended in the air. Nova choked out a gasp as Apocalypse li ed Peter's head by grabbing his hair and the girl in purple approached leisurely, swinging her sword.

"End him," Apocalypse instructed.

"N-No," Nova gasped, smacking Apocalypse's arm.

The girl spun her sword, and Nova let out a choked cry as she swung the blade. Only, she didn't cut Peter's throat. The sword sliced Apocalypse's throat.

Nova's eyes widened, but she didn't have time to process what was happening because Apocalypse threw her backwards like she weighed nothing. Nova went flying and crashed through a pile of rubble, her powers doing just enough to break her fall, and she heard Peter shout her name. Scrambling upright, Nova watched Apocalypse grab the girl by the throat and li her into the air.

As Nova watched, the girl turned into Raven, and Nova's eyes widened. "Raven, no..."

She tried to use her powers to get Apocalypse to released Raven, but she could barely stand a er the crash she just had, let alone muster the strength to protect her friends. Apocalypse looked at Raven. "The great hero. You are feeble. Just like the others."

"No!" Nova coughed out, as he tightened his grip.

"Charles!" Apocalypse yelled. "Come!"

"Dad, no!" Nova shouted, praying that her father could hear her.

"Come! Rescue your weaklings!" Apocalypse roared. "Give your life for theirs!"

"Raven!" Nova yelled, as Raven's hand started slipping from Apocalypse's arm.

"Charles! Will you do nothing?!"

Apocalypse suddenly faltered, and Nova took her chance. This man had hurt her friends, broken Peter's leg and nearly killed Raven. He had almost taken her father from her, and now Nova was angry.

Rising to her feet, she glared at Apocalypse and let out a yell, directing all of her anger towards him. The earth seemed to move as she yelled, the rocks around her rising as Apocalypse flew backwards into a broken building and disappeared from view. Raven dropped to the ground and Nova stumbled over to her friends.

She dropped down beside Raven, checking that she was breathing, before she turned to check on Peter before turning back to Raven.

"Oh my God. Raven. Raven, wake up!" Raven stirred only slightly and Nova let out a sigh before she moved towards Peter, taking his face in her hands. "You're okay. You're okay. I've got you."

"It hurts," Peter whimpered.

"I know, but I've got you," Nova whispered.

She turned and saw Apocalypse approaching them, his hand held out in front of him. The wall of the house before them faded away into dust, revealing the rest of the team inside. Nova watched Apocalypse approach the building, and her eyes widened in horror.

"No!" she yelled.

As she made to get to her feet, a metal support beam thudded into the ground, followed by another, forming an X in front of Apocalypse. Nova looked up and saw Erik above them, appearing to have changed sides.

"You betray me?" Apocalypse asked.

"No," Erik replied. "I betrayed them."

All around him, the scrap metal started to rise and fired at Apcalypse, who deflected it easily. Hank and Scott leapt down from the building and rushed towards them, with Hank crouching down over Raven.

"I got you," he told her quietly.

Nova turned to the dirt encasing Peter's leg, holding out her hand and concentrating. With the remaining energy she had le , Nova caused the dirt to crumble, releasing Peter's leg. Scott removed his glasses, the beams of energy from his eyes joining Erik's barrage of metal.

When Peter was free, Nova grabbed his arm and draped it over her shoulders, pulling him upright as they stumbled away from the building. She and Hank le Peter and Raven by a wall, the two of them completely incapacitated, and then they ran back towards Scott.

Using her powers, Nova joined Scott and Erik, forcing the rubble around her to rise before she sent it hurtling towards Apocalypse.

Hank tried to leap at him, but was thrown aside. Thrusting with an hand, Nova managed to catch him before he collided with an overturned car and allowed him to regain his balance.

Scott closed his eyes and Apocalypse sent him flying backwards into the wall. The building seemed to suck him in, trapping him as Scott became encased in concrete.

"Hank!" he yelled. "Nova!"

Nova rushed towards him, but her feet were pushed out from underneath her and sent her flipping over herself. She gasped and managed to catch herself, but not before Hank was sent flying into the wall and fell limp on the ground.

"Hank!" she cried. "Hank! No!"

Erik was still holding Apocalypse at bay, so Nova joined him as she got to her feet and sent more rubble hurtling his way, the flames around him burning everything in sight. Nova then saw Jean, walking through the air as though she was on the ground, and she threw out her arms and screamed. All around her, flames burst forth, and Nova watched as the flames took the shape of what looked like a phoenix.

Whatever Jean was doing was enough to stop Apocalypse, bringing down his barrier. Nova secured him with her powers, making it impossible for him to even li his toes, and Erik sent the sharpest metal shooting down at him, trapping him in place. Hank freed Scott, who then scorched the metal and began to trap him completely.

The barrier around Apocalypse began to reform and Nova grit her teeth. "He's getting away."

Lightning suddenly struck the force-field and destroyed it. Another mutant had joined them, a girl with white hair who had her hands held up to the sky, summoning the lightning with her mind.

Jean let out another scream and Apocalypse was destroyed, turning to nothing but dust as he was finally, finally vanquished.