

[three] it all starts with raven

"WHAT?" Charles asked, sounding confused.

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"About fifty years from now," the man said.

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"Fifty years from now? Like, in the future, fifty years from now?" Nova asked.

"Yeah."

"I sent you from the future?" Charles asked, the disbelief evident in his tone.

"Yeah."

"Piss o."

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"If you had your powers, you'd know I was telling the truth," the man said.

"How do you know I don't have my..." Charles began, his eyes narrowing. "Who are you?"

"I told you," the man said.

"Are you CIA?" Charles asked.

"Nope."

"Have you been watching me?"

"I know you, Charles," the man said. "We've been friends for years. I know your powers came when you were nine. I know you thought you were going crazy when it started, all the voices in your head, and it wasn't until you were twelve that you realised all the voices were in everyone else's head. Do you want me to go on?"

"I never told anyone that," Charles said.

"Not yet, no, but..." the man said. "You will."

"Alright, you've piqued my interest," Charles said. "What do you want?"

"We have to stop Raven," the man said. "I need your help. We need your help."

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Charles looked like he was about to cry. "I think I'd like to wake up now."

"Dad," Nova said, as Charles got up and walked past her and Hank.

"What does she have to do with this?" Hank asked, as Nova watched Charles walk into his study.

"Everything," the man replied. "She's the key to everything."

"I'm sorry, what did you say your name was again?" Nova asked, peeking out from where she was hiding behind Hank, her arms folded. "Because I still don't know."

"Logan," the man replied.

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"Well, Logan, it's nice to meet you," Nova said.

She then turned on her heel and walked into Charles's study. He had his back to her and was pouring himself a glass of whiskey. Nova hated that he drank as much as he did, but it was a coping mechanism and she didn't want him to fall further into his despair than he already was.

"Dad?" she said quietly.

"What, Nova?" Charles asked.

"Are you alright?" she asked.

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"I'm fine."

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"Now, you and I both know that's a lie," Nova said. "I can read you like a book."

"She says to a telepath," Charles mumbled.

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"It's all about the eyes," Nova shrugged. "Windows to the soul."

Charles pointed at her. "I've taught you too much."

"Not enough," Nova corrected. "There's always more to learn about, like how that man out there got here from the future."

"He's probably lying," Charles said.

"I don't think so," Nova replied. "I looked into his eyes when Hank asked him what Raven has to do with this, and I think... I think whatever happens because of her is really bad."

"You do, do you?" Charles asked, eyeing his daughter with a curious light in his eyes. When she nodded, he downed the whiskey in his glass and sighed. "Alright, fine. I'll give him ten minutes."

Nova smiled before she rushed back out into the foyer and ushered Hank and Logan into the study. Once seated, Logan launched into his story, telling them exactly why he had been sent back to the past to find them. From what he said, Nova gathered that Raven was captured by the military and her DNA was used to create an army of what Logan called 'sentinels', which were engineered to target mutants and destroy them.

Charles seemed disbelieving. "So, you're saying that they took Raven's power and what... they weaponised it?"

"Yep."

"She is unique," Hank said.

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"Yeah, she is, Hank," Charles agreed.

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"Well, in the beginning, the sentinels were just targeting mutants," Logan explained. "Then they began to identify the genetics in non-mutants who would eventually have mutant children or grandchildren," his expression darkened. "Many of the humans tried to help us. It was a slaughter, leaving only the worst of humanity in charge. I've been in a lot of wars. I'd never seen anything like this, and it all starts with her."

"Well, let's just say that for the sake of... the sake that I-I choose to believe you, that I choose to help you, Raven won't listen to me," Charles said. "No, her heart... and soul belong to someone else now."

"I know," Logan replied. "That's why we're gonna need Magneto, too."

"Erik?" Nova asked.

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"You do know where he is?" Hank asked.

"Yeah," Logan replied, as Charles started laughing.

He got to his feet. "He's where he belongs."

"That's it? You're just gonna walk out?" Logan asked.

"Oh, top marks," Charles replied. "Like I said, you are perceptive."

"The professor I know would never turn his back on someone who lost their path," Logan said. "Especially someone he loved."

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Charles backed up and turned around. "You know, I think I do remember you now. Yeah, we came to you a long time ago seeking your help, and I'm gonna say to you what you said to us then: fuck o."

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Nova's jaw dropped as Logan grabbed Charles by the collar of his dressing gown. "Listen to me, you little shit. I've come a long way, and I've watched a lot of people die. Good people. Friends. If you wanna wallow in self-pity and do nothing, then you're gonna watch the same thing, you understand?"

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He released Charles, who shrugged. "We all have to die sometime."

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As he walked away, Hank sighed. "Told you there was no professor here."

"What the hell happened to him?" Logan asked.

Nova shrugged. "He lost everything. You know, Erik, Raven, his legs. They built the school, the labs, this... this whole place, then, just after the first semester, the war in Vietnam got worse."

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"Many of the teachers and older students were drafted," Hank continued. "I mean, it broke him. He retreated into himself. I... I wanted to help; do something, so I designed a serum to treat his spine, you know, derived from the same formula that helps me control my mutation. I take just enough to keep myself balanced, but..."

"He takes too much," Nova said quietly, fearful of her voice breaking should she speak louder.

"We tried easing him back, but... he just couldn't bear the pain, the voices," Hank said. "The treatment gives him his legs, but it's not enough. He's... He's just lost too much."

"I hate seeing him like this," Nova admitted. "But when people lose the will to go on, there's not much you can do to bring them back."

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She reached for the whiskey decanter, and Hank stepped forwards. "Excuse me? What are you doing?"

Nova held up the decanter and looked at Logan. "Drink?" he nodded and she turned to Hank. "Offering our guest a drink. Problem?"

Hank grit his teeth. "Fine."

"So you're the infamous Nova," Logan said, taking the drink from Nova as she held it out to him.

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"I guess," she replied.

"How old are you, kid?" Logan asked.

"Seventeen," Nova replied. "It was my birthday last week."

"Oh, well, happy birthday," Logan said. "You know, where I'm from, you look a lot different."

"Older, I guess?" Nova asked.

"Yeah," Logan replied. "But also... the way you carry yourself is different."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Nova asked, straightening up subconsciously.

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"Nothing," Logan replied. "Just... you've got a long way to go in your life, kid. You're gonna do great things."

"Thanks?" Nova replied unsurely.

"You control gravity, right?" Logan asked.

Nova nodded.

"So, you ever thought about being an astronomer? Maybe an astrophysicist?" Logan asked.

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"Not really," Nova replied. "I hadn't given it much thought."

"Well, maybe you should," Logan replied, winking at Nova like he knew something she didn't.

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Just as she opened her mouth to respond, Charles's voice interrupted. "I'll help you get her. Not for any of your future shite, but for her."

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"Fair enough," Logan said.

"But I'll tell you this: you don't know Erik," Charles said. "That man is a monster, a murderer. You think you can convince Raven to change, to come home? That's splendid. But what makes you think you can change him?"

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"Because you and Erik sent me back here together."

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