

Maybe in another dimension

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Kapitel 8: Shapeshifting Emotions

Being back in Genosha didn't feel as good as he had hoped. It was a home. Kind of. But standing in his old room in the school that looked almost exactly like he left it, with Charles by his side, touching hands and loving words made him feel pain. So much pain that he wanted to throw up as soon as he entered his tiny house with the more or less well-maintained front yard. Erik knew why he had avoided the school for so many years. It just brought back the worst and the best memories.

He never wanted to let Charles back in his life this much. It made him weak, vulnerable and sensitive. But the last events had required one last visit. To see if Charles was alright. To see that he won't kill without reason. That he didn't become a monster. Like Erik.

Now that he knew there was no real threat, the metal bender could go back to his usual self and forget about the human part in him that wanted to stay at the school. Stay with Charles and stay in those arms for ever. Forget about his cause, forget about mutant kind and forget that he was a terrible man.

The time flew by and Erik did his best to fit back in his old routine. His people still tried not to ask about the recent events but failed here and there. Only that one guy, who made Erik go back to the school, asked about Charles and got an actual answer. But all of his reactions were the same: doubtful.

It was a late sunny day when Erik felt the presence of unfamiliar metal around his house. He recognised it within a few seconds as jewellery. From Raven.

"You did it again", was all she said after she invited herself into Erik's house and sat down on the cushy little couch. The sun was already setting, so Erik turned on some lights to take away the sharpness of her visit. At least that's what he intended to do; in the end the lightening made Raven's face even more obscure. He liked her blue form more; her human form made him uncomfortable.

"Did what", Erik asked in a low tone and tried to be occupied with a cup of coffee to prevent Raven from seeing his face. She had to be content with just glaring at his back.

"You left. Even though he asked you to stay."

That made him laugh. "He didn't ask such a thing."

"You're so full of shit", came her angry voice. "What's this time? Because he's 'just a clone'? Because the real Charles died? He is Charles! Don't pretend he's not!"

Erik stared into the cup of fresh coffee. He wasn't sure whether to give the mug to her peacefully or to throw it into her face. Since they were in his house and throwing the hot liquid into her face would end in a fight, he decided for the former.

"You're running away", came suddenly Charles voice. Erik turned around to see Charles sitting on his couch, casually crossing his legs and looking at him. For a second – just a millisecond – he believed it to be true. That Charles was sitting there and waiting for his coffee that Erik just made for him.

"Stop that", growled the metal bender and grabbed the mug.

"Why?", Charles – no Mystique – asked in an innocent, but serious voice. "We need you in the school. There are still a lot of things that don't work."

"Like what? Teachers and stuff? You want me to be in front of a class? With students who fear me?", Erik teased and finally put down the coffee in front of ... Mystique.

"No, I want you to do your fucking job as a friend and be there, when another friend needs you." Before Erik could offer a sarcastic or angry answer, fake Charles kept talking. "Don't you see? This is your chance. Your chance to do it better. To be the friend you weren't all those years."

Before Erik could answer to that ridiculous statement, Charles stood up. Erik froze when he came towards him. "He lost his memory and he doesn't want to remember, because everything we told him about the past was horrible and, to be honest with you, I can't blame him. Not at all. It's kind of sad that he doesn't want to remember our childhood, the precious moments we had, but even here I can't say that he's wrong. Our childhood wasn't easy, especially for him. Hearing voices, no one else could, as a young boy must have been terrible. His mother was an alcoholic and his step father abused us all. The only love he felt was in the heads of other people. Even I was afraid of him sometimes because he was so powerful. He felt people dying when he was still very young, Erik. All he ever had was pain and suffering. And then he drowned himself in books, lectures and university stuff. He made fun of women in bars, picking them up like they were nice toys just for the moment while in search for some love."

Charles had never told him any of that. Probably because Erik wasn't worth of knowing. Or more likely, considering it was Charles, he didn't want to burden him with his past.

Fake Charles came so close that Erik felt his breath. It was hard not to think that the

real Charles was in front of him. Or Charles No. 3. Because Raven even smelled like him. Like the school. Like ... what used to be his home.

"And then there was you. I know that now", fake Charles breathed. His blue eyes were fixed on Erik's mouth. "Suddenly he was different. No more bars, no more One-Night-Stands, no more drinking. Fighting for a cause he believed in by your side was what made him happy. You two were great together. You had your differences but at the same time you found a balance. He was always too optimistic about everything and you were too pessimistic. If you both would have listened to each other more, maybe things would have gone a different way."

"Are you here to lecture me about the past? Because if you do: look into a mirror", Erik managed to say.

"You're blaming me for leaving him?", fake Charles asked. The whole situation was disturbing: Charles was standing right before him and talking about himself in third person. But then again Erik had to remind himself that this person in front of him wasn't the real Charles. Or Charles No. 3. "He gave me his blessings to go. In the end he was hurt by my decision and I truly regret leaving him for so many years alone. For not writing him once. Or not visiting him, when he had those numerous operations. I feel probably as guilty as you. But I'm not hiding in a village I built myself to feel better about my 'oh-so-great-cause' and my decision to leave him."

"You're playing really dirty, Mystique."

"So did you", fake Charles said and came so close that their chests touched, "all those years."

Erik wanted to move. Had to move. But all he did was stare the person in front of him down. "Just back off."

"Just come home." Warm hands touched his shoulders and moved higher to his cheekbones. The touch was so light, Erik could have mistaken it for a loose hair touching his skin. "Take the opportunity to make it better."

The whole situation was suddenly turning very emotional. And Mystique knew exactly what she was doing. Seeing Charles so close, again on the verge of tears with his eyes glistening in the pale light of the room, made his stomach twist. And his heart ache. That's why he had always avoided his old friend: he made him weak. So weak.

And in those weak moments he wanted nothing more than to be held by him. Something in Erik shouted "Let's just be together, let's go far, far away from here and begin a new life, just the two of us, no one else! Let's pretend the world is a beautiful place, where we can settle down and be happy again after so many years of misery! We suffered enough, just let's go!".

But no. The mutants needed them. Both. And now that Charles Xavier was no longer in his best state with his memories, it all depended on Erik.

"Good night Raven", was all Erik could manage to say before he finally stepped away from the warmth and turned his back to fake Charles.

"Erik, don't –", he began, but Erik was already on his way upstairs.

"Just leave. Please."

He assumed it was his shaky voice that made Raven go in the end. She didn't come back after that visit. And in that night, Erik dreamed of Charles. Lying in his bed. Talking about his past. Until he dissolved into waves of blood again.