

Cale Storyline 03 Relatively Dangerous

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Sequel to Truth Be Told. As Generation X prepares to have about student join, one of their foes prepares to make another strike.

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Chapter 1 - Trust	2
Chapter 2 - Family Secrets	6
Chapter 3 - Dreams Do Come True	13
Chapter 4 - Revealed Truths	19

1 - Trust

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Relatively Dangerous

Trust

It had been a quiet day at Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters. At least that was how it had started. Rich still wished that some of the others had stayed behind. He couldn't remember who had stayed behind with him and Yvette, but now they were in no shape to move. Yvette and he had been running from an unknown attacker, one that was after him. It wasn't Emplate, so he was thanking God for that small favor. Yvette and he had turned a corner, and even though there was an open hallway to run down, they ran into an invisible wall. As they recovered from the collision, Rich felt the wall close around them. Both he and Yvette were having trouble breathing, as a female voice said to him, "Your life is over."

Richard Cale awoke and sat straight up in his bed. He was gasping for breath. He hated nightmares, especially like this. He knew he wouldn't get back to sleep anytime soon. He glanced at the clock in his room. 3 AM. This was a bad one, and a bad sign. The last time he had these nightmares, Emplate had attacked the school. Rich decided that it would be best to get dressed and walk around. Once he was dressed, he grabbed his flute and left the guy's dorm.

Elane looked back at the letter she had received weeks ago. She knew she had a powerful mutant ability, and the first plan she had to use it was halted by one person. Until now, she never knew how he knew, and now a gentleman who had met him had offered her a chance at revenge. She walked through Logan airport and watched for the person that would meet her. It was hard to think how she could easily find a man about 3 to 4 feet tall in the sea of people. It wasn't until she heard someone say, "Ms. Elane," that she turned and saw the person she was looking for.

"Are you the one who sent me the letter?" she asked him, noticing that on his chauffeur's hat, there was a card with the letters DOA on it.

Without the grin ever leaving his face, the man said, "No. That was the master. He is most eager to meet you. He feels that he can offer you the one thing you desire most." He was right, and Elane smiled. As if reading her mind, he then said, "The master is waiting at his house, and I will take you there."

Immediately, the man had taken her to a black limo, slightly beat-up, and started it on its way. As he drove, Elane saw a gate and sign that read, "Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters." She turned to the man and said, "Is that..."

"Yes, that is where he is. The master has a plan for you that will get you in and out in no time." Elane was never one who enjoyed many people, but then the larger a group, the harder to control things with her powers. Eventually the car pulled to a stop at a lighthouse. He took her inside and led her up the steps. Halfway up, Elane noticed an empty cell, with many cuts in the walls. The man who had wanted to meet her was evil, and she loved it. At the top of the stairs, the man disappeared through a door and talked with someone. A second later, the man came out and said, "The master is ready to see you." She

followed the man into the room and was shocked at what she saw.

Emplate knew what he was doing. He wanted this girl to know what would happen to her if she failed him. The look on her face showed him that he had received the desired effect. He looked at the girl. She was a blond, about eighteen, and she had a very powerful mutant ability. From what he could see, it had a great deal to do with aura manipulation. He then said to her, "Welcome to my home, Ms. Bonstein. I take it that you enjoyed your trip."

She appeared to get her wits together and ask, "Who are you who can offer me vengeance on the one who ruined my plans?" She jumped right to the root of the meeting.

"My name is Emplate. I have met with the target of your fury before. When he first arrived at the airport, I tried to capture him, but he knew I was waiting. Later I attacked the school and he used my own abilities against me. He is a mimic, who can even mimic personalities and thoughts. That is how he ruined your plans. I offer you the chance to ruin his life."

"How do you know that my ex-cousin ruined my plans? I never said anything about my plans, and how my power could help me do that."

"My unique abilities have earned me knowledge on sight. I know how much you hate your ex-cousin. I know of the plans that you had, and how they were ruined."

"Alright, but how does that help me in ruining his life?"

"Do you know that he fears me the most? He fears that I will use his abilities to turn him into another being like me. He also fears for the safety of the girl he has fallen in love with, a former prisoner of mine. Your vengeance would be to bring them to me and watching him suffer."

He watched Elane Bonstein smile. There was something unique in the smile. "And what if I fail?" There was a tone of defiance in her voice. She had something up her sleeve and he couldn't tell what.

"Then, I will have to sup on you." He held up his hands and let the mouth on them show. Instead of recoiling back as he would have expected, Elane walked over to him.

"Then, you will lose a chance at a woman who can offer you love. I can allow you to breathe without that respirator." His eyes went wide. Could this girl's abilities allow him to breathe without his respirator? He watched her and noticed that her right hand had formed a cup. He felt something like a helmet on his shoulders. She approached him and said, "Remove the mask." It was said so sweet that he felt he had to try.

He heard D.O.A., his valet, yell, "Sir, it's a trick. She's going to kill you." He understood the concern, but this girl was so evil that she was in love with him. He removed his respirator and breathed the air. It was the same as what went through his respirator.

He let a smile cross his now visible face and said to Elane. "I believe you have proven to be worthy of not being my meal."

She smiled and said, "I can do this at any time for you. It is in thanks for giving me the chance to wipe out Richard. You might want to get the respirator back on, for I will return my aura to its normal form soon." He was almost distracted when she kissed him, but he quickly did so.

He gazed at her and said, "Together we can destroy Generation X. Now, I will transport you to the school at the time when everyone, except Richard and Yvette, will be gone. At that time, you will capture them and bring them here, understand."

"Perfect. Rich will never know what hit him." She laughed very viciously and Emplate took delight in hearing it.

He turned to his valet and said, "D., take Elane to her quarters." D.O.A. escorted Elane out of the room and Emplate returned to his chair and sat down. Quietly he said, "Now, Richard and Yvette, I shall have both of you in my power." He started to laugh aloud.

Emma Frost awoke in her bed when she heard a crash outside her window. She put a robe on and ran to the window. She opened the window and looked out. She heard a voice say, "Cripes, this is not going to be a good day. I walked into Emma's home and fell into the shrubs. The way this day is going it should be about now when..." It was Richard Cale. For the past two months, Rich had been the newest student. In a day's time, although, the ward of Rich's former uncle was going to be a student here. But Rich was never up this early, unless he had a nightmare.

She looked down at Rich and said, "I hope you haven't had another nightmare, but judging by your mood, that is a long shot." She knew about the secret of Rich's nightmares, and she knew that last time, he was right.

He looked up at her and said, "I'm sorry I woke you up. I figured that you got woken up, and yes, I did have a nightmare." Emma watched as Rich got up and brushed off his clothes. She noticed that he was very upset.

"Rich, would you like to talk about it, or maybe let me try and figure out what is bothering you about this nightmare?" She knew that Rich did not like having her psionically probing his mind, but she hoped he would agree.

It was a complete surprise to her when he said, "Maybe you can find something that I can't." After what she did his second day at the school, Rich had told her, in his actions, that this nightmare had something that worried him.

"Rich, I will be down in a moment. Wait for me at the door." She watched as he nodded and headed toward the front door of her home. She quickly got dressed, and headed down to open the door. She did not know how long Rich had been outside, but it was cold that February night. She was wearing her white sweater as well as her usual winter outfit. She opened the door and stepped back, allowing Rich to get through without his mutant ability latching onto hers. She closed the door and motioned to a couch, "Would you like to sit down and tell me about it?"

He sat down on the couch and said, "I can explain it, but it will not lead me to the solution to my problem. I would appreciate any help you can give, by going into my nightmare." This was what she least suspected he would ask, for her to mentally look at his nightmare. She noticed that he relaxed himself so he would not be knocked out like the last time. She then focused on Rich's mind and entered that part where all his dreams were stored. She first saw the one where Emplate had attacked Rich. That one was when she discovered that his nightmares were usually omens of things to happen. She then found the recent nightmare. She watched as Rich and Yvette were running from something. The attacker seemed to be focused on Rich, but didn't mind catching Yvette as well. The attacker took more of a form as she watched.

Eventually, Emma could determine that the attacker was a female, with the voice of evil. Emma wondered if Rich's psychic energy had generated this image of an enemy that he might have made in his past. She noticed that Rich and Yvette had gone unconscious, while floating in the air, but the dream was starting to fade out. She had to act quickly. She psionically said to the female form, [Who are you?]

The form looked at her and said, [I am relatively dangerous to all of you.] With that Emma was knocked out of the confines of the dream by an unknown force. She floated out of Rich's mind in bewilderment, not knowing what to say.

As she recovered from the occurrence, Rich said, "Are you alright?" Rich always behaved like a gentleman, at least when he was calm. She noticed that there was a look of worry in his eyes.

"I will be fine, Rich. I am going to contact Sean, but first I want to ask you, the female attacker said she was relatively dangerous, do you have any idea what that means?" He shook his head and Emma realized that this might be a possible problem. "Rich, I am going to talk to Sean about this, alright." He nodded and Emma gave Sean a psionic call.

Sean didn't like being awakened by Emma, but he remembered the last time Rich had a nightmare. If this was any indication of another attack by Emplate, they had all the right in the world to worry. A new mutant was going to join the school soon. When Rich received the letter from his former uncle, Rich said it was his last act from the grave. It was this day that Daria, a female mutant about Jubilee's age, was arriving at the school. When he arrived at Emma's home on the campus, Emma was waiting at the door. "So Rich had a nightmare. Is Emplate going to attack?"

Emma looked at him and shook her head. She then said softly, "The attacker in Rich's dream was female, and someone that Rich knows. The thing is, Rich can't think of who it is. The person must be planning to attack when Rich and Yvette are here, according to Rich's dream, but Rich appeared to be the center of the attacker's focus." Sean didn't know if this was worse or better. Knowing that it wasn't Emplate was a plus, but an unknown attacker was a minus.

"Do ye think that it is someone who Rich had wronged?"

"I'm not sure. I think we should ask him." Sean couldn't argue with that and the two walked over to the room where Rich was waiting. They noticed that Rich was laying on the couch.

Rich looked at them and looked as if he was sorry for putting his feet on the couch. He quickly sat back up and then said, "More questions?"

"Aye. Emma told me about the dream and I was wondering if there is anyone in yuir family or ye have met that ye have wronged." He knew he had regretted not telling the students about his cousin, but he hoped that Rich didn't have a skeleton in his closet like that.

Rich looked at them and said, "I had given my parents strict instructions that they had to contact me, if and only if, someone had an urgent problem to talk to me about. I would contact them if I wanted to say 'Hello' to someone I had met. None of the people who got on my bad side, or who I had gotten on the bad side of, knows where I am."

"I hope yuir right, lad." He glanced at the clock and noticed the time. "Rich, how long have ye been up?"

"Since 3 AM, Sean."

"You've been awake for two and a half hours now. What was the earliest that ye have woken from these nightmares?"

"3 AM."

Sean didn't need to hear that. It might be a clue to how soon this might happen. "What was the second earliest?"

"4 AM, when I had the nightmare with Emplate in it." The last time it was a day that passed since the nightmare and the event. Maybe there was a link between the amount of time he slept and the time between the dream and event.

"Rich, do ye think there might be a link between the time you slept and the time till the attack?" He watched as Rich shuddered. Something about what he had just asked scared Rich.

"Sean, I sometimes don't fall asleep until after midnight. The night I had the nightmare about Emplate was on about four hours sleep. This one was after two hours sleep." Sean realized what his theory meant. The attack would happen sometime today. If anything, they could not leave Rich and Yvette alone at the school. He knew that Rich and Yvette always spent a lot of time together.

"I hope yur dream doesn't come true when we pick up Daria today."

Rich's eyes widened in shock. "Omgosh, that's right. Today is the day that Daria arrives. The attack seemed to take place when you were all gone. Then all I have to do is go to the airport, and everything will be fine." He yawned with his last word. Sean wondered if Rich would be awake by the time they had to leave for the airport.

2 - Family Secrets

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Relatively Dangerous

Family Secrets

Yvette had woken up early today. She wanted to help out in preparing a room for this new student. Nobody was up yet, so she decided to go get breakfast for herself. Since Rich had arrived, she had started to live a new life, different from her life in Yugoslavia, and much different than her imprisonment by Emplate. She went to the main building and went to the kitchen. Yvette figured that she would have a quiet breakfast of Apple Jacks and a glass of apple juice. She did enjoy apples, even back when her mother used to give them to her. She was quite surprised to see Sean Cassidy, one of the teachers, awake and in the kitchen. "Sean, I'm surprised you're up."

He looked at her and said, "I'm not the only one up." He motioned to some people in the room. At the counter, Emma was making a cup of coffee, and from what Jubilee and some of the others said, it was the only thing she could make safely. She glanced over at the table and saw Rich sitting there, and it was obvious that he didn't sleep well.

She watched as he looked at her and said, "Hi, love. I think I have bad news." She realized what that meant. Rich had had another nightmare. She decided to approach him, for when his powers latched onto hers, they could mentally talk in her native tongue, and that was usually how he told her most of his secrets. As she approached, Rich said {I think someone from my past is coming after me.}

She was confused by this. Rich never said much about anyone who he made mad. {Is it Emplate? If he is coming, then we have to hide.} She was still afraid of Emplate, and she felt safe attacking him only when he was weak, so weak he would disappear.

{No, but for some reason that I cannot explain, I wish it was.} He was more worried than ever, but luckily, he was not mad at it.

{Who could scare you that much, enough to make you wish Emplate was attacking?} She could tell she asked the wrong question when Rich instantly tensed up. She pulled back so he wouldn't cut her. She watched as his claws made cuts into the table. Sean and Emma ran over and she decided not to press any further. Rich would tell her when he was ready. She then turned to face Sean and Emma.

"What did ye say to the lad, Yvette?" Sean was worried by how fast that Rich had tensed up.

"I think I asked him a very sensitive question that he is not ready to answer yet," she replied honestly.

"Yvette," Emma said, "you know Rich better than any of us. Is there anything he might have done that made someone mad at him."

She thought about it for a moment, and all she could remember was just the little rivalries he had growing up. "Most that I remember is the guys he never got along with in school."

"That could be a problem, because the attacker in Rich's dream is female." Yvette started to worry about this. She wondered if it might be a girl who might have loved him, but he didn't feel love for them.

Yvette started to voice her thought when she heard Paige Guthrie gasp. "Omigosh, what

happened to Rich?" Paige was apparently shocked by the fact that Rich was mimicking her abilities.

Yvette looked at her and said, "Rich had another nightmare, and something about it appears to have hit a sensitive spot in his past." She hoped that would satisfy Paige's curiosity. She sometimes wondered if Rich's attempts to patch things up between Paige and Jono were mistaken as interest.

Paige swallowed and asked the same question that everyone would probably ask, "Is Emplate going to attack?" The look of worry was evident. Everyone was told about the dream after Emplate's attack, and everyone had a fear that Rich would have another nightmare like that.

Emma looked at Paige and said, "I don't believe it is. Rich allowed me to mentally examine his dream." Yvette finally realized that this nightmare had really scared him, for him to allow Emma to go into his mind. Emma then said, "The attacker in Rich's dream was female, which could mean anything."

Yvette decided to voice her opinion. "Emma, I think it might be a girl that who might have had feelings for him."

Paige looked at her and said, "If that is the case, Yvette, you better be careful, because it might be something like the movie, 'The Crush'. Your life might be in danger."

Yvette was just about to say something when she felt a hand on her shoulder. She looked back to see Rich standing there and saying, "I wonder if that is it. A girl that had feelings for me, but I didn't have feelings for. That would be better than what I was thinking." She looked somewhat relieved when he said that. "I'll tell you about the worse fear later." He then mentally said to her, {Give me some time alone to think of how to tell you about that, Okay, love.}

Yvette smiled at the love in her life and said, "Okay, I'll see you later." She watched as he left the kitchen. She looked at everyone and said, "I think he is going to tell me something later, should I ask him if I can tell you about it." Sean and Emma nodded and Yvette went to get her breakfast.

Monet St. Croix had just woken up and looked out on the day. It was a nice day, especially for the new student to arrive on. She had gotten dressed in one of her nicer outfits, but then all her outfits were nice. She left the girl's dorm and walked towards the main building. On her way, she saw Rich walking in her direction. He looked as if he was lost in thought. She walked over to him and said, "Is there something troubling you, Rich?"

He noticed her and stopped moving, so that he would not latch on to her mutant ability. He then said, "Nothing you can help me with. In fact, you are the last person to ask for help in this matter."

She was shocked at what he said. She argued about what he said, "How can you be sure about that? I can probably help with your problem."

"Have you told them the truth of Marius? The truth of your abilities, or even your sisters?" He had hit a nerve, but then he seemed to be good when it came to arguing with someone. He continued, "In the two months I've been here, what they know about you and what I know differs by such a leap that Neil Armstrong wouldn't try and take a shot at making it." Monet couldn't deny that he most likely knew the truth about the first two, but the truth about the twins was almost impossible.

"Rich, I don't think the time is right to tell them about everything. You found out about my brother by misfortune. As for the truth of my abilities, that I had to tell you. When it comes to my younger sisters, I cannot yet tell anyone about them." She hoped that he hadn't latched onto her abilities, but due to her distance from him, he probably had.

"I offer my sympathies to that little family secret, but I must find the right way to tell Yvette about one person I fear as much as Emplate." Monet finally realized that Rich harbored a skeleton in his closet that must have haunted him for most of his life.

"Is something bothering you, Rich?" She noticed the worried look on his face and remembered seeing it before.

Just as he was about to say something, the unmistakable voice of Jubilee said, "From what

Paige just told me, he had another nightmare." She turned to face Jubilee. Jubilee was obviously ready for the day, and she was not alone. Everett was right by her side. The two had become as close as Richard Penny had been. Monet wouldn't admit it, but she had feelings for Everett.

She was just about to say something when Rich said, "Too many cooks spoiling the broth." She knew it was an old cliché, and Rich usually talked in old clichés. She turned and saw Rich fly off. Maybe he needed to be alone to think about this.

When Everett and Jubilee were close enough, Everett said, "I think this one really has him scared. From what Paige said, Penny asked him a question about it and he tensed up. He put a couple nasty cuts in the table." Everett watched as Rich flew behind one of the buildings.

"I hope he remembers that he won't have my ability for long. But where could he go to be alone." Monet had wondered about that. She usually had her autism to pull her out of this world and into her own fantasy realm.

"Well, since Beast took Artie, Franklin and Leech to the X-Men's temporary home, he might disappear to the tree house. He might get at least an hour of peace. Angelo, Jono, and Mondo are going to work on their abilities today." Jubilee finished off. Monet realized that Rich was not going to get the peace and quiet he needed to think. She then went with them to get breakfast.

Jono looked around the Biosphere. Skin, Mondo and he felt that they had to train their abilities more. After Mondo's experience being captured by Black Tom, all of them had been training. Today, the three of them were practicing using their abilities to stop a threat. Emma always thought that the best way was to practice against each other. Jono figured that Angelo would probably take high ground, but it was Mondo that was more dangerous, for he had the best cover. Mondo's mutant ability could allow him to become anything organic. Jono looked around for Mondo. It was unnerving, because Mondo could be right underneath his feet. Jono looked up around the trees. He was near the tree house, and odds were that Angelo wouldn't hide there, but then last place to look was the place something you were looking for was. As Jono started to approach the tree house, what looked like vines almost hit him. He looked up and saw a figure in the trees. It was Angelo. He said to his teammate, "*Good try, but the timing was off.*" With that, Jono let a blast loose and knocked Angelo from the tree.

Angelo stood up and said, "You got me, but I think we might both get caught now." Then Angelo lost his balance, and Jono realized that the ground was moving. They were standing right on top of Mondo.

As Mondo knocked them in two directions, Angelo off in the direction of the control room, he in the direction of the tree house, Mondo said, "Did I do well with waiting?" Mondo returned to his normal form.

"Not bad. You probably would have surprised half the guys I use to hang with."

"*Very good. You waited for a moment to catch us off guard. That is a good offensive maneuver.*" Mondo smiled knowing that he did well. "*I think we have all learned that surprise is a good weapon.*"

Surprise was also a bad thing. When his ability manifested, it took him and Gayle by surprise, and left both of them with wounds. He was about to say about the cons of surprise when all of a sudden, a familiar voice went, "Oh Sh..," and an explosion took out the wall of the tree house, as Rich came flying out, looking like Jono did. It was with good reflexes that Angelo used his abilities to bring Rich to the ground before Rich hit a tree. Rich looked around, and since he was near Jono, he psionically said, "*I think I should have asked someone about this, huh?*"

Mondo walked over and said, "Something wrong, my friend. You can tell me" Mondo always treated Rich as a friend for life, due to the fact that Rich was the one that saved him from Black Tom. Almost everyone else was treated as a friend.

"*I was just thinking about something. I had a nightmare last night.*" Jono remember what had

happened last time, but now was a time to be ready in case this one came true. He then noticed that Rich looked very tired.

"Is there anything we should worry about with this nightmare?" Jono hoped that it could be dismissed, and he was hoping that Paige was not going to be hurt, although he still hadn't told her he was sorry about Thanksgiving.

"Not that I can think of right now. Although, I think I have finally decided about what I was thinking about." Jono watched as Rich made a motion as if he was yawning. Rich then looked at his hand and said, *"Forgot that like this, I have no mouth. Right now, I think our biggest worry will be explaining to Artie, Franklin and Leech why their tree house has a wall missing."*

Angelo responded to that by saying, "Don't worry. Everett and I can get it patched up before the kids return." Jono was somewhat relaxed at knowing that he was not included on that project. He decided that soon, he would try to patch things up with Paige.

Mondo then said to Rich, "What do we know about this new student that will be arriving today." Jono figured that Mondo asked the question to change the mood of the situation.

Rich then reached into a pocket and pulled out the letter he had received a few weeks ago. *"According to what Bastion had said in the letter, she is about Jubilee's age. Her name is Daria. As for her ability, that is a mystery. Other than that, we have to wait and see what Daria says when she gets here. Does that answer any questions?"*

Jono then said, *"Any idea why we are all going to meet her?"* He thought it was unusual for everyone to be going to meet her.

"All the letter said was that it would be best for her protection."

"Maybe Emplate will be less likely to attack if we are all there."

"That sounds right," Angelo said in agreement. Jono remembered that Emplate had attacked him the moment he got off the plane. That was an experience he wished no one to share.

"Well, I think I better be going. There is something I must talk to Yvette about before we have to leave for the airport." With that Rich headed out of the Biosphere. Jono figured it might be a while before Rich decided to talk to anyone, knowing that Rich had to let his ability leave him.

Jono turned back to Angelo and Mondo and said, *"Do you think we should continue with training?"*

Angelo turned to him and said, "Si, I still have to catch the both of you off guard." With that, the trio returned to practicing.

Jubilee looked around. She didn't know much about Daria, but she hoped that she would like her part of the decorating. Almost everybody who was helping set up the room had added their own touch to the room. Jubilee decided to help Penny put up the curtain that Penny had picked out. Monet, who was watching them, said "I think to the left."

Jubilee was a little frustrated that Monet was giving her instructions on how to hang a curtain. The two had called a truce back at Emma's Canadian house, after they were rescued from Toad. But, Monet did have a way of getting on one's nerves. She said, "Monet, if you want to help, why don't you come up here and help us."

Monet responded quickly and calmly. "I am helping by watching from here. I can see what you can't see. Besides, it is a suggestion."

Everett, who was helping Paige get the bed ready, said, "I think it looks fine, Jubes." At least Everett was on her side.

Paige turned her head and looked at the curtain and said, "Ah think a little to the right." Terrific, one for left, one for right, and one for fine. Jubilee had to agree with Monet that it was best for a person not near the curtain to judge.

Regardless of that, Jubilee turned her head and said, "What do you think, Penny?" She always thought of Penny as a sister, and after Rich's arrival, Penny expressed the same thoughts.

Penny looked at her and said, "Well, sis, I think we need a tie-breaker." She then said, "And go easy on Monet. It wasn't an order she gave." Jubilee realized what Penny meant. She had been a slave of Emplate for a long time before being brought to the school. She would know the difference between Monet and Emplate best. Again, if it wasn't for Rich, she would have never told the stories about what he did to her. Sometimes, they all wished that she hadn't.

Jubilee had to agree with Penny and shouted, "Could somebody help us figure out which way to move the curtain?" It was almost a plea than a request.

Just as she finished speaking, she heard Rich's voice say, "Half an inch to the left and it will look great." Well, at least that was better than Monet just saying to the left. She and Penny moved the curtain and then backed away from it. The red curtain looked lovely in the sunlight. Rich was right about the look and it was almost instantaneously that Penny was by his side.

"You're right. It does look great." She was smiling as the two looked at the curtains. Rich was smiling as well. He seemed to appear a bit drained as he yawned. The nightmare he had had that night must have woken him upon little sleep.

Rich looked Penny in the eyes and said, "Yvette, could we go someplace and talk, alone." Jubilee noticed a look of recognition in her eyes as she nodded. Rich must have wanted to tell her about something he didn't want everybody to know yet. Rich had told Penny many secrets about his life since the two had been seeing each other. They all found out about that when Rich went into his depression.

Penny turned to everybody and said, "I'm going to leave for a while. I hope I am not leaving at a bad time." Everybody understood what was going on and she left with Rich.

Paige broke the silence when she said "Ah wonder if that has anything with what she asked him this morning. Ah remember that it struck a nerve with him."

Jubilee wondered what it was Penny had asked Rich. "Do you know what she asked, Paige?" Jubilee could not think of a single time, other than during his depression, that Penny had ever struck a nerve with Rich.

"Ah wish Ah did know, but Ah don't."

Monet had bit her lower lip. She knew something, and Jubilee turned to face her. "What is it, Monet?"

Monet looked at her and said, "I think it is a skeleton that he has in his closet. A secret he wished he would never face again."

"Like you and Emplate?" Everyone knew the connection between Monet and Emplate, but they didn't know how deep it went.

"I don't know, but for some reason, I think there is some connection."

"Well," Everett said to everyone, "if it is anything like that. It can't be worse than Emplate." Deep down, Jubilee hoped it wouldn't be like what she had faced once. When she used to hang with Wolverine, they got pulled into the Mojoverse, and she had to deal with a version of herself that worked for Mojo.

As he walked with Yvette back to the main building, Rich decided to tell her about the one person he feared more than Emplate. With her ability, he psionically said, {Love, I want to tell you about something from my past.}

She looked at him and responded. {What is it?}

He decided to start from the beginning of how it began, {You remember me mentioning my uncle, the one with the mutant ability to see the future.}

{Yes.}

He yawned. Fatigue was catching up with him. {He used to be in the army, and he took a nasty blow. Afterward, he couldn't have children, so he was forced to adopt.}

{That must have been terrible, I mean to not be able to be a father naturally. My folks told me about it when I was about to have a younger sister.}

{Well, they did adopt. It was a couple years after he married my mother's sister. The first child was a boy, which was a baby. Everybody loved that child, and thought him adorable.}

{What happened then?}

{Years later, the boy wanted a sister, or brother. They caved in and adopted a girl. She came from a broken home. No one believed she was the problem, not until a few days later.}

He could see the concern in her eyes. She stopped the story and said, {Rich, I think you should tell Sean and Emma about this.} They were in the main building now, and fatigue was really hitting him. He wanted to finish this story, but he couldn't keep awake.

He looked into Yvette's blue eyes and said, {I think I will, but I think I better rest first. Please wake me before we have to leave to get Daria from the airport. It might be the only way to avert this nightmare.}

Yvette nodded and they walked over to the lounge. Rich decided to lie down on the sofa and rest a while. He needed the sleep, and the rest. As he drifted off into dreamland, he felt Yvette kiss him on the cheek and say, "Don't worry, I'll always protect you, as you protected me." He felt better hearing something like that as sleep took him to his dreams.

Sean was with Emma in his office. In a few hours, they had to go to the airport. The fact that Rich had another nightmare only made things more complicated. He and Emma were still thinking about it as they were planning out Daria's first few days here. He was about to ask her about the Biosphere session when Emma said something disturbing. "Sean, do you think that Daria is who is threatening Rich?"

"Now, that is a daft idea, Emma. What would Rich have to worry about from her?" Although, he wouldn't admit that he had had the same thought.

Emma had a simple answer for that. "It is similar to what a child goes through when a new child is going to be born. Maybe he feels threatened by her presence. We know that the attacker is a female mutant."

"And that is a reason to suspect Daria? We don't even know what the girl's abilities are?" Sean then started to think along the same lines that Emma was. That was disturbing, to think that the new student was the one who would attack Rich.

"We know that she was in Bastion's care. Who knows how that might have warped her mind?" Emma was about to continue when there was a knocking at the door.

"Come in," Sean said. The door opened and Yvette came into his office. He probably knew why she was here. He motioned for her to sit down and then said, "Did he say anything?"

Yvette looked a little concerned when she said, "It is something that he would tell you in his own words. All I can say is that it must have been a daughter of his uncle." Sean noticed the look that Emma was giving him.

Before Emma could say anything, Sean remembered Rich had two uncles. He looked at Yvette and asked, "Was it his uncle on his mother's side?" When she nodded, they were now faced with an unknown attacker again, but there was relief that it wasn't Daria. Now all they had to do was figure out who wanted to attack Rich. "Can Rich elaborate on who it might be?"

Yvette just looked at him and said, "The lack of sleep has caught up with him. He's asleep in the lounge." Sean hoped that Rich would wake up before they had to pick up Daria. In his mind, Sean could see Yvette staying behind until Rich awoke, and they might not see the two ever again. The thought that it wasn't Emma offered little assurance. For all that could happen, this unknown attack could be working

for Emplate, but Emplate didn't have any female mutant Hellions.

Sean noticed Emma leaning over to Yvette. He heard her say, "Yvette, why don't you keep an eye on Rich and wake him if he has another nightmare." He watched as Yvette nodded in agreement and left the office. Sean was a bit suspicious about that when Emma said, "No, I didn't use my power on her. But now, we have to wonder who might be the problem, and I think Rich would be very upset if we called his family for help."

"Aye. But what other choice do we have? We have little time left before we have to leave for Logan airport."

Emma just looked and said, "If we are forced to leave Rich and Yvette here, then we will leave someone to protect them." Emma was being smart about this. She was remembering Rich's wishes, and the fact that Rich didn't want his family to know about the problems here was top on the list. Sean then wondered if that might be the one thing Rich would regret.

3 - Dreams Do Come True

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Relatively Dangerous
Dreams Do Come True...

Elane was looking out of the lighthouse window when she heard Emplate enter the room. She turned to face her new ally and asked, "Is it time?"

Emplate walked over to her and said, "Soon, everyone will be leaving the school. I have gotten insight that Richard and Yvette would stay behind. The fact is that you might be expected."

She did not like the sound of that. "What do you mean?"

Emplate looked at her and said, "They are planning to have someone stay behind with them. That won't affect the plan any, will it?" His words were almost harsh, but she knew he wouldn't sup on her.

"One extra person is not a problem. It is hard for me to focus my aura on more than four targets. The less I have to take on, the more likely success will occur. Now, Emplate, I have a question for you?"

"And that is?"

"The girl that Richard has taken a liking to, Yvette. Is there another reason you want her brought here?" She heard Emplate sigh as if there was a weight on his shoulders.

"That girl was unlike most of the other mutants I supped on. She lasted the longest. I still wonder where my life ended and hers began. The fact that she escaped has made it harder for me to survive. If the opportunity would have arisen, I would have traded them one mutant for her."

"And forcing Rich to watch her suffer would be painful for him as well. I could really love it here. But how will I get to the school to capture them?"

"I shall transport you to the school, but do you have a way to hide from the cameras." Elane knew that this would shock Emplate, as well as Generation X. She focused on her aura and allowed it not to emanate from her, but to envelope her. Emplate then exclaimed, "Amazing, you have become invisible."

"I can do this at anytime, Emplate. They won't know where I am, until I attack them." She allowed herself to become visible again and said, "Anything else I should know?"

"Yes. I don't want them to know of my involvement, at least not yet. When you leave, head north from the school. Eventually, you will see the lighthouse."

"Then, I'm ready to attack." She noticed that Emplate held out his hand.

"Take hold of my hand, and I shall take you to the gate of the school. And put your aura around the two of us." She did as he said, and instantaneously, they left the plane of reality and passed through what seemed a realm of hands, reaching out to slash them to pieces. They then appeared at the gate of the school, and Emplate left the same way they arrived. She put her aura up, and disappeared from sight.

Everett walked into the lounge with Jubilee, Monet and Paige to see Rich, fast asleep on the sofa, and Penny sitting near him. He always figured that after the impression Rich made on her, that the two could never be separated. She looked up at them and motioned for quiet. Obviously, Rich had given

in to the need to sleep. Of course, the way that everyone had said he was yawning, it wouldn't be too long. He whispered to Penny, "Do you think he'll wake up soon?"

She stood up and walked over to them. "Not in time to go to the airport. I'm worried about him. I don't want to leave him alone to face someone who wants to kill him, but his dream said that both of us would be captured, or worse." Everett noticed that she was going to cry.

Jubilee then said, "Don't worry, Penny. If you stay behind, someone else will stay to help." He noticed that Penny started to calm down. Everett wondered if that would be true if he and Jubilee would be put into that situation.

It wasn't too long until Sean, Emma, and the others entered the room. Everett knew it was time to leave for the airport, but everybody had heard about Rich's nightmare. He noticed that Sean looked at the couch and asked Penny, "Do ye want to try and wake him?" Penny shook her head and he continued, "Well, I figure that ye will want to stay with Rich, but I want someone to volunteer to stay with them." Everett wondered how much help he could be. The ability was unknown, and apparently by how things appeared, Rich had an idea of who it was.

It didn't take too long for a response, because Paige said, "Ah'll stay behind, sir. Besides, Ah want to talk to Yvette a bit." He had to admit, there was a look of confusion in Penny's eyes, but he wondered how long it would take Paige to sort things out with Jono. He could also tell by the look in Jono's eyes that he was worried about her facing an unknown attacker.

"Alright, but be careful, lass." Sean responded to her volunteering, and then said, "Alright everybody, let's head to the airport." Sean then motioned them all to the school van. Everett thought they were all taking a chance by leaving Yvette, Rich and Paige behind, but what could they do.

As they got into the van, Jubilee said to him, "Hey, Ev, do you think that they will be alright? I mean, we don't know a thing about Rich's family, and we got a shock when we found out about Bastion." He remembered how close Jubilee had been to being Bastion's prisoner.

"Don't worry. I don't think that anything could be worse in Rich's family than Bastion," he told her, but he didn't believe what he had said. There was just something about it that seemed wrong.

Paige watched as the van pulled away. Deep down, she thought of how hurt Jono had been. She couldn't keep this anger up forever, she still loved Jono, and Rich was always trying to get her and Jono back together. She knew that in her anger at Jono, she took his interests in her life as and mistook for affection, but she had to admit that Rich had a charm all his own. That was part of the reason she wanted to talk to Yvette about. Rich was the best thing to ever happen to Yvette, and she didn't want Yvette to think that she was trying to take him from her.

She went back to the lounge and Yvette was sitting next to Rich. He had started to toss and turn. He must have been dreaming again. Yvette must have been trying to wake him psionically. Yvette then saw Paige standing there and said, "Paige, I appreciate that you are staying behind to help, but why did you want to talk to me?"

Paige knew Yvette was confused about that, so she decided to tell her. "Yvette, Ah don't want you to worry about me trying to take Rich from you anymore. When everyone gets back, Ah'm going to patch things up with Jono. Ah just hope Ah get the time to think about it." She saw a smile cross Yvette's face.

"Paige, even when I didn't talk, I thought you would make a nice couple. Sometimes, what one doesn't say is the loudest thing they communicate." Paige had to admit that Yvette was right on the nose. A loud crash shattered the quietness of the moment, and Yvette's eyes went wide. "What was that?"

Paige knew what it was. It was the mystery attacker. She quickly husked her skin, revealing a skin of iron. She turned to Yvette and said, "Wake Rich and find some place to hide, until Ah call you. Ah think that the mystery attacker has finally arrived." She ran out of the lounge and to the main hall. The

door had been smashed open. She looked around and saw no one. She was about to look outside when she felt someone punch her whole body in one shot. She hit the back wall and almost collapsed.

"Gee, and I was hoping for a challenge." Paige looked up and saw a blond girl, about 18 standing there, with an evil grin on her face. "I guess this will be a quick visit."

Paige stood and said to the attacker, "Ah will guarantee you that. Ah plan to throw you out of here." She started to run at the girl. The girl just looked at her and laughed. When Paige was halfway to the girl, the girl did a kick at her. Paige thought it was strange, since she was too far away to be hit, until she felt the kick to her stomach. She fell to the ground gasping for breath.

The girl looked at her and said sarcastically, "Poor little hick girl, did I hurt you? Maybe you need to tighten your gut a bit." Paige watched as the girl clenched her left hand. As the girl's hand tightened into a fist, she could feel a forced crushing her waist. She screamed in pain and the girl released her grip. "Hurt like hell, didn't it, Hick?" Paige couldn't move, but she had to try and hush again. She went to start the process, but her wrists seemed to be held together. As she struggled to separate her wrists, the girl walked over to her head and said, "I am Aura, your worst nightmare." With that, the girl's foot hit her square in the face, and everything went dark.

Rich awoke as Yvette was shaking him and screaming at him. He looked at her and said, "What's wrong?" He looked around and saw nobody around. No. The nightmare was coming true. He then said, "Yvette, love, where is everybody?"

She looked at him with a slight panic in her eyes. She then said, "You were asleep, and Sean had asked if anyone would stay behind with us. Paige volunteered and..."

"Oh no! The nightmare is coming true."

"Rich, that's not the worst of it. The attacker is here. Paige told us to hide until she came and get us. I then heard a scream out in the hall." Rich knew what that meant. Paige was out of commission.

Rich looked around the room. In the corner, he saw a vent. "Yvette, the vents might be our only way to safety. I don't think Paige can help us right now." He started to tense up, so he could cut the screws in the vent.

She did the same and said {What's wrong? Why did you say that?} She was scared now, and he couldn't blame her.

{In my dream, someone stayed here. By the time of the chase, they were in no shape to help us.} The screws were cut and the vent cover was open.

{But who could be attacking?} He motioned for her to go into the vent first. He hoped that they would get in and moving before the attacker arrived.

As he followed her into the vent, Rich heard a familiar voice say, "Come out where ever you are, Rich?" It was who he feared it would be. They were in deep trouble. He closed the vent and motioned Yvette to move until they were out of sight of the vent, and in a cross vent.

As they stopped, Rich looked at Yvette and said, {Remember that I was telling you about that girl my uncle adopted.}

She seemed to grasp the concept quickly. {You mean that the attacker is her. Oh my God, what can she do?}

{She has the ability to extend her aura, to manipulate it to do things. Defensive measures are useless, for her defense is her offense. That was why we must stay out of her sight. I don't know what she can do with her abilities. But, that leaves one question.}

{How did she find out you were here?} He nodded. He told nobody of the school. And there was no way that she could have found out.

He was about to say something when a voice echoed through the vents. "Rich, I don't care how, but I will find you, and I will ruin your life. I hope you have a girlfriend, cause I will give her the same

treatment I gave the hick that tried to stop me, only worse."

Rich looked at Yvette and saw she was trembling. He decided to try and comfort her. {Well, I guess there is some good news.} She looked at him in shock and he said, {At least we know that she isn't working with Emplate, because if she was, she would have known that we were an item.}

Yvette let a small smile cross her face. {I guess your right, but I think we should try and do something.}

He had to agree. {Something tells me that she beat up Paige pretty bad. We better try and get Paige to the Med-Unit, and soon.} Yvette nodded, and they worked their way through the vents.

Daria looked out at the crowd. It was surprising to find out she was a mutant. Bastion had told her that mutants were freaks, and now she was one. She was confused. When Zero Tolerance ended, everyone was shuttled away, except for Daria. She had been handed a letter with a photo, and some money. The letter was from Bastion. He said that his nephew would help her more than he could have. The photo was obvious that of Bastion's nephew. The boy appeared about twenty-one, with brown hair, and brown eyes, other than that, he appeared to look like Bastion. The fact that he wore glasses was the only real difference that Daria could tell between the faces, other than the age. She thought about how Bastion would have tried to help her, maybe by removing the mutant factor, but then what would she be. She had some bad fears although. She remembered the video tape that she had seen, and how the creature called Emplate had attacked Jonathan Starsmore. What if this creature would try and attack her? "Daria?" said a voice in the crowd. Daria turned in the direction of the voice and saw an Asian American girl beckoning her. The girl was about her age. Amongst the group of people, she recognized a few faces from the file that Bastion had. She recognized the blond haired woman as Emma Frost, head of Frost Enterprises, and it was obvious that the boy whose face was half covered was Jonathan Starsmore.

She walked over to the group. She was nervous. How would these people except her, knowing that she had worked with Bastion? She decided to finally speak up. "Hello, I guess you are from the school?" She looked through the people in the group and failed to find the face of Bastion's nephew. She then asked, "I was just wondering where Richard was?"

A man with a goatee answered the question. "Rich is back at the school with two of the other students, and we should be getting back there."

A little bit confused by this, Daria asked, "Is something wrong with him?"

It was Emma Frost that answered this time. "It appears that Rich has a unique gift for foretelling the future. We don't want to be gone too long, in fear that when we return, he might be dead, as well as the students with him."

"Is it the Emplate creature?"

This time, a girl of African descent spoke. "How did you find out about Emplate?" There was shock in her eyes.

"It was part of the tape from the security cameras that Bastion had 'obtained' when he was searching for mutants. Nobody there knew how to classify it." The look the Africans face had that of distaste when she said the word 'it'.

The Asian girl spoke again. "You have to forgive Monet, she's a bit touchy about family."

"Jubilee," Monet had said, "I don't think this should be discussed until at the school." Daria remembered seeing that name before. She was part of the X-Men at one time.

Daria then remembered what had happened to Jonathan Starsmore and said, "Could you tell me on the way to the school? I don't think that I want to meet this Emplate person right now."

The man with the goatee then said, "Of course. Along the way, we shall tell ye a bit more about

ourselves, but I hope that you have changed since your employment with Bastion."

Daria thought back to some of the things she saw Bastion do to the prisoners she had. A shiver ran up her spine. "I hope no one ever goes through what I have seen him do, Mr."

"Cassidy, Sean Cassidy. And ye can call me Sean." Daria had the strangest feeling that her life was going to get a new start.

Rich and Yvette had spent the past half hour maneuvering through the vents. Every time he heard the voice of his former cousin, they switched paths. Eventually, they made their way to a vent that led to the Main Hall. When they left the vents, Yvette said, {You were right, Paige isn't going to be of any help.} Rich saw what Yvette meant. Lying on the floor of the hall was Paige. It was obvious that she tried to use her ability, but was unsuccessful. She was now back to normal flesh and blood, and she was unconscious. The air coming in from the broken front door would not be good for her.

{We better get Paige covered up, before she catches a cold, besides I don't think she would appreciate someone seeing her like this.} He said, due to the lack of clothing on her body. Yvette nodded and they worked quickly, cutting down a curtain, and covering Paige so she wouldn't freeze, and that she wouldn't be embarrassed when she came to.

{Apparently, your cousin doesn't intend to let anyone stop her,} Yvette said in a worried tone. He completely understood her concern.

{I hate to think what she has planned for me if she does catch us. She'll probably make me watch you suffer and die, but then, who knows?}

{She'll have to find us first, and let's hope we can keep her guessing until everyone returns.}

"That's it." Rich shouted it, forgetting that his former cousin could be anywhere. He then continued, {That is why the attack happened when hardly anybody was around. She hated crowds. It is harder to manipulate a crowd of people with an aura, because of the size. If we can hold out until Sean and the others return. We'll be safe.} He noticed movement. He and Yvette backed towards the hallway behind them, because the movement was in front of the vent that they had come out of. There was nothing there, but then, she appeared.

"Well, I should have known you would try and help the Hick, but judging how you and that one act, she must be your girlfriend. Get ready to die, you two." She acted as she was going to grab something.

{Bolt.} Instantaneously, Rich and Yvette ran down the hallway. They had to find a vent to hide in. They needed all the time they could get. There was no telling how soon everyone would get back.

As they approached a side hall, Yvette pointed and said, {There is a vent. If we can reach it, we're home free.} He nodded and they made a dive for the vent. In mid air, he felt the pain of hitting the wall, but he knew what they hit. As he and Yvette started to fall to the ground, he felt as if he was hovering.

He and Yvette were soon in an upright position floating in the air, but immobile. They were facing his former cousin, as she walked down the hall toward them. He noticed that her hands were clenched, as if she was holding something in them. "You know," she said, "I always wondered how the hell you found out about my ability. Now, I found out how." She continued to put pressure on them, more on him than on Yvette. Rich didn't know why she was doing that.

He started to wonder how she knew he was here. He looked at her and said "Elane, how did you find out that I was here?" He was starting to have trouble breathing.

She continued putting pressure on him and said, "I hacked into Ms. Frost's computers." Rich, even on the little consciousness he had left, could tell that must have been a lie, but who would help her. He didn't have long to think on it, for everything went to black.

Yvette looked at Rich. The one person who helped her communicate with GenerationX, and the one person who loved her, was hanging in mid air, apparently lifeless. She turned to face the attacker, who he had called Elane and said, "Why are you doing this?" She was scared, not because of what she would do to her, but what she would do to Rich. Rich tried never to hurt anyone, with the exception of Black Tom Cassidy.

Elane brought Yvette face to face with her and said, "Because, he ruined my plans. I was going to control the world. Strike fear into everyone, and how could anyone stop me. I could become invisible. I could force anyone to do anything. I could even force you to kill him if I wanted to." Yvette shuddered. This girl sounded exactly like Emplate, but she didn't want to feed off them. No wonder Rich was afraid of her. "All I want is to see him suffer, maybe die. After all I do to you, he will be in tears." She felt the pressure as Elane started to constrict her breathing as well.

"You won't succeed. Our friends will stop you." She hoped that this would be true, but something told her that once Elane had them, they wouldn't see the school ever again.

"Who said that we would be here?" At that Yvette couldn't breathe anymore. She slipped into unconsciousness. She sensed the darkness of sleep surrounding her, with one difference. There was a high pitched sound.

4 - Revealed Truths

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Relatively Dangerous
Revealed Truths

When Sean pulled the van up to the main building of the school, a feeling of dread hit his entire soul. The door was in pieces. Everyone ran out of the van, including Daria, who still hadn't told them about her ability. She had spent most of the time asking questions, and assuring them that she was no longer part of Zero Tolerance, although everyone knew that the organization had been destroyed. In the main hall of the building, Sean saw a sight he didn't want to see, and it was obvious that Jono was upset as well.

Sean watched as Jono ran over to Paige's side. He knelt down to her face and said, *"I should have stayed here as well. Maybe, you wouldn't have ended up like this."*

Sean walked over to Jono's side. "Lad, we didn't know what would happen. But if the attacker was this powerful, then we have to find Rich and Yvette, before it's too late."

They were almost taken by surprise when Paige spoke. Her voice was weak, but she got one word out. "Aura." Sean started to wonder what it meant, but then noticed something else. Paige had been covered up, and by the sight of the curtains in the room, Rich and Yvette were the ones that did it.

Sean got up and said, "Jono, you and Mondo get Paige to the med-unit. Everett, try to track down where the attacker is. Jubilee, I want you to get Daria to a safe place." For once, he hoped that Jubilee would listen to an order.

Sean got a surprise when Daria spoke up. "Sir, I think I might be able to help." He didn't want her to see some of the evils they worked to stop, at least not yet.

"Daria, I don't think that would be wise. We don't know what we're dealing with."

He was about to continue when Everett said, "I think I found her, if Rich's dream is correct." He went off down the hall and everyone followed him. Eventually, Sean saw the sight that Emma had seen in Rich's mind. Richard and Yvette were held in the air, and the attacker was standing in front of them. She had blond hair, and probably was too focused on Rich and Yvette to see them attack her. Sean watched as Everett seemed to launch his aura at her. Just as it would have made contact. She spun around, with a footsweep. Even though nobody was close to her, everyone seemed to fall, as if tripped. The only person who avoided the attack was Jubilee, due to her gymnastic training.

As Sean got up, the girl just said, "Pitiful. Just wimps at this place." The girl was cocky and Sean was going to make her release the students that she held captive. He let loose a sonic scream, capable of knocking her unconscious, but much to his surprise, she acted as she switched hands and held her right hand up. The sonic scream doubled back and canceled itself out. He then felt a punch hit his midsection. He finally understood what Paige had said. The attacker must call herself Aura, for she controls her aura like Angelo controls his skin.

Elane looked at the mutants that called themselves Generation X. What was she afraid of? The teacher's sonic scream was easy to counter, and the one who had the glowing aura must have figured out her ability, which is why she knocked everyone down. The girl with the yellow raincoat had to be a

show-off. The only one who dodged the foot sweep. She tried to think of what to do next. She had to get out, but not tip off that she was working with Emplate. She hated crowds, for they were harder to control with her ability. She also had to maintain a grip on Richard and Yvette. She was almost startled when the African-American girl came flying at her. Elane formed a fist in her free hand and swung. Her aura complied by enlarging the fists aura and knocking the girl down to the ground and knocking over the teacher, a woman in white, and the African American boy with the aura. "I am starting to wonder if anyone here is a treat. All of you rely on abilities that I can counter."

Elane realized her mistake when she felt something around her body. It didn't distract her enough to make her lose her grip on her prey. She then saw that the guy with grey skin was doing it. He was controlling his skin, the same she controlled her aura, and he was extending the skin on his right hand. "Guess what, chica? I have a trick of my own like yours," he said in a mocking tone.

"Yes, but you are going to learn to treat a lady with respect." She quickly brought her knee up and then returned to her stance. In that quick instant, the man's skin left her body and she saw his eyes cross in pain, as he collapsed in agony. She let a smile cross her face, but she had to escape with her prisoners.

"If you're a lady, then let me knock your lights on," said the girl in the raincoat. This was odd for anyone to say.

"Don't you mean 'lights out', just like the state you are about to be in?"

"No." Elane then got the sight of several sparks hit her square in the face. The burning pain each made forced her to react. She put up her hands and formed an aura wall at the level of the girl. She heard her prisoners fall to the floor, but they weren't going anywhere. As she got her eyes used to the sight, she saw that another girl appeared to be dissolving. It was as she was holding back the sparks that she noticed that a swarm of metallic bugs were attacking her.

"What the... I hate bugs." She started to try and hold the bugs and the sparks back, but it was too much. She then realized that vengeance would have to wait. She ran to a door and dived out a window to the outside. She ran off into the woods, enveloping herself with her aura. Emplate was not going to be happy, but then she knew other ways to strike at her former cousin.

Jubilee had watched as the girl ran out a door. It was an outside room, and she was tempted to follow, but where had all the bugs come from. Jubilee turned and saw Daria dissolving, and the bugs seemed to be coming from her. "Daria, is this your ability?" she asked.

Daria's voice seemed a bit weak. "Yes, but I'm not sure how to pull myself back together."

Jubilee saw Emma walk over. Emma knelt down to Daria and said, "Relax." Almost instantly, Daria appeared to calm down a little and the bugs returned to her. She was almost back to normal, when she panicked. She started to dissolve again, and instantaneously Emma's eyes glowed. Emma was helping Daria return to normal. Afterwards, Emma stood and said, "We should get Rich and Yvette to the med-center as soon as possible. Who knows what that woman did to them."

"Ms. Frost, what do you think about that girl that attacked? Could she be a problem?" Jubilee asked. She figured as much, but how dangerous was the attacker.

"Jubilee, I think that Rich can answer all of our questions about who ever she was."

"Aura." Jubilee turned to see Sean was standing up. "Paige said one word when we found her, Aura. That must be the girl's codename, and her ability as well."

"Are you saying she can, oh let's just say, knock out Wolvie at fifty paces and stop the rest of the X-Men without a sweat."

Monet, who finally recovered from the punch, said, "Jubilee, nobody could be that powerful with an ability, and please stop referring to the X-Men like that."

When Everett got up, he said, "She's on the right track, Monet. I was going to try and knock her

out with her own ability. She has one heluva rangewith her ability. She sees it, she can attack it. Defensive abilities areworthless. Split second attacks might be all that stop her. That is probablyhow Paige got in the state she's in. And we all saw, and felt what shecould do."

Jubilee then noticed that Daria had walked over to Rich and Penny. Sheleft the conversation that everyone was having over how to talk to Richabout this. When she approached, Daria was looking at Rich's face, andthe photo she had of Rich. "He looks a bit different than in the photo,"Daria said as Jubilee approached.

Jubilee knelt down beside Daria. Daria had probably thought of Rich asthe closest thing to family. "Rich has a unique ability that allows himto fully mimic a mutant he's near. After about a week here, you'll probablysee him like this a lot. He and Penny are an item."

"Penny? I thought this girl's name was Yvette."

"Well, when Penny was brought here, she had been a victim of Emplate. Overthe time she had been here, I gave her the nickname of Penny. When shewas delivered, all we were told was the word 'Penance.' That became hercodename."

"How did you find out her name?"

"That was due to Rich. Rich had been able to make contact with her. Thefirst time that they met, Rich spoke in her native tongue. Afterwards,he taught her to speak in English through some psionic link, and they fellin love."

"Jubilee, do you think Rich could help me with my ability?" Jubilee sawthe look of concern in her eyes. The girl wanted to understand what shewas.

"Sure. He might be able to show you a way to use your ability to give youa cool hairdo." She said pointing out Daria's bald head.

"Bastion insisted on that for all the girls. I don't know why, though."

"If you ask me, Bastion appeared to be a bit too military. It was worseto discover he was a Sentinel, but then you do know what they say aboutthe military."

"What's that?"

"Military Intelligence is two words that contradict each other." The twostarted to laugh at the joke, which was the most truthful thing about themilitary, until Monet, Everett, Sean and Emma came over.

Sean looked at them and said, "Okay, lasses. Do ye want help us get themto the med unit." They both nodded and as Daria helped carry Rich, shehelped carry Penny.

Emplate sat in his chair at the top of the lighthouse. He was startingto feel drained. He needed to feed soon, or else he would be pulled intothe Beyond. He was looking forward to supping on his favorite meal. Hewatched the door to his room open as D.O.A. stuck his head in the door."Sir, Elane has returned."

"Send her in, D." He couldn't wait any longer.

"But.."

"Send her in." D. left the door, and a second later, Elane walked in. Emplatnoticed the state she was in. She had some burn marks on her face. He couldalready guess what had happened. "I take it that you were unsuccessful."

She walked over to him and kissed him on his forehead. They were both evil,and they could do so much. Elane then said, "I have to admit, he has theluck of the Irish. He and Yvette managed to keep me hunting for them untileveryone returned. Although, they were not as tough as I thoughtthey would. Next time, I'm going to need to know more."

Emplate sighed in frustration. "I need to sup or else I will go back tothe Beyond. I was hoping to

have both in my grasp." He looked at Elane for a moment. In that brief moment, he forgot about love and began to imagine how her ability would taste as it went through his system. But then he thought of the screams that Yvette made, when she believed him as someone to take care of her. True, he only saw Yvette as a meal, but Elane was more than that to him. She loved him.

"Emplate, there is more than one way to attack Rich." He then noticed that she had stopped talking, and was looking in fright.

He glanced and saw the hands of the dead reaching for him. He yelled out to her as he knew he was disappearing from her sight, "Tell me when I return, for I shall return." The hands pulled him into the Beyond, and his own private hell.

When Paige awoke, she felt sore. She opened her eyes to discover that she was in the med-unit. She remembered what had happened to her. That girl, Aura, had attacked, and knocked her out. Then she heard Jono's voice, and Sean's, and she had warned them. She looked in the med-unit and to her left, she saw two other bodies laying in beds. One was Rich, the other was Yvette. The two were safe, but obviously injured. Aura must have caught them, but was probably stopped by everyone else.

"Hello, Sunshine." She turned and saw Jono standing there. She watched as he approached and took her hand. She was happy to see him, and smiled at him. As she smiled, he said to her, "I'm sorry."

"Jono, you don't have to be sorry about not being.." She stopped when he shook his head. She then realized that he didn't mean that, he meant Thanksgiving. "Ah'm sorry, too." She embraced him in a big hug.

The moment was cut short when Sean came into the room. He looked at them and said, "Well, lass, ye had us worried for a moment. How ye feeling?"

Paige released Jono and sat up in bed. "Ah think Ah feel worse than when Yvette ran amok when she first arrived." She was still a bit sore were Aura had put that pressure on her.

"From what we got from the scans, yur waist had been crushed. Some of yur internal organs were bleeding, and ye had a couple broken ribs." As Sean had said that, she could swear that they were still broken.

She turned to look at Rich and Yvette and asked, "What about them?"

Emma Frost answered that question as she walked into the room. "Rich had some internal injuries, and when he was dropped, he sustained some trauma. Yvette was in a similar state, except her injuries weren't as bad." Paige was relieved to hear that, but she wondered how the two lasted so long.

"Any idea of how they managed to last until you got back?"

"Judging by the way some of the vents were opened, the two were scrambling around the vents," Emma said.

"I think that might have been Rich's idea." Paige looked to see Jubilee entering the room, with a girl about Jubilee's age, bald and with a red dot on her forehead. Jubilee turned to the girl and said, "This is Paige Guthrie. She is the one with the disgusting ability."

"It's useful, at least for defense," Paige responded instantly.

"Didn't do you any good against Aura. By the way, this is Daria."

Paige looked at the girl and said, "Welcome to the school. Ah'm sorry Ah didn't come to the airport, but..."

The girl looked at her and said, "I know. Everybody has told me about Rich's dreams." The girl then approached Rich and looked at his face. She then noticed that Rich had started to have what appeared to be an epileptic seizure. Daria then yelled, "Something's wrong. Rich doesn't seem to be well."

Paige yelled to Daria, "Step away from him, Daria. You are forcing your ability onto him." Daria

looked as if she didn't understand. Sean ran over and pulled her away from Rich's bed.

"Daria, did Jubilee tell ye that Rich mimicked mutant's abilities?"

"Yes."

"Well, how he reacts is determined by who closes the distance between him and the mutant while he is in a neutral state. You initiated the change, and something tells me that ye had some trauma in yur life." Paige looked at the girl and then noticed that Rich had calmed down. Paige could tell that he was starting to wake up, due to the fact that he started to move his head. He didn't sit straight up until Yvette screamed.

Rich jumped when he heard the scream. For a moment, he thought it was him screaming, partially due to a unique occurrence. Someone must have gotten near him in his state of unconsciousness, at he must no longer have had Yvette's ability. He sat up and opened his eyes. He was in the med-unit, and it was Yvette that was screaming. He saw Sean and Emma trying to calm her down, and he then saw Daria. She looked just as she did in the picture, but he knew something about her that worried him a little. He wondered if she was aware of the fact. He turned back to Yvette to see she was sitting up, but was wary of everything she saw. He looked at her and smiled and said, "I think we are safe, love."

She relaxed and smiled at him, and then said, "Rich, I had the strangest dream. I dream that you weren't around, and Emma was handing me over to Emplate."

Rich noticed the glance Sean gave Emma, and Rich said, "I don't think Emma would do that, unless she planned to make sure he didn't get you. She doesn't want to see any of us die." It was now that everybody was filing in. Apparently, everyone had an encounter with Elane.

Sean looked at him and said, "Rich, lad, when were ye going to tell us about Aura?" Sean's tone made it evident that he was upset with Rich. But then, Rich couldn't blame him.

Rich sighed and said, "Fine. If I am going to reveal this dark secret, then two other secrets must be revealed." He noticed a look of puzzlement on everyone's face, except Monet's. Her face was had a look on it that begged him not to say anything. Rich then said, "Daria, I don't know if you are aware of this, but you have the ability to alter your form to do a task."

"I figured that out. Thank you, but why are you say this," she replied, very puzzled.

"Daria, you joined Zero Tolerance before your abilities awoke. In the process, I think you underwent the first phase of becoming a Prime Sentinel. Your abilities alter you from your true form to that of metallic forms." Daria blinked and was speechless.

"I didn't even know about that. And you learned all that when I got near you," she eventually said.

Rich nodded. It was an odd experience, but if she did remember it, something in her made her forget about it. He then noticed Sean looking at him and said, "Then what's the other secret?"

Rich let a smile cross his face. It was usually the same smile he had seen on Emma's face. He then mouthed the one word that Monet didn't want to hear. "Gemini."

Rich watched as Sean turned to face Monet. It was obvious that Sean knew about the twin sisters, but did he know what Rich knew. Probably not. Rich watched as Sean said to Monet, "Well, lass, if you don't say anything about yur twin sisters, I have a feeling that Rich will tell us. Which is it?"

Monet looked down at the floor. For the first time that Rich had met her, Monet was truly afraid. Monet finally said softly, "I am the twins." Rich saw the looks on everybody's eyes, including Daria's, and this was her first day here.

Jubilee was the only one to say the next question. "How? I mean, you can't be the two of them, unless it is in your mind." There was a flash of light and then there were two eight year olds standing exactly where Monet stood. Rich truly understood now what the two were.

Rich sat up and looked at them and said, "Tell me if I'm correct, girls, but you have the ability to

merge into a new person. One that you pick what you like, but the only way to maintain the balance of who is in control at any given time is those autistic spells." The twins nodded. Rich then said, "So, Monet St. Croix is just a fabrication of your imaginations."

The one girl said, "Yes and no, Richard." He was taken back by this. She then continued, "I am Monet St. Croix. My sister is Claudia." The other nodded and started to fall, as if weakened by the transformation, or she was dependant on the transformation. The two remerged into the familiar form of Monet St. Croix.

Rich shook his head, to clear his mind. He then said, "Then all what you two did was merge together your abilities, knowledge, and age. But why did you keep that form if..?" He then pieced together what he learned the second day he was at the school. The part that Emplate drained from Monet St. Croix was actually Claudia's powers. "Never mind, I know."

"Know what?" Emma asked, looking as if she was going to scan his mind.

"Claudia has become so dependant on being part of Monet that she probably won't survive for long alone," he lied. "Since the two of them are combined, it explained the strength, heightened senses. Over time, one forgets what it is like to live without a fallback." Monet gave him a small smile which communicated thanks.

"Then, how did the ability to merge manifest so early in their life." Sean asked.

"Maybe it was instinct of self-preservation. They didn't know at the time that blood relatives are immune to each other." Rich stopped that, and finally said, "Now, you all want to know about 'Aura'."

Paige looked at him from her bed and said, "Ah think we should have known about her on the first day."

Monet then said, "True. She seems to be quite a dangerous adversary." Rich shuddered, for he knew that she was dangerous. She was almost pure evil.

Sean then said, "First of all, how did ye meet her, and what happened?"

Rich hated bringing that memory back, but he had to. "First of all, Aura's real name is Elane. She probably still goes by Elane Bonstein, since that was my uncle's name. Elane was his second adopted child. He adopted her due to the fact that his adopted son wanted a sister. Elane came from a broken home. She was the one that broke it."

Sean interrupted by saying, "So Aura is your cousin?" He hated to ever think that Elane could be considered relation, but she did so good a job of disappearing that her last known name was Bonstein.

"My whole family won't even say she existed," Rich continued. "It wasn't until my birthday that I met Elane for the first and last time. It had been obvious she didn't like anyone, but when I approached her, I saw her plans. She had planned to start with our family to control the world. I don't know how she would go about, but she was going to start with us. I told my uncle and all her plans came apart at the seams. She ran from the house that day, swearing vengeance on me. The police were informed of her, but no one could find her. I lived my life as I could. Eventually, I thought she forgot about me. When I came here, I left no trace of coming here."

Emma then asked the question what was bothering him, "Then how did she find out you were here? I doubt she hacked into the school's files, since I have locked down the computers from hackers, and I have no records of the school's students in the computers at Frost Enterprises."

Rich looked at everyone and said, "I knew she lied about that. If who I think helped her find out I was here, then she is dead by now."

Monet said the name he suspected, "Emplate. If he did help her and she failed him, she is dead."

Yvette then said, "But if Emplate helped her, she would have known about us." That puzzled him, too.

Daria then said the one thing that made it fit together. "Maybe Emplate didn't tell her, or she was under instruction not to tell." Rich wondered how much she had learned about Emplate, or how much

she had observed when Bastion was head of Zero Tolerance.

Jubilee then said, "That makes sense. But the only way we will know the truth is if Aura attacks again. I don't think Emplate is the forgiving type."

Rich looked at them all. He knew that what he would say would shock them, but it was true. "I hope he isn't the forgiving type. I wouldn't mind seeing her dead, for then I wouldn't have to worry anymore." At that everyone stopped asking about Elane, and he hoped that Aura was gone for good.