

Maybe in another dimension

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Kapitel 11: Genius

Erik didn't know when he fell asleep again, but when he woke up, he smelled something burnt. His first thought: the house was on fire. He jumped out of bed and hurried downstairs where the smell intensified. But instead seeing flames and smoke, he saw naked legs covered with tiny freckles and bare feet standing in the kitchen right in front of the oven. Charles was cooking. Or at least tried to.

"Charles", Erik sighted and went closer to the disaster. "What... What are you doing?"

But before his friend could answer, he saw what was left of some eggs in the pan.

"I tried to make breakfast... But I failed", he admitted sadly and looked very upset. "I thought I might remember cooking like playing chess yesterday. But... it seems that my old self didn't cook at all."

"He did", Erik smirked and took the pan out of Charles hand to throw away the eggs. "But it ended always exactly like this. Don't worry. I guess Charles Xavier just can't cook."

"Really? Did I already try to make you breakfast?", the telepath asked curiously and watched how Erik disposed the eggs and grabbed new ones from the carton right next to the stove.

Erik stopped for a moment in his movements. He remembered Charles standing in the kitchen back at the school trying to make Erik breakfast after they had had a little fight the night before. He burnt everything that could be burnt. In the end they shared a big pot of yogurt with fruits in it, because everything else had ended up in the trash by Charles. They laughed about it the whole day and the fight was forgotten. "You did", was all that Erik said after he began to cook some new fried eggs.

Unfortunately eating yogurt with fruits didn't solve paralyzing your best friend. Or betraying him. Or almost killing him.

"You don't have to make breakfast for me, Charles. I usually don't eat anything in the morning. Coffee is enough", Erik explained while he sizzled some bacon.

"I wanted to be useful", he explained and watched Erik cooking.

"You can be while you're trying not to burn down the house", Erik joked, but Charles frowned like he was deeply hurt. So the metal bender added a bit more bacon stripes as an apology. He knew Charles liked it savoury in the morning. That's why he got soft at the edges after Erik moved in with him 20 years ago. Everyday bacon and eggs or sausages weren't very healthy. But Charles loved it, so Erik didn't object and made him what he wanted. Almost every day.

"You made me breakfast... almost every day?", Charles whispered, looked down and grabbed the kitchen counter.

Erik's eyes began to sting. Was he thinking again too loud? "That was a long time ago."

"Why did we stop making breakfast for each other?"

"Oh, you want to know more about the past?", Erik teased. With a little bit too much aggression, he put the eggs and bacon onto plates. "Then remember."

"I can't trigger memories like that. And I just... don't get why we separated. What happened that we... ended up like this? Just tell me. I don't want to rummage in your mind to find the answer."

Erik started the coffee machine. "I don't have the nerve to talk about that in the morning. Just take it as it is." He placed their breakfast on the kitchen island. The loving atmosphere was turning sour. And suddenly Charles didn't say anything anymore. When he wanted to brew some tea and didn't know how to start, Erik placed him at the kitchen island and made everything else. Erik's passive-aggressive behaviour was making Charles insecure. In the end they ate in complete silence. And Erik wondered, if his decision to let Charles stay, was the right one. Maybe they weren't made to live together. After all, people change over the years. And 20 years of separation wasn't probably the best for a friendship.

After they finished breakfast, Charles asked carefully for his clothes.

"They're still wet", Erik grumbled as he got upstairs to shower. Charles followed him.

"Don't you have a dryer?"

Erik sighted. "I don't need one." It was still cloudy outside, but the rain stopped. He looked outside of the bedroom window, thinking about a way to dry Charles clothes faster. Maybe another mutant in this village owned a dryer. "You should've brought more clothes."

"Maybe", Charles admitted, "but I didn't want to carry half a ton for six hours."

Suddenly Charles stepped in front of him and started opening Erik's wardrobe. "I need something to wear, Erik, I can't run around half naked all day. Although I enjoy it."

Erik tried to ignore the statement as best as he could. "I have a meeting at twelve. I can ask someone for clothes for you", Erik murmured and grabbed some clothes for himself while Charles was still looking through his belongings. A part of him was offended and angry that the telepath was so rude to not mind his personal spaces. Another part of him loved the straight-forward Charles. Seeing him grabbing a different Cardigan and a shirt with the intention to wear it was making Erik's heart warm. He felt... comfortable.

When he was in the bathroom, he began to gather some things for Charles. Like a new toothbrush, some towels and a brush. Erik didn't brush his short hair, but Charles had to. This mob of hair had to be tamed.

Suddenly, Charles knocked at the slightly open door and peeked inside. Erik just came out of the shower and was wearing only a towel around the waist, which made both of them a little bit uncomfortable. Nonetheless, Charles spoke silently. "They're coming, Erik. What should I do?"

"Who's coming?" His heartbeat went faster. A threat? An enemy? More scientists?

"Raven and Hank!", Charles whined.

"Oh, god..."

Indeed, it was like Charles had predicted: They acted like Charles was their child that ran away to his friend which they didn't approve. Raven stood next to the kitchen island with crossed arms, while Hank sighted almost every two seconds in disbelief. Like two parents in distress.

"We were worried, Charles. You can't just... run away", Hank said as the good guy he was.

"A lot of things could have happened on the way! That was reckless! You're still lacking a lot of memories – you don't know yet who's the enemy and who's not!", Raven yelled as if she was the more stricter parent.

"I'm a telepath. I know exactly who my friend is and who my enemy is", Charles sighted and played with the buttons on the navy Cardigan he was wearing. Blue really was his colour.

"Apparently not", Hank grumbled and looked in Erik's direction.

"Erik is my friend", Charles said with a determination that made both Hank and Raven go silent. "I'll stay. I'm no use as a professor at the school. I don't know what to do with all of the students. And to be honest with you: I don't intend to change that. I know that the school was built by me to give young mutants a place. And that my intention was to create an institution where humans and mutants could live together peacefully. And it kind of worked."

Hank and Raven just watched Charles speak. And they looked at him as if he was an

alien.

“But we all know how that ended, right? The school had to be rebuild a few times, because humans and mutants destroyed it several times over the years. I got paralysed, I lost my hair, I lost almost everything that I held dear in life , I almost got killed a few times as far as I know and I was alone. Completely alone all those years.” Blue eyes glistened in Erik’s direction. “I don’t want to be alone anymore.”

“You never were, Charles!”, Raven interrupted Charles’ speech and came a step closer to her brother. “You’ve lost some people, yes, but that was a long time ago. Now you have a family again. You have me, Hank, the children, all of the teachers –”

“That’s not what I mean and you know that”, Charles interrupted her sister and Erik began to sweat nervously.

All words seemed to be stuck in Ravens throat. Hank blinked a few times in disbelief. “You can’t be serious, Charles. I mean – Genosha is great, not very peaceful, but yeah, you can probably find someone here. But can’t you look for a woman while staying at the school? Where we have an eye on you? Where you can be the professor for all of your students? Your current situation is still vague, you know that. What about Moira? You could call her, I’m sure –”

“Who the fuck is Moira?”, Charles blared and seemed to get angrier by the second.

“A very good friend of you from the CIA”, Raven explained with a soothing voice, trying to calm her brother down. “You used to... uh, date? I’m not sure if you guys really dated, but you had a crush on her!”

“On Moira?”, Erik asked with a sarcastic tone. “Really?”

“I don’t remember her. Even after her name was mentioned. She can’t be that special.” Blue eyes searched to Erik’s grey-green ones as if to say ‘I’m sorry’.

“Charles, I understand you want to have someone special in your life, that’s ok. You never mentioned something like that before, but we can find someone. I’m sure. But please come back. You’re not safe here”, Hank plead while adjusting his glasses.

“I’m perfectly safe here”, Charles objected again and took a few steps towards Erik. His warm hands grabbed Erik’s arm. “And I don’t need you to find someone for me. Just let me decide on my own.”

The implication was too strong for Erik. “Maybe they’re right, Charles”, he said with a slightly shaky voice. “You’re better when you stay in the school.”

Charles’ eyes widened. Blue balls looked up to Erik and couldn’t believe what he just said. All of them stayed silent for a couple of seconds until Erik felt the mental nudge. Charles was asking for permission to enter his mind.

“Charles”, Erik thought with a loud mental sigh.

"Why are you sending me away again?"

"You're implicating something you might not understand yourself, let alone Hank or Raven."

"I'm implicating nothing. I just want to stay here. That's all."

"And what about saying you want to find someone special while grabbing my arm?"

"You are special to me! Am I not to you?"

"Are you talking through a mental link? Hello? We're still here!", Raven interrupted with a disturbed look on her face.

Both Erik and Charles blinked in their direction. And since the metal bender didn't want to answer Charles' mental question, he decided to avoid the whole situation completely.

"Charles is staying here for the moment", Erik sighed in resignation and cut off the mental link. The telepath let go of his arm immediately. "I wanted to send him away yesterday but he refused. So I allowed him to stay at Genosha for the next days. Or weeks. Depending on how well this is going to work and how long he intends to stay."

"It's what you always wanted, hm? Charles Xavier, the great telepath, now fighting for your cause?", Hank spat and growled under his breath. "What a great coincidence that he has no memories of your old self. No more your opponent but your ally – that sounds nice. How did you do it? What kind of promises did you tell him? To stay with him this time?"

"I promised nothing", Erik answered with a serious tone. "Now go, before I forget myself and let you escort by one of my soldiers."

"Oh, soldiers, how wonderful!", Hank raised his voice. "Do you hear that, Charles? He has his own soldiers! For someone who was the victim of a disastrous war, you're pretty good in playing war yourself, Erik!"

Raven's eyes were dancing between Hank and Erik. She knew that things would escalate any second if she didn't do anything. But Erik's mood had already snapped.

"You dare saying those things to me? You weren't there, you didn't see the things they have done!", the metal bender yelled and gathered metal around him. All kind of things started to rattle around the house. But Hank wasn't intimidated.

"Do you see that, Charles? He's dangerous! He wouldn't hesitate to kill us all if it wasn't for you all those years –"

But before Hank could finish his sentence, a soothing atmosphere was spreading through the living room.

Hank stopped yelling. Erik stopped gathering metal around him. Raven loosened up.

"Just go", Charles breathed and stepped in the middle of the room. "Thank you for your concern, but I'm fine. I will call you once in a while. But for now: please go."

Both Raven and Hank nodded contently and stepped outside. After the door was closed again, Erik felt the soothing atmosphere around his mind fading.

Neither of them said anything until they heard a car leaving.

"You overstepped my boundaries. Again", Erik muttered in a low voice.

"If I hadn't deescalated the situation, you and Hank would've destroyed the house. We all seem to be very stubborn people."

Erik ignored Charles goodwill and glared at him. "Do that again and you will leave. Permanently."

"You'd rather have your house destroyed, a fight with a friend and probably wounds all over your body instead of me in your head?"

"Hank's not my friend", Erik growled and came closer to Charles, who was still standing in the middle of the living room. "He wouldn't have had the chance to destroy anything in here. Let alone myself."

"So, you would have killed him? Was he right about that?"

There it was again. The constant disappointment in Charles' eyes returned whenever he was confronted with one of Erik's flaws.

They looked into each other's eyes for a couple of seconds until Erik felt that a fight wouldn't solve anything. Because – no – of course, he wouldn't have killed Hank. Not because of something trivial as an insult. But acknowledging that would mean that Erik had to comply and admit to have overreacted.

"I will head to the meeting now", he announced grumpily instead and walked past Charles.

"Have fun. Please ask for some clothes, yes?", the telepath muttered angrily back.

As soon as Erik stepped out of the house, he felt lighter. He found that he liked arguing with Charles when he was angry as well. Most of their encounters were filled with so much rage from Erik's side and so much sympathy from Charles's side. He was never truly angry. Whenever Erik did a horrible thing – Charles forgave him the second he had done it.

Maybe it wasn't so different right now. But it was trivial. The fight was a nice change to all of the other burdens they had to carry for the last years. Because when Erik

would return later to his house, he knew that Charles would still be there.