

## [five] breaking into the pentagon

**NOVA WALKED BESIDE** Charles and Logan as they followed a tour group through the Pentagon. Hank walked slightly ahead of them, his disguise consisting of a bucket hat which didn't really suit him, and as they passed a stairwell, Charles patted him on the back before he, Logan and Nova headed down the stairs away from the tour group. 𐄂

As they headed down to the lower levels that were o -limits to civilians, Peter was in the process of breaking Erik out of his cell. Nova walked towards the kitchens with Charles abs Logan, praying this was successful and nobody ended up getting arrested. Charles went first, pushing through the doors and plastering on an authoritative voice. 𐄂

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls," he announced, entering the kitchen to find the sprinkler system engaged. "This is a Code Red situation. We are evacuating the entire floor so that we - my associates and I - can, uh, secure the prison."

"Who are you?" asked one of the guards.

"We are special operations, CB-FB-CID," Charles replied awkwardly, trailing o as he finished. "Look, perhaps you didn't hear me when first I spoke, but it's imperative that you understand we are in complete lockdown situation. We have to get you to the third floor—" 𐄂

Logan moved past Charles and shoved one guard backwards, grabbing a frying pan before he tripped the other guard and knocked him flat on his back. Nova stepped forwards, altering the gravity of the other guard that was charging towards Logan and sending him flying backwards into the wall. He slumped and Logan turned to Charles. 𐄂

"Oh, I'm sorry, were you finished?" he asked.

Charles ignored him, grabbing the key from the unconscious guard and using it to unlock the door. "I'm sorry, I'm just not very good with violence." 𐄂

The elevator opened slowly, and Nova saw Erik Lehnsherr again for the first time in years. She was only a kid the last time she saw him, and he had changed a lot since then. Peter stood behind him, and when he saw Nova, he winked. 𐄂

Erik looked confused. "Charles?"

Charles punched Erik hard across the face, so hard that he stumbled into the wall and Erik hit the ground. Nova sco ed. "Not good with violence, my arse." 𐄂

"Good to see you too, old friend," Erik said, rubbing his jaw as he got to his feet. "And walking." 𐄂

"No thanks to you," Charles shot back. 𐄂

"You're the last person in the world I expected to see today," Erik told his former friend.

"Believe me, I wouldn't be here if I didn't have to," Charles replied. "If we get you out of here, we do it my way. No killing."

"No helmet," Erik said. "I couldn't disobey you even if I wanted to." 𐄂

"I'm never getting inside of that head again," Charles said, his tone laced with anger. "I need your word, Erik." 𐄂

Before Erik could utter another word, a door opened behind them and guards flooded in. "Nobody move! Hold it right there!"

"Charles?" Erik said.

"Don't move! Hands up, or we will shoot!"

"Freeze them, Charles," Erik said.

"I can't," Charles replied.

"Hands up!"

When Erik registered that Charles no longer had use of his powers, the pots and pans in the room began to rattle. Charles let out a loud, "NO!"

A split second passed, and the entire scene before them had changed. The bullets hit the wall behind them and the guards were knocked out by their own fists or thrown to the ground. Various foods hit every surface and the pots clanged to the ground.

Nova's eyes widened as she saw Peter from across the room, realising that he must have done this. "Awesome."

They headed for the exit, and as Logan passed Peter, he patted his shoulder. "Thanks, kid." 𐄂

Nova lingered, waiting for Peter to follow. "That was really awesome."

"Thanks," Peter said, smiling. "I got a cool hat from it."

Nova looked at Peter's head, spotting the Pentagon Security cap he had evidently stolen from a guard while doing his thing. She laughed and said with a teasing edge to her voice, "And you didn't get me one?" 𐄂

Peter disappeared for less than a second before he returned with another hat in his hand, identical to the one on his head. "For you, my lady." 𐄂

"I was joking," Nova told him, but she took the hat and placed it on her head. "But thank you."

"Anytime," Peter said, shooting Nova a wink. "So..." 𐄂

"Nova!" Charles shouted. "Let's go!" 𐄂

Nova shot Peter an apologetic look. "Guess it's time to go."

"Okay, hold on," Peter said.

He placed his hand on the back of Nova's neck and the other fell into place on her arm. She looked at him. "What are you doing?" 𐄂

"I'm holding your neck so you don't get whiplash," Peter said. "Just trust me, okay?" 𐄂

"Trust someone I've just met, sure," Nova nodded sarcastically.

"Great," Peter said. "Hold on."

Nova felt the wind whipping through her hair before she was suddenly planted on her own two feet again, standing beside Logan's rental car. When Peter released her, she had to hold the side of the car as a wave of nausea rolled over her and her vision swam in front of her eyes.

"It'll pass," Peter promised, placing a hand on her back. "It happens to everyone."

"I want to say that was awesome, because it was, but I think I'm gonna be sick," Nova said. "Give me a minute."

When Charles, Hank, Logan and Erik joined them, it became obvious that not all of them were going to fit in Logan's car. Nova held up her hand. "I can just fly above you guys." 𐄂

"Nope," Charles said. "Out of the question."

"Or I can get a cab?" Nova suggested.

"On your own?" Hank asked.

"No, I'll go with her," Peter o ered. 𐄂

Charles didn't seem all too enthusiastic, but when Logan smiled at the two teenagers, it was over for him and his argument. "Alright. Meet us at the airstrip." 𐄂

He handed them a crumpled twenty dollar bill, which Nova took and put into her pocket. "Thanks. See you in a bit." 𐄂

As she and Peter walked towards the gates leading to the streets, Charles frowned as he watched them go. "I don't like this." 𐄂

"Relax, old friend," Erik said. "They're teenagers." 𐄂

Despite his wrongdoings and all of his evil plotting, Erik had always had quite a so spot for Nova. It required a level of bitter cynicism to hate her that nobody had stooped as low as to achieve. It also helped that, since she was a baby, Erik had called him Uncle Erik, regardless of how much it irritated Charles. If there was one person on Earth that Erik Lehnsherr would never harm, it was the girl he was watching walk away with a hyperactive boy at her side. 𐄂

"I still don't like this," Charles muttered. "Should've sent Hank with them."

"Too late now," Logan said. "Just get in the car, Charles." 𐄂

Nova looked behind her at her father, a smile on her face. "I can tell he doesn't like this."

"I never asked, but which one's your dad?" Peter asked. 𐄂

"Uh... none of them," Nova replied. "Well, I mean, Charles is my adoptive dad. Both of my parents died in a car crash when I was two."

"Oh, crap," Peter said so ly. "I'm sorry to hear that."

"It's okay," Nova said, shaking her head. "I mean, I never really knew them and if I did, I'd just be putting them in danger because of who I am."

"I'm sure that's not true," Peter said, raising his hand to call for a cab.

"Yeah, but it could have happened," Nova shrugged. "I mean, they were normal, as far as I'm aware. They weren't mutants, so me being who I am would've just painted a target on their backs."

Peter placed his hand on Nova's shoulder. "Then I guess you're lucky you've got an adopted dad as cool as yours." 𐄂

Nova smiled. "Yeah, I guess you're right."

Continue reading next part 𐄂