

Hand of Sorrow

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On a search and rescue mission in Japan the X-Men uncover secrets they could not imagine and unlikely allies. What Consequences will they face? What challenges? And above all, will mankind survive this new undertaking? No slash.

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Chapter 1 - chapter 1	2
Chapter 2 - chapter 2	6
Chapter 3 - chapt. 3	10

1 - chapter 1

The sun was high, the sky a brilliant blue broken only by occasional wisps of white pushed along by the gentle summer breeze. The world was warm and lush, off in the distance birds sang and soared through the sky, twirling and giving a beautiful display for their land ridden audience. Storm felt quite comfortable knelt on the thick green grass outside the mansion, in her large brim hat tending to the gardens she kept about the property. Each flower was blooming brilliantly after a full spring of pruning and loving attention the roses had come in gorgeously. It was a rainbow on the ground, shades of red, yellows, oranges even a brilliant violet. It was when she'd leaned forward to draw in a deep sniff of her pride and joy that she heard the clamored shout, chief of which she knew quite well.

"Stormy, watch out!!! Came that deep voice, laced with his even deeper accent. There was barely time enough to turn, her arms already outstretched as the winds were conjured barely above her own head, the whirlwinds capturing and holding the basketball that had flown in her direction from some bad pass made by her fellow comrades a few feet away on the court. The backlash of which caused her hat to fly from her head and her hair to wind about her face. Had she been but a second late the offending ball would have crushed her precious children.

"Good catch Stormy! Maybe next time you be on Remy's team, non?" The Cajun slowed his pace. As he shouted he had been sprinting towards the weather goddess but now that the danger was gone there was no rush to retrieve the ball. He could consider it a break. The day was warm enough he had been playing in nothing but short and was still sweating, even his auburn hair was sticking to his back where he had it tied and the stray piece he has to keep pulling out of his eyes.

Storm looked up at her brother, a critical eye focused on his. With little effort the ball flew right into the thief's unprotected stomach, a grunt escaping past his lips but as expected, his quick hands caught the ball non-the-less. "How many times must I ask you to stop calling me that." When Remy gave her a cheesy little smirk and shrug, she gave a soft smile herself. She could not stay mad at the man for long. "Please do be more careful where your passes land. If I were not here this would have ended badly." Her eyes narrowed and though the soft smile never faded the threat was clear to the Cajun and he nodded. Gathering her gardening tools back into her basket and retrieving her hat Storm headed back toward the mansion. A few steps away from her garden she heard family call with a smirk in his voice.

"Qui Stormy! Remy try ta be more careful next time!"

She sighed, shaking her head gently. From behind him she could hear the others yelling for him to hurry up. He of course responded with boast about how he was winning and they were only rushing their defeat. She chuckled lightly as she entered through a back door connected directly to the kitchen. The sun was hot today, and she figured she'd stop in for a cool drink. Placing her basket down on the counter top she managed to capture Jubilees attention. The teen had had her head down on the counter, sitting on a stool she had pulled up to the median in the middle of the large kitchen. Given the heat she'd discarded the coat that was her trademark opting out instead for shorts and a t-shirt. "Is something wrong, little one?"

"I'm bored!" She cried out. "Its been so long since we've seen any action!" She pouted, resting her chin in her crossed arms on the tiled top. "I mean we're the x-men. Shouldn't we be out beating up some baddie or something?"

The child's anxiousness amused the goddess. She laughed softly as she turned to the fridge. "Don't be so eager Jubilee. Being an X-men does mean being ready at any moment, but you must learn to take your time and smell the roses as well." Storm turned from the fridge, two bottles in hand, placing one within reach of the her younger teammate. "I believe the heat is agitating you. Why not work out you aggression like the others. Gambit is playing a game of basketball, why not see if you can join the next game?" She suggested.

Jubilee played with the bottle in her hands for a few moments. Though the condensation made it slippery in her hands the cool plastic was somewhat refreshing. "Too hot out there..." She mumbled. For just a moment she thought it sad how the bottle caught her attention. Was she really that bored? The one problem she found with being an X-man was that once you have that adrenaline rush, the excitement of mission, it became hard to unwind. Especially for her. She was a still a kid, so she lived for action long before joining the team.

Storm pursed her lips together for a moment cocking her head to the side, thinking. She drummed her fingers on the bottle cupped between them for a moment before looking straight back at the teen. "Perhaps you could try to calm yourself. I'm sure there's something in the library that you could find interesting. It will calm your mind and spirit." She offered.

With a sigh Jubilee pushed herself away from the counter. She knew Storm wouldn't give up till she had found something for her to do. If she didn't take something up soon she knew it'd lead to chores. Finding and reading some stuffy old book was far better than that around her. Besides she could always fake it and daydream while she stared blankly at the pages. "Maybe your right." She grabbed the bottle off the counter as she turned on her heels, retreating through the doorway, leaving Storm behind to take a drink from her bottle with a gentle smile.

Well the idea of blankly staring at the pages was blown the minute she walked in. There in the expansive library was the large blue fur ball they knew as Beast. She loved the man to death, but in HIS quest for knowledge she would inevitable drag any poor unsuspecting victim in. If she dared to try that 'fake read' stuff here he would certainly notice. And though he meant well he would start asking her question like what she liked about the story or throwing in some random information about the author or the time period or something that would demand she actually pay attention. Before she could sneak back out she was caught by the furry man who had been hanging upside down by his feet which gripped the ladder that was attached to the wall and used to get books on the top shelves.

"Ah, young Jubilee!" What brings you here?" The man called to her, adjusting his glasses. "Come to expand your mind perhaps?" He sounded almost hopeful.

With an inward sigh Jubilee put on a large grin. " I have a book report!" she lied, hoping the man wouldn't be able to read her. It's lucky that Hank didn't appear to have that same 'I can tell when your lying' power Wolverine did. "Just stopped in to grab a book!" She was overdoing it, her voice was too quick and her pointing to the books only furthered the suspicion. Jubilees eyes scanned the endless shelves of book. Shed needed one that was small and sounded simple. She could just run up to her

room and read it some time later, whenever she felt like it really. Just incase Hank decided to quiz her on it later. At least for a while she could just tell him she hadn't finished it. Feeling the mans eyes on her she just grabbed the thinnest book she could find and turned back to him. "I left all my notebooks upstairs! I'll just read this up in my room!" She gave one of those too big smile again as she backed out of the room.

Beast let out a chuckle, re adjusting his glasses before returning to his book.

Jubilee Sulked through the hallways. She had literally just given herself an ectra assignment she would never get credit for! That sure was a stupid move if ever there was one. This day wasn't going anything like she thought it would! Well actually she hadn't actually thought about the day really. She'd just hoped for something interesting. With each moment that passed the day got more boring. Certainly wasn't what she thought would happen when she joined the team.

Over the shuffling of her feet she could hear a humming as she passed by a familiar door. The door was slightly ajar, just enough for her to see int. Familiar red hair fluttered across a delicate bare back. The slinky little black dress and heel that Jubilee couldn't perceive as being comfortable in any form of the word dropped a large clue as to what Jean was preparing. With nothing else to occupy her time with Jubilee knocked on the door, clearing her throat softly to gain attention. It had to be better than mentally screaming her presence to the telepath.

The red head turned with a large smile. Her lips were painted red and her eyes were already lined, her lashed curled and combed and her cheeks rosy red. Jewelry that sparkled so bright they had to be hung from her ears and neck delicately, drawing the attention down towards her chest in the flowing, strapless dress. She practically beamed. She was quick however to wave Jubilee in, gesturing towards her bed that would serve as a couch for now.

"Big date, Huh?" Jubilee threw the book down on the bed, leaning back in a relaxed position. It's not the first time her and Jean had shared girl talk, certainly wouldn't be the last. Other than her teachers pet streak, Jean was the most normal here, personality wise anyway. It takes a while to be able to trust someone who could go into your mind and mess around. I mean she never really though she'd do it now that she knew it but when ya first get her, it's hard to believe you wouldn't mess with people like that when it was so easy to do.

"Scotts planned a big night on the town." The smile reached her eyes. She sat delicately down on her vanity seat, which looked more like a glorified foot rest. Jean looked to the side catching a glimpse of the book Jubilee had cast aside. "catching up on your reading?" She questioned, quirking a brow.

"Between Storm and Beast I don't have choice." The teen sighed. "I've got to remind myself to write a sticky not never to announce my boredom in this house." This earned a hearty laugh from the telepath. "Worst part is I don't even get credit for it..." The laughter was renewed. Jubilee pouted, tossing a throw pillow from the head of the bed in Jeans direction which was stopped promptly in mid air. "No fair!" She whined.

"Since when has life been fair." Jean chuckled out. The situation eventually caught up to Jubilee. She felt a tug pull at her lips and with Jeans continued laughter it was like a yawn. Seeing others make you

want to do it too and before you can help yourself you're doing it!

The laughter was cut short as a far too familiar presence entered their minds. It was an open link, calling to many in, out and all about the mansion. Jubilee had never really bothered to ask the others if it was the same for them but whenever the professor spoke to her in this manner she should always see his face. Did he do it to make seem less creepy that there was a disembodied voice in your head?

~X-men. We have a new missions. I will be waiting for you in the war room.~

And did he always have to be so blunt?

Her thoughts suddenly switched Jean. Where her face had been Beaming with joy only a minute ago, she now wore a solemn face. She did wasn't quite upset. As sad as it was it wasn't the first date that had been interrupted and it certainly wouldn't be the last but duty called. Shuffling over to her closet she began to pull out that old familiar uniform. How many battles had it seen, how many close calls? How many more would it see before it was done?

"Why don't you head down Jubilee, I'll be there in a moment. With a warm smile Jubilee scooted to the edge of the bed. "How bout I wait for you outside and we go together?"

As tough as it was being an X-man, there were rewards. These friendships. This Family. This made it all worth it.

2 - chapter 2

Authors Note:: sorry for not adding one in the first chapter. This is my first X-men fan fiction. I watched the cartoons from the 90's as a kid, the new movies and started with the comics recently so its got elements of all three. Also, in my mind I do more of the cartoon, but I make Logan taller. I feel he was way too short and it just helps making him more like the movie height in my mind. As for accents, I will be trying, but I'm new so please be easy on me. Also important for you to check my end notes on this chapter. Thanks for reading and please review.

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CHAPTER 2

Xavier allowed himself to be lost in thought as he waited for his x0emn to arrive in the war room. His fingertips tapped together at odd intervals in an attempt to calm his mind. The anxiety of this mission clouded his mind, in fact it was this mission that his mind was attempting to wrap itself around. Saying it was complicated would be an understatement,

“Professor...?”

The gentle, Familiar voice snapped him from his deep musings. Storm stood a short distance inside the doorway, concern was written on her face. Even he could not remember the last time of of his beloved students had been able to sneak up ion him. His mind wondered further than he'd though.

Behind Storm he could see several of the other beginning to enter the room. First Scott, his demeanor somewhat irritated, followed by Rogue and coming at a leisurely stride Gambit. Behind her. He was quick to take up a seat next to her though nearly all of them were open. He flashed her a sly smile, she sighed, rolled her eyes and turned from him.

Professor Xavier gave Storm a smile of his own, reassuring her with a nod, “I'm fine Storm. You can take a seat.” She responded with a gentle if some what suspicious smile of her own before moving on to her chair.

Nearly everybody had arrived now that Jubilee, and Jean had walked through the door. Jean still had her make-up on in her hurry to head to the war room, though her hair had been pulled back in a hassle free pony. That explained Scotts stiff demeanor, but he feared this mission may be too important to let wait any longer. Hank had been with him before he called the team, as lost in his own though on the matter as Xavier himself.

Jean continued around the table, knocking Gambits Legs off as she passed. She received a childish

pout from the man too old for such antics and she responded with a warning glare. Was he sure he'd picked the right team for his mission?

"So Prof.! What's up?" Jubilee questioned with enthusiasm.

"When everyone is present, Jubilee, Everyone will know." Taking a moment he looked about. : has anyone seen Wolverine?"

"Ah think he's in the danger room. It was runnin' when Ah passed it on my way here. Knowing him he ain't gunna show till we're done. You might as well tell us now Professor."

"Wolverine plays a vital role in this mission I'm afraid. I must wait till he's..." Xavier was cut off by a gruff clearing of ones throat. Turning he found Logan standing in the doorway. "Logan, thank you for joining us."

Logan grunted, taking the first available seat. "And my vital role?" He questioned sarcastically.

Regaining his composure, Xavier thought, only for a moment, on how to begin. "This is a very delicate matter. I have chosen you because I'm counting on all of you to be discreet."

"And you picked Logan?" Scott asked off handed.

"Watch it, bub!" Logan growled across the table.

"Gentlemen, please!" Hank finally spoke. "This must be take seriously, Clicking a button on the large table a hologram sprang up from the center of the table. It looked nearly like a mug shot. The Picture was a woman, perhaps in her early twenties. Despite her youthful face, her mouth was in a tight line, eyes cold and dark. Other than an unusually unhappy face she almost didn't have any signature of being a mutant. Rich chocolaty hair, brown almond shaped eyes and normal colored skin. Only difference, Physically, was her ears came to a delicate point.

"I have made contact with this girl. The only name I could get from her mind was Ren. The mission is to retrieve her and bring her back to the mansion."

"So we're playing taxi fro your new recruits then?" Wolverine asked, leaning back in his seat, "Why can't she get her own ride?"

"It's not that simple, Logan." Xavier looked up to the image of the woman. The emotions were clear on his face, his brow wrinkled with worry. "I fear there is more behind this young woman than I could reach. When I spoke to her she was clearly hiding something." Turning back to his x-men he wore a face of seriousness. : this woman is in danger and has no way out but the c-men. I will not abandon her."

"No way out?" Scott questioned. "Professor, Just where is she?"

"Kyoto, Japan." He stated flatly.

In a mere moment thousands of thoughts and memories flooded into Logan's memory. A pang to his

heart and then hot anger in his veins. "Count me out." He stood, turning from the others, drawing their attention.

"Logan I need you on this mission. You are the only one who knows the language enough to quid the others." The Professor said calmly.

"Find someone else!" He nearly growled out. "What about Blue," He nodded to Hank. "I'm sure he'll know the language."

"Of course I do." Hank wasn't always modest. "That's not an issue. My appearance, however, is."

"This girl isn't one to trust quickly. The less shocked she is with us, the better." The feral seemed unmoved. "Logan you are the only hope for everyone, including this woman to come out alright."

Logan's back stiffened. A long pause passed, tension in the air. With clenched teeth a growl, soft enough you could only hear if you were sitting by him, Logan sat back down, clearly still on edge. A slight bow of his head gave away the professors gratitude.

"I do not know the troubles you may see,. So please be prepared. I will keep in touch should anything arise. And one more thing my X-men," The tone in which he spoke made each team member turn from where they'd been poised to head out. " If it could be helped, I'd rather no one but our target know of your mutant abilities. Keep your identities as X-men and mutants a need to know basis.

"Gambit cocked his head a bit with a grin. "Perfect time for Gambit to try out his new sun glasses, non?" Rogue sighed and smacked his back as they filed out the door.

Professor Xavier watched his team leave, a heavy sinking feeling in his chest. Cupping his hands together he buried his head in his hands. Thumbs rubbing his temples with a heavy sigh.

"Charles, my friend, you are doing the right thing." Beast placed a hand on his shoulder. "If only I could believe that Hank."

Jubilee plopped down in the, all things considered, comfy seat. She didn't really need to change. Her outfit never really did fit in with the rest. Instead, after finding they'd be taking a private plane instead of the x-jet (less suspicious) she spent that time packing activities for the trip. She stretched her legs out and threw her arms over her head. "This is just like a vacation!" She squealed.

"Yeah, except it isn't." "Scott passed her to the seat in front of her. He wore his usual slacks and sweater. It fit in with the theory of them being tourists rich enough too afford a private jet. But of course he donned his trademark red shades. "This is still a mission and has to be treated like one" He stated in his usual, emotionless field commander voice.

"Oh come on! All we gotta do is find girl. I mean after magneto, juggernaut and Apocalypse this should be a piece of cake! Why couldn't we have some fun afterwards! I mean we'd even have a native tour guide!"

"Shut it, kid." Wolverine warned from behind her, arms crossed. It was slightly odd seeing Wolverine out

of uniform but at least the well worn jeans and plaid shirt were fitting of him. "Some 'mission'" He scoffed. "we're being sent to another country with only an idea of where this woman is and no idea of her powers! She could blow us apart with a thought for all we know. It could even be a trap."

"Logan got a point. WE don't know n'ting bout this girl. Why da Prof. send us in blind?" Gambit sat on the left o the others. As he's said earlier he donned a stylish pair of sunglasses. A blue silk shirt and black dress pants and auburn hair pulled back into a sleek pony tail at the base of his skull finished the look.

"That's all the more reason for us to be on toes." Scott said sternly. "We don't always know what were up against. So we've got to be prepared for anything."

"Hmph. I think the Professors' up to something." Logan grumbled.

"We've trusted the Professor this long, Logan, and he's always done what he thought was best. Why question him now?" Storm stood by Logan's seat while Jean piled their bags into the overhead.

"Something was off." Logan brushed a thumb across his nose to emphasize. "Didn't smell right."

Feeling the tension grow Jubilee reached for her MP3 player and turned the volume up high. The images of her fighting teammates muted by the music was near entertaining. She was sure that had she not already been listening to music some one would have covered her ears when Jean snatched the Cigarette from Remy's mouth before he could light it. She could hear the telepath telling him in her head that she wouldn't let him smoke in a confined space and his colorful responses.

How could they make 14 hours on a plane without killing each other let alone survive Japan?

Authors End Note: Please notice that yes, 'Ren' is an oc. However the whole story will not be focused around her, like many oc fan fictions for those that hate that type (I'm not a fan myself.) She will be like Piotr, Comes in, is important, then becomes like any other mutant that they've run into with alternating 'importance'. I've noticed in my writing I'm Gambit, Wolverine and Jubilee heavy and this is likely to continue for a while though I am trying to keep it more like the comics/cartoon where all the characters have side stories and a vital role in the plot. Again, thank you for Reading and Please do review.

3 - chapt. 3

Authors note: Hi everyone! As warning I was otaku long before I got into comics. 'Ren' is Japanese, she will speak English but there will be Japanese as well. Simple words like 'sensei' I'm not gonna translate, cause they're pretty widely known but anything not common I will give a number and translate at the bottom. Don't worry, there won't be much actually written in Japanese,

Chapter 3

"This is pointless." Wolverine growled. Normally he'd take I as a challenge to find some one in a city this crowded. But he had nothing to go on this time. Normally he'd have Intel on where they liked to drink or a scent to follow. Sometimes both. But this time nothing! He was teetering on the edge.

Scott ground his teeth together as quietly as he could. Jean, having sense his stress reached for his hand, patting the back lightly with her other. His normal tactics at keeping his sanity wouldn't work this time. They couldn't split up because Logan was the only one who knew the language. They all knew it was stupid! Like finding a needle in a Kyoto sized haystack. They're all annoyed enough, they didn't need him to remind them!

Off to his right he saw a flutter of yellow. Jubilee, camera in hand was leaning forward over a stand sat by a building. An older native woman gladly welcomed her, picking up different items and attempting to make a sale. It didn't help that Jubilee knew none of what the poor woman was saying. "Jubilee!" He ground out sternly between clenched teeth. Jubilee turned from the stand. Her bright smile faded upon seeing the look on their leaders face. She could only offer a quick apologetic look to the old woman before she ran back to her group.

"We're here on a mission, Jubilee. This Isn't a vacation." His voice was low but deadly.

"The Professor said he wanted us to look like tourists. I was just trying to be convincing," She offered in way of explanation. Her grin and shrugged shoulders drooped more each second from his expression. Shades or not Cyclops glares always come through strong and clear.

"Come on, Scott. Cut the kid a break. Not like WE get to travel like this all the time." Rogue clapped him on the shoulder from behind with one gloved hand.

"It's difficult enough to find one person in a million when you're focused, Rogue. It only gets worse when you snapping away."

Gambit pulled himself from the back of the group, wrapping his right arm around Jubilees shoulder and pulling her towards his body. "Maybe she got a good idea." He defended. "Her camera like a pair of

binoculars . Maybe she see our girl 'fore we do." Scot was silent. The point was valid and there was little choice he'd win. "Go, petite." He patted her softly on the shoulder and gave her room to move forward as he drifted to the back again.

"You and I both know she ain't lookin' for our girl through that thing, Gumbo."

"Yeah, but why not let her have fun, non?" Gambit flashed him a grin. It was obvious the Cajun was just as interested in pissing old four eyes as he was getting Jubes outta trouble. It was, however, not being able to see that mischievous glint in his eyes that Logan was sure was there. Back home Gambit only wore his glasses on occasions. Being here felt like they'd accomplished nothing. They were back in hiding, trying to pass for Human again. Logan didn't like being forced to become a hypocrite. How could they go back and tell any of the kids it was ok to be a mutant when even they were trying to pretend otherwise?

Still, seeing Remy piss off Scott brought a smile to his face. Sometimes the Cajun was alright.

Jubilee rebounded quickly, the grin was back on her face and her camera snapping as if it was her personal mission from Xavier himself. She was aiming one shot at an older looking building when she was knocked off balance by a man plowing into her shoulder. She managed to catch herself before falling, turning to the fleeing man and yelling after him. "You're excused by the way!" Angrily she dusted herself off, mutter to herself when she heard a noise from around the corner. It started low but became increasingly louder.

Soon, like a damn bursting, people in odd numbers came pouring around the corner. They near trampled each other in their rush, tripping over themselves. Here and there some seemed to look for shelter in near by shops. There were yells in Japanese, none of which Jubilee understood but it appeared that their words spooked the people who had not from the next street and sent them running. 'Akuma' was the only word Jubilee could make out. It was repeated so often among the frightened natives, It didn't take long for the shops to lock their doors and those with shades drew them shut. Those without shades scurried to duck behind their counters.

"Logan! What's going on!" Scott demanded. The whole team drew in close stancing themselves. Even Jubilee fought her way back to them, grabbing Stroms arm and attempting to hide behind the weather goddess.

"It's like they've gone mad!" The teen shouted.

Logan worked his way his way to the front . The slouch and drag in his step that had been so evident only moments before had vanished. He now walked with confidence, dominance.

"Logan!" Scott demanded.

Logan turned ,a predatory smile wide on his face and glint in his eye. "Either we found our girl or we're in for one helluva fight."

They rounded the corner, each prepared for a fight. As of the moment they still had managed to keep their identity as mutants a secret but running into a fight in the middle of the street didn't prove to have much luck in keeping it for long. At Scott's orders Logan had kept his claws away, Gambit had his cards handy but had not yet charged a single one. Scott, having very little option had donned his visor. If it came to a fight he'd do more harm without it. The others were ready. As long as they weren't taken by surprise they should be alright.

There was nothing down the street. Only the destruction the stampeding civilians had caused in their panic. The streets were deserted and branching off in a million different directions. Without someone who could show them the way to the fight (which would be highly unlikely) they were right back where they started.

"Great! We're back to wandering the streets again and this time I don't even have any stores to look at this time!" At Cyclops' look she chuckled nervously and gave a sheepish grin.

Logan took the lead, raising his nose to the air. A familiar coppery scent had teased his nose from the back. Moving away from the others it became more easily detected. He could also feel the breeze and knew just which way it was, pushing the scent and just where to head.

"What in tarnation are you doing?" Rogue's southern drawl drew out from the center.

"Blood. Where there's a good fight there's blood." Without another word he began walking down the street leaving the others to follow or stay. The hairs on the back of his neck were standing and an excitement ran through his blood. Some scent in the air drove him forward, if for nothing else, he could take out his frustration in the fight.

One thing Logan never did quite get. How there could be so many side streets that acted like alleyways but never quite looked like alleys back home. They were wider and better lit. Well most were. Those that were in the more traditional part of town. Over the years the buildings drew in closer and closer and many of the simplistic buildings Logan had come to love gave way to skyscrapers and apartment complexes.

That's just where the smell of blood led him, down one of those many side streets. Rounding the corner of the alley he could see straight through to the other side from the street over he saw a figure through the filtered light. The look of what his senses told him was a male was enough to make him pause, allowing the others to catch up.

There was leather tight pants, platform boots that laced right up to the knee. Long, black leather trench embroidered on the back, form fitting and zipped from neck to navel and flapping from the waist down. The man's hair was spiked like a sun around his head, some black others bleached blonde. But worst for Logan was the make-up. His face was painted pale, eyes lined dark and speckled with glitter. His lips were painted in geisha style with black and the gleam from the amount of piercings across his face and bouncing jewelry. It was enough to make Logan want to hurt him.

However it appeared that another had already reached him. His form was soon kicked from view by a

female from. This one dressed in orange light legged leotard, long sleeves broken by red warmers she wore over her wrists. Her legs were covered by what appeared to be a loose fitting skirt covering a revealing pair of shorts.

"Wow! doging outfit!" Logan raised a brow as the teenager peered down the alley beside him. A grin found its way to his lips when Storm called her name sternly to reprimand her for cussing.

At the noise of the others arrival the woman at the other end of the alley turned to them. Her eyes pierced right through the darkness to focus on them. Despite a few scuffs and scrapes sprinkled across her face and the bitten and swollen bottom lip. The face was unmistakable. Right down to the tight line she kept her mouth in. It was their girl alright. But just as quickly she turned chasing her prey away from the opening of the alley.

"That's her!" With barely a moment to register what was happening Jubilee was off running down the alley before Wolverine could stop her.

"Petite wait!" Gambit called after her. Him and Wolverine were first after her quickly followed by the others. With Storm and Rogue grounded for the time being Gambit had an advantage. Years of running out of trouble as a thief built up his speed and he was quickly catching Jubilee just on the other side of the alley. Wolverine was right behind him, trailed by the others.

"You're going to get yourself killed one day, kid!" Logan growled out. Just in case, Gambit put both hands on Jubilee's shoulders, anymore excitement and Logan may snap. He could push her out of harms way this way.

"Dat was dangerous, chere." He scolded gently.

Ignoring the obvious mis-trust from his Cajun 'friend', he turned to the woman they were after. She had, for a moment, the man in her hands, punching him to the ground like one would punt a football, When her opponent was down she turned to them. Her stride as she approached them was powerful, yet graceful. Shoulders back, steps light, like she was barely touching the ground.

Everyone took stance immediately. There was no doubt she could fight and not knowing anything about this woman they couldn't take any chances.

She paused a few steps away, facing just a bit diagonally from them. She took them in, looking over each of their faces with her almond shaped eyes. Pursing her lips a moment in thought she began to speak. It was slow, deliberate, but amazingly there was no accent held in her voice when she spoke.

"I said I would join after I was finished." Despite her current appearance, her voice was high and delicate. A young girl's voice. It was her voice that gave away how very young she really was. "Go home!" She nodded her head to them as if 'home' was right behind them.

"Sorry kid. Professor wants to talk to ya and we got orders." Wolverine spoke clearly. The tone wasn't threatening but it was deep, demanding and final.

The woman's eyes were quick to focus on him. It felt as if she were reading him but he didn't feel her in

his mind the way he did when the Prof. had tried to help him remember what had happened to him. He swore he even saw her nostrils flare.

"I will join you when I'm done!" they locked eyes and Logan steadied himself for the stare down of his life, until a voice came from the ground behind her. First a raspy laugh followed by a light, for a mans, voice, mockingly.

No one understood what the man was saying but the sneering amusement in his voice and hate in his eyes it was obviously something cruel. The woman that they now knew to be 'Ren' stiffened at the laugh. The longer the man spoke the more fury filled her eyes till there was a full fire burning behind them. Her chest began to heave as a growl was released from her lips.

A blur of color and the native woman had turned. She grabbed the man who had pilled himself to his feet by the collar. It was when she struck the man a detail was revealed on his flesh that none had realized about her. The shallow but oh so present cuts that criss-crossed his face with each blow she delivered drew attention to her pointed nails tipping each finger. They were well maintained, filed and buffed to a manicured shine that was quickly covered in blood.

Blood specks flew to the ground on occasion as the ferocity of her attack grew. Her anger escalated to the point her nails tore straight through the leather held in her fist. The man fell to the ground and in a breath she straddled him, both fists going at the man. In only moments the man was reduced to a bloody mess. Her hand, tips bloodied, raised high into the air nails pointed in a killing blow. As her hand descended it was caught tight in logans fist. She turned to him with a growl, tugging her arm feircly in an attempt to free herself. "Hannasei!"(note 1) She snarled.

"Sorry, kid. Can't do that." Logan answered without hesitation. "I got orders from the Proff. And I ain't gunna wait for ya." Her eyes narrowed into a glare he eagerly returned.

Her head snapped down the road, Logans ears picked up the faintest sound of sirens off in the distance. Police sirens and ambulance. He looked back to Ren, her pointed ears twitched and her chocolate eyes darted from side to side for a moment, searching.

Only seconds later, with a cry she leapt to her feet and with a high round house kick to logans head, freed herself from his grasp. Despite the awkward angle of her beginning, without missing a beat, she landed on all fours. With hardly a backwards glance she was down the road at an inhuman pace,

Growling, Logan wiped away the blood dribbling down the corner of his mouth as the large bruise that had only briefly formed healed. "Storm! Rogue! Follow her from the sky!"

"The Professor said for us not to use our powers!" Rogue protested.

"WE loose her now we may never fins her again!" he growled. Stabilizing himself on his feet he headed down the way the girl had gone, counting on his nose to lead him.

Jubilee made a start to follow him but stopped as she passed the bloodied man. "What about him!" There was a tremor in her voice. Uncertainty as to if the man was still alive.

Feeling sympathy for the teen, that she has to see this, he paused. "An ambulance is on it's way. We can't do anything for him that they can't."

"Come on sugah." Rogue urged as she pushed the teen away from the bloodied sight. When Jubilee was off with the others she took to the air with Storm. There was a dot off in the distance that would be their lady bit it would take a minute to catch up, even flying. "She sure does run fast, don't she?"

On the ground Logan followed his nose, the others followed him. When they'd approached her he was able to pick up her scent and if that hadn't been enough when she'd kicked him in the jaw he got a good whiff. His jaw still tingled a bit and with his bones and healing factor that said something for her strength. Apparently it wasn't novice they were dealing with. If Charles didn't want to help her learn her powers then just what was it that he needed her for?

"Scott, Come in" Storms voice over the comms they stowed away in their pockets broke the relative silence of their pursuit.

Scott pulled the small 'X' monogrammed sphere from his pocket, attempting to keep up with Logan and the others as he fished it out. "Go ahead Storm."

"She turned into an alleyway. It a dead end but I can not see in. It's too dark."

"Copy, Storm. Keep an eye on her! We'll catch up in a minute. Don't approach her. WE still don't know what she's fully capable of."

"Roger, Cyclops."

A grin pulled at the corners of Wolverines mouth. The scent was getting stronger, They were catching up! Up ahead they could see the figures of Rogue and Storm hovering over a near skyscraper building. Some where in their pursuit they'd crossed from traditional to modern. From the looked of it they weren't in the best part of town.

Seeing their approach Storm and Rouge descended to the mouth of the alley. They waited there for the few moments it took their teammate to arrive. They kept a close eye on the alley though nothing appeared to be moving inside. If they blocked the only exit at least she couldn't escape. Rogue felt bad though. They were treating her like an enemy, cornering her. She probably ran in there cause she was scared and confused. She looked into the alley with sympathy, caught a little off guard when the rest of the team arrived.

Jubilee Arrived a full minute after the rest of the team. When she finally caught up her legs felt like rubber and she could hardly breathe. She doubled over, hands on her knees. "That's it! No more Twinkies!" Jean gently lay a hand about the teenagers shoulders. Directing her back to the rest of the group.

Scott peered into the alley. It was deep and the light from the street quickly faded into a deeper darkness. With buildings on three sides and towering into the sky. The sun had all but been eliminated in its confined space. "It'll be nearly impossible to see."

"Maybe Gambit can help." The Cajun pulled a card from his pocket. Placing the thin cardboard between his middle and index finger it began to glow, giving off a soft light. Heading into the alley it didn't give much but it would be the best they could get.

The others circled Gambit, eyes scanning the darkness. Wolverine had pushed past the card thrower to the very fore most of the light. He had payback for the little gift she'd given him earlier. His nose flared. Her scent was everywhere at once. He couldn't find her, it was like she'd bottled it as a perfume and doused the place. Never before had his nose ever been this confused.

" 'Be prepared for anything' they say, but does anyone think to bring a flashlight around here!" Jubilee mumbled. Jean firmly 'shh'ed her.

Though there was only a sphere of light it was enough to light the walls when shifted one way or the other. They shuffled along, tight together till a short distance ahead they could see the dead end and still no sign of their girl.

"Where'd she go!" Jubilee exclaimed.

"Maybe she climbed her way out" Jean offered.

"Impossible! Rogue and I were watching the entire time. She couldn't have escaped without us noticing."

"She's still here!" Logan growled out. He moved forward a bit more, sniffing the air. He tilted his head up, first to one side then the other. That feeling hadn't gone away. The hairs on the back of his neck were still standing. She was definitely still here.

When he turned to his left, there was only a momentary rustle of sound before something jumped from the right. Though Wolverine didn't have a moment to turn the others saw how their target had jumped down from the darkness. Her feet had landed flatly against his upper back, knocking the Canadian off balance. Using his body like a springboard she repelled, tucking and spinning herself back the way she'd come. Her hand caught the railing of a rusting fire-escape bolted to the building, flipping herself to perch on it like a gargoyle.

The team took a step back. Logan who had landed face down on the dirty, cracked concrete let out his angriest fowl yet. Being taken by surprise never did sit well with him. He turned to the woman from the ground, bearing his teeth. She didn't flinch.

"I told your Sensei, I'd join when I was done here. Go home." Her face was emotionless, not even angry. Did she ever feel?

"Now we definitely ain't leaving without you. Even if I gotta drag ya out in a body bag!" Wolverine lurched towards her, claws extending with a 'snk'. He sliced at her feet but with hardly any effort she jumped from her perch to grasp a high pipe sticking from the opposite wall, leaving him to slice through the rail of the fire escape.

There was a buzz as Gambit added a bit more of a charge to his card. He was aiming towards her, prepared to launch. Warned by the buzz of kinetic energy Jean latched onto his shoulder causing him to

pause.

"You can't! You'll hit the building and possibly hurt someone inside!"

"This is my territory! You can not harm me here. Go back home. While you still can!" her nose was as high in the air as it could get. Wolverines blood was boiling. His threat was dangerously close to becoming a reality. With a feral growl Logan launched forward, lashing at her, truly not caring at this point what condition he brought this girl back to Charles in. With what seemed like a bit of a mewl she leapt from the wall, pushing off with her feet and launching herself over their heads just as Logans claws dug into the brick walls leaving three slashes about an inch deep. This time she landed on top of a dumpster, immediately back into a crouched position like a cat about to pounce.

"Jean! Do something before he kills her!" Scott commanded. Jean nodded. This had gone on long enough. Even she was growing tired of the games. Placing her fingertips to her temples in concentration she glanced at her target.

Feeling eyes on her the Japanese woman looked up into the eyes of Jean Grey. For the first time since they ran into her there was terror in the woman's eyes. Without hesitation she leapt, appearing to have surrendered the battle in retreat. However, half through her pounce Jean caught the light weighted girl in a psychic field. She was frozen for a moment in shock until she began to thrash about. Animalistic growls rivaling Logans were emitted amongst snarls and curses in her native language. Jean was forced to concentrate harder with each thrash to keep the woman confined.

For a moment the thrashing ceased. The girl known only as Ren glared hotly at the telepath, lips pulled back from sharp canines in a snarl. Seemed there was an unwilling white flag being raised until she drew her hand back. With a grunt her hand was shoved forward and leaving her palm was a ball of fire that burst through the field and hurled straight to Jeans body. The flames engulfed Jeans upper body and with a horrified shriek she lost control over the shield.

Jean fell to the ground, clutching her face in a protective manner just as the woman fell gracelessly on her behind.

"JEAN!!!" Most of the team rushed to her side, calling her name or gasping in horror. Logan looked back as she fell. His heart ripped, shattered. The sound of her scream was more than he could take. He turned on the woman who seemed to have temporarily lost her bearings when dropped. Picking her up by the collar of her shirt he threw her against the wall like a rag doll. Her head cracked against the wall with a sickening sound and a yelp as she slumped to the floor of the alley. Logan was on her in a moment, sheathing the middle claw on his right hand he caught her neck between the other two, pinning her to the wall.

Her eyes were scrunched and her head lolled a bit. It was clear her world was spinning but he didn't care. "You've done it now!"

"Wolverine stop! You kill her!" The Cajuns voice called from behind him. He attempted to pull Logan away but the man back handed him with a closed fist. With adamantium laced Gambit went down fast. Logan waited. Waited for the woman to look at him. Her eyes were dazed but she looked at him with the certainty that she was going to die, as if she were looking at the reaper himself. He then raised his left

hand, fully clawed and froze at the voice he heard and the unseen touch that stayed his hand.

"Logan, don't!" Jean's voice held dear. Fear for the woman she was sure Wolverine would have gutted without hesitation. She was picking herself up from where she'd fallen. When Logan looked back, nothing had happened to her. Her flesh was not burned and her clothes weren't even singed. But he was certain he'd seen her go up in flames.

"Jeanie." Logan's hand was released from her mental grasp and he retracted the claws that held the woman to the brick wall. She slumped down to her side, barely catching herself with her hands before her face met the ground.

"I'm alright, Logan." She assured him at his look of disbelief. She looked down to the woman who, for the moment, had the fight knocked out of her. She looked tired and worn and oh so small laying there. Yet, though her eyes were blurry and unfocused she had enough to look at Jean with such hate. "It was all just an illusion."

Note: 1 'Let go/ Let me go!' (I know how to say it and I guessed at how to spell the romanji form of the word. If you speak Japanese or know the correct romanji for this word please let me know, I will fix it. Thanks)

Important: Also, though I'd love to go someday I've never actually been to Japan. I'm kinda making up the scenery. So if anyone out there doesn't think it matched, please be kind, I didn't mean any harm, just had to set a mood.