

# Maybe in another dimension

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## Kapitel 10: Fancy fo a game

Erik didn't know if his decision to let Charles stay was the right thing to do. But he had the feeling that if he had decided against Charles, he would've regret it. Maybe it would all work out. And they could be together like in the old days.

After Charles knew that he was allowed to stay, he relaxed instantly. Though the air still felt sticky: Erik didn't know how to handle the telepath and what to do with him. He was never good with adequate social interaction and being with someone you originally avoided was even worse. Back then, when they were young, they had a constant link through their minds, so Charles always knew what to do or to say, so Erik didn't have to bother. But now, Charles wasn't allowed in his head and Erik had to speak for his own to bring in some interaction.

So he came up with that one thing Charles and he had always enjoyed. "Fancy for a game?", he asked when he watched Charles wandering through the living room inspecting things.

Charles turned around and looked confused. "For what game?"

Erik's joy over a good chess game with his beloved friend died down immediately. "Chess. We'd used to play it."

"We had so many differences that we avoided each other for almost 20 years, but we... played chess?" Charles arched his brow in disbelief.

"It was our mutual ritual", Erik explained while gaining the chess board made of metal with his powers and placing it on the coffee table. "We always chatted about mutants, our plans and our visions above a good game. You were a worthy opponent. The best by far, to be honest. At least for me."

As soon as the chess board was placed and Erik sat down on his wing chair, Charles followed to the couch and ogled the board. "That sounds... very nice." He also sat down and placed the blanket back on his naked tights. "But I'm afraid I don't remember all of the rules. I mean, I know how chess works, but... I'm not sure I will be the opponent you're used to."

Erik knew that something like this would have happened sooner or later. That his

amnesia would come with a lot of restrictions. But he tried his very best not to be upset and throw the chess board out of the window. "We can have a test round."

As soon as Charles made his first move, Erik felt this familiar warmth coming up his spine. Chess was something that he had reserved for Charles – and only for Charles. It was their thing, their come together, their way of expressing their thoughts. He once played chess with Magda, because he missed playing it after so many years, but it had felt wrong. He had never touched a chess board since then, when Charles was not around.

After a few minutes of concentrated playing, Erik won. Of course, but Charles did a really good job. After all – they played for several minutes. Someone with little to no talent for playing wouldn't have lasted a minute with Erik.

"You're a fast learner", the metal bender admitted and looked up. His voice felt a little bit raspy. When Charles also looked up, he tried to look less intimidating. And it seemed to work: Charles smiled at him brightly.

"I still don't remember playing but I remember that I've used to play a lot", he explained but sighted immediately. "Ah, that probably sounded weird, but I hope you know that I mean. Anyway: It's a wonderful game. I'd like to play another round."

Somehow Erik liked that Charles was so amazed by playing chess. "This was just the test round. We're playing three rounds. Let's see if you can beat me."

Charles laughed like he hadn't had in years. As if time had stopped and they were back at the study, where they used to play. The only difference were his tiny wrinkles around his eyes that indicated that years have passed.

After the first round was over and Erik had won, Charles sighted in contentment. They didn't talk between their moves like they used to because Charles seemed to be too occupied by the game. Before the second round started, Erik went to the kitchen and grabbed two glasses.

"Do you want a drink?", he asked, already looking for the whiskey.

"Alcohol?", Charles asked innocently as if he wasn't allowed to drink yet.

"You will like it. It's the same Whiskey we used to drink." The revelation of the fact that Erik always had bought the same Whiskey Charles owned was suddenly very uncomfortable for the metal bender. He had just blurred out a very personal secret.

But thankfully Charles still had amnesia and didn't ask why Erik had bought the alcohol after all those years. He just nodded and smiled, while he waited for Erik to come back.

After Charles had nipped at the brown liquid, he grimaced. "That's disgusting!"

Suddenly, Erik felt like laughing. "Disgusting? You always liked alcohol very much. I'd

even say... a little bit too much."

"Really?", Charles wondered and took another sip. "Maybe I can get used to it."

"Oh, you don't have to. After all, alcohol is bad." And before Erik could feel like a parent again, he made the first move for their second round.

This time they chatted a little bit. About Genosha, what Erik's position was and who's living in this village. Charles only asked polite questions that weren't too personal, but at the same time he looked like he was really interested in more information. Erik was suddenly so absorbed in talking about future plans of Genosha that Charles beat him.

"I saw the opportunity and I took it", was all Charles said while he was grinning like a champion.

He was, indeed, very powerful. Not only was he enormously intelligent, but he was also very talented. In almost everything. Erik was again amazed by his friend. Silently. Deep within his heart. He'd never say it, but the admiration was still there.

Charles finished his drink in the middle of the third round. Before he could say something about the taste of the alcohol, Erik got the bottle and poured more whiskey in the glass. Maybe it wasn't the best idea to give innocent Charles more alcohol when he had never drunk anything, but it made the awkward situation they were in more comfortable. At least for Erik. The light dizziness made him calmer. About the situation. About his decision. About his feelings. About Charles.

By the end of the third round that Erik had won, he was a little bit drunk and Charles was pretty drunk.

"Now I understand why people drink that", he slurred, "it has a really, really nice effect." While he giggled, Erik emptied his third glass of Whiskey and felt his mouth twitch. He smiled and looked at his friend that was playing with the blanket around his legs.

"It's already late", Erik finally said and peeked to the clock in the kitchen. Out of an old habit, he said: "Let's go to bed."

And suddenly Erik felt his mind spin. He looked to Charles who was staring at him with red cheeks and seemed to project again – in his drunken state no wonder. "To bed?"

"Ah, well", the metal bender murmured while he was looking at everything in the room except his friend. "I only have one bed. But if you're staying for the next days... weeks... or, uh, months" – god, why had he drunk so much? – "we can buy you your own bed. But for now... You can decide whether to sleep here on the couch or... well..."

That didn't sound right. At all.

Charles may have broken the rules and was wandering through Erik's mind. He felt it.

The warmth radiating around his head. "It's fine", Charles blurred eventually. "I'm sleeping here. The couch is absolutely adequate."

Erik now wondered what Charles had seen in his head that he dismissed the idea to sleep with Erik instantly. To sleep in his bed. Not with Erik.

"Okay, good night then", Erik stammered and rushed to the stairs before Charles would see more of his messy thoughts.

"Good night, Erik", he heard Charles voice, but he was already halfway to his bedroom.

When he lay down, the whole room swam. His heart hammered in his chest and he wanted to slap himself for acting so poorly just because of a few drinks. He didn't even offer Charles a pillow or a better blanket.

He fell asleep with his clothes on. When he woke up it was still in the middle of the night, but he had to go to the toilet. With half closed eyes he shuffled to the bathroom. His head hurt. The hangover came quickly this time.

After he returned to the bedroom, he was wide awake. The thought that Charles was sleeping downstairs on his couch was making him nervous. Was that really a good idea? To let him stay? He didn't remember anything. He was just a clone. Not really Charles. But at the same time, he was Charles. The latest game showed Erik that this version of the telepath was very much like the young version from 20 years ago. When the world around Charles Xavier was still intact. When he wasn't ruined by Erik Lehnsherr.

And a part of Erik didn't want to do the same mistake again. He wanted to give Charles an opportunity to make his life a better one. And because Erik knew that misery and death followed him like a disease, it would have been the best solution to let Charles stay at the school. Without him. But Charles didn't want to be left alone. He even walked to Genosha by himself, just to be with Erik.

What a beautiful thought that was.