

X-MEN: NEXT GEN

Written by

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INT. DANGER ROOM - DAY

The city the X-Men were just in still dissolves into data, revealing bare walls save for a few dings and scratches. The sky has disappeared into a well lit dome ceiling.

DAVID ALLEYNE (15), an intelligent mind behind the muscles, marvels at the now dissolving city.

DAVID

I can't believe I'm actually in the Danger Room.

Nori walks next to him, big smile on her face.

NORIKO

Tell me about it. This place is so cool. I wonder how we turn it on.

Megan flies overhead, examining the digitalizing landscape.

MEGAN

Why would you want to do that?

NORIKO

Because I want to take all these guys down on my own!

She pats one of the sentinel's digitizing leg.

DAVID

Nori, you're good, but these are sentinels! Even the X-Men struggle against these guys sometimes.

Nori smiles and playfully punches the leg. Electricity arcs from her damaged gauntlet into the armored appendage.

NORIKO

See? Nothing to worry about.

A BEEP echoes around the dome as the landscape stands still.

DANGER ROOM (V.O.)

Derezzing process halted.

The three students look around, confused.

DAVID

Noriko, what did you do?

NORIKO

I didn't do anything!

DANGER ROOM (V.O.)
Training simulation resuming.
Standby.

Four pairs of sentinel eyes turn yellow as the mechanic humanoids attempt to get up. The one shattered by Bobby shorts out and collapses, but the others rise to varying levels of height, still towering over the students.

SENTINEL
MUTANTS LOCATED.

The sentinel closest to David lunges at him as best it can with one leg slashed off and claw marks still in its face.

Panicked, David leaps out of the way and rolls to his feet.

The sentinel continues to punch and grasp at the mutant, but David continues to dodge, much to his own surprise.

DAVID
(shout)
Nori, shut them down!

The sentinel with lightning scoring on its face faces Noriko, who crouches down into a combat position.

NORIKO
Gladly!

With a quick charge up, Noriko unleashes a blast of electricity at the robot, knocking it backwards.

SENTINEL
ERROR. ELECTRICAL ANOMALY DETECTED.

NORIKO
Yeah? Detect it again, you oversized tin can!

She unleashes another blast.

Meanwhile, Megan tries to get the doors open but they've been locked. Panic taking hold, she flies up and away as a sentinel tracks her movements.

MEGAN
Um, I agree with David! This was a lot more fun when these things weren't trying to kill us!

The sentinel raises its hand and a green energy blast tags Megan in the back. With a cry, she begins to fall.

DAVID
Megan!

NORI KO
Megan!

With her attention drawn to the falling Megan, Noriko doesn't notice the sentinel's backhand, knocking her sprawling across the floor and unknowingly breaking off her regulator.

David attempts to catch Megan but the sentinel he's engaged with slams its fists down, forcing David to backflip out of the way to avoid the attack.

As Megan's unconscious body hurtles toward the ground, a quick leap by Laura gets her underneath the falling girl, catching her in midair.

Nori shakes her head and sees Laura carrying an unconscious Megan dodging sentinel attacks.

NORI KO (CONT'D)
Who's that?

Quickly seeing her own sentinel trying to smash her into paste, Nori quickly darts out of the way.

DAVID
Doesn't matter! We have to-

The sentinels suddenly halt, eyes going dark once more.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(confused)
-get... out of... here.

DANGER ROOM (V.O.)
Simulation terminated.

David and Nori look around, seeing no movement from their adversaries. The derezzing begins again.

INT. DANGER ROOM CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A hand lifts off of a pressed button that reads MANUAL SHUTDOWN. With a small SHIFTING sound, the hand becomes sand and retreats.

INT. DANGER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Laura looks at the sentinel staring at her, fist clenched and two small blades barely protruding from her knuckles. Seeing the threat pass, she relaxes and retracts the claws.

Megan stirs in her arms.

MEGAN

What happened? Is it lunchtime yet?

The clone places Megan down and the others join.

KURT (O.C.)

You're not wrong, fräulein.

They turn to see KURT (22), the blue devil with a heart of gold, materialize into the room with a puff of purple smoke.

KURT (CONT'D)

What exactly happened here?

David and Nori share a glance.

NORIKO

We were part of orientation and we got separated from the group.

The blue one raises an eyebrow, unconvinced. Even David looks a little shocked at the quality of the lie.

NORIKO (CONT'D)

(to David)

Well I'm not wrong...

KURT

Best catch up with the others. I'll bring the little one to the infirmary to get patched up.

With one more look at one another and one to Laura, they all begin heading out while Megan stands next to Kurt.

MEGAN

Hey, Laura?

She halts, looking back at a sheepish Megan.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Thanks for... You know.

Unsure of how to respond, Laura just nods and continues on.

INT. CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

The two-story cafeteria is well lit due to the giant window that takes up one wall. The lower levels are bustling with students, most of which are marveling at the upper level's celebrity occupants of X-Men and school faculty.

Out of one of the connecting hallways, Nori and David dart behind anything that will conceal them while Laura just walks in normally, grabbing a tray and getting in line.

David and Nori slip in line behind her, eyes scanning for any suspicious movement or gazes.

DAVID
You think anyone noticed?

NORIKO
Coast is clear.

Finally, the two "spies" relax with a sigh. Laura places a sandwich on her tray and heads to a table.

DAVID
I'm David and this is Noriko.

NORIKO
"Nori" to my friends.

LAURA
Hello, David. Noriko.

She takes a seat as the other two share a confused look before sitting at the table with her.

DAVID
Thanks for helping Megan out back there. That could have been bad if you hadn't stepped in.

NORIKO
I could have taken them.

David shoots Noriko a glare as she sits.

NORIKO (CONT'D)
But thanks anyway.

DAVID
So where'd you learn to fight like that?

LAURA
I did not fight.

DAVID
Sorry?

LAURA
I did not fight. I caught Megan as she fell.

NORIKO

Well it was a pretty good jump.
Where'd you learn something like
that?

Sandwich in hand, Laura pauses for a moment.

LAURA

I was... taught from an early age.

An epiphany strikes David.

DAVID

So THAT'S why I was able to survive
for so long!

For the first time, Laura's interest is peeked as she glances
at the boy.

NORIKO

You think it was her?

DAVID

It's got to be!

He notices Laura has stopped eating.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Right, sorry. I absorb knowledge
from people around me. I must have
been able to learn those moves from
you because you were in the room.

LAURA

You took my memories without
permission?

DAVID

Well, yeah, but it's not like I can
control it.

Noriko can tell where Laura is going with her question.

NORIKO

It's only specific knowledge, like
how to change a tire or,
apparently, how to dodge attacks.

DAVID

And I can't maintain it. Once the
person leaves, so do the skills.

Seemingly satisfied, Laura continues on her lunch.

INT. CAFETERIA SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

As the three students eat in the lower levels, their CHATTER provides ambient noise to the second floor, giving it an air of privacy.

The other X-Men are all eating their meals, chatting with one another as Logan watches Laura from the balcony overlooking the lower levels.

HANK MCCOY (40), the legendary blue-furred scientist Beast, approaches Logan with two drinks. He hands one to the man and follows his gaze.

HANK

I know that look. Something on your mind, Logan?

Logan takes a swig, not taking his eyes off of Laura.

LOGAN

Hank, I got a favor to ask.

Hank gives him a smile though he rubs his shoulder.

HANK

I don't know, Logan. Last time you asked me that-

A smile creeps across the corner of Logan's mouth.

LOGAN

The hair grew back in a week.

HANK

After it was chemically burned off!

LOGAN

You already got your apology. I ain't giving you another.

They both take swigs of their drinks as the scientist gives his friend a sideways glance.

HANK

You know you're always welcome to stay as a teacher.

This makes the Canadian chuckle.

HANK (CONT'D)

Come on, Logan. The kids would love it, everyone on staff loves you, and Laura-

Looking down at the girl, she has noticed Logan and Hank staring. Logan raises his drink to her and Laura gives him a slight nod in recognition.

HANK (CONT'D)
She would be so much more
comfortable with you around.

LOGAN
That's exactly why I can't be here.

Hank looks at his friend, confused.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
She needs a chance to be a kid, for
once. She won't do that if I'm
around.

Hank sighs and finishes his drink.

HANK
So what would you have me do?

Logan meets his friend's eyeline.

LOGAN
I need you to look after her while
I'm away.

HANK
Why would I need to look after her?

After a brief pause, Logan takes a sip from his drink.

LOGAN
She ain't exactly sociable.
Besides, you know how my past
doesn't like to stay there.

Understanding, Hank nods.

HANK
You have nothing to worry about,
old friend. I'll do what I can.

Logan smiles at his friend and pats Hank's shoulder before returning to the seating area.