

The Plan

So I'm sitting here, ostensibly sunbathing, surreptitiously watching Marie. As if I need to sunbathe. I've spent so much time outside that my skin is naturally dark. Still, I've got a couple of cold beers beside me, some chips as well, and I'm wearing sunglasses.

No sun cream. When you're a mutant like I am, sun damage isn't exactly a problem, besides; I have a reputation to keep up. The big bad Wolverine wearing sun cream? I don't think so.

The sunglasses are to hide the fact I'm watching her, again.

I met her four years ago now. And I've tried to leave her every year. And I keep bloody coming back.

It didn't help that when I first met her, I thought she was eighteen. Legal.

She wasn't.

Bloody fifteen. Made me feel like a right pervert. I've done a lot of things in my life; killed more people than I can list in thirty minutes, assassinated people, murdered people, you know, everything, but I ain't never slept with no under age girl. No matter how bloody attractive she is. With her soft manners, innocent sensuality, and a figure that should be illegal.

Well, as soon as I could, I got the hell outta Dodge. Back to fighting in bars in Canada. It's not really fair, but it's a hell of a lotta fun. Makes me enough money to stock up on food for a few months, so I can disappear to my shack. Shack? Well, that's one word for it. You spend twenty-odd years working on a shack, and you see how shack-like it is. It's fucking neat, warm, quiet... the perfect place for me to be alone, do a bit of hunting, and enjoy the quiet.

Quiet's important to me. Telepaths will tell ya that it can drive them crazy, hearing everyone's thoughts, till they learn to control. I envy them, they can fucking control it. You can't control your senses. I can hear so much, when I can't sleep at night; I can hear Scott snoring half way across the mansion. And people wonder why I'm grumpy? It's the same with smell. The emptiness in Canada has a special smell that can't be replicated anywhere. It smells clean, no pollution, no toxic fumes, nothing.

There are times when just being around people is too much. I need the solitude.

Or so I thought.

The last two years I've been there, I've been bloody lonely. Missed Marie's scent. Missed the southern lilt to her voice, even the way she calls me 'Sugar'. Sugar? Do I look like a fucking Sugar?

So I gave in. I've waited long enough for her now. She's legal in every country in the world, and I think she still likes me. So I came back to the Mansion, no explanation, as always, and took up my post as Martial Arts instructor with the brats.

Pissed the hell outta Scooter too. Heh.

Scott's a good fighter. Top one percent in the world, I'd say. His Shotokan Karate is exemplary. He's hard to predict, pretty powerful, and he's got great technique.

And in a straight fight, I'd take him down in around five seconds.

He doesn't get it. He's a martial artist, but not a fighter. Sure, I can match the style, but why would I do that? He's locked into a single mindset, and it works for him. Mostly.

Top one percent, puts him somewhere in the top two thousand fighters, I guess.

I'm in the top five.

And there's a fucking huge gap between the top five and the rest. There's a guy in Thailand who can hand me my ass on a plate every time I go against him. Thank God he's a pacifist, because I'd be seriously worried about taking him on. Anyway, the difference between us and the rest is that we don't have a style. Not really. We know them all, and develop our own. And because we know everyone else's style, we can adapt our own, and predict what they're going to do.

Still, no point in letting people know that is there. Chuck knows, Hank too, Marie knows, but then, she's had my head inside hers. I see her smirking at me when I spar with Scott and let him get some shots in.

Scott's the sorta guy you send in when you want everything nice and clean, and it doesn't necessarily have to succeed.

I'm the guy you send in when you want the mission successful.

He's still a dick. I swear I just flirt with Jean because of his reaction.

Ain't gonna happen though; she stinks of him. Do you really think I could get close to someone who smells like they bathed in a guy that morning? Of course, he doesn't know that either. Nor does she.

Marie does.

So, I spend my days teaching the pups how to fight, while Scott scowls at me. I spend the evenings playing pool, drinking beer, and watching sport. I don't go out to bars anymore - I'm almost fucking domesticated.

Problem is that sex is very sensual for me. It's why I enjoy it so much. I've always chosen women by how they smell, over how they look. I rarely go home with the best looking women, but when you have the senses I do, it's very fucking important.

I figured, the first time I left here, that finding someone like Marie to fuck would solve the problem, and I could continue as I had been.

Nope.

She didn't taste good.

She wasn't Marie, even if I asked her to wear long gloves.

For most guys, that would be a problem, not for me. Getting a woman to do that sort of thing is easy. All ya gotta do is look at them like you're exactly six seconds from ripping their underwear off, shoving them against a wall, and fucking them into next week. Their heart rate increases, they start to get turned on - I can smell it - and they're willing to do what ever.

It helps that I've got a good body. Scott's a swimmer type, defined muscles and shaved chest etc. Boring. He'd probably be gay if he wasn't with Jeanie. The time I spend down the gym is just pounding the weights. I've got to. I've got a fucking metal endoskeleton. It weighs nearly four hundred pounds. You try jumping around like I do when you weight that much. It's another reason I can take down pretty much anyone. You punch me and you're in for a world of hurt, and that's before I hit you.

So, that almost leads me to why I'm sunbathing near a pool full of teenagers that I'm starting to wish I could just fucking kill.

I want Marie.

It actually looks like life is working for me for a change. It doesn't normally. Her mutation is a bit of a problem, or so I first thought. A winter alone allowed me to get through the issues. Her mutation sucks... well... *everything* out of everyone she touches, leaving them drained, and maybe dead if she does it long enough. She gets their powers, their skills, even their minds. Which is why she's currently wearing gloves while swimming with the others - she's scared of touching them, they're scared about touching her.

Heh. They better be fucking scared about touching her. I'll rip off the arm of anyone of them who tries it.

Anyway, back to her mutation. The problem with me is that I appear to be immortal. I've been 'dead' twenty-seven times. And I keep coming back. Not to mention even killing me is bloody hard. My memory is still shot to pieces, but I still have nightmares about World War One and Two. So, at the very least, I'm around a hundred years old. I'm not getting any older. So, the thought of a life-partner has never really been a valid one for me. Till now.

The way I figure it, is that if I keep touching her, then backing off as I feel the pull, then two things'll happen. One, she'll start to get my healing ability on a long term basis; and two, I'll start to become immune to it.

There is a slight hitch; that maybe I'll be immune before she's immortal, but if that happens, then Sabretooth can make himself useful and give up his powers for us. I'm sure he won't mind. Much. Chuck can help her deal with having that animal in her mind, but the way I figure it, if we prepare before hand, he's fucked.

I reach down and take a long swig of my beer. Decent Canadian stuff. Had to import it myself, none of this weak-as-piss stuff Scott drinks. I refocus on the pool. The boys are showing off their strength by throwing the girls in the air. That French tosser is throwing Sparky in the air. Ahh shit, Marie's got that expression on her face. The bitter-sweet one, when she wants to join in, but can't 'cause none of the boys really wants to risk touching her.

Well, I guess now is a good time to start with the touching. I roll to my feet casually, and stalk over to the pool. I'm wearing jeans, but what the hell, getting them wet won't be a problem, and I want to control this touching, not be controlled by it.

That little ice-stick is panting around Marie again, his hands are fluttering near her, as if he'd like to pick her up, but doesn't have the guts.

Wimp. It's only pain. They all think I don't feel it, that's the way I want them to think. Don't need some fucking pity from a bunch of pansy asses. My sense are enhanced, pain walked along right with that. You've just gotta ignore it, even when you poke Adamantium claws into yourself to get you out of a bind and save Marie. It. Fucking. Hurts!

I place a hand down and slide into the pool. I have to be careful when doing this sort of shit, as I could quite easily break through the floor if I'm not. Remember how much I weigh?

I scowl at ice-boy and growl, "C'm'ere," at Marie. She raises an eyebrow at me, and I smirk back. I reach out, casually, grab her around the waist, and lift her clear out of the water, throwing her a good six feet in the air. She's as light as a feather.

There's a brief second of crystal laughter from her, before she twists, jack knives gracefully, and dives cleanly into the water. Damn that girl has one fine ass!

"Jesus Christ, Wulvie," Jubilee - Sparky - says. "How high did you just throw her?"

Marie's surfaced now, and is smiling at me. That massive smile she saves for me, the one that makes me want to tear apart the country as a gesture of affection. She could ask me to do anything with that smile, and I'd fold like Scott at a card table.

"Thanks," she smiles.

"Never mind that," Sparky interrupts again. "Do me."

I raise an eyebrow at Marie, who nods. So I shrug, reach out and grab the kid, and throw her as high as I did Marie. She ain't as graceful, and she weighs a little more. It doesn't matter though; she's not the one I'm interested in.

Marie swims to me again, holding her hands out to the side. I smirk at her again, and grab her by the waist, and pause for a second. The boys are scowling at me, pissed that I'm out-manning them on something. Idiot's don't realise it's not just about strength; you've got to be balanced properly. I've tried to tell them about it in class, but what do I know? Enough to back myself in a fight against all of them together actually. I can't help a little smirk at that idea. I lift her out of the water, and at her nod, launch her higher into the sun light.

'Wolverine, would you mind coming to me office, please,' Chuck suddenly says in my mind.

"Sorry guys," I say. "Chuck's just called."

Marie looks disappointed as she swims back over to me, the boys happy. Casually I reach out and stroke her arm, holding my hand against her skin till the pull starts. I wait for another second, feeling how fast she can drain me, and release her. Her eyes are wide, and she's looking completely shocked. I smirk at her, and hop out of the pool, the wet denim clinging to me like a second skin. I pad off, feeling her eyes on me. I hope she got the message - to trust me, as I know what I'm doing.

I wander towards Chuck's office, not bothering to knock, and drop down on a chair. Scott frowns at me, Ororo's amused, Jean is rolling her eyes, and Hank, well, who can read him? I like him though, not many people I'd say that about. He's Dr Jekyll in Mr Hyde's body.

"Got a beer?" I ask hopefully, knowing it will irritate the dynamic duo.

"No," Scott sighs. "We asked you here, because we are worried about your teaching technique. You are too rough with the students."

I smirk at him. "We?" I enquire, looking around the room. Storm doesn't care. I suspect that Beast doesn't either. Charles is being the good boss, and letting his people deal with their own problems, and Jeanie's being a good lapdog.

"So, who am I to rough with?" I ask, humouring him for now. Marie would be so proud of me.

"I'm afraid I can't tell you that," Scott replies stiffly. I swear the rod up that guys butt has a rod up its butt.

"Then what exactly is the problem?" I ask.

"You have unrealistic expectations of them," he pontificates, pacing in front of me. "And you push them too hard."

Without warning, I explode out of my chair, sweep his legs from under him, assist gravity by slamming him into the floor, shove my arm across his face so he can't look at me - or use his eyes - and extend a claw either side of his neck, my middle claw lightly scratching his jugular. While slightly modified because of his mutation, I've found this position is REALLY good for getting people's attention. The whole thing took less than a second, and everyone is kinda shocked. I think Beast's smiling though.

"Listen up, kiddo," I use my best growl, as I ain't gonna say this twice. "I'm not training these pups to fight; I'm training them to survive. People out there ain't sparring, their fighting, hard and dirty. I've seen way too many dead kids, some that I've killed myself, and if I'm in charge, then these damn kids are gonna learn anything and everything, so that when they're out there, surrounded by a hostile force, they can get themselves the hell out of there.

"There's a fucking war going on out there, and these kids have chosen to fight. Their decision, but as soon as they step into that room, they become my responsibility. And I ain't gonna stop pushing them till I know that they are the best they can be."

I stand, and wander over to the professor's cabinet, stealing some of his whiskey. "Anyone else?" I offer politely.

Scott's back on his feet now, and he's looking at me slightly differently. Fuck. He thinks I care about the little shits now. Well I don't.

Much.

Heh. He's also just realised I could kick his ass any time I feel like it. Oh well. I drain the shot-glass. "Anything else?"

Chuck's got this amused air about him. I sigh, "Come in," I grunt suddenly. It's probably better he knows what's going on.

He looked surprised; I've not really offered that before. And a second later, I hear him politely knocking on my mental shields. I let him in, and show him what I want him to see. Marie, my plan, everything.

Remarkable," he comments, staring at me. Slowly, he nods once, and I smirk. Thought he'd understand. I'm her only chance at a long, normal life. But now I need several beers. I hate telling people what I feel. I nod to the others, and pad out slowly, leaving a nice wet stain on Chuck's couch from my wet jeans.

"You do have a quite remarkable way of making a point," Beast rumbles cheerfully next to me.

"Thanks, Hank," I grunt, not quite as cheerfully. I hate remembering the past.

"While indubitably impolite, I find myself curious as to your violating your 'no-mental intrusion contract' with the good Professor."

Typical, triple the amount of necessary words. "Marie," I grunt. "Might need your help. Gonna see if I can make myself immune to her."

Hank nods. That's what I like about him. He understands subtlety and that what isn't said is often as important as what is.

"My facilities are at your disposal," he replies simply.

"Want a beer?" I offer.

"Regrettably, I have some cultures I must study, but I would like a rain check."

"Sure," I nod. There ain't many people I'd share a beer with, but the hairy guys one of them.

I wander into the kitchen, open the fridge, and pop the cap off a beer. One of the good things about a metal skeleton - I don't need bottle openers.

Ice walks into the room, and approaches me. Strange, always thought he'd melt or something if he got worked up. He's pissed about something. I settle back against the counter top and watch him curiously. I drain the beer, and then fold my arms. It always makes me look more intimidating. I've practised intimidation for longer than this guy's lived, so if he's trying to do... wait, he is trying to intimidate me. It takes all my effort not to laugh at him.

"Problem. Frosty?"

He doesn't like that.

"Stay away from Rogue," he snarls. It's kinda cute, like a puppy snapping at a wolf.

"Why?"

He pauses, as if that was the last thing he expected me to say. And her name's Marie, dickwad. "You're gonna hurt her."

"None of your business," I reply evenly. At the moment, beating the shit outta him, attractive as that might seem, probably isn't a good idea.

"You're too old for her."

"Technically," I smirk, "I'm too old for everyone, but I've been alone, not going back there."

He blinks, not sure what I meant.

"Besides, it's up to Marie, isn't it?"

He tries to growl at me. I want to ruffle his hair, throw him a bone or something.

"It's always been you," he complains.

"Maybe because I don't mind touching her," I offer casually.

"She could be mine!" he insists.

I sigh. "Marie's been mine since before you met her. Now that she's grown up, I'm claimin' what I own."

He looks at me, so I stare back. For a second, I imagine ripping out his throat with my bare hands. He shudders, and backs down. He turns and storms out. That's the secret to intimidation: letting them know what you are thinking.

I help myself to another couple of beers, light myself a cigar, and wander back outside. Sparky, Frenchie, and the others are now playing a game of soccer. Wimpy sport. No violence. Boring. Marie's watching again, so I walk over to her, sitting down next to her, and pass her a beer. I know her tastes, bloody should do, she got them from me.

"You touched me," she says quietly, sitting Indian style.

"I did," I agree.

"Why?"

"Because I wanted to." I know my answers are frustrating her, but it's fun.

"Why?" She asks again, but this time she's looking down a little vulnerable, you know?

I reach out and stroke my fingers down the side of her face. As the pull comes, I hold my hand there for a second, then pull back, taking another puff on my cigar. "Because I want to," I reply, and this time I'm not teasing. It's true.

"Don't," she whispers, tears in her eyes. "Don't hurt because of me."

I smile slightly; hey, at least she still cares. It has been the one flaw in my plan, if she no longer wants me, I'd be pretty screwed. And not in a good way. I take her hand, lightly playing with her fingers through her glove, and she looks at me, shocked.

"You're not a kid anymore," I state.

I can see the comprehension and hope appearing in her eyes. Damn, she's beautiful! I really want to roll her over on her back, and kiss those damn lips that are pouting at me. She gasps softly, and I grin at her.

"I'm not," she agrees.

"You know what you're getting into?"

She smiled at me, and reaches up with her free hand. She caresses my face, and I can't wait for her to lose those damn gloves, so I can feel that properly. Still, I've waited four years, I can wait a little longer.

"Why now?" she asks.

"Don't want to be alone anymore," I reply. "Don't like anyone else."

She smiles that smile at me - that Marie smile.

"So you're mine?"

I grunt in acknowledgement.

"On one condition," she says softly, her eyes going down again. She's only ever this shy around me. Anyone else, and she's kick-ass Rogue. I like Rogue, Rogue will fight with me, for me, against me. But I love Marie. Marie's the one that lets me look in the mirror.

"What?" I ask.

"I want a kiss. I need to know."

I nod slowly, she knows I ain't gonna tell her what she wants to hear. Not now. Maybe later. Ain't the way I'm put together. Besides, if Chuck knows, she's has the right.

I lean over without hesitation, and finally kiss those lips of hers. My hand slides up, burying itself in her hair, holding her head still. As this is gonna be a small kiss, I need to make sure it's a good one. I slide my tongue between her teeth, and finally get to taste her. Perfect. She looks good, smells good, sounds good, tastes good, and feels good. What more could I want?

The pull starts, but I don't stop for a few seconds, want to make sure she gets the message.

I gasp, and reach for my beer, take a long steadying drink. Damn, my jeans are to fucking tight now. I'm exhausted, but can feel my healing kick in. Maybe this crazy scheme will work after all.

She's smiling at me again, and she uncurls herself from the floor, takes a step forwards, and sits down comfortable in my lap. I suddenly get the feeling that she's not going to move.

She turns to me, and I can see a little glint in her eye.

"I love you too."

I smile, pass her the beer, and relax. Yep. Life's good. Now, I just hope she likes the shack.

"I'll love the shack," she says quietly. "As soon as we get you immune to me, we'll go there and spend a few months with you teaching me what you've learnt over the last hundred odd years."

Damn! I knew she was a keeper!