

THE ADVENTURES OF

MW

Intex — only the greatest  
psychotic villain ever — rises ...

# The Hybrids

REXFORD RICH

Mark Wills  
Mark Wills

and the

Hybrids

Rexford Rich

Part 1:

The Hybrid Experiments

A week had passed since we had escaped from Creative Works; or should I say that a week had passed since we barely made it out alive from Creative Works?

We were surprised that Intex didn't send anyone out here to kill us. He probably figured that we would go back, and he would be right; he needed to be stopped and we would be the ones to do it, but ... once we trained ourselves enough.

I woke up this morning on the couch in the living room. Rachel was lying on my lap, just resting her head there; she was awake. She had decided to stay with us for a little while. She was worried that we wouldn't be able to take down Intex by ourselves. She did, after all, help us with escaping out of that place. She called her parents earlier this week to tell them that she was alive and well, and that she was staying at my place. Her parents were thankful, but wanted her to come home. Rachel explained that she was old enough to make her own decisions.

Rachel could tell that I was awake and she lifted her head. "Hey, Mark," she said. "Have a nice nap?"

"Yeah, I guess." I said, still I was a little tired. I felt completely fine otherwise, considering what we've been through at Creative Works. As for everyone else, they were getting there; healing. I could tell that Rachel's back still hurt her, because it looked like it took some strength to sit up. "I'm going to make some breakfast."

"Okay," Rachel said, and she slowly leaned forward and kissed me on the cheek.

I got up, walking into the kitchen. I pulled out a box of pancake mix from the cupboards up above. I got out everything I needed to whip the batter together. I heard the bathroom door open. A few seconds later I saw Bruce walk out of the hallway. He looked refreshed, probably from getting a good night's sleep.

"Hey, man." I said. "How are you feeling?"

"I'm alright," Bruce replied.

"Are you well enough to take down Creative Works?"

"Yeah, I think so."

"Because we're going to take it down today."

"Today?!" Rachel jumped up from the couch. "Are-you sure?"

"Yes, Rachel." I sighed softly and finished mixing the pancake mix. "We have to stop Intex, before anything gets worse."

"I know ... but today? How can you guys be ready?"

"Ready or not, we have to." Bruce said.

"Well, I'm ready." I said.

Rachel put her head down, thinking. Then she looked back up at me. "You're right, Mark that we have to stop him; he is an insane lunatic that needs to be stopped, before he kills everyone on the planet, but I just feel that we are not ready." Rachel walked around the couch, into the kitchen, and up to me. She sighed. "Let me help you with breakfast."

She took the bowl from me, grabbed a measuring cup, took a scoop of the batter and poured it on the heated griddle. She got a spatula out to get ready. "So, we're going today?"

"Yes," I replied to Rachel.

"Well, just in case anything happens ..." Rachel trailed off.

Very quickly Rachel stood onto the tip of her toes, leaned towards me and kissed me dead on the lips. I was not expecting it, but I went along with it. We must've kissed for a good ten seconds until Bruce gasped as if he was seeing something shocking; not us, though.

Both Rachel and I opened our eyes, pulled ourselves apart and took a look around. We saw that Bruce was looking at us, with his mouth opened; a second later I knew why. I looked down at the floor and saw that I was a foot above it. Rachel's feet were atop of mine, her arms still around my neck. She too looked down and saw.

"Mark!" she exclaimed. "You're flying!"

"Bruce?" I asked.

"No, I'm not doing it," he replied.

Slowly I landed on the floor; I wasn't even sure how I did it. "Was that flying, or levitating?" I asked myself.

"Maybe it's both," Rachel replied. "Bruce," Rachel said, but looked at me. "Flip those pancakes ... now, where were we?"

I leaned down, Rachel leaned in and we started kissing again. It felt as wonderful as it could be. It felt as if there were butterflies in my stomach, almost as if they were trying to lift me off the ground themselves. I peeked my eyes open for a second and realized that, sure enough, I was flying again; a foot above the floor.

We finished breakfast, dressing into some hoodies. We wanted to prepare ourselves for if someone saw us with our wings out, so that we could keep our identities safe — those of us who had wings.

We walked out the door, out onto the sidewalk. I couldn't help but to keep glancing at Rachel. She was giving me a reason to definitely take down Creative Works. Once we would, we could be together.

It took just a few minutes until we made it to the Creative Works.

We already had our hoods up and stood in front of the door. "Are we ready?" I asked.

"Yep," Bruce said.

"Ready when you are." Rachel said.

I gave Rachel a weak smile and she smiled back.

I looked at Bruce and nodded. "Let's go."

I turned the handle and as always it was locked, but I shoved it open with my strength to make it seem that it was unlocked. I slammed the door shut behind me. The three of us started walking forward.

We arrived to the first room in the long hallway. Bruce used his telekinesis to break down the door.

We looked inside to find it empty. We walked further down the hallway, arriving quickly at the second room. Rachel kicked the door down, surprising me with her strength. It was empty as well.

The next room, I kicked the door down; empty, except for a metal chair bolted to the floor. We kicked down several more doors, one right after another. The intruder alert alarm went off, blaring away.

We worked faster, practically running these doors down. By the time we reached the twentieth room, we found prisoners chained to chairs. We ran in, breaking the chains off of them.

They seemed very puzzled. We explained that we were freeing them and they ran off, exiting the building. They looked so excited to leave this hideous place.

We kicked down doors of some more rooms, finding files in some, along with other research. Suddenly, someone ran up to us with quickened speed. I'm talking like super speed. It wasn't someone we actually wanted to see, though; it was Bryan.

"Hey, guys." He said. "How's it going?"

I scoffed; him and Intex both tried to be sarcastic all of the time. I decided to join along.

"Great," I said in reply. "Just freeing everyone from some evil place."

Bryan laughed, and then became serious. "You guys are not going to take us down."

He shook his head, immediately attempting to punch me in the stomach, but I quickly dodged it. I returned the favor back by shoving my foot into his gut. He let out a groan, but he quickly recollected himself.

He threw his fist towards my head, but I easily avoided it. I thrust my hand out, grabbing his throat. I squeezed as hard as I could, not daring to let go.

He choked, but at the same time my throat started tensing up. I began to choke. It felt like someone had their hand around *my* throat. I

dropped Bryan and he landed right on his feet. I was still choking. No one had their hands around my neck, though. I knew that it had to be telekinesis, obviously not Bruce, though.

I was, then, lifted into the air, forcing all of my weight onto my throat. I assumed that Bryan had telekinesis too.

Not a second later Rachel kicked Bryan in the shin. I could tell that it hurt him a good bit, though he didn't let go of me.

I felt the pressure in my face build.

Bruce started mimicking Bryan by using his telekinesis in the same way; choking him. Still Bryan didn't release his grip on me. Rachel kicked him again in the leg; it seemed to have no effect. Rachel kicked again, but this time in between the legs.

Bryan immediately let go of me so that I dropped to the floor. Bryan fell to his knees, groaning, holding his crotch.

"What a cheap hit!" he yelled to Rachel.

"I don't give a crap!" Rachel yelled at him. "You don't hurt Mark!" she raised her foot and kicked Bryan in the head, sending him towards a wall, spinning on the floor.

He slammed into the wall, not getting up. Rachel had knocked him unconscious. Still, Rachel was going to make sure he was out. She ran back up to him, kicking him a lot harder in the head; hard enough that we heard a crack.

I got to my feet, rubbing my throat. I hacked, taking in deep breaths. Bruce telekinetically raised Bryan up, throwing him through the air behind us. He flung towards the outside door, hitting it and finally falling to the ground outside.

Bruce plowed down the door of the next room; it was empty. We were going to complete this mission, not letting Bryan stop. The alarm was still blaring, causing our ears to ring.

My throat still hurt. I caught that Rachel kept looking at it, checking it. My throat started to feel warm as it started to tingle, almost as if needles were poking me. The pain suddenly left. It was healed just like that.

“Wow, that felt good,” I said, as Rachel kicked down a door.

She looked at me, wondering to what I was referring. She realized that I meant about my neck, since it was healed. She looked relieved to see that the pain was gone.

Gas escaped the room. I knew immediately that there was a prisoner bolted to a metal chair. My sight confirmed this.

We walked into the room, finding a young boy, who looked to be about seven years old, bolted to the chair. I felt pity for him. He looked up, realizing that the door was opened, seeing us. He realized that the gas escaped the room, immediately breaking the chains right off of him. Obviously he portrayed the ability of super strength.

He ran towards us, but was about to hit us instead of thank us.

“Wait,” I exclaimed. “We’re here to rescue you!”

He stopped. “Oh,” he said in his young, soft voice. “Thanks,” his eyes started watering.

“Go,” Bruce said. “Be free.”

The boy didn’t hesitate at all, running off faster than Bryan had previously demonstrated.

We found many more rooms like this. It was sad; Intex must’ve kidnapped all of the kids from their parents. It was sickening.

We continued knocking down doors, freeing young kids. The alarm finally stopped blaring.

A storm of guards started darting down the hall towards us. Their movements looked robotic. When they got closer, it seemed that they *were* robotic. Their faces looked like robots. But parts of them seemed human; cyborgs.

They had raised guns at him, immediately firing. I already felt a bullet graze my hair. They were not bad shots.

“Quick!!” I yelled. “Go into the room!”

I ran the door down so that the three of us ran into it. The room was empty. I kicked a hole in the wall. We ran through it, entering into a room where scientists were working on experiments. They all jumped once they heard and saw us.

“Back away from them!!” I yelled at the scientists.

They didn’t even more, until Bruce shoved them backwards. Most of them fell over. They ran away like wimps, afraid.

The sound of gunshots grew louder. Cyborgs find which room we were in, actually using the door. I picked up what appeared to look like a scalpel, throwing it at the first cyborg. It penetrated right through the cyborg’s head, causing it to fall over as sparks flew from it.

Bruce grabbed a cyborg to hurl into another. Rachel ran up to one, immediately kicking its gun away from it. He kicked it square in the chest, sending it into the door.

I immediately unstrapped a person from one of the many of cots. All of the people looked terrified and confused. Bruce and Rachel held back the cyborgs from getting to me.

“Don’t worry,” I told them. “I’m freeing you; I’m getting you out of here.”

“You can’t,” a boy said. “We work for Intex.” The boy shook his head. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to say that. I just-just said it without ... meaning to. I want to get out of here ...”

The boy continued shaking his head back and forth, as if fighting himself. With thoughts were his own; Intex had tried to manipulate him, forcing him to work for him.

Rachel kicked a cyborg, sending it towards Bruce. Bruce grabbed it in mid-air, telekinetically flinging it head-first into another cyborg. The two of them together fought this batch of cyborgs. Surely, more would come.

Bruce and Rachel joined to help me.

“Come on, let's go.” I said.

We unstrapped some more clueless, helpless people.

More cyborgs barged into the room. “Stop,” they said in a semi-robotic voice. “We are going to kill you.”

I scoffed; it seemed that they were programmed to say things. I backed up from one of the poor people, walking towards a cyborg. It raised its gun, shooting my right shoulder. I felt the sharp pain instantly.

Despite the pain, I sprinted at the cyborg. As I got close to it, it tried to raise its arm to punch me, but I easily dodged it. I sent my fist back at it, hitting its head. I grabbed it by the neck and pull its head off with my other hand. The electrical circuits sparked with the sudden

forced of being disconnected. It fell to the floor once I dropped it. I threw its head at other cyborgs.

More cyborgs started appearing, all starting to shoot at us. Rachel was somehow already on the other side of them, moving so quickly. She started punching and kicking them, denting them and ripping off some heads.

Bruce threw cyborgs at each other, bashing them into walls. I started kicking, punching and knocking them over like dominoes.

I realized that my shoulder still had its sharp pain, but at least it wasn't as bad as it was at first was. I took a glance down at it to see that it was already healing. The bullet had gone all of the way through, though; it was a clean wound, resulting in a nice, quick heal.

I picked up a cyborg, thrusting it at another.

“Stop, we are going to kill you,” the cyborgs kept saying.

I shook my head, continuing to throw things at them, as well as themselves at each other. I found another scalpel and threw it hard towards a cyborg's head. I missed, though it didn't matter since it went past it to hit another cyborg in the chest. That cyborg fell over short-circuiting.

One of the cyborgs shot me again, this time in my right leg. The pain angered me. As if they could see my anger, they shot at Rachel, hitting her in the left arm. She cried out in pain, falling to the floor.

I was furious.

I yelled out a battle cry, charging furiously at the cyborgs. I picked them up, threw them down hard, crushing them. I ripped off head, after head, from one cyborg to the next. They started gaining up on me, holding their guns up to my head. I knew that I could heal, but I wasn't sure if I would survive if they shot me in the head; I didn't know whether or not if I could regenerate.

I kicked one of them in the legs, knocking them down. One cocked its gun, shooting at me but just as I pulled a cyborg into the line of fire. The bullet pierced into its back, shorting it out immediately.

All of the cyborgs had their guns ready, pulling the triggers without any thought. Their guns were suddenly flying towards the ceilings. The bullets hit the ground and walls around me.

Some bullets had actually curved around me. Bruce had saved me just in time.

I got up and spun around, punching every cyborg in sight. There were tons of them. I was never offered a break.

Bruce looked pretty busy as well. He fought in front of Rachel to protect her. I managed to take a glance to see if she was okay; she was lying on the floor, groaning in pain, but she was alive.

I grew angry all over again, channeling it into my combat. I ripped some more cyborgs apart. I grabbed a cyborg, swinging it around to knock other cyborgs; using it as if it were a bat. I ripped some more heads off. Suddenly I was shot in the chest.

I fell to the floor, gagging. I couldn't breathe and it hurt to move. I looked at my chest to see that I was already losing a lot of blood. Rachel gasped as she saw me, getting up, ignoring the pain in her left arm and running up to me.

My vision started to blur as I felt very light-headed. I couldn't breathe; couldn't move. My vision went black and the sound all around stopped.

A couple of seconds later everything was loud and bright. I felt renewed. I jumped to my feet, strangely feeling full of energy. I looked down at my chest, just as Rachel punched a cyborg that tried to punch me. My chest was spitting out a bullet. The wound was closing. It still stung a little bit, still in pain, but only for another minute until it healed completely. I saw that there was now a scar formed.

I was ready to start killing these cyborgs again. There were still a bunch of them running all around, cornering us. They continued to shoot at us, but we were all over the place.

Rachel started freeing as many of people from the beds since they were in danger of the bullet breezing past.

Bruce and I didn't let up, whipping around, smashing the cyborgs heads, ripping them off. My shirt was all bloody from my blood. I realized that I was surprised at how fast I did heal from it. My healing power was getting fast. My powers were increasing, so with that ...

I ran up to an empty bed, picking it up easily. I swung it around bashing cyborgs in their sides and on top of them, crushing them. The bed's frame was made of metal, being very effective.

Bruce caught on, using his telekinesis to lift a bed into the air. He threw it around, pranging cyborgs.

A man suddenly appeared in the doorway. It was Bryan. "Well!" he exclaimed. "Look what the cat dragged in!" Still sarcastic, though looked furious.

He noticed how many cyborgs were already destroyed and how some of the people, or what they called experiments, were getting away or already gone.

"What is this?!?!"

Bryan ran towards me with his quick speed. His fist was flaming of fire. He punched right through the bed I was holding in front of me, hitting me in the stomach. I stepped back to swing the bed at Bryan, but he dodged it. I threw the bed down, as Bryan kicked me in the back. I took a couple of steps forward to save my fall, which almost made me fall over from walking on the unbalance crushed-cyborg-floor.

I spun around, throwing me leg to kicked Bryan, but missed. As he ran around me, he kicked my back again. This time he hit me hard enough to send me flying into a wall, creating a creator.

I jumped out of the wall, suspecting Bryan to run up from behind me. I back flipped, preparing for Bryan so that I landed right in front of him. I pummeled my fist into his nose with a great enough for to knock him down. I trudged down on his chest, knocking the wind out of him.

I snatched him up over my head, throwing him far up, towards the ceiling.

"Noooo!!!" he yelled, while soaring through the air

Just as he was about to hit the ceiling he disappeared, reappearing five feet above the floor, and then coming back down onto his feet.

Bryan laughed at my reaction, which must've been all over my face.

“Teleportation,” Bryan said.

I tried to throw a punch at him, but he disappeared so that I got punched from behind.

I threw my arms out to catch my fall, but got kicked in my face, throwing me backwards. Bryan was bouncing around, teleporting. He was laughing, seeming to enjoy this battle of ours.

Rachel started freeing the rest of the people from the beds; they already knew what to do; run and get out of here. Bruce fought off the remaining cyborgs, while I fought with Bryan.

Bryan dodged a lot of my blows by either moving super-fast, or teleporting. I was getting very frustrated. I dodged just as many as he did, but moving swiftly as I had learned from my Kung Fu training.

I heard some creaking as metal rod came from out of nowhere, landed down in Bryan's hand. He used it to swing at me. He hit me a few times. I felt bruises forming already. I tried my best to avoid as many blows as I could.

A broken cyborg was thrown through the air, hitting Bryan right in the head. It hit him hard enough to knock him out. I looked around, seeing that Rachel just put her arms down; she had thrown the cyborg.

I was surprised, because her one arm had been shot.

“Thanks, Rachel.” I said. I picked up the metal rod that Bryan had dropped, using it to whack Bryan hard in his head, even though he was already knocked out.

A set of running feet made it to the entrance of the room and werewolves appeared. They all ran into the room, immediately coming at us.

They all looked angry, as if seeking revenge.

“What did you do with Blade?!” one of them yelled at me.

I looked at him and just laughed, remembering that I had left him in the basement. I kicked him in the face. He stumbled backwards, ramming into another werewolf.

Another ran up to me, but I wasn’t just going to wait for him to do something.

“Here,” I told him. “Take this from me.”

I gave him a blow to his jawbone. Furious, he slashed his claws out at me, but missed horribly, because of my having leaned back. I scoffed. I head-butted him, causing him to falter over backwards. He had stumbled over crushed cyborgs.

More werewolves came at me from every direction. There were more werewolves here at once than I had ever seen. I wasn’t going to count, but I guessed there was like twenty.

As I fought them, I could see that these guys were very trained with combat. Blade was just as good with his, though we had locked him up.

I heard someone coming down the hall. He was shouting to someone, giving orders. It sounded like Intex, “... *make sure to get Stealth safe; he’s essential!*” I could barely make out what he said; obviously having no idea what he was talking about.

Intex appeared at the doorway.

Once he saw me steam almost came out of ears by what he saw all around in the room. It was a disaster, according to the eyes of Intex’s: experiments escaped, cyborgs destroyed, scientists fled, and we were knocking out the werewolves.

“Why can't you guys knock them out yet!?” Intex yelled. “Why can't you kill them?! There are ONLY three of them!!” He scoffed, looking around. “Where is Blade?”

I smiled. None of them knew where he was. He came to our house alone to try to kill me, apparently not letting anyone know where he went. We locked him up in our basement, leaving him thinking that he was kidnapped, and that I was killed by the kidnapper. I laughed at how sad it was.

“What are you laughing about?” the werewolf fighting me asked.

“How none of you guys knows where Blade is.” I replied. “You guys don’t know that I killed him.” I bluffed.

“You're lying.”

“Nope.”

“What?!” Intex exclaimed, walking up to me; shoving the other werewolves easily aside.

“You heard me; I killed him, with Bruce’s help.”

He looked furious. “Blade?” Intex was falling for it.

He believed it because of knowing that I would be the one to stop *him*; no doubt I could defeat Blade ... even though I hadn't, yet. We had only locked him up.

Intex made fists while staring me down. He shook his head. “You couldn’t have done that to Blade.”

Blade was one of his greatest creations; greatest hybrids. He was obvious the most liked by Intex. Intex’s fists started freezing, literally. They look frosted, having cool air forming around them. He started choking me. I felt the cold, freezing hands around my neck. He squeezed hard.

I couldn’t breathe, while feeling a temperature so low that I have never endured in my life. Intex had cryokinesis; the ability freeze things or reduce temperatures.

I was already passing out from the result of my organs slowing down.

It seemed strange when I suddenly could breathe my vision cleared, while Intex’s hand stayed around my neck. It was still cold, but didn't hurt.

“What?” Intex exclaimed, noticing that I was not dying.

“You can't kill me,” I said, not sure whether I was bluffing or not.

Furious, Intex stopped choking me only to throw me upwards, towards the tall ceiling. The feeling of falling upwards was still scary, despite it being my third time.

This time I hit the ceiling hard, making an *oof* sound. I plummeted towards the floor fast. I wasn’t sure if I would save myself by levitating or not, but I stopped right before hitting the floor. I looked to see that Bruce

had his hand held out. He dropped it to quickly return to fighting the werewolves; I fell to the floor, but managed to land on my feet.

Intex threw his hands out, projecting electricity at me. I fell to my knees, shaking violently.

I got to my feet as Intex continued to electrify me. I was fighting the sensation and uneasiness of it. Somehow, it seemed as if my body started to become immune to the electricity as my healing ability fought it.

I picked up a table, throwing it at Intex. Just a millisecond before hitting Intex, his skin transformed into a shiny, metallic texture. The table hit him and shattered. Intex's skin returned back to normal.

I threw another table, hard at Intex and it broke as it hit Intex's metal-like skin that immediately returned. Again, his skin reverted to normal.

I ran up to Intex, punching him as hard as I could, straight into his mouth. He was sent flying clear across the room. Intex quickly got up, throwing up his hands as if to project something from it again. I was expecting more electricity, but it seemed that he changed his mind, shooting out some sort of liquid fire instead. It shot straight across the room, hitting me.

It felt incredibly hot, burning the skin on my arm right down to the bone. I realized that it portrayed the aspects of lava, not fire. I yelled out in pain from the burns.

Gradually I could see my arm starting to heal. Intex shot it again, but it stopped in mid-air. I looked around for Bruce, but he was on the floor, still in pain.

I looked around to see a tall, skinny, dark-haired young man holding his hands out; he seemed to be our age; it was the same boy who had escaped from his cell when he first came here.

It seemed that he had telekinesis as well. My arm completely healed by now.

“Which one of you guys have telekinesis?” the boy asked.

“Bruce,” I said.

“NICK!!” Intex yelled at the young man. “How'd you get out of your room?”

“Easily,” Nick, the young man said. “Fooled the stupid guards.”

Intex angrily shot the liquid fire at Nick; Nick didn't stop it in time, so it hit him in the chest. He fell over, not getting back up. It looked like he was dead.

Some of the liquid fire on the floor started to cool, turning black. It was definitely like lava. Intex could shoot lava from his hands; how bizarre.

The last of the werewolves he fought off by Bruce and Rachel. They turned to join me. They saw Nick lying on the floor, seeming dead. Poor guy, he was just trying to help. Now he was dead.

Intex shot the lava at me, but I jumped out of the way by doing a somersault. I flip backwards, kicking Intex in the face. I got to my feet, instantly throwing my fists at Intex. He attempted to dodge my hits, failing at most. Intex fought back with his fists electrifying; still he was no match to my Kung Fu.

He managed to launch a bolt of electricity at me, sending me half-way across the room as I slid across the floor. The blast of electricity should've knocked me out, but it seemed that my accelerated healing gave me some resistance.

Bruce telekinetically threw a table at Intex. Intex wasn't prepared for it, focused on me. The table hit him in the side of the head; this time

his skin didn't turn into metal. It seemed that he had to be concentrating in order to alter his skin.

Rachel joined in, throwing a table at Intex, knocking all of the research and papers off of it. Intex prepared himself this time, changing his skin into metal.

I looked around, seeing a metal rod on the floor that Bryan had pulled from something. I picked it up, running towards Intex with it.

Intex looked frightened, as if this was when I was going to stop him, or kill him.

I started whacking him everywhere, striking him over and over again. Intex skin was still in its metal form, though. Somehow the rod stopped right before it would hit Intex. I saw that Bryan had awoken.

Bryan had his hands out, using his telekinesis. Bryan yanked the rod out of my hands, whacking me with the rod. I was knocked to the ground. In turn, Bryan kept whacking me. Unconsciousness was starting to creep up on me.

While still hanging on, I heard Rachel scream at him. She charged at Bryan, knocking him over. She snatched the bar from his hands, whacking him hard across the head. Again we heard a crack.

I quickly recovered, jumping to my feet. Intex had already recollected himself as well, even though still being in his metal form.

Rachel aimed the rod at Intex. He gasped as if having a fear of metal rods.

Just a few seconds before the rod would puncture Intex in the gut he pulled something out of his pocket, hurling it at us. Rachel was drawn towards what Intex threw at us.

The room got very windy. I saw why. The thing that Intex had thrown was a sphere; a Reynotic sphere. The lights above flickered, turning blue. A blue portal opened up, pulling us in.

This time the portal and lights were not purple as they were before, but were blue. I wondered if this was because Intex had a different Reynotic sphere.

While being pulled into the portal, I grabbed a hold of Intex, pulling him with me. He refused to go in, shooting lava at me. I couldn't help but let him go, being pulled into the portal. I bumped into Rachel, knocking her into it with me.

There was a flash of bright light and the color of blue everywhere. We fall a few feet, landing on some grass; pointy grass. I had landed on top of Rachel, immediately getting off of her. I pulled her to her feet.

"Are you okay?" I asked her.

"I'm fine," she replied. "Where are we?"

The portal reopened above us, sending Bruce down from it, closing afterwards. I caught Bruce so that he could land on his feet.

The whole sky electrified one second, and then returned to normal, clear sky.

Bruce looked around. "Where are we?" he asked.

I took a look around myself. It was all very familiar.

"This looks like that ogre-land that Intex sent me to with the Reynotic sphere." I replied. "Remember me telling you guys about it?"

They both nodded, continuing to look around, being cautious of ogres.

“It looks like Intex reprogrammed the sphere to force us into ogre land. Last time the Excellency said that we’re supposed to be teleported to the base that stands in the middle of both territories.”

I looked around, finding the castle in the distance. Even though this all look familiar, it seemed different in some way.

“There,” I said, pointing at the castle. “That’s where we have to go.”

“So, we just have to get past the ogres to get to the castle?” Bruce asked.

“What’s an ogre?” a low voice asked.

We all spun around and saw what dragon, definitely not an ogre. Which one could be worse?

“You’ve never heard of them?” I tried to act casual.

“Nope, never,” the dragon replied. “Wow, do you guys look tasty ... I think I'm going to have some dinner; you guys are invited.”

“Gee, thanks,” I tell the dragon.

The dragon pounced on us, drawing his claws out, pinning us all to the ground. He growled at us.

More dragons appeared.

“Hey, Drey. Looks like you found some humans,” one of the other dragons said. “You guys are in the wrong territory. Goody for us.”

“How ... how many territories are there?” I asked, skittishly.

Drey, the dragon on top of us, scoffed. “Just two; us and the humans.”

Drey shoved one his claws into my chest, which felt incredibly painful. My chest began to bleed out fast. I immediately felt weak. Good thing I decided to talk first, not Bruce nor Rachel; they could’ve gotten stabbed instead.

I wondered if the future in which I stop Intex was supposed to have recently happen. Intex looked frightened as if all of the events led up to it. Possibly out of fear that it would come true, he sent us here; to St. Reynolds; with dragons, instead of ogres.

Drey laughed. “These pathetic humans look so weak.”

“Well isn’t that redundant?” another dragon asked. “You said pathetic and human in the same sentence!”

The dragons laugh maliciously.

Drey was thrown off of us; Rachel stood to her feet. Drey’s claw was pulled out of my chest. I took in a deep breath, almost immediately healing.

Drey quickly got up, though looked very confused as to what just happened. Bruce got up next, holding his hands out to shove Drey further away, using his telekinesis.

“How ...” Drey was confused.

“I think ...” I said getting up, clumsily. “That you were wrong to call us weak.”

“Quick, let's kill them!!” another dragon yelled.

They all surrounded us, spreading their wings out to be ready. They raised their claws, starting to whack at us. Bruce back flipped in place, knocking a dragon’s hand out of the way.

“What the ...” the dragon said, puzzled.

Yet again, the sky lit up with lightning, startling us. The Dragon’s, though, didn’t seem to notice it. The dragons laughed at us, noticing how we flinched at the lightning.

“You guys aren’t from around here, are you?” one dragon asked.

“I guessed you could say that,” Bruce replied.

He held up his hands, shoving dragons aside, leaving them confused as to how they were moving without being touched. We fought with them, while I was trying to figure out who was harder to fight; Intex or these Dragons. Sadly, I decided that Intex was harder to fight than these dragons.

It wouldn't be incredibly easy, but I knew that we could defeat these dragons.

One dragon jumped into the air, about ready to pounce on Rachel. I ran towards her, but then right at the last second possible she jumped out of the way. The dragon pounced on the ground.

All of these dragons were clueless as to how humans were moving so quickly and fighting like this, not to mention, also, how strong we were, and how Bruce could move them without laying a finger on them.

One of them grabbed me around my chest. Their hands were pretty big size; they were definitely bigger than the ogres. I struggled to break free, pushing with all of my strength.

“Wow,” the dragon said, “this little bugger’s strong!”

Bruce held his hands out, seeming to try to help me out.

“Wow, he just got stronger,” the dragon exclaimed. Bruce had added to my strength. “Let's just take this one and get out of here.”

“But I'm hungrier than that!” one dragon complained.

“Yeah, what about us?” Rachel asked, surprising everyone.

“What, you want us to eat you guys too?” Drey asked.

“We're not letting you take Mark.”

“Oh, getting feisty on us, huh?” another dragon asked.

Rachel ran up to the dragon holding me, but he jumped into the air, started flying in place. “Ha!” he exclaimed. “You can't get me!”

“Oh, yeah?” Rachel laughed. She concentrated —realizing she didn't have to — and the humps formed in her back, coming out as wings. She let them pass through the premade slits in her jackets. All of the dragons were wide-eyed.

The dragon holding loosened its grip, so I took this chance, pushing myself out. I dropped towards the ground. I thought about my levitating / flight power that I was developing, trying to use it to save my fall, but I hit the ground.

“You ...” Drey stuttered. “You have ... wings?”

“No,” Rachel said sarcastically. “These?”

“Then what are those?”

The dragons didn't seem to understand sarcasm. “I was being sarcastic; of course they're real!”

Bruce retracted his wings out from his back, flapping them. The dragons continued to stare at them.

“They look like bird wings,” one of the said.

Bruce held his hands out. One of the dragons flinched, kind of catching onto what Bruce could do. Bruce pulled one of the dragons down to the ground, while also throwing two of them into each other.

Rachel flew towards Drey, while flapping her wings. She kicked him in the face.

All at once, we began taking on this dragons. Humans beating up dragons; what a shocker. I would be so embarrassed if I were one of the dragons.

“Come on, guys,” I said. “We have someplace we need to be.”

“You're not coming over for dinner?” a dragon asked.

“We might if you could catch us.”

With that Bruce and Rachel got ready to take flight. They looked at me, sort of asking me if I could fly with my new power. I tried, but my body stayed on the ground.

I thought about how the power had worked twice in the same minute at home. It was when I was kissing Rachel. I looked at Rachel, feeling the love I have for her; I hovered a foot off of the ground, but only to fall back down. I tried again, but failed.

Rachel smiled, swooping down to pick me up. She relied on her had enhanced strength to carry me.

Bruce, Rachel and I headed towards the castle. At first, the dragons started following us, but one by one they retreated; Drey was the last one to follow us before he, too, retreated.

On our way to The Base, we noticed some other dragons all around. They noticed us as well, having to take another look at us; they seemed very confused. They had no clue what the heck was going on. They only have seen other dragons and maybe some birds flying around, not humans.

I was even still surprised that we could fly. It was pretty amazing ... feeling the wind push against us; it felt great. Rachel wobbled a little bit as the wind changed. Bruce and Rachel were still learning to fly, trying to figure out the tricks. Maybe they could get some pointers from the dragons ... or not.

We got a little closer to The Base, noticing we had some followers. Some birds started to join us. It seemed that they didn't realize that we were humans. They were some pretty good size birds, too, about the size of us. Once they looked over at us, they flew away, scared for a second. They realized that we weren't any trouble so they very slowly joined us again.

On the spur of the moment, the birds dispersed, replaced with dragons. They started staring at us, confused.

"How are you guys flying?" they asked.

"We're like you guys," Bruce said. "We use these things called wings that come from our backs."

"I ... we can see that, but you're ... human."

"Yeah, so?" Rachel said.

"Well —"

“What are you guys doing here, anyway?” another dragon interrupted him.

“Do you guys know what a Reynotic sphere is?” I asked.

“You came here by one of those sphere things?” the first dragon asked.

“Yep, but instead of sending us to The Base, it sent us to you guys place.”

“Someone must hate you,” the second dragon said. “Because they must know how much he *love* humans. Say ... you should come over for dinner.”

“Yeah,” another dragon said. “We could have *being* soup, as human beings!” they laugh hysterically.

“Yeah,” Rachel replied. “That is if you could catch us!”

The sky unexpectedly lit up with lightning, startling us again, though it didn't bother the dragons.

They dragons were already surrounding us, now getting closer. We dropped, but they dropped right with us; they were skilled with flying. They came close enough so we managed to throw some kicks at them, while flying. We were still strong.

“Wow,” a dragon rubbed its nose after I had kicked him. “You're strong!”

“Yeah probably more than you are!” I exclaimed.

“Oh yeah?!”

“Yeah, we should arm wrestle.”

“What's that?”

“It’s probably a human thing,” another dragon said. “Now let’s kill them!”

They came closer. We fought and flew. It seemed hard for Rachel and Bruce to fly and fight at the same time. As for me, I just kicked at them; I wasn’t doing the flying.

Not being skilled and coordinated, Rachel forgot to flap her wings so that we fell fifteen feet before she started flapping again. Once a dragon came close enough we both kicked it, causing it fell all of the way to the ground; we knocked it out! The dragons were, yet again, very confused as to how humans could be doing such a thing.

Dragons were being thrown without being touched. Bruce was getting better at his telekinesis; after all he was practicing, even at this moment.

More dragons appeared. They were confused at first, but joined the fight to kill us. Dragons sure did hate humans. No doubt humans hated dragons too. Excuse me, ahem. Dragons *love* humans ... for dinner.

*Come on, Mark.* Rachel said. *You’re getting heavy, I wish you could fly right now; it’s hard to fight.*

“I’m sorry, Rachel,” I said. “But I can’t control it.”

“Control what?”

“What you said; I can’t fly yet.”

“But I didn’t ... say that.” Rachel said as she kicked a dragon. “I thought ... it.”

“What?”

“I didn’t say anything, I was thinking to myself.”

“So ...” I kicked a couple of dragons in their faces. “I read your mind?”

“Did you?”

“Think of something.”

Rachel kicked at another dragon. “Okay,” she kicked another dragon, loosened her grip on me, but then squeezed harder to keep a hold.

She kicked some more dragons, as did I. “You know ... this is not really a good time to be testing this out!” Rachel was frustrated. “Sorry,” she regretted yelling at me. She kicked a dragon’s arm out of the way from getting swatted. “Can you try flying?”

“I can try, but I don’t know if it’ll work.”

“Just try.” She kicked another dragon in the eyeball. It yelled out in pain, slowly making its way to the ground, where it rolled around on the ground, moaning and groaning.

Rachel loosened her grip around me as I tried to fly. I didn’t feel like I was flying, but then realized that I was. Rachel’s arms weren’t touching me. Although it was too good to be true; I started falling.

“Mark!” she yelled.

A dragon swooped towards me, to catch me, but I kicked it in the gut ... while falling. I thought about how Rachel was just holding me —I suddenly stopped, floating in the air.

“You're flying, Mark!” Bruce exclaimed.

“I am,” I said.

Rachel came nearer, fighting off Dragons that got in the way. I looked at Rachel, realizing that she looked awesome while she fought.

I started to propel myself upwards. A few dragons came down at me. I spun in place, kicking. It felt kind of weird to float in the air, kind of like swimming, but without the water resistance.

A dragon fell down right next to me. I looked up to see another fall down. Bruce had bashed their heads together, knocking them out. There were about seven dragons left. Make that six now; Rachel just kicked one hard in the back of head. It fell to the ground.

These dragons no longer looked confused, but determined and motivated to killing us. They looked furious. We were knocking them out, one by one, but they hadn't even touched us. I spoke, or thought, too soon. A dragon just smacked Bruce in the back, just missing his wings. Bruce fell about twenty feet before flapping his wings again.

A dragon came rushing towards me. I got ready to kick or punch it, but just then I fell. I fell fast and the dragon missed me. I couldn't stop myself. “MARK!!!!” Rachel yelled as she tucked in her wings to come down after me, but she wasn't gaining on me.

I tried flying again, but it wasn't working right. I stopped falling for half a second, but then started falling again. Again I stopped for a second only to fell. Rachel started getting a little closer. I stopped in mid-air

again, and again fell, hitting the ground from one-hundred feet up. I felt something snap.

I immediately howled out in pain, groaning. I didn't even try to move, because of how badly it hurt. Rachel landed down next to me. The dragons deserted Bruce, now more interested in the hurt human; me.

"Let's get the weak one!" one yelled.

"You'll ..." I moaned. "Be sorry ... that you ... said that." I groaned.

Rachel fought off dragons that tried to get to me. Bruce started pushing dragons away without touching them, and like always, they seemed very confused.

Abruptly my vision started to blur until I couldn't see at all. The pain in my back felt horrible and so sharp. I couldn't hear a thing except for the sound of someone screaming. At first I thought Rachel and Bruce were screaming by the sight of myself, but realized that I was the one doing the screaming.

I barely felt something rub against my leg. I was completely zoned out to what was happening around me. Bruce and Rachel probably were fighting like crazy, blocking dragons from getting to me.

I felt like I was falling, all over again. The pain felt so horrible that it didn't even feel like I was lying down. My back started to numb up. I felt like I was falling while everything around me was black. I couldn't see, nor hear anything, except for the sound of myself screaming.

Something appeared in the darkness, someone. I started to imagine Rachel. Somehow, imagining Rachel felt better. My pain eased a little bit. My yelling calmed down.

Everything seemed to calm down, all I could see was Rachel, though. She was sitting down next to me on a couch, or was it a bed? She was talking to me, but I didn't hear any words. She was taken by a drag-

on, took into the air until all I could see was a dot. “Mark, help me!!” I heard Rachel cry out. I spun around, seeing her strapped to a bed, surrounded by complete darkness. She was strapped to a bed, or a cot, just like she was in Creative Works. I ran towards her, but I wasn’t getting any closer. She started drifting away, crying out for help. She disappeared again. “Mark!” Rachel yelled. I spun all around, finding Rachel inside a set of bars, surrounded by more darkness. A dragon landed on top of the cell, crushing her. Intex appeared, grabbing a metal rod from out of nowhere and started hitting her. I tried to stop Intex, but I couldn’t move. Whatever happened, I couldn’t help Rachel. I was dreaming. It had to be a dream.

“Mark, wake up!” Rachel’s voice sounded louder this time, and clearer.

The darkness around me started to clear. Light started forming. My vision was coming back, but everything started as a blur. I could make out three figures. My vision started to clear faster now. Soon my vision became clear, and I realized that the three figures turned out to be Rachel, Bruce, and a tree.

I sat up, feeling refreshed.

“Mark!” Rachel exclaimed, wanting to hug me, but she was afraid. “I’m so sorry that I didn’t catch you.”

“It ...” I started, feeling my back, which was fine. I felt just fine. I healed. “It wasn’t your fault.”

“Yes, it was. I dropped you in the first place.”

I sighed. I was alive, and my back was fine.

The only dragons in sight were lying on the ground before me. They were all knocked out. Bruce and Rachel had done well to defeat them; they had protected me while I was out.

I got up, feeling as good as new. Rachel was still worried, though. I looked at her, flashing a smile. I reached my arms out, pulling her to me and embracing her in a hug; I squeezed. She hugged back.

“I was afraid that I would lose you,” I said.

“What?” Rachel exclaimed. “I thought that I would lose *you*,” she cried.

“I blacked out and was dreaming. All I dreamt about was you. I saw you ... stuck and getting hurt. I was so worried.”

“Mark,” Rachel was soaking up my shoulder. “I was really worried that ... that you ...” she gave a long pause and sobbed. “I was worried that you died.”

“I’m still here, Rachel.” I said. “I’m never going to leave you.”

Bruce coughed to get our attention, but we ignored him, continuing to hug. After a few more seconds Rachel released me, taking a good look at me in the eyes.

“I love you,” she said.

I smiled, realizing that she just said the L word. Now it was my turn. “Me too ... I ... I love you too.” I said.

Slowly we leaned forward, starting to kiss. I wasn’t sure what Bruce was doing right now, but he probably either being grossed out or

jealous, but hopefully he was just looking away. We kissed for a good while, not stopping until we heard a roar.

We let go, looking towards the sound of the roar. There were three dragons right in front of us.

“I've never seen that before,” the dragon said. “Humans clinging their lips together; now that’s just weird.”

I smirked, but then I felt angry. I ran towards them. They looked excited, as if their food was coming to them. I surprised them with a somersault, kicking them in their faces. They back up, roaring with anger.

They were confused as can be. One was thrown into the air by an invisible force. The dragons saw the other ones lying on the ground, looking as dead as could be.

“What happened?” one asked, looking at the unconscious dragons.

“We killed them,” Bruce said.

We assumed most of them were only knocked out, but a few could be dead.

“What? How?”

“Like this,” Rachel said as she quickly moved around and kicked one of the dragons, knocking it backwards. Two of the dragons were thrown into the air, hard towards the ground head first. Bruce had his hands out, telekinetically throwing them hard at the ground; knocking them out.

Rachel took on the remaining dragon, jumping into the air to kick him square in the face. He immediately fell to the ground, unconscious, at least.

“Guys,” I said. “We gotta get to The Base, or we’ll be fighting dragons all day.”

Without any further ado, we sprinted towards the tall, giant castle. We seemed to be at least a mile away. A couple of dragons noticed us run by, but they didn’t take another take. They went back to their business. If they looked back up we were already gone. We had to get to the castle now; we couldn’t just keep fighting all day.

I could tell that Bruce and Rachel were sort of worn out and panting, not just because we were running. The sky lit up again with lightning, even though there didn’t seem to be any storm clouds.

Despite anything, we ran until we made it to the gate of the castle. I was thinking about how last time I jumped over the fence. This time it was all blocked off. Maybe they learned from me breaking through last time. Or maybe it was because the dragons could fly.

There were two dragons wearing armor standing at the gate. But then again, the ogres weren’t here; maybe I was never here. This place seemed just like the one with the ogres, only there were dragons.

The two guards noticed us, though they didn’t move.

“We have to get through,” I said.

“Do you have a pass?” one of the dragon guards asked.

“No.”

“Then you're not getting by.”

I nodded at Bruce. He struck his hands out, sending the dragons flying. He telekinetically broke the gate down. We took no hesitation, running through the newly formed opening, heading inside the castle. We entered into the large lobby.

We ran around a bend in a hallway. It didn't take long before we found the seven-foot tall man. "Your Excellency!" I exclaimed.

The tall man jumped, looking at us alarmingly. "How'd you guys get in here?" he asked.

"Your Excellency, it's me." I said.

He cocked his head. "And you are?"

"You don't remember me?" I asked. "Last time I came here through a Reynotic sphere that had sent in ogre-land because someone reprogrammed the —"

"Wait!" he interrupted. "Did you say 'ogre?'" I nodded. "What do you know about ogres?"

"Well, last time I was here there were ogres instead of dragons. Someone who hated me sent me here, reprogramming the Reynotic sphere, sending me in the middle of ogre-land. I came here and you understood and sent me back home to Earth."

"I've never met you before ... and ogres don't live here."

"What?" I paused and looked back forth between Rachel and Bruce. "But this is just as I remembered it; just there are dragons instead of ogres." I paused. "Isn't this place called St. Reynolds?"

"Yes," the Excellency replied. "But there's something that you're mixing up. You've probably met me before, but not *me*. *Here* there are dragons, but in the parallel universe there are ogres."

"Parallel universe?" Bruce asked.

“Yes, I know of another universe that is exactly like this one, except, like you said, its base separates ogres from humans.” He paused. “Did you say that you were sent here by a Reynotic sphere?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Hmm, that must be what they call it in the parallel universe, but here we call it Reynolic Spheres.” He paused. “I have only crossed over once, however it costs a lot. I don’t believe I can give you a free pass, for not even a man like myself is allowed a free pass.” He paused, though mumbled, “Although, I’m sure I could ...”

I looked at Bruce and Rachel as they were trying to take all of this in. The Excellency sighed. “This is going to be difficult.” He sighed. “Well, let’s not stand around; it’s not doing us any good. I guess I understand your situation ... so, did you say that someone who hated you had sent you here?”

“Yes, his name is Intex.”

“Intex?!” he exclaimed. It looked as if we opened up some long, closed memories inside his head.

“Do you know him?” Bruce asked, surprising me that he spoke up.

“Yeah, he’s the one that ... well ... he gave me *gifts*.”

“What’d you mean?” I asked.

The main doors swung open, startling us. Two guard dragons appeared. “There they are!” they yelled, pointing at us. “Your Excellency, watch out!” They started charging at us.

“Stand down!!” the Excellency yelled. They froze in place, one foot on the floor, while the other feet stayed in the air, in mid-step. “They are okay, they’re with me. Go back to your posts at the front of the gate.” They were able to move again, immediately spinning around to run back out the doors, heading back to guard the gate.

“Did you see that?” the Excellency said. “That was one of the gifts that Intex gave me; verbal mind control.”

“Intex gave you powers?” Rachel asked calmly.

“Yes, but he called them gifts. We agreed that he would give me powers if I gave him a Reynolic sphere; a rare Reynotic sphere, which comes from your universe; the one that you're from. Those ones are hard to come by. Right now ... all I can think of to get you back home is by using another Reynotic sphere from your universe. Yet, they are very difficult to come by since there are few. If I were to find one it would be very expensive.”

We walked out of the back entrance of the castle, towards a circular facility. We looked up to see the lightning in the sky, even though there were no storm clouds. “What?” the Excellency asked, seeing that we looked up. He looked up as a result. “That lightning is natural.”

“But, the clouds aren’t out.” Bruce said, stating the obvious.

“Yes, of course, but you should know that you are present in The Stormy Galaxy. Here, storms occur all day long, all year long, despite any *conflicting* weather condition. It is never ending and, thankfully, is not hazardous. So far.” He paused. “We’ve never had any problems. Lightning is not the only sort of storms we get, though.”

“The Stormy Galaxy?” Rachel asked, curious.

“Yes,” he replied.

We made it into the portal room, seeing the workers at work. A group of them were before the portal machines. Some were at the control panels, managing the systems, keeping them stabilized. They seemed to stand taller when they saw the Excellency, as if fearing to disappoint them in any way.

“At ease,” the Excellency told them. “I have here some people that don’t belong here. They need to get back home.”

“No problem,” a worker said. “Who to?”

“Earth,” I said.

“On it.” The worker started typing in coordinates.

“But,” the Excellency started. “They’re from the parallel universe.”

“Wait, what?” the worker paused, finding this to be very surprising. “Really? The one with ... ogres, is it? We’ve ... never dealt with that before.”

“Yes. Can you open a portal into that universe?”

“It would be a very complicated process. I’m not sure that we could do it.” He scoffs to himself, realizing something. “The easiest way would be to just find a Reynotic Sphere, but we all know how rare those are.”

“That I know.” The Excellency replied.

“How far are we from Earth?” Bruce asked the Excellency, while looking at the portal engineer.

“We are about four million light-years away from Earth,” the worker replied.

Bruce’s jaw dropped. Rachel looked shocked. I narrowed my eyes. Something about that number seemed to be familiar. Perhaps The Exper-

imental Galaxy was the same distance, although, obviously, not in this exact spot.

“See if you can work on creating a portal to cross over, and then send them to Earth.” The Excellency told the worker. As if something clicked the worker’s head jerked and he got right to it. I knew what it was; it was the Excellency’s power of verbal mind control. The Excellency looked at us. “Come follow me, it’ll take a while until they figure it out.”

“Can’t you just tell them to work faster?” Rachel asked.

“My gift doesn’t work that way. It still limits to people’s own abilities in which to obey. I can force them to surpass their physical limitations.”

We followed the Excellency back into the castle, into his room. After unlocking the door and closing it behind him, he sat down in his rocking chair. He offered other chairs for us to sit down in.

“I’m sorry,” he told us.

“For what?” I asked.

“For making a deal with Intex to have those spheres ... it’s just that these ... dragons were getting out of hand, so this gift would come in handy for handling these dragons. I could force them to obey me, and they do. I have finally created peace here. I didn’t realize that Intex had evil intentions.” He paused. “Why does he hate you children?” He grew curious. “Did you guys do something to make him mad?”

I sighed; I didn’t know where to start. “Do you know where the Experimental Galaxy is?” I asked.

“Yes, it is a couple of galaxies over, why? Although, I think they changed the name; I’m not sure though.”

“Hmm. Well, that is where I originate from. Planet Rexton was dying as a result of a plant life was dying, so I was sent to Earth; oddly though, away from my family.”

“In your universe it must be, because in this universe, planet Rexton is fine and healthy; it’s planet Mason that’s not. That same sort of plant virus killed all of its plant life.”

“Hmm. So ... uh ... Intex was sent to Earth before that even happened, because he was running illegal experiments on people, testing them, trying to alter their DNA, crossing animal DNA into them.”

“So, he gave them gifts like he did me?”

“Yes. He was sent to Earth. My father left me a message to stop Intex from ruining people’s lives on Earth. Intex found out about this and tried to stop me before I stopped him. It was just now that he sent us here. Earlier he sent me to this world in our universe, with the ogres.”

“I understand now ...” the Excellency said, nodding his head. “I wish I knew that truth about Intex, though. If I didn’t, then maybe you wouldn’t be here.”

“Maybe that’s not true,” Rachel said. “He could’ve killed you and took the sphere anyway.”

“Hmm, that could have been possible.”

I knew it to be possible. It seemed that Intex would not let anything stop him from achieving his goal. Although, I realized, I didn't even know Intex’s full intention. What did he ultimately want to achieve?

We ended up staying overnight in the Excellency's room. We weren't bothered, apparently no one bothered to bother the Excellency. Everyone respected him, and I don't think that it was because of his "gift" of making people obey him, either; he made a reputation before getting his gift. I remembered him from our universe, everyone respected him the same as they did here.

I hoped that the workers would figure out the right formula or whatever to get us back home. Who knows what Intex could be doing right now? I didn't even want to know, but I couldn't help but think about it. He could be taking over the world, while we were stuck in some other dimension, spending the night waiting on someone. Intex had planned this, I know it. He knew that if we got close to actually stopping him, he would send us here. I just hoped that things weren't working out for him right now.

I woke up, feeling like crap. I couldn't get very much sleep. For one, all of this we were going through affected it, and, two, the lightning storms outside were loud and consistent all night. That's what The Stormy Galaxy was known for.

I got out of the bed that the Excellency had provided for us. Bruce was staring at the ceiling and Rachel sat up to look at me. The Excellency was snoring away, laying in his bed sound asleep. I walked up to him, tapping him to wake him up.

"Huh? What?" he jumped. He looked around, wondering why we were in his room, and then all of yesterday came back to him. "Oh, yeah ... the portals ... uh, your guy's home. Uh yeah." He got up and walked to his desk. "Sorry, I'm not a morning person." He put on some glasses to

help him find where he put his contacts case. He then took his glasses back off, putting in the contacts of some sort very quickly. He excused himself so he could get a change of clothes, heading into his restroom. A few minutes later he returned, with a change of clothes on, and a nice aroma.

“Alright,” he said. “I’m ready. Now, let’s get to it.” The Excellency walked out of the room. We followed. He walked down to the back of the castle, into the circular structure of The Base and the portal facility.

There were already workers in their posts, working on something or cleaning things. We walked up to one of the portal engineers as he immediately got his thoughts ready.

Your Excellency,” he said, bowing and showing his respect. He looked to us and gave a head bow.

“Report.” The Excellency commanded.

“Yes, well ... I spent all night working on this and I am getting close to completing the whole formula. I would like permission to work with some more helpers to build on our knowledge and finish this.”

“Do whatever it takes to finish it,” the Excellency paused and thought. “Today,” he added.

The worker jerked his head as the Excellency’s voice of command triggered his obedience. He immediately rushed over and got five more workers to get with him. The six of them together already starting working on it immediately.

The Excellency started walking away as we followed. He looked to us and then specifically to Bruce. “I guess that you were right,” he told Bruce. “Let’s see if you’re right; I just commanded for them to finish this today; they’re getting right to it.” He paused, but continued walking. We walked back into the castle, down a few hallways, making our way into a large room that smelled like breakfast.

“Let's get something to eat,” the Excellency said. “I don't want to send you guys home, starving.”

We all sat down at a table, which the Excellency had us sit at. He sat down with us. The chefs were already bringing food out, placing fully filled plates of food in front of all of us.

“Will that be all, your Excellency?” a waitress asked. He nodded and the waitress went back into the kitchen.

I looked up to the Excellency's eyelevel. “I really appreciate you helping us,” I told him. “You didn't really have to help us, because I know that people can't just barge into the castle and —”

“I understand,” the Excellency replied. “I feel responsible for your being here, so I want to help you guys. But let us calm down a bit and let the workers figure out their formula. In the meantime, let's eat.”

The Excellency dug into his food as we ate ours. I actually realized that I was already starving; it felt good to be eating. With a couple of minutes, I had already finished the plate. Suddenly, it was replaced with another plate full of more food, presented by a chef. They poured me some orange juice into a cup for me. I drank it. They refilled it, not complaining at all. This place was awesome. The Excellency didn't even have to lift a finger. I wondered if it was because of his gift or if he really was respected this much.

The Excellency was a tall man so he ate more than we did. Before I even knew it, he had already cleaned five plates, I was still growing so I ate a lot, but I was only on my second plate. He surely ate faster. It was amazing.

We ate until we were full. It was the biggest breakfast that I ever had. If we were able to leave and go back home today, we wouldn't be able to fight Intex; we couldn't fight on a full stomach. I looked at the Excellency. He looked satisfied.

The Excellency looked at us. "You guys look tired," he stated. "Did you guys get good enough sleep?"

I sighed. "No, but we are also tired from eating so much."

"Oh, well ... you didn't have to eat all of that. The chefs just fill up the plates once they're empty, because they hate for us to be underfed. I get fed well here."

"How do you get so tall?" Rachel asked.

"It comes naturally in my race. Way back in the past, my family was first put into ruler-ship because they were thought to be superiors, being so tall. My ruler-ship was just past down to me. I can't help being tall, though I do like it." He paused to take a good look at us. "You know, I don't talk to people like this around her. People are always asking me how I want things to be and always approach me with respect. They seem that they don't feel qualified to talk with me about personal things. I'm finding that I'm enjoying our conversations, even if they seem pointless. I don't get to talk like this very often."

"Well, you're welcome," I said, "but it wasn't like we planned on coming here, though. I didn't want to come here."

"Yeah, I understand." He paused. "But thank you for being patient with me."

“No problem.”

“I feel like it’s my fault that you are here.”

“It’s not your fault,” Bruce said.

The Excellency sighed, getting up from his chair. We started walking and we followed him into the lobby. He was unsure of where to go.

“You know,” he said. “Things used to be so hectic around here, but ever since ... Intex ... gave me my gift, things ran a little more smoothly. I feel kind of guilty. I’ve forced people to do things.” He sighed, walking towards some chairs to sit down in. “You guys are the only ones that I have told about my gift. No one here suspects a thing about me ... but I suppose that I don’t expect too much of people.”

“Yeah,” Rachel agreed with him. “You seem like a nice guy. People respect you here.”

“Yes ... they do. But ... I don’t feel like I deserve it.”

“Did you feel like this before we came here and told you about Intex, or after?” I asked.

“I have felt like this for a while now, but since you guys came here it’s added on to my guilt. Sure, my gift comes in handy — it’s helped out in keeping the dragons in line — but ... sometimes I would like people to not always listen to me. I would like a little rebellion ... you know.”

“I see,” Rachel replied.

“Well,” Bruce said. “Remember how you told that worker to get the formula done today? He immediately got to working, to get it done. Maybe you could tell people to not listen to you every once in a while.”

“Maybe, but ...” the Excellency said. “It wouldn’t be the same. I feel ... I just ... I don’t know if I want this *gift* anymore. This ... burden.”

“What if ...” Bruce started. “What if you tell one of you scientists to get rid of it for you? I mean, they would listen, wouldn’t they?”

“I guess,” the Excellency said. “I never thought of it working like that ... not until you guys came here.” He paused. “But, thanks to you guys, I think I can live with it now. I could figure out how work with it. I could tell people to ...”

“To work at the pace they want to work at?” Rachel asked.

“Yes! Exactly. That’s a great idea. I could tell them to work at the speed they want to work at. Things will seem more ... normal. You guys sure know how these sort of things work; you have a clearer understanding on how to use your gifts at their highest extent.”

“Your Excellency!” a portal engineer exclaimed, walking up to us. He bowed before the Excellency, and bowed his head at us. “I have finished the formula with the help of my fellow engineers and it is ready for these young people for transit.”

“Okay,” the Excellency said, getting up as we did the same. “Brief me on the way.”

We followed the worker towards the Portal Facility. The worker explained what he did on the way. “It’s not a perfect formula, but it’ll do. In simplest words, we made the portals be able to cross over to the other side, to the parallel universe, and you will appear in the other Base. Then from there they could take you back to Earth. You will just have to have a note or something to let them know the details. Maybe, I could suggest that you write your signature on it, your Excellency. I mean, the other Excellency should have the same signature, right?”

“Yes,” the Excellency said. “You guys have done a great job today, thank you.”

We made it into the Portal Facility, walking right next to the portal machine, which had a couple of steps that led to a big ring; there was a

control panel off to the side with the worker next to it. The worker powered up the portal, typing in some stuff on the control panel and pressing some buttons. He seemed to have got it ready to walk through.

The portal whirled to life, disrupting some airwaves after creating itself. It shimmered in blue, rippling the air inside of it in a shape of a circle.

The Excellency wrote a note. Once he finished he handed it to me, putting the pen into his pocket. I grabbed the paper note, read it and nodded to him.

“I will never forget you guys,” the Excellency said. “I enjoyed our company together. Thanks for being there for me.”

“Thanks for helping us,” I said.

“No problem.” He turned to the worker. “Excellent job today. How could I reward you? Tell me, honestly.”

The worker seemed to lose his blank expression for a second, showing a relaxed emotion. “I would like an hour break and a plate full of cookies.” The worker said quickly. “Umm ...” he said after realizing what words just uttered from his mouth. “Sorry. I-I didn't mean to say that.” The Excellency smiled at him. “Let me take that back, I requested too much.”

“No,” the Excellency said, smiling. “That is fine.” He paused as if thinking for the right words to say. “Feel free to get your cookies and have an hour break, but only after you send these guys back home.”

“Of course.” The worker smiled; he seemed excited to have some cookies for later. The worker looked at us, nodding. “It is all set; all you have to do is step through whenever you're ready.”

The three of us stepped onto the steps, all looking back at the Excellency. I nodded to him, giving him a little bow. I waved. The Excellency smiled, waving back to us. "Thanks for the tips," he told us.

"You're welcome," I said. "Goodbye."

"Bye."

He waved again to us all, as we walked through. We immediately stepped through to the other side; the parallel universe; our universe. Everything looked the same, except the Excellency wasn't in the room. The workers jumped and held up some sort of rods that must've been weapons.

“Hold it right there!” they yelled.

“Whoa,” we held our hands up. “Don’t ... hurt us.” I said. “We have a note. We came from the other side.”

“Of what?” the worker asked.

“The universe. We came from the parallel universe of this place.”

“What? How? That’s impossible.” They were utterly shocked.

I found the worker that wrote the formula on the other side. I pointed to him. “You were the one that did it. You figured out a formula to help us ... cross over through these portals.” We stepped off the steps. I walked towards him. The worker was still tense, though he slowly lowered his weapon.

“I’ve seen you before,” he said. “You were here a few years ago. You said that someone forced you to get sent here. You ended up in the middle of the ogre’s territory.”

“Yep, that was me.” I said.

He set his weapon down. “He did it again?”

“Yes.” I handed him the note. “That’s to let you know that we need to get back to Earth.”

“Why, that’s the Excellency’s handwriting!”

“Yes, from the other side.” Bruce said.

“I’ll have to get the Excellency.”

As if on cue, the Excellency stepped into the room. Immediately he saw us. Then he looked at me, remembering who I was. "I thought I recognized your voice." He paused. "What are you doing back here?"

"That same guy sent me back, but into the parallel universe."

"What? It exists? The other side?"

"Yes, I just came from there. The Excellency from there wrote a note."

The worker handed the Excellency the note so he could read it. "Oh, I see." He said. "So we'll need to get you back home." The Excellency looked at the worker. "Get them home to Earth."

"I can't give them a free pass. Not even you can do that." The worker said.

The three of us looked at each other. Intex didn't come to this side to meet The Excellency; he didn't have that *gift* in which he had on the other side.

"Of course." The Excellency said. He pulled some coins out of his pocket, counted them, looking at us. He handed them to the worker.

The worker inserted the coins and the portal machine powered up. A hologram appeared of the universe. He zoomed into the milky-way galaxy and then into Earth. "I'm sorry; I don't remember where exactly you live."

"Ohio, North America." I said. "Err no. New York; we moved."

"Moved?" he didn't seem to understand; they must've not used that word. Nevertheless, he zoomed in on North America and to New York. I leaned in and zoomed into Manhattan for him, clicking on our house.

"Right there." I said.

“Okay.” The worker said, He clicked some buttons and the portal appeared. After pushing more, the portal opened up. “You're all set and ready to go.”

I looked at the Excellency. “Nice to see you again.” I said.

He nodded, but not sure how I was happy to see him. We turned around and walked up the steps.

“Wait!” the Excellency exclaimed, and we turned. “What's he like? The other me.”

I smiled. “He's just like you. A nice, modest ruler. Everyone respects him and he treats everyone the same. He's a nice man.”

The Excellency seemed satisfied to know. “Thank you.”

I nodded and bowed my head, turning back around. The three of us walked through the portal. The whole world changed around us. We appeared into a noisy city, full of honking cars and chatty people. It was my backyard, in New York City.

“It's good to be home.” I said. “Now where were we?”

The portal behind us closed, disappearing.

“Stopping Intex,” Bruce said.

“Let's get to it,” Rachel said.

“Let's hope that he didn't do any more damage.” I said.

The three of us had our jackets on already, we never took them off. We put our hoods up, heading towards Creative Works. Walking down the streets helped burn off a lot of the calories we just ate. There was still always so much traffic here in NY. It was as if nothing had changed.

I wondered what Intex did while we were gone. We gave him a couple days; still he didn't seem to do anything, like take over the world. Well you gotta say; it's only been two days ...

We made it the Creative Works, taking no hesitation to make our way into the building, having forced the door open. We faced the long hallways, although this time something seemed off. We walked down the long hallway, checking the rooms. It looked as we had left it. We had cleared the first few rooms. We walked until making it where we last left off.

We walked into the room, finding nothing. The big room was completely empty. There weren't even so much as beds. There were no scientists, no scalpels on the floors, no debris from the cyborgs ...

We walked out of the room, running down the halls. We found some offices; all that was in them were desks, no chairs. We searched the whole building ... it was completely empty, deserted.

"Intex retreated." I said. "He chickened out."

"You got that right," Bruce agreed. "He was a scared of us and he ran away home to his mommy."

Any other time I would've laughed but not now. "No, Bruce. He moved to another place. He wanted to get ahead of us."

"But where?" Rachel asked.

"I don't know ... Bryan has teleportation; they could've teleported all of their stuff anywhere on the planet."

"Yeah, you're right." Bruce said.

"Did you hear that?" Rachel asked.

"No, we don't have super hearing, Rachel." Bruce said sarcastically.

We all tried to listen for something.

"Hear what?" I asked.

"Listen." Rachel said.

We all listened again. We were in the hallway, walking past rooms. We heard it. The sound came from behind us. Someone was yelling, but it sounded muffled. We turned around, walking down the hall. It came from inside a room. I peaked in the window, finding people about our age in there, chained to a wall. Somehow we had overlooked this room.

I kicked the door down. There seemed to be gas floating in the air, but it dispersed as I opened the door. We looked at all of them. There were four of them. One of them looked familiar.

"Hey!" Rachel exclaimed. "You're that guy that helped us in that one big prison room."

"Yeah," Bruce added. "And in that science room ... you had my power ... you had telekinesis."

“Wait!” I exclaimed. “I thought you were dead; Intex shot lava at you.” I looked at his face. “You don’t have a mark on you.”

He scoffed. “You have super strength, right?” he asked me.

“Yeah, so?”

Just then he pulled with his arms, breaking the chains easily.

“Oh, you have super strength too?” I asked.

“Nope,” he said. “I have a few powers, but super strength is not one of them. I have one main power; it’s called Juxtakinesis.”

“What’s that?” Bruce asked.

The guy broke the chains apart for the three other prisoners. “I can replicate the powers of things or people around me. So you,” he pointed at Bruce. “You have telekinesis. While we were in that one room, I replicated your ability. You, Mark, you have super strength and accelerated healing. Well, I sort of used that, absorbed that, from you so that I partially healed, but you ran away before I fully healed.”

“Then, how’d you heal completely?” I asked.

“That would be one of my other powers; vasokinesis. I can control blood, injury and pain. I controlled my blood and wounds so that I healed myself; but it’s not perfect.” He paused to look at the four of them altogether. “By the way, my name’s Nick. Nick ... Gloom.”

“Gloom?” Rachel asked.

“Yeah, I made it up. I wanted my own last name, so I made it up.”

“Hey what about us, man!?” one of the four exclaimed, another boy. He had blonde, wavy hair that went down to his eyebrows.

“What about you?” Nick smacked him across the back of the head, but it looked like they were fooling around. They must've known each well.

“My name’s Alex Rush,” the boy said. “Rush, because I can run super-fast.” He felt the need to demonstrate as he ran around in circles around the room, returning back to where he stood before. “It’s fun.” He seemed like an energetic guy, probably because of the power that he had.

“I’m Grace,” said the long, blonde haired girl.

“Mara,” said the dark-haired girl. She had a Hispanic accent and looked Hispanic; definitely Hispanic.

“Were you guys’ prisoners or experiments?” Rachel asked. “I hope you don’t mind me asking.”

“We were both,” Nick said.

“They called us failed experiments,” Grace said. “Because we didn’t listen to them. Most experiments are engrafted with a curse to obey Intex and to inherit evil thoughts, but for some reason we didn’t get that.”

“Well, it must've not worked on us either,” Bruce said.

“Oh, you guys we not done being treated on; you were not in that stage of experimentation to be given those unhealthy thoughts,” Nick said. “I’m surprised that you guys survived.”

“What?” I asked. My heart skipped a beat. It raced, trying to make up for missing on. I looked at Rachel and Bruce. “Should they not be alive?”

“Well, during experimentation, you can’t really take them off until they are done, because it could damage you, or screw up your DNA.” He paused; looking at our expressions, seeing that we looked worried.

“Don’t fret about it, you guys are fine, and you look fine ... there shouldn’t be any problems.”

“Are you sure?” Bruce asked.

“Pretty sure.” Nick said.

“Well, let's stop worrying. So what can you guys do?” Bruce smiled, looking at the girls, but it seemed that he was looking at Mara the most. I could tell that he already liked her. His last attempt to flirt with a girl failed; that was in high school.

“Our powers?” Grace asked and Bruce nodded. “Well, I can move quickly ... like umm ... agility and I can kind of control metal, though I'm skilled at it. All I can do right now is sort of draw it towards me, like magnetism.”

Bruce looked at Mara and expected her to tell him what she had. “Me?” Mara asked, shyly.

“Yes,” Bruce said.

“Umm ... I talk animals, and do what animals do.” Mara spoke very slowly, trying to articulate her words correctly. I could tell that English wasn’t her first language. “I also heal like you,” she looked at me. “I see around things and see far, not uhh ...”

“Like Bent vision.” Grace interpreted. “She can see things in her mind, without using her eyes.”

“Yes, bent vision. And, umm ... comp-computer power.”

“What?” Bruce asked.

“Technopathy.” Grace said.

“Oh.”

“And, sun power.” Mara said.

“Nucleokinesis,” Grace explained. “The two of us can communicate with each other through our minds. They somehow gave a bond between us. We can’t do it with anyone else.”

“Wow, that’s cool.” Rachel said.

“But we saved the best for last,” Alex said. He had a grin across his whole face. “I bet you won't believe it, unless you already know about Intex’s desire to transform everyone into hybrids of different sorts. We are part avian, as Intex called it. Or birds. We have wings.”

“What?” Bruce asked, smiling. “You do?!”

Alex was the first to demonstrate, taking no effort at all to extend the wings from his back; they came through some holes, or slits, in his shirt that I did not notice were there before. He was just like Bruce and Rachel; his wings could seep through his skin and into his back. Alex exhaled, sighing. It must've felt great to push his wings out, having had held them in for a while.

“We have wings as well,” Rachel said, pointing to Bruce and herself.

“We figured that much,” Grace said.

“What about you guys?” Bruce asked the rest of them.

“Well, as Alex said, we all have them.” Nick said.

“Mara and I have wings that come from our arms.” Grace said. “So we have to flap out arms and wings and the same time in order to fly.”

Grace demonstrated. Wings started to seep out of the inside of her arms. She seemed to wince softly as the wings came out; once they were fully out, she felt fine, though.

“Does it hurt?” Rachel asked, noticing her having winced.

“Only when they first come out of our arms.” Grace said. Grace started flapping her arms and wings to show us how it looked.

Bruce smiled. “I'm glad to not be alone with just Rachel, being the only ones with wings; you guys have them too.”

“Just with Rachel?” Alex asked.

“Yeah.”

“What, you don’t have wings, Mark?” Nick asked.

“No, I thought you knew that.” Rachel mentioned that she had them and pointed to Bruce to explain that he had them as well, but she didn’t point at me. I figured they assumed just the two of them had them.

“Nope.”

“Well, Bruce don’t say anything to them, I don’t want you spitting it out.”

“I made a promise to you, Mark ... I wouldn’t tell anyone.” Bruce said, referring about me being an alien.

“Say what?” Alex said.

“Well, obviously, if Bruce made a promise to not tell something about Mark, then Mark probably doesn’t want everyone knowing.” Grace said.

“Well,” I said. “I can sort of fly, but I don’t need wings. I haven’t perfected it yet, in fact I’m not that close at all. I’ve only done it a few times; when I was scared and when I was ...” I looked at Rachel and smiled. “When I was ... attracted to ...” I trailed off, everyone could figure out what I meant, seeing that I was looking at Rachel. Alex snickered.

It was then our turn to tell them about our powers. I didn’t tell them that I was an alien; I couldn’t be certain to trust them yet. I was actually kind of surprised that they didn’t know ... or they knew but pretended not to. I wondered if they even knew that Intex was an alien, the same ... species that I am: Rextonian. I thought about how that sounded, it had a ring to it. It sounded better than humans, or Homo sapiens.

Alex seemed the most intrigue about our powers. He seemed like a very hyper person and sure liked to talk a lot. Nick, Grace and Mara didn't seem to mind. As we were explaining our powers and how we could control them and such, Bruce would look at Mara the most. I knew Bruce well enough to know that he was already having a crush on her; she didn't seem to show much emotion. I could tell that she was very shy.

"So, I see that you guys have all met." Intex said from behind us. We all spun to look at him standing in the doorway.

"Where'd you go?" I asked him.

He ignored the question. "How was St. Reynolds?"

"Just perfect. No problem whatsoever. We made good friends with the Excellency."

"What?!" Intex was shocked. "With *him*? I thought he was a guy with little patience."

"Well, thanks to you, unfortunately, he has opened up to us and solved his problems."

"He ... you-you know everything?"

"Yep. We know it all."

"The dragons weren't a problem at all," Bruce said. "Thanks to you, they gave us flowers and hugs. We danced and played musical chairs."

Intex's jaw dropped, and he looked shocked. He was buying it, well making not the part with the partying with the dragons.

"Yeah, thanks to you giving the Excellency his gift, all of the dragons were nice to us." Rachel said, going along with it.

"Very well then," Intex said, his expression changing to determination. "I guess that I'll have to go back there and kill him."

“NO!” Rachel exclaimed. “You can’t.”

“Why not? He promised to not tell the dragons to not hurt the humans.”

“He did?” I asked. I shook my head, smiling. “We weren’t being serious about that. I thought that was a given. The dragons actually wanted us for dinner.”

“Really?” He narrowed his eyes at us. “Well, then ... I guess that he can live ... for now. But as for you guys, you're dead.” He uttered the word: *guys*, though he was only looking at me, hating me the worst.

“You know,” Nick started. “The future might have already changed. Mark may not stop you by himself; but we are going to help him.”

“No,” Intex said. “I’ve seen it. I know what happens. I'm going to kill all of you, but first I’ll kill you, Mark.”

A blur appeared in front of me, coming focus behind Intex. Something metal hit Intex in the back of the head. Intex’s skin turned into metal, protecting him from the blow. Intex spun around, facing Alex to grab the metal rod from his hands. Without hesitation, Intex raised the rod to strike Alex with it, but Alex was too quick for him, running fast towards us. Intex swung at the air. Alex laughed at him, mocking him.

“Where’d everything go?” I asked Intex, once again.

Intex glared at me. “You would be the last person on Earth I would tell!” he scoffed. “I moved it, and you're not going to find out where it is.”

Intex raised his hand, shooting lava towards me. Just inches from hitting my face, the lava is stopped by the help of Nick having replicated Bruce’s telekinesis.

Intex was furious. He looked as if he was going to do something more, but he stopped. He smiled. "I got a surprise for all of you." Just then he disappeared out of thin air.

"Well, that wasn't that surprising," Bruce said. "Bryan could do *that*."

But that wasn't the surprise. Intex came back, but with someone else. Or something else. He brought along another hulking person, or experiment. He was very muscular, also having cat-like eyes, his nose looked like that of a gorilla and he had dark hair all over his body except for his face.

"Surprise!" Intex exclaimed. "Meet the Terminator. He's my greatest creation yet! He's part Panther Padres, and Pongidae Primata. Or for you stupid idiots, he's part panther and gorilla." Intex smiled. "Now, Terminator, kill them. Kill them all, but start with Mark."

The Terminator smiled, showing yellow, ugly fangs. It roared, running towards me, fast and quick, probably the panther part of him. I jumped out of the way as he pounces at me. He whips his body completely around, spinning with his knuckles on the floor. He grabbed me around the neck. I immediately punched him in the face, but he didn't even so much as flinch, as if it caused him no pain.

I couldn't breathe. As my vision started to blur, I got extremely light-headed. I struggled to break free from the Terminator's powerful grip, kicking and punching. He seemed to not feel a thing.

I was ripped from Terminator's grip. I gasped a few breaths as my sight came back to me. I looked to see that Nick was fighting the Terminator, moving as quickly as the Terminator was. Either Bruce or Nick had saved me, surely.

I glanced at Intex, he seemed to be excited, thought it seemed to fade. Nick must've been ruining his fun. The Terminator hit Nick hard, but Nick only hit him back, as if he did not really feel a thing. Nick was replicating The Terminator's abilities. They punched at each other, making it noticeable that Nick was better at combat than the Terminator.

It seemed that Bruce didn't want Nick to have all of the fun and glory, because he took to it to push the Terminator over, only to then throw the Terminator towards the ceiling. Nick watched as the Terminator hit the ceiling hard only to come back down fast. Nick made sure to get out of the way, looking over at Bruce, knowing that he had used his telekinesis to throw The Terminator upwards.

I got through with rubbing my neck, thought it was still sore. As if realizing this, my neck seemed to heal as I felt the burning sensation; the pain vanished and healed.

The Terminator was about ten feet from hitting the floor, but landed on all fours, like a cat. He then jumped up onto his back legs and rested some of his weight on his knuckles, like a gorilla. He stood on his legs again and roared, pounding his chest, looking very ridiculous. He was furious, though.

I looked at the spot in the floor in which he landed, finding that he had put four dents into it, being a cement floor. I shook my head in disbelief.

The Terminator looked at Bruce, furious that he was thrown by him, but then he remembered his assignment; he was to kill me first. He darted towards me.

I prepared myself, planting my feet and throwing my hands up. He got within three feet from me, but the world changed around me as I found that I was somewhere else; about twenty feet behind him. I suddenly felt the lightheadedness. Someone's hands release me. I turned around to see Alex. He winked at me. Alex had grabbed me, using his super speed to pull me away from being hit.

I smiled at him, though I could've probably taken on The Terminator. Alex wasn't aware of my training and skills that I possessed.

Terminator stood there, prepared for any one of our moves. I took a glance at Bruce; he was looking at the Terminator then to Mara. I glanced at Mara and Grace; it seemed that they were communicating with each other telepathically. They probably did without much effort, doing naturally. It looked like Mara was upset.

"Intex," she exclaimed. "You're sick!" she said furiously. "This is your *creation*?" she scoffed. "You're insulting nature. A gorilla and a panther are supposed to be two separate and unique, beautiful animals!"

Intex just laughed.

The Terminator pounced by pushing off of its back legs to sprang at me. This time it jumped over me, completely missing me. It scurried at me, but I easily dodged it by doing a summersault.

Alex just grazed my shirt, running at a fast speed. He realized that I wasn't going to get hit so backed away. He did not know about my Kung Fu training, yet again.

Mara looked angry, ashamed of what Intex had created. She got ready for battle, throwing up her arms. She didn't look like a girl that would put herself in that position, but she wanted to show Intex up. She charged at Terminator.

"Mara, no!" Bruce exclaimed.

Mara ignored Bruce and kept running towards the Terminator. Just a few feet short of reaching Terminator she jumped up, grabbing Terminator by his shoulders, using her feet like a hawk. She pulled out her wings, flapping them while flapping her arms as well. She carried Terminator up into the air to throw him into a wall. She landed on her feet, only using just one hand for support.

Mara stood on her feet; a couple of seconds later the Terminator did the same. The Terminator ran towards her, but suddenly stopped to turn around to run towards me first. Mara wasn't fooling around. She jumped towards him like a lion, biting down on his neck. It wasn't a pretty sight. She looked scary. She had actually transformed her body into a lion.

The Terminator roared in pain, throwing his arms around. He hit Mara hard and she let go off him to fall towards the ground. Bruce caught her just in time. The Terminator ran at me as I shook my head; I just flipped my body forwards to land onto its back. I hit it as hard as I could, but didn't stop at one. It roared at each hit I gave it. It didn't take long and the Terminator grabbed me, thus throwing me.

I was thrown into a wall, landing hard on the ground. Alex looked ashamed of himself that he didn't save me. The hit to the wall hurt very much so. I couldn't get up at first, so I just sat there.

Bruce jumped forward, after making sure that Mara was okay. He raised his arms, using his telekinesis to throw metal chairs at the Terminator.

I sighed, waiting for my regenerative power to kick in.

The Terminator didn't seem to feel anything from the hit of the chair, continuing to walk towards me. It jumped at me, but missed as I jumped to flip myself over him. My body finished regenerating.

I threw my arms out, immediately breaking out into a fight. It was relying on its strength to fight, while I used my training.

The Terminator blocked a few of my shots here and there, and it hurt. All he did was throw his arm out to block mine, but he was so strong. I was bouncing all over the place, kicking him and punching him. He only made a few hits at me, when he could, but when he did it hurt. He was very strong.

He was also fast too. He —it— was very agile and would've moved as fast as I could, if it had my training. It was my training that kept me going. Suddenly, the Terminator was thrown across the room, and then he was thrown into Intex. I looked around to see that both Nick and Bruce were working together. Intex threw him off.

“Kill them!!” Intex yelled. “Quit stalling and kill them!!”

The Terminator jumped to hit feet and Intex did also, looking furious. Terminator ran towards me and was directly towards a wall as it tried to stop itself. Bruce kept making him turn in other directions and threw some other things at it.

Alex ran around it, carrying things with him and just as he would run past, he would let go of something and let it hit the Terminator. The Terminator was getting very annoyed. It did a back flip and landed on top of me. It took no hesitation and started beating the crap out of me. I tried my best to block its punches, but it was very strong.

The Terminator took no break and kept punching me. I felt horrible. My nose had to be broken and if he punched it just right it would be shoved into my brain. I tried to fight back, but the Terminator was too strong. Suddenly the Terminator's punches slowed, but he still tried to kill me. I was close to passing out, but I held on. Bruce or Nick was holding back the Terminator. I knew that neither of them was stronger than each

other. Bruce was still practicing his telekinesis, and Nick was using it by only replicating Bruce's power, so he never practiced.

Terminator jumped off of me and back flipped and kicked Bruce in his face. Bruce fell to the ground in an instance. Nick telekinetically shoved Terminator and ran towards him and punched him, absorbing either my strength or Rachel's. The Terminator just kicked Nick and shoved him into a wall. Nick immediately passed out. Terminator kicked Bruce before he could get back up.

My face started burning as I was starting to heal. My nose felt awkward and I felt it, it seemed out of place. My nose was starting to heal, but right now it would heal wrong. I started to straighten it, but it hurt even worse. But I had to make sure that it would heal right, so determined, I managed to straighten it out, yelling in pain. This immediately drew the Terminator's attention and Intex's.

The Terminator jumped right on top of me, and started punching me all over again. It felt like Mara, Grace, Nick and Alex didn't have any sort of training, because Bruce and I were doing all of the work. But now Bruce was knocked unconscious. Just then the Terminator's head was kicked forward by Rachel. Rachel kicked the Terminator off of me, but it immediately got right back up and threw a punch at Rachel. Rachel dodged it and started punching it.

I felt like crap, but I knew that if I just roll the pain out, then the Terminator would kill us. Despite all of the pain that I was in, I jumped to my feet and wobbled a little. My head was spinning. Rachel jumped and kicked it in the face, but he only was stunned for a second. Just then he punched Rachel hard in the face, sending her flying.

"Rachel!!!!!!!!!!!" I yelled at the top of my lungs.

I charged at it, throwing punches and kicked, avoiding any blows that it threw at me. Mara jumped forward, looking fierce. She jumped right over top of the terminator, but he wasn't even focus on her at all,

but on me. I continued to dodge his punches, and remembered not to block them, because he was strong. My face was starting to heal and I felt dried blood cracking on my face.

I punched the terminator in the nose hard. It back away a few feet and shook its head and punched at me, but missed completely. Mara suddenly kicked him hard in the back, using some sort of animal power. The Terminator fell to his face and then Grace jumped out of nowhere and hit him with a metal rod.

Before the rod hit anything or anyone, Intex gasped. Grace stabbed the metal bar into the Terminator's back. It rose to its feet and looked at all of us. He shuddered and then reached its arm around his back. It pulled the metal rod out of its back and groaned in pain. It took the rod and swung at all of us, but we all ducked missing it.

I jumped forward and kicked it in the face. I kicked it again and again and grabbed the metal rod out of its hands and swung it across the terminator's head. Then it suddenly kicked me, sending me across the room until I hit a wall, hard.

Alex picked up the metal rod and charged super-fast at the Terminator. The Metal rod pierced all of the way through the Terminator. It stopped in its tracks and looked down at the rod, and then it looked back up and gave a blank stare. It fell to the ground, face first, shoving the rod further. Intex was stunned.

Intex also looked scared, but only for a second. But then I wasn't sure what he felt, because then he was gone. He teleported.

I immediately ran to Rachel. I held her in my arms. I looked at her nose, it was definitely bleeding, but I wasn't sure if it was broken or not. "Rachel, wake up!" I exclaimed.

I heard a groan, but it came from Bruce. He sat up and immediately looked around for Terminator. He saw that it was dead, with a metal rod stuck all of the way through its back and chest. The next thing he no-

ticed was Rachel and I. I tried to get her to wake up. I leaned down to listen to her breathing, but I didn't hear anything. I felt for a pulse, but got nothing.

“Rachel!!” I screamed. “Wake up.”

Bruce got to his feet and ran over to me and Rachel. Alex ran up to Nick and shook him. A few seconds later, he woke up, gasping. Nick looked all around, absorbing in what had happened. Nick probably was healing already, but not Rachel. I gently shook her and then listened for her breathing again. I didn't feel or hear anything coming from her. I started blowing into her mouth, trying to get her to breathe.

I wiped the tears on my face, also smearing blood onto my hands. I softly stroked Rachel's hair and her face. I cried and gently touched a cut that she had on her cheek. I noticed the blood on my thumb that I had smeared from my face onto it. I looked at Rachel's cut. I wondered if I could use my blood to heal her. I whipped more of the blood off of my face and tried to put it into Rachel's cut and waited, but nothing seemed to happen. Rachel wasn't waking up.

I looked at Nick, who knelt down beside me. "Can you help her?" I asked him.

"I can try." Nick said. He laid his hands on top of Rachel's head and chest. He closed his eyes and concentrated. A few seconds passed and Rachel's cut on her face started to close up. Rachel's nose seemed to be alright. Any other cuts and bruises on Rachel disappeared. He kept his hands over top of Rachel, but she still wasn't waking up.

"Come on, Rachel." I cried.

Seconds passed and felt like minutes. I shook Rachel. "Come on!!" I yelled. "Wake up!" I cried more. I leaned down slowly and pressed my lips against hers and kissed her. "I love you," I said, "but I can't do this without you. I need you with me. You can't leave me. We need to stick together."

I thought about what all had happened in this week. Rachel got kidnapped and we rescued her, but she didn't return home. She stayed with us. Then we were sent to St. Reynolds and now we came back here and killed the Terminator, sort of brought down this particular Creative Works, but now Rachel was ...

Nick took his hands off of Rachel's head. "I'm sorry," he said. "I can't help her."

"NO!!" I yelled at him. "Don't give up." I grabbed his hands and put them back on her.

"I can't do anything."

"Yes you can!!"

Nick sighed. "I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do for her. She's ..." he wasn't going to say it.

I cried, my tear drops falling onto Rachel. I reached my hands around her and picked her up, holding her close to me. I held her tight in my arms. "Come on, Rachel." I held her head close to me, stroking her hair. I felt blood on the back of her head, but Nick had already closed the wound.

I saw a cut on her arm, Nick hadn't closed it. I looked around on me, all of my wounds healed. I looked around on the floor and found a piece of glass. I took it to my arm and made a big cut. I let the blood fall into Rachel's cut on her arm.

"Please work." I cried. "Please wake up Rachel."

I waited and waited. Seconds passed. Minutes passed. I let more of my blood fall into Rachel's cut, but she wasn't waking up. She wasn't healing. My blood couldn't save her. I cried into her shoulder.

"Come on, Mark." Bruce said. "She's ..."

"Wait!!" I yelled.

I heard something. I leaned closer and listened to Rachel. I heard a faint heartbeat. "Her heart's beating!!" I exclaimed. I listened for her breathing and heard it to be very light. "She's alive!! Come on, Rachel! Wake up!"

She groaned and grunted, but she was still asleep. I looked at the cut on her arm. It was healing. Her cut was healing; my blood had saved her.

"Come on!" I said. "Let's go to my house."

I smiled, looking at Rachel's face. I felt so relieved. She was alive, but would just have to recover. I picked her up and held her in my arms. I got up and we headed towards the door.

“Let me help you,” Nick offered.

I shook my head. “That’s alright, I got her.” I was still crying, but they weren’t tears of sadness any more. It was relief and happiness; Rachel was alive. Bruce led the way and the rest of us followed. Then Bruce stopped.

“What?” I asked.

“Shouldn’t we, like, burn this place down or something?” Bruce asked.

“Yeah!” Alex exclaimed. “Let burn it to the ground! I’m so tired of this place.”

“Well,” I said. “What’s the easiest way to take down a building?”

“Burn it,” Grace said.

“Well, I guess we burn it.”

“Alex,” Nick nodded to him. “Find something to burn this place down.”

Rachel gasped in my arms, and I immediately looked down at her. She still didn’t wake, but she was recovering.

Alex ran around the whole building and came back in a second with a torch.

“Well, what are you waiting for?” Nick asked Alex.

Alex pressed the trigger on the torch, but it didn’t start. He pressed a second time but it still didn’t light. By the third strike it created a flame. Immediately, Alex got to work and started burning things down. He burnt broken walls, desks and tables, and then he started running around practically throwing fire around, but not literally. There were files scattered all over the place, dumped from file cabinets and Alex caught

them on fire. Pretty soon, there were a lot of things a fire and in a couple of minutes it would spread to the whole building.

“Now let's get the heck out of here!” I yelled.

We all ran towards the door.

“What about how we look?” Alex asked. “What are people going to think when they see us all beat up?”

“Let the burning building explain it.” I said.

We all charged out of the building, startling people outside. We rushed past people, Bruce and I leading the way to our house. I heard people ask if we were alright, but we kept running. Then we started to slow, realizing that we didn't need to be running anymore. We avoided making any eye contact.

We made it to my house, without attracting too much attention. I set Rachel down on the couch and everyone else looked around. Bruce was smiling.

“What?” I asked him.

“Blade,” he replied.

I laughed. “Do you want to go check to see if he's still there?”

“Sure, I doubt it though.” Bruce walked off, heading downstairs.

I crouched down next to Rachel and started stroking her hair. I could definitely see that she was breathing; her chest was moving up and down, heavily. I kissed her on the forehead and lay my head against hers. I started falling asleep; I was so worn out.

“He's gone,” Bruce said, waking me up. “Blade left. He crashed the basement.”

I laughed, lifting my head. “He must've been furious when he realized where he was.” I stretched and yawned. I immediately looked at Rachel, she looked good. She didn't have any bruises on her at all; nor any cuts. She looked healthy, but she was still asleep, and she looked like she was sleeping peacefully.

“He torn all of the chains apart,” Bruce said.

“Are you asking me to take a look?” I asked.

“Well, yeah.”

“Holy crap!” I heard Alex exclaim from downstairs.

“Alright,” I said, getting up. I took a long look at Rachel. She could wait on me for a minute.

I followed Bruce downstairs and immediately my attention was drawn to the wreckage. Blade must've been more than furious. The whole basement was flipped upside down. My weights from my lifting equipment were thrown everywhere, pieces of chains were everywhere other than by the chair, which was ... clear across the room, lying on its side. The basement smelled like sweat ... and dog breath. I actually found myself smiling, even when we had to clean this up.

“What a mess,” I sighed. “Blade must've gone bonkers.”

“So,” Alex said. “You guys locked Blade down here?”

It was Alex, Bruce and I that were downstairs, everyone else was upstairs.

“Yeah,” Bruce said. “We kidnapped him and pretended that we were actually kidnappers.”

“We had lights shining on him all of the time,” I said, “so he was blinded and couldn’t make out our faces. We tried our best to change our voices so that he wouldn’t recognize us.”

“Man!” Alex exclaimed. “He was a really beast back at Creative Works.” Alex sighed, thinking back to it. “He was so mean to us. He always was the one that tortured us. Intex would want us to join sides with him, but we always refused. The first time we refused, Intex killed ...” Alex stopped and held back a sob, and kept his voice from breaking. “He killed our parents. Some of us thought about giving in, but it was Nick that told us to refuse. He kept reminding us that Intex was evil and corrupt, and working for him would be horrible, and that it wouldn’t bring our parents back. So we kept refusing to side with Intex, so Blade was the one to torture us ... and he loved it.” He paused and perked up. “And you guys treated him like dirt!” he exclaimed. “You guys are so awesome! I can't imagine how angry Blade was to realize that it was you guys that locked him up.”

“Yeah,” I said. I was still thinking about what Alex had just told us. “Alex ... I'm sorry ... about your parents.”

Alex nodded. “Do you guys have coffee?” He quickly changed topic, getting away from all of this touchy stuff.

I looked to Bruce. “Umm ...” Bruce thought about it. “If we have any at all, it would be very little. It’s hard up to like in New York City, so we don’t have that much.”

“Oh. That’s alright.” Alex sighed. “It’s just that I haven’t had coffee in ... ages — forever. I’ve been locked up in Creative Works for so long.”

“Let's ... I don't know,” I said. “Do we want to clean up this mess right now?” I asked myself and Bruce.

“I can.” Alex said, and suddenly in a flash everything was clean.

“What the heck?” I exclaimed, looking all around. I looked at Alex, who was out of breath. “You didn't have to do that. We could've cleaned it.”

“It's the least I can do. I want to be a good ... guest here.”

“You're not a guest; you're a member of this ... household.”

“What you do with the chains?” Bruce asked.

Alex pointed to a barrel in the corner. “In there.”

“Well,” I said. “Let's ... go upstairs.”

Once we made it upstairs, I immediately walked to Rachel. She was still on the couch, right where I left her. The TV was on with the news on. There was a report about a building catching fire. It was Creative Works. The reporters were puzzled, because there was nothing left in the in the building. It was completely empty. They really didn't know much about the building, but that it was a record keeping company and a transporting company — yeah right.

“Oh God!” Bruce exclaimed.

“What?” I replied, looking up.

Bruce had the phone up to his ear. “I was listening to the messages ... we got fired from our jobs, Mark.”

“Crap. We haven't showed up in a week, because we were at St. Reynolds.”

“St. Reynolds, huh?” Nick asked.

“Yeah.”

“Intex must really hate you guys.”

“Well, we made friends with the Excellency there, so he made sure he got us home.” I paused. “Bruce, you should try calling them back and explain to them that you were sick and maybe you could get away with it.”

“I got a better idea,” Bruce said. “How about I saw that that one strange back pain I had before that made me fall to the ground, rolling in pain ... maybe I can say that I was in the hospital all week.”

“Well, he's gonna want to know what was wrong.”

“Umm ... I could tell him that I had a tumor.”

“Well ... that's a bit of a stretch isn't it, Bruce?”

“Well it fits, doesn't it?”

“I ... guess.” I paused. “Just tell him what you want.”

Bruce inhaled and exhaled and dialed the number for the Manhattan Bakery. He started to explain to the boss why he hadn't come in and the boss believed every word of it. He had a gullible boss. After a few minutes, Bruce hung the phone up. He looked at me blankly, and then smiled.

“I got my job back!” he exclaimed.

“So,” Alex asked. “What about you Mark?”

“I'll have to see.” I said. “Wait! You guys need to help out around here too. Some of you should try to get jobs. If we lived somewhere in nowheresville we could get away with one or two people working, but not in New York City.”

They all nodded. Just then, Rachel started groaning. She was waking up.

I immediately got close to Rachel. I knelt down next to her and stroke her hair. "Rachel?" I said softly.

She groaned and opened her eyes. She immediately looked around to see where we were. She perked up straight, looking for anything dangerous, but then she calmed down. "What happened?"

"We stopped the Terminator and burned down Creative Works." I explained.

Rachel slowly raised her hand and touched the back of her head. She felt for any cuts, but there were none. She looked at her arms and saw how healthy they looked. Then she looked puzzled.

"Mark!" she exclaimed. "For several weeks, I've had a scab on my arm, here." She pointed to it. "But now it's gone. All of my injuries are gone ... how?"

"It was me." I said. "You ... you weren't responding, you seemed ... dead. So I did what I could only think of. I put my blood into one of your cuts. I figured that since I have accelerated healing that my blood may be able to transfer that to you, at least temporarily, so that you would heal."

"Well, it looks like it worked." She smiled. "Thank you, Mark." She leaned forward with her arms out, and we embraced in a hug. We hugged for a long minute and then she laid a kiss on my lips. Alex "oohed" and Nick scoffed.

Rachel got up as I did the same. "So," she said. "You guys stopped Terminator?"

"Yes," I said. "We used a metal rod and stabbed it."

“Oh, how ... delightful,” she said sarcastically. She thought for a minute. “I think I should call my parents, they probably worried sick about me.”

“Oh,” Bruce spoke up. “I saw another number that was on the missed calls list, it might’ve been your parents.”

“Yeah, I better call them.” Rachel walked to the phone and already started dialing.

“So,” I said to Bruce. “I better see if I can get my job back.” I pulled out my number and went to the contacts. I found the business: *Stanley’s Building CO*. I clicked send and it rang and rang. Finally someone answered and I asked for Stanley himself, but she said that he wasn’t available right now. “Okay,” I said. “Well, could you let him know that this is Mark?”

“Mark!?” she exclaimed. “Yeah I can let him know, but ... where have you been?”

I sighed. “Umm ... I was with my housemate ... he was sick and in the hospital, so I was with him all week.”

“Aww, well that’s too bad. Well, why didn’t you call?”

“I guess that I didn’t have the time.”

“Well, okay. I’ll let him know that you called, and we’ll get back to you.”

“Okay, thanks.”

“No problem. Bye.”

“Alright, bye.” I closed my phone shut.

“What’s up?” Bruce asked. “Well, my boss wasn’t available, so I’ll have to see.” I paused and looked at the rest of our crew; the new members. “You guys are going to have to help out here ... big time ... especially

now. We are behind in our bills by a week. And plus, we've missed out training with Kung Fu."

"That explains how you guys were so good at fighting!" Grace exclaimed.

"Didn't you hear us talking about it?"

"Oh, I didn't realize that that was what you were talking about."

*Don't lose focus on your real mission.*

"Of course." I said.

"Of course, what?" Bruce asked.

"What you said — wait!" I exclaimed. "Who said that?" Everyone had puzzled looks on their faces. I looked at Rachel and saw that she was laughing and talking on the phone with her parents. I turned back to everyone else. "I know what it was," I came to realization. "Lately, there has been this new voice that has come into my head. It doesn't talk much at all, but only when it needs to. Right now it just said, 'don't lose focus on your real mission.' Our real mission is to stop Intex."

"Well... uh... ¿No acabamos de ver que cuando se tomó su edificio?" Mara said.

"Uh, what?" I asked, totally clueless to what she just said.

"Uh, sorry." Mara paused and thought. "We ... stop building ... fire ... burn down ... we finish mission, right?"

"Oh, no ... Intex moved everything to another building. He's got more buildings, I'm sure of it. I'm not sure where, though. We might be able to find out where if we look for anything that Intex may have left behind. The building was completely empty before we burnt it down, right? So that means that everything was moved; moved to another building."

“Entiendo.” Mara said, nodding. She understood me.

“Okay good.”

“Hey,” Grace said. “You don’t need to try to talk simpler for Mara, just talk normal. She can understand you just fine, it’s just she has a hard time speaking English.” It looked as if Grace and Mara were talking to each other by thought.

I went back to thinking about the voice in my head. All of the sudden this voice was talking to me. It has only happened a few times. I thought that it may be my father’s voice, Bart. But I wasn’t for sure, because I have asked it before, but it didn’t reply. But I knew what to do right now; I had to find out where Intex had moved to.

Rachel got off of the phone and walked back towards me. She was smiling, even though her eyes looked watery. “Yup,” she said. “My parents were really worried. They said that they were almost about to drive here to New York. I had to explain in simplest terms about what happened.”

“What about you getting hurt?” I asked. “Did you tell them that?”

“Umm ... well, no. That would’ve made them worry more.”

“Do they want you back home?”

“Of course they do, but they said that I’m old enough to make my own decisions.”

“Well, what do you want to do?”

“I want to be with you Mark.” She paused, looked down and then looked back at me. She started flushing. “Because, I love you, but ...”

“But? Why is there a ‘but’ in there?” I smiled.

“I want to spend some good time with my parents before coming back. Plus I can pack up the rest of my things.”

“I see. That’s fine.”

“Yeah ... so I ... err, uh, they said that they’ll come here by plane and pick me up to go back home with them.”

“How long will you be gone?”

“Just a few weeks at the most.”

“Okay.” I gave her a big hug and a soft kiss.

“I’m not leaving just yet.”

“What’s wrong with a hug and a kiss right now?”

“Nothing, I guess.”

“Just so you know; I love you too.” She smiled and I smiled back at her. I could see Nick out of my peripheral vision shaking his head. I looked at him and realized that he was shaking his head at Alex, who was probably making fun of us, but really it was because he was jealous.

“I guess I ought to get ready to leave,” Rachel said, and she walked back to our room.

All of the sudden, my head felt like it was going to explode and I fell to the floor. I groaned in pain and rolled around. Inside my head I heard a whole lot of noise and voices. My head ached, and felt like it was throbbing. If someone was asking if I was alright, I couldn’t tell, because there were so many other voices in my head, all at once. I had no idea what the heck was happening. I tried to calm down, but nothing was happening, I continued to hear so many voices all at once. It was like sitting in the middle of a football game, except everyone had microphones on and had the volume on and amplified.

Gradually, the voices started to make phrases and words. I was starting to understand some things. I heard phrases like, *‘move out of the way, I’m late for work,’* *‘darn this traffic!’*, *‘okay, if I just continue straight*

*and make a left and I'll be there,' and 'what a beautiful day out in Central Park.'* The rest of the voices were all jumbled and just noise. The voices all seemed like what people were thinking. Suddenly, it all stopped and my head cleared. I opened my eyes and saw everyone in my house crowded around me, they were all worried. My ears were ringing.

I sat up and felt something wet roll down my cheeks and lip. I wiped away tears and blood. That's how bad the noise was; it made me cry and made my nose bleed.

"Oh my god, Mark," Rachel cried. "Are you alright?" she was knelt down next to me, stroking my hair.

"I don't know what just happened," I said. "All of the sudden I was hearing all of these voices in my head."

"Ones like that one voice that you just heard that you were talking about?" Nick asked.

"No. They sounded like people here in New York City. They were people talking about the traffic, and one was from Central Park, saying how beautiful it was outside." My head still hurt and I tried rubbing it, as if it would help.

"Was it a new power?" Bruce asked me.

"I'm not sure."

"Maybe it was like super hearing," Alex said.

"No," Rachel said. "With super hearing, if you heard all of that noise all at once, your ears would bleed. Trust me, I have super hearing."

"What, has that happened?" Grace asked Rachel.

"Yes, but just once, at my parents' house."

“No,” I agreed with Rachel. “I don’t think it was super hearing. It didn’t sound like what people would say; it was more like what people would think. I think that I was reading people’s thoughts.”

“Like, Grace and me?” Mara asked.

“Yeah, except I read everyone’s mind.”

“What’s that called?” Rachel asked.

“Mind reading,” Grace said.

“No, telepathy,” Bruce said.

“Telepathy ...” I said, slowly. “Well, it sure hurts.” I gave a weak chuckle and I slowly got up to my feet, Rachel helped me up.

“Let’s go to your room,” Rachel said walked me down the hall.

We sat down on our beds. We each had our own bed, so there was two in my room. We just thought about things and how much has happened recently, only this time, I was reading her mind. Just then I remembered something. When we were at St. Reynolds, with the dragons, I remembered that I read her mind then too. It was when she was flying and trying to carry me. She was thinking that I was getting heavy. At first I thought she said it, but she actually thought it. I was gaining telepathy. But it wasn't coming easy; it was painful ... just now anyway.

The next morning I woke up early. I had a lot on my mind. We had to find out where Intex had moved to, and Rachel was going back home today, just for a little while. I looked across the room and saw Rachel sitting up on her bed, she was waking. She was sitting her head on her hands in between her knees, thinking.

“How are you doing, Rachel?” I asked her.

“I’m fine,” she said. “I ... I don’t know ... I miss my parents and want to be back with them, but I want to be with you at the same time. I’m ... Mark ... I-I just love you, and I don’t want to leave you.”

“Oh, Rachel.” I got up and walked over to her. I sat down on her little bed. “You’re so sweet.” I stroked her hair.

She looked up at me and smiled. “You gave me quite a scare yesterday.”

“I’m sorry, I guess.”

“There’s no reason to be sorry ... you-you couldn’t help it. You’re just developing another super ability.” She paused and it was silent for a long while. “Do you ... often wonder about, umm ... err-do you still feel human, you know, after you found out the truth?”

“Well... I always thought I was normal until that one cut that I got from those hairy monsters and it healed quickly. Then my parents told me the truth that I was from another planet. I still have trouble believing it. That ... there is life outside of this world. But I still feel human. I look human and ... I have the same feelings as humans do. I have feelings for you, just ... like you do. But, I’m not human. I’m ... Rextonian.”

“Well, I found it hard to believe too, until we went to St. Reynolds. That helped me envision other life outside of Earth, so I can believe that Rexton once existed.”

“Yeah, because now it’s gone ... a plant virus wiped the planet.”

“Well, Mark. You still feel like a human to me, but a much stronger human.”

I chuckled and flexed my biceps, and looked down at them. They were looking pretty awesome. This super strength of mine was developing and showing in my arms; plus I was working out too. Rachel felt my bicep and chuckled.

“That’s hot,” she said. I smiled.

“So are you,” I said.

She leaned towards me and gave me a soft kiss right on the lips. “I love you.”

“I love you, too.”

She looked back down at the floor and sighed. “I won’t be gone long ... just a few weeks. I want to say bye to my parents ... for now ... I don’t know about forever. I guess you don’t realize how much you miss them until you’re not around them. Don’t you feel the same?”

“Yeah, but I’m not with them, because the voice in my head told me that I had to leave them, to protect them. Because of all of the danger around me, I didn’t want to put them at risk.”

Rachel smiled. “What about me? You put me in danger.”

“I know, and it pains me. You almost ... you-you could’ve ...”

“Don’t say it, Mark.”

“It’s my fault, too. I put you in danger.”

“No it’s not. I chose to be with you, because I love you.”

“I’m curious ... Rachel, how long have you actually loved me?”

She smiled. “How long?” I nodded. “I don’t know ... I mean ... I always have liked you and Bruce. I enjoyed playing with you guys, but I guess for about two years I started to have a crush on you.”

“Not Bruce?”

“No. I mean he is cute, but he’s ... he’s different. He’s tries to act cool sometimes, but he’s not really.”

“That’s Bruce.” I laughed. “You know what I think?”

“What’s that?”

“I think Bruce has a crush on Mara.”

Rachel chuckled. “I’ve noticed that too. He’s always looking at her. And whenever she says something, he pays close attention to her.”

“Yup.” I laughed. “Oh, Bruce ...” I shook my head, thinking about things we used to do together, but now we were starting to kick butt, back-to-back.

“So,” Rachel started. “Are you going to stay here?”

“Yeah, I have to take care of this house and check out Creative Works and see if we can find out where Intex moved.”

“Yeah, but it’s more like Disaster Works.”

“Yeah, you got that right.” I thought back to all of the people there that Intex called experiments. “That place ... it was sick. Intex ... doing all those horrible things to those poor people ... and how he experimented on you guys; that terrified me. I thought he had ...”

“Don’t think about it,” Rachel said. “We’re fine. Intex made us more powerful.”

“Yeah, but he was hoping you guys would work for him, but I broke you guys out.”

Suddenly I heard some shuffling of feet in the kitchen. I was about to get up and check it out, but Rachel grabbed my arm and stopped me.

“It’s only Bruce,” she said. “I can tell by the sound of his breathing.” I cocked my head and raised an eyebrow. “I’ve learned how different you guys sound from each other. You all have a different sound that you guys make, so I can tell who’s who. An easy way to figure out who’s who is to listen to your breathing.”

“Wow,” I said. “You have good hearing.”

“Yeah, it’s like dog ears.”

“Maybe I should start calling you dog ears.”

“Umm, no thanks.” We laughed.

“Yeah, Bruce is probably making some breakfast. He’s gotta go to work today. He got his job back.”

“Good for him.”

“Yeah, he's got a nice boss; gone for a week, but his boss hired him back. I just have to see if my boss is just as friendly.”

“Who's this?” Rachel asked herself, tilting her head, using her super hearing. “Heavy and fast breathing. Fast heart rate. Who do you think it is?”

“Alex.”

“Yep.”

Rachel and I sighed at the same time, and then we looked at each other, and then laughed. For the next couple minutes we just looked at each other, smiling.

Rachel was already packed, but her parents haven't arrived yet. They were going to call when they arrived at the airport. Rachel let her bags be in our room and she and I walked into the kitchen. Bruce had already made a bowl of oatmeal for himself and was already eating. I looked at the time, it was seven O' clock. Bruce had to get to work in a few minutes. The Manhattan Bakery wasn't that far from here, it was just the traffic that he had to worry about.

Bruce looked nervous, probably because this was his first time going back to work, after being fired and re-hired, and probably also because of lying to his boss. He had explained that he was in the hospital because of that strange pain that he had in his back, which he had, but never actually went to the hospital for.

Alex was looking around, running around, and using his super speed. He was looking for what to make for breakfast. All of the sudden there was a cook book on the counter. Then there was flour and then sugar and suddenly all of the ingredients for pancakes were out, and then before we knew it, he was beating the recipe together in a mixing bowl.

"What are you doing, Alex?" I asked.

"Making breakfast," he said, sounding a little out of breath.

"Well, why are you in such a hurry?"

"Oh, sorry I can't help it." Just then he started mixing it slower. He got out a frying pan and plugged it in.

"You still have to wait for that to heat up," Rachel said. "You should've plugged that in first, and then made that pancake batter slower so you would've have to wait as long on that frying pan."

“Oh, well,” Alex trailed off.

I looked at Rachel and she smiled at me. The two of us walked to the table and I sat next to Bruce. We waited for the frying pan to warm up, so that we could eat some pancakes.

“What are you worried about, Bruce?” I asked.

“I don’t know. I’m afraid that my boss will ask more about what happened,” Bruce replied.

“Well, why don’t you tell him that it’s a little personal, after all it is, isn’t it?”

Bruce nodded. “Yeah, I don’t want to tell him that my back pain was because of growing a pair of wings.”

“Besides, Bruce, your boss is very nice, especially compared to practically any other boss here in New York City.” I paused. “I don’t even know if I got my job back.”

I looked at Alex who was looking at us, standing in front of the frying pan. “What are you good at?” I asked Alex.

“Me?” Alex pointlessly asked. “Umm ... cooking? I don’t know ... uh —”

“Making trouble,” Nick said, walking out from the hallway.

“What about you Nick?” I asked him.

“I’m good at a lot of stuff, why?”

“Because, we need to put you guys to work. I want you guys to go out and apply at every place you walk by. So dress nicely.”

“What about finding out about where Creative Works moved?” Alex asked.

“I check out Creative Works here see if there was anything left behind, while you guys go job hunting. I might get my job back, if not I’ll have to look too. I’m sure I won’t be at Creative Works all day.”

“Well, who knows?” Nick stated.

“Well!” Bruce jumped up from his seat. “I gotta run! See ya guys later.” Bruce threw on his shoes and opened the door and left to go to work.

I looked at Rachel, who had just given a sigh. She saw me and smiled and then looked down.

“Are you alright?” I asked.

“Mark ...” Rachel sighed again. “I umm ... I miss my parents, so I need to visit them ... and I just keep thinking about all we have been through.” She gave a long pause. “We faced a lot of danger so far and I know that things are not just going to get better, but I still want to be with you, but I don’t want to get hurt anymore.”

“I won’t let that happen.”

“But ... you did. I almost died.”

That really hurt; that statement pierced right through my heart. I sighed. “It pains me so much. I was afraid ... that you did ... die, but I ... I saved you, Rachel. And I can do it again.”

“But, why even put me in that danger.”

“If you don’t want to be a part of it, then stay with you parents.”

“I don’t want to be without you.”

“Besides, guys,” Nick started. “I don’t mean to butt in, but Rachel you have just left; Intex won’t leave you alone. He ran those experiments on you, hoping that you would side with him, but since you betrayed him he’s going to find a way to kill you.”

“And he almost did.” Rachel said.

“Yes, and we are all going to have to protect each other.”

“Nick’s right.” I said. “You know what, we weren’t ready to face Terminator, but we were given no choice. We are all going to need to get training. Bruce and I have gotten some training in Kung Fu, but now all of us are going to need to do the same. Then we’ll have to train in our basement. We need to establish plans. We’ll fight each other, and try practicing situations, just without hurting ourselves.” I paused. “Speaking of which, I need to set up appointments for all of us to start training, and for me to continue training.”

Alex started pouring the pancake batter onto the frying pan. Too bad we didn’t have an actual griddle; we were hard up living in New York City; Manhattan, New York.

“So, yeah ...” I started to conclude. “You guys need to find jobs and we all need to train ourselves, otherwise we won't be able to fight Intex.”

A few minutes later we ate the pancakes that Alex had made up. Grace and Mara both stepped into the kitchen at the same time. They seemed to be very close, not to mention that they could communicate with each other by thoughts. They reminded me about how I was able to listen to everyone’s thoughts in all of Manhattan. It really hurt my head. I wasn’t in control of it.

“Grace, Mara,” I got their attention. “We were discussing out some of us here are going to need to get jobs to help pay bills and such, so they we can live. And we all are going to need to start training, you know, learning some Kung Fu and to practice downstairs on each other. And I thought of something else now; we need to practice our powers too. We need to be in full control of our powers. Right now I developing telepathy and it sucks. It gave me quite a headache yesterday, so that’s what I need to work on.”

“So, I need to practice my super speed?” Alex asked.

Nick shook his head.

“You're already good at that, aren't you?” Rachel asked.

“Yeah.”

“Practice flying.” Nick said. “We all suck at that.”

“Yeah, especially me.” I said. “I don't even have wings; I have this unstable levitating power, I'm not sure if I can even fly yet.”

Nick and Alex got ready and got on some decent clothes. They threw on some dress shoes that Bruce and I had. They looked nice, I gave them thumbs up, and they headed out to do some job hunting. Now it was just me Grace, Mara and Rachel.

I looked at Grace and Mara and they both smiled at me. "Well ..." I said. "I guess ... I'm going to check out what's left of Creative Works to see if I can find out where it was moved to, but I'll wait 'till Rachel leaves.

"You two look ... uh ... perfectos juntos." Mara said.

"Gracias." I said to Mara. I looked at Rachel and we smiled at each other.

Just then, Rachel's cell phone went off. She pulled it out and looked at it. "Hello?" she answered it. "Uh huh." She listened to who was on the other end. "Okay, we'll be there in a few minutes." She hung up her phone. "They here early." Rachel said, referring about her parents; they had already arrived at the airport.

"Well, let's go." I said.

"Do you want us to go with you?" Grace asked.

"Umm ... I'll leave that up to you guys."

"Creative Works, you want us go?" Mara asked.

"Umm ... whatever you want to do."

"I think we'll stay here," Grace said. "And if we want to, we'll go to Creative Works."

I nodded and looked at Rachel. We both got up and put on our shoes. Rachel hugged Mara and Grace, and then we walked out the door. Rachel and I walked out onto the busy sidewalks and headed towards the airport.

It took about fifteen minutes to walk to the airport. It took about three minutes to figure out where Rachel's parents were. It was so crowded here. Once we found them, they ran up to Rachel and gave her a big huge.

"We were so worried," Rachel's mom said.

They looked at me and then gave me a hug. "Thanks for taking care of her," Rachel's father said.

I felt guilty, because I didn't a horrible job at it, almost getting her killed. I nodded and smiled, despite what I was thinking.

I looked at Rachel and sighed. "Well," I said. "I guess I'll see you later, right?"

"Yup," she said. She pulled me close and gave me a good bear hug, one that actually cracked my back; after all she had enhanced strength, but it felt good. Then she released me, and then gave me a good long kiss on the lips ... right in front of her parents, she didn't give a crap what they thought. She released me and smiled; I smiled back. Then she gave me another kiss and I kissed back. "I love you."

"I love you too ..." I said, "so ... much."

"Me too." She paused, and then added, "This isn't goodbye."

"I know."

"See ya later, then."

"See ya." I looked at her parents. "Mr. and Mrs. Stanbury." I nodded to them. "Take care. Have a safe flight." I said, which immediately

reminded me of Rachel's wings. They should be fine, planes are pretty safe.

"See ya," Rachel's dad told me. "Be safe too."

"Yep." I said.

We gave each hugs, handshakes and one last goodbye ... and then I got another kiss from Rachel. "Please be careful." Rachel whispered in my ear. "I can't lose you ... I love you too much."

I looked at her and nodded. "See you later, Rachel."

"See ya, Mark, my love."

"You guys are so full of it," Rachel's father said.

"Hun!" Rachel's mother yelled at Rachel's father, and elbowed him.

I gave a little chuckled. "Alright, see ya guys."

We finally waved our goodbyes and turned our backs and went our separate ways. I looked back just as Rachel did the same. She blew a kiss at me and I blew on back. We both smiled at each other and waved one last time, and then we turned back our ways and walked.

My eyes started to water and a tear ran down my cheek. I didn't realize how much I loved Rachel. I kept thinking back to how she almost died, because of me. I felt so guilty.

*Stay focused.*

I heard that same voice in my head again. I couldn't tell whose voice it was, but I was sure that it was a man's. I was also pretty sure that it was my father's, Bart, my biological father. But the voice was right, I had to get focused. Instead of walking back home, I walked right towards Creative Works.

I couldn't just walk into the mess of the burned building, because there was crime scene tape blocking it. I started walking around it, making sure no one was watching me, and then I ducked underneath the tape, running down one of the building walls that were still intact. I found an opening into the building, which was a broken wall.

Most of the walls were still intact, so no one could see me inside the building. The whole place reeked of smoke, though. I looked in every room that I passed, looking for anything that could tell me where Intex had moved to.

I found a room that had some paperwork inside a metal filing cabinet, which had saved the paper from burning. I looked through the papers, but all of it was research and information on their sick experiments. I found many more rooms like that, with the same kind of papers. Then I found a room that looked different than the others.

This room had a door in the wall. It was kind of like a medicine cabinet. I went to open it, but it didn't budge. So I yanked on it and forced it open, breaking the door. Inside were a few papers, which had some strange symbols on it. It was foreign. There was also some kind of crystal. The crystal was perfectly shaped and was very shiny. I picked up the crystal and started studying it.

Suddenly I felt very light-headed and dropped the crystal and the light-headedness stopped. My head cleared and I looked at the crystal on the floor at my feet. *What did that crystal just do to me?* I asked myself. I slowly bent down and picked up the crystal. I braced for the same light-headedness, but this time I didn't get it. I waited for something to happen. I waited for about ten seconds until something did. I saw a flash of images cloud my vision. They were images of some lab ... and a person in the lab, wearing a lab coat. Some sort of people barged into the lab and grabbed the person. The person looked like Intex. The people that captured him looked like authorities.

Then I got flashes of the planet Rexton. There was some sort of green mist that flowed through space and hit the planet. Plant life was getting destroyed in an instance. Then images started flowing through my whole head. I couldn't keep up. I couldn't make out any of the images, because there were so many. All I could make of them was that it had something to do with Rexton. Then when I thought that I couldn't get any more images to cloud my mind, even more flashed through my mind. I became so light-headed that I passed out, and still images were flowing through my mind, clouding my own thoughts.

I woke up feeling tingly. I looked at my hand and saw that my fingers were gripping the crystal hard. I tried letting go, but I couldn't. I sat up and my head spun. I had no idea where I was at. I saw burnt walls and floors around me. The smell of smoke was in the air. Debris was everywhere. Then there was plants dying around me, and I looked around and saw that the whole room was filled with people. People were panicked, everyone was terrified. Then, suddenly, everyone disappeared. The burnt walls and floors came back.

I realized that I was still in Creative Works. I got up to my feet and wobbled. Images flashed through my head again. I almost fell over, but I forced myself to stand upright. I looked down at my hand and saw the crystal still gripped tightly between my fingers. I couldn't let go. I barely remembered why I was here. I wanted to find out something ... I wanted to figure out where someone had gone to. Someone that I had to stop. It was Intex. I had to stop Intex and I was here to ... to figure out where he had moved to, but my mind was on something else, something I wasn't even sure about.

Images were still floating around in my head. Suddenly, the whole area shifted and I could see people everywhere. They had different clothing than normal. They were all terrified. There was a broad voice. I looked around and saw someone's head on a big screen. The guy on the screen was sitting in an office. It looked sort of like a president, sitting in an office. He looked like he was trying to keep his cool, hiding the face that he was just terrified as everyone else. The man on screen was speaking in a foreign language, but then it changed into English and then I could only make out a few words that he was saying: "we ... separate ways ... go to Planet Mason ... will go ... Earth ... you that are criminals will ... banished elsewhere. We must leave our planet, because it is dying." The voice

started to sound clearer. Things around me started to turn brown and then grey. The color of green was dying around me. "Please follow the authorities and they'll help you go about to your destinations. We will keep families together. Some of you will have to go to Mason, and only a few of you will go to other galaxies. But we need to act fast. Please go about in an orderly fashion."

That got me to thinking, it was the least I could think ... I was seeing images of planet Rexton dying, right before my very eyes. It had already died. The crystal in my hand had recorded ... memories, I guess, of Rexton. The voice of the person on screen must've been Rexford, himself. He was telling everyone what they need to do. Then I remembered that he said that families will stay together, wherever they go. Except ... I didn't stay with my family. Somehow I got separated from my family and got sent to Earth.

The area around me started changing again and zoomed towards an area where people were heading into ships. There were tons of ships all around. Authorities were all around the ships, urging people to quickly get inside, but in single file. Some ships were already taking off. They took off fast. The ground everywhere was a bland brown. There was no longer any grass. People were panicked still and some people looked like they were having a hard time breathing. The air on the planet was diminishing. I could breathe fine. Some people were falling over. I ran up to someone and tried to help him up, but my hands phased right through him. I wasn't even there. I shouted, but no one could hear me. It was just a vision in my head. It was the crystal in my hand. I looked down at my hand and saw that the crystal was glowing.

I started walking towards the ships and I ran into something. There was nothing in front of me. I felt the surface of what I ran into. It felt like a grainy, slimy wall. A burnt wall. It was a wall in Creative Works. I was running into things at Creative Works, but my mind was elsewhere. I was seeing the destruction of Planet Rexton; my home planet. I looked

around for me, for my family. But I really had no idea what they looked like.

Just then I saw Intex. He was chained up and being shoved into a ship. He was a prisoner. There was one other person in chains that was shoved in behind him. Intex looked the same age as he did now. Then I saw an officer, or whatever you called the authority, holding a baby. There was a woman crying, trying to stop the officer. Other officers stopped the woman. The woman was with a man who was chained up too. The baby was crying and was put into the same ship as Intex.

“Please!” the woman cried. “Please, let us have our baby!”

“Your husband had made a huge mistake,” the officer said. “You know the law; you can't have your baby.”

The woman cried and fell to her knees. An officer stood her up to her feet. The woman looked to the man next to her in chains; he must've been her husband. She slapped him in the face and he took the slap. He looked guilty. Whatever he had done had been awful ... now their baby couldn't be with them, instead the baby was going into the same ship as Intex was.

Intex was heading towards Earth, for banishment, and so was the baby. Then I realized that the baby must've been me! Intex and I were both on Earth, so the baby must've been me. So ... my father had committed a crime that disallowed him from being with me? What had my father done? It was so bad that I was separated from my family. My mother and father were sent to Mason and I was sent to Earth with Intex.

“Please,” the man in chains, my father, said. “Just let me give my son something.”

“What?” an officer asked.

“I need him to know the truth, about where's he's from. He needs to know that he's not from Earth.”

“We’ll handle it. He’ll be given to another family and will be sent in his own ship. The ship will give him knowledge about where’s he’s from. So don’t worry.”

“Will he know about what I've done?”

“No, but he’ll know that you’ve gone to Mason. And it’ll be in your voice.”

“What will be?”

“The voice to tell him about his history; it’ll be your voice to tell him.” The officer paused. “Now, you say bye.” Then he shoved the man in chains towards another ship. That was when my parents and I parted ways.

I was separated from my family because of a mistake that my father had made. I didn’t even know what my father had done, though, but it must've been so awful that his own son couldn’t be with him. I couldn’t be with my own father and mother. I couldn’t even be with my mother. I wondered if my father and mother stayed together after that ...

My vision was started to clear of Rexton. I started to see the burnt walls and floors of Creative Works. I noticed that I was lying on the floor, I had fallen down. It was probably when I ran into the wall or something. I felt dizzy and light-headed still.

I remembered why I was here, but I couldn't even focus on that. All I could think about was how Rexton had died and how I was separated from my father and mother. What had my father done?

I looked down at my hand and saw that the crystal was still in it. I tried to see if I could let it go, but my fingers would not give way and they stayed clenched around the crystal. Suddenly a strange language was speaking. It was in my head, because there was no one around here. I had no idea what it was saying, but I had a feeling that it was speaking in Rextonian, but I haven't learned the language.

My vision started to blur again and I started seeing a healthy looking planet clouding my vision. It looked like Earth, but I wasn't sure, although it could be Rexton. I saw two men together in a room of a nice house. The house looked nothing like they do on Earth, it had to be on Rexton. One of the people in the room looked like Rexford, and the other I wasn't sure who he was. Rexford looked young compared to how he looked when Rexton was ending, when I saw him on the monitors.

"Mason," Rexford started speaking, "you know with what we can do, we can help this planet bloom. But I've been thinking ... what if we could use our powers to create another planet?"

"Another planet?" Mason, the other person, asked.

"Yeah, we have the ability to. Think about it."

"I'm still sometimes think about how it is even possible to have powers, while everyone else on this planet doesn't."

"Yeah it is pretty amazing, right ..." Rexford sighed. "We have done so much to help this world, but I don't know if you've noticed but all they have been talking about lately is the population."

"Yeah, they're saying it's getting over-populated."

"About fourteen billion people they say live here."

"We could use another planet ... or two. Because there are a lot of people." Mason paused. "Let's say we do this ... where would we create these planets?"

"I've already done this research. You know the galaxy next to us has some stars the perfect size for a few planets. And another thing, I found one star that's the perfect size and already has two planets orbiting it, but the only problem is that those planets don't have any life on it. But we could put life on it ourselves."

"With our powers ..." Rexford nodded. "Cosmokinesis ... with that you can practically create a planet." Mason paused. "That galaxy next to us, what's it called?"

"It doesn't have a name."

"Let's give it one ... for now we could call it Experimental Galaxy, where we could experiment on the planets there, to see if we can give them life."

"Sounds alright, for now."

My vision started clearing again and I could see that I was still in Creative Works. Now Grace and Mara were with me. They were on their knees, hovering over me.

"Are you alright?" Grace asked. "You were out of it."

“Yeah, I'm fine.” I said.

“Was Intex here?” Mara asked.

“No,” I said. I looked around and saw that the crystal wasn't in my hand anymore, Grace was holding. “It was that,” I pointed to the crystal.

“Yeah, what is it?” Grace asked.

“It's a crystal that somehow holds memories of Rexton. I was black out because it was giving memories or recordings of Rexton's history ... of beginning and end.” I paused. “I couldn't let the crystal go, but you took it out of my hand just like that. I tried to let go of it so I could think about the information that I learned from that crystal, but I couldn't just let go.”

“Did you find anything that could tell us where Intex is?”

“No.” I said. “This was the first thing I found.” I looked at the crystal in Grace's hand. I was thinking about taking it back, because learning about Rexton was kind of interesting. It seemed essential to understanding my home planet's past, but I knew that I had to stay focus on the task at hand. We had to look for something, anything that could tell us where Intex was now.

Grace and Mara searched room after room, while I basically just followed. I couldn't keep my mind off of learning about Rexton. Rexford and Mason created live on Rexton and Mason, and they named that galaxy. It sounded like they were going to rename the galaxy later, but they must've just went with the Experimental Galaxy.

“Let's check this cabinet,” Grace said pointed to a metal cabinet bolted to a wall.

I was about to open the door of the cabinets, myself, after breaking the lock with my strength, but then Grace broke it open with her mind. I was puzzled at first, but then remembered about her metal ma-

nipulation power. She used it on the door to pry it open. The cabinet was filled with papers, but no crystals or other things like that.

“We need check if it tells us where Intex,” Mara said.

“Right.” I said, and we all grabbed a stack of papers and started flying through them.

They were mostly papers about their experiments on people, and about failed experiments. I wondered if Rachel and Bruce would be in here ... and Nick, Alex, Grace and Mara. Would they call them failed, because they wouldn't obey Intex?

We went through the whole stack of papers and found that they were all on experiments and old formulas that they used and whatever. We found files on Nick, Alex, Grace, and Mara, but it wasn't anything new. Some of the papers had burnt edges from the burning of the building.

We left the room and checked room after room again. We decided to just check out Intex's actual office. The last time I saw this room, it was filled with tons of papers, but now it was completely empty. There weren't any filing cabinets, any desks, or any tables. The room was nothing but bare floor.

“I bet that they took everything with them,” I said. “They probably didn't even leave anything valuable behind ... well except you guys.”

“Yeah ...” Grace thought back. “We were so hungry ... Intex left us here to die.” She looked around. “Now look at this place ... all burnt up and smelly.”

Mara nodded and we decided that there was no point in being here, it was completely empty. “Well, we better get going,” I said. “Before the cops decide to check out this place and find us here.”

It felt a little different at home. Rachel was gone, Bruce was at work, and Nick and Alex were job hunting. It was just me Mara, and Grace. We hadn't found anything at Creative Works to tell us where Intex had moved everything to. The only thing we did find was that one crystal. Grace had set it down on the counter and I couldn't keep my mind off of it.

When I touched the crystal, I couldn't let go. It kept flooding my visions with memories of Rexton. It was really fascinated to learn about my home planet, and I felt that I needed to know more about it, to know where I have come from.

Grace saw me looking at it. "What did that really do again?" she asked me.

"What?" I looked at the crystal. "It gave me information about Rexton, tons of things that I never knew ... but it didn't give me enough information."

"So ... you want to see if it could tell you more ... by touching it?"

"Yeah."

"Well, we're not stopping you."

"Well ... the thing is that it practically knocks me out from reality and floods my mind with it, so I can only see what it projects into my mind. So if something bad were to happen, I would have no idea, because I would be knocked out."

"Mark," Mara spoke up. "We are strong and powerful, can we help protect you suppose bad happen."

I nodded. "Okay." I looked at the crystal. "Because I want to find out more about Rexton ..." I grabbed the crystal off of the counter and nothing happened. Nothing. I waited for ten seconds and still nothing happened.

I walked into the living room, carrying the crystal and sat down on a chair. "It's not doing anything, it's supposed to —" and with that I was out and it started to flood my mind.

My vision shifted from home to a house on another planet. Inside what looked like a living room were two men: Rexford and Mason. I was right where I left off.

"Don't you think that it's a bit of a stretch, though?" Rexford asked Mason, within my vision that the crystal projected into my mind.

"I guess it does, but think about it Rexford ... we could be famous. We could —"

"Is that why you want to do this? For Fame."

"Well ... only a little bit. But I really want to do this for the fact of creating life on other planets that don't have it."

"We are already famous here ... we have restored areas that were the deadliest to all Trexonians and made them some of the healthiest places to live in all of Trex."

"Yeah, that was fun."

"You're right, it was. It's fun to create ... well ... life." Rexford sighed and smiled. "Mason, I think it's a great idea to give those two planets life. They deserve to be beautiful."

"Yes, after all this planet is becoming overwhelmed with so many people."

"We better address this to the Trex Space Administration."

“What if they deny us?”

“Why should they ... they already know about what we can do. We are the only Trexonians with super abilities and this world is getting over populated. They should be perfect with it. I'm actually wondering if they are already thinking about this. After all, it's been about a year since we told everyone about us.”

My vision started fogging up and the images in my mind were rippling, and it started to clear up when I saw a space ship soaring through space and landing onto an empty planet. Rexford and Mason were in space suits and stepped out of the ships and onto the empty planet. They looked around in amazement. They weren't alone. There were several other people, or Trexonians, with them; Trex Space Administration (TSA) scientists or whatever with them.

Their space suits were nothing like astronauts' space suits here on Earth. They were a lot slimmer and looked easier to walk around in. They walked around just fine, because the planet's size was perfect, so it was just the perfect force of gravity. Rexford and Mason took a look at the planet's star. It was just the right size. TSA approved these planets for creating life on. Rexford and Mason looked up in the sky and saw their home galaxy. They looked at each other. “See you later, Trexus Zeta.”

Rexford was the first to started getting to work. He held his hands out and front of him and immediately the ground before them started sprouting grass, flowers that I have never seen before, bushes, and then trees. Within just a couple of minutes, Rexford had a few acres of plant life. He had to create enough plants so that enough oxygen was made. This must've the planet that Rexford has chosen, because Mason wasn't doing much of anything, although he did help a little, but Rexford was doing most of the work.

The TSA spacemen looked around in amazement. Rexford looked to them. “Is it safe to take our suits off yet?” Rexford asked them through the radio system.

“No,” a TSA spaceman said. “I don’t think so yet, because the oxygen has to fill up the atmosphere first before filling the air around us. We haven’t trapped enough oxygen in front of us. Keep on ... doing your thing.”

Rexford nodded. “Mason, do you mind helping me?”

“But I thought that you wanted us to strictly work on our own planets.” Mason said.

“Forget that, we’re going to need to work fast.”

The TSA spacemen/women nodded in agreement. Rexford and Mason got together and held their hands out and the ground sprouted with plants. They made the ground around them turn into the perfect soil for plants. They created rocks along with the dirt. They started to make the water in areas appropriate. It wasn’t an easy progress, and it took a long time for them to accomplish this. By the time the whole planet was filled with life several weeks had gone by.

A TSA spaceman was the first to take his helmet off. He held his breath for a moment and slowly breathed in. Then he sighed and smiled. “It’s beautiful!” he exclaimed. “It smells so fresh.” Then one right after another, everyone began to take their helmets off. There were about twenty people, including Rexford and Mason.

“Just to be safe ...” a TSA spacewoman said. “You should probably continue creating plant life and water to keep this planet alive.”

Rexford nodded. “Of course.”

Mason looked at Rexford and smiled. “Next will be my planet.” “What are you going to name this?” a TSA spaceman asked Rexford.

“I’ll name it Rexton.” He paused. “And I get to rule this planet.”

Everyone nodded. "Yes, the commander has agreed that you deserve every right to rule this planet."

Rexford smiled and took a good look around, and then he took a big breath. "Ahh, fresh air."

My vision started to fade and then chairs started to take form in my sight. Then the carpeted floor and then a TV. It was my living room. My vision cleared completely and I found myself still sitting in the chair. I looked around and saw that Bruce, Grace, Mara, Alex and Nick were all home. Grace must've explained to them what I was doing.

They all realized that I was awake and were curious to hear what I have learned about Rexton. I found that I could set the crystal down. I must've seen everything in the crystal ... or maybe I wasn't ready to see any more, because I was still holding it but I wasn't getting anymore visions. I set the crystal down on a desk.

"How long was I out?" I asked.

"About five hours," Grace replied.

"Wow ..." I paused. "I guess you guys want to know what I learned ..." everyone leaned forward and I chuckled and then went about explaining the whole story. I even shared my confusion about how my parents were separated from me. I still had that to learn about. What did my father do to get us separated?

I had bizarre dreams that night about Rexton. The dreams didn't make any sense to what really happened. I was really fascinated about what I had learned about Rexton and how it was created. Rexton and Mason actually had powers, like we did, and they created life on those lifeless planets. The thing was, too, they were just like us; no one else had any powers.

I was curious as to how Rextonians could get powers by coming to Earth. Then that got me thinking. Rextonians actually came from Planet Trex, or from the Trexus Zeta Galaxy, and the same goes for all of the Masonians on Planet Mason. So they were all the same race, all from the Trexus Zeta Galaxy, which is kind of where I came from. So that got me thinking ... when Rextonians enter Earth they get powers, so that must mean that anyone in the Experimental Galaxy and everyone in the Trexus Zeta Galaxy will get powers too by coming to Earth. So I wondered if Rexton and Mason somehow got in contact with something from Earth, which gave them powers.

It was just a thought, but it was pretty interesting. It was pretty amazing that they created life on other planets. We had many of planets in our Milky Way galaxy, but they probably are not even suitable for life. There's talk about Mars having life, but I still think it's a myth, even after everything I learned about Rexton. Mars just isn't suitable for life; it's too far away from the sun and would probably freeze all of the time.

*Stay focused.* The same voice said again. Apparently, thinking about Rexton wasn't important right now. *Right now you need to focus on Intex, the truth to you past will be told to you later.* That was the most that this voice in my head has said to me at once. But I guess that it was right, I had to focus on finding Intex.

With that I snapped out of my haze and jumped from my bed. I bolted into the kitchen and saw that everyone was eating pancakes, Alex had already cooked everything. Everyone looked at me, wondering why I had just run into the room. I looked for Rachel, but then realized that she wasn't even in New York. I saw that Bruce was sitting at the table and I remembered that he didn't work this day.

I sat down at the table and grabbed a plate and fork. I put a few pancakes on my plate and pour syrup on it and immediately started eating. "So ..." I said when I had a chance. "We really need to figure out where Intex is ... we have to stop him and we have no idea where he is. So, that's what we're doing today." I stuffed my mouth with more pancakes.

Everyone nodded in agreement. For a few seconds there was just the sound of scraping of forks on the plates and chewing, and then Nick perked his head up. Then he got really serious.

"What?" I asked him, and then everyone else looked at him.

He raised a finger and a second later he jumped from his chair. "I hear screaming ..." he started. "And ... growling and laughter."

"Sounds like Blade," Alex said.

"Yeah, he's here, tantalizing people."

I jumped from my chair and immediately ran to the door was about to about but then quickly threw on my hoodie and threw the hood on, and then I opened the door and ran out. Nick, Bruce and Alex were already behind me. Nick stepped in front of me and led the way. We ran down several blocks until we saw panicked people, screaming and running from ... Blade. He was a terrifying sight to everyone here in New York City.

Blade was in his werewolf form, of course, and he was growling and laughing at everyone. He was chasing people and holding them over

his head. Alex ran right up to him and grabbed a girl from Blade's hands, saving her. Blade was surprised and then realized that it was us. He smiled and laughed.

"Now it just got interesting!" Blade exclaimed. "Let's dance!" He whipped his hand at Alex, but he easily missed it.

"What are you doing?" I yelled at Blade. People everyone ran, but also some started watching us facing blade.

"Having fun terrorizing people." Blade replied, laughing.

"Remember how we easily fooled you into thinking you were kidnapped?" Bruce asked him.

That immediately trigger something in Blade's brain and he roared at us. He struck his arm out at Bruce, claws retracted. Bruce flung with arm out of the way without touching him. Bruce telekinetically shoved Blade over, raising his hands up for effect. Blade quickly got up, as furious as ever. He growled and launched forward at Bruce, but Bruce stopped him in midair and then threw him into some grass off the side of the road.

People were started to watch, curious as to how we were facing this beast. Blade got to his feet and Alex ran super-fast and tripped him. Blade jumped back to his feet, still mad. I ran forward just as Blade jumped towards me. Right before he was right on top of me, I punched him right in the stomach, sending him in pain rolling on the ground.

Then I just thought of it. I signaled everyone to back down. I walked up to Blade and pulled him to his feet. I grabbed him by his shirt and held him up. "Tell me, Blade," I yelled. "Where's Intex?"

"Intex!" Blade scoffed. "I thought that he said I was his greatest creation and do you know what he did?"

"I don't care; just tell me where he is!"

“He left me here. He moved his building and left me here, with you freaks!”

“We’re the freaks? Have you looked in the mirror lately?”

Citizens started walking closer, to see what was going on more closely.

Blade laughed. “Just tell me where Intex is!” I yelled in his face.

Blade only laughed more. Anger rushed through me and I threw Blade to the ground. I started beating him up, punching him in the nose, over and over. Then I forced myself to stop. I had blood all over my fists; Blade’s blood. “Tell me.”

Blade laughed again, blood all over his face. He was a maniac. “He’s in Europe, but what does it matter.”

“Europe?”

“Yup.”

“Why’d he go all of the way over there?”

“Why don’t you ask him yourself?”

“How can I? Europe’s a big place. Where exactly in Europe?”

Blade smiled lessened and he sighed. He shook his head. “He said that I was his greatest creation.” He mumbled to himself, and he said more, but I couldn’t understand what. “Now all he cares about it that ...” he trailed off.

“Shut up and tell me where!” I punched him in the mouth.

“Oww,” Blade actually said. “But how can I tell you if you told me to shut up?” He laughed.

I shook my head and deeply sighed.

“Dublin, Ireland.” Blade said.

“Ireland, huh?” I asked. “Okay, why thank you.” I grabbed him and pulled him to his feet, just to shove him to the ground again. “I can't just let you walk away ... you a danger to everyone here.”

“Yeah, I like the sound of that.”

People around started clapping. I looked around and realized that we were surrounded by hundreds of people. Suddenly I started to feel nervous. I realized that they must've had no idea what we were talking about, but we only focused on me stopping Blade the werewolf. Oh, little did they know. I looked at Bruce, Nick and Alex and saw that they all had hoodies on with the hoods up. We all knew to keep our identities hidden.

Blade got to his feet and I kept my eyes on him, but he just stood there and wiped blood off of his face. He looked at me and chuckled to himself. “How's Rachel doing?” he asked. “I heard she almost died.”

“She's fine!” I yelled and kicked him in the chin, hearing a loud clacking sound of his jaw closing suddenly.

Blade kept his balance and then looked at the ground where I was standing. I looked down to see what he was looking at and realized that I was floating three inches off of the ground. I was levitating again. But once I actually thought about it, I stopped and landed on the ground. I started to wonder what trigger this power and realized that I have only done it when I was thinking about Rachel. I thought about her again and looked down and saw that I was hovering above the ground about an inch. Then I stopped.

“Nick,” I whispered his name so only he could hear. I couldn't have anyone know our names. “Grab Blade.”

Nick stepped forward and grabbed Blade and hit him on top of his head, knocking him out. Nick then threw him over his shoulder and the four of us started walking back towards home. Nick didn't have super

strength; he had used his juxtakinesis to replicate my super strength. We had to lose this crowd before we got home.

I looked around at the crowd and saw that there were even cops watching us. They had their guns put away, but we ready, just in case. They were puzzled and happy at the same time. They seemed to appreciate us stopping Blade. But I thought they wouldn't approve of it, considering that it could be called vigilante work.

We decided that it was up to Alex to help us disappear ... well kind of. Alex ran us home, super-fast. One by one. We had to force ourselves not to barf, because it was intense to move so fast, even though it wasn't for Alex, because he was the one doing it. Alex was tired once he was done.

Grace and Mara saw the sight of us four and Blade lying on the floor. "What you going do with Blade?" Mara asked.

"Umm," I started. "Somehow we gotta lock him up, but last time he broke free of the chains."

"Too bad we don't have the power proof gas," Bruce said.

"Yeah," Nick said. "And where would we get that, anyway? We burned down Creative Works, that gas is probably dispersed everywhere, so it has lost its effect."

"Yeah," I said.

Nick looked back at Alex and chuckled. "I wonder, Alex," Nick said. "What if we just flew, instead of you running us back and forth?"

"You decided to mention that after I do all of the running?" Alex scoffed.

"I can't quite fly yet." I said. "So ... thanks for helping us get away, Alex."

"You're welcome." Alex gave Nick the stink eyes.

"So," I looked down at Blade, who was lying on the floor, knocked out from consciousness. "We got Blade to talk."

“Yeah, more like you beat it out of him,” Alex said.

“It wasn’t that bad.”

“Well ...” Bruce said.

“Anyways,” I continued. “Blade told us that Intex had moved his building to Dublin, Ireland. So ... we’re going to have to get some plane tickets, unless you guys want to fly over the ocean?”

Everyone shook their heads and shouting in disagreement. “Okay!” I held up my hands. “Then we’ll need a plane.” I sighed. “It’s going to be expensive.”

“I’m going to have to tell my boss that I’m ... going on vacation or something,” Bruce said. “I hope he doesn’t mind, because you just got back to work.”

“I know. And you what else, he gave me a fringe benefit, by paying me for the week that I was ‘sick.’”

“Wow.” I paused. “I saved up a couple thousand bucks, and I believe that a ticket from here to Dublin would be around eight-hundred fifty bucks. Times that by six and you’ll get ...”

“Five thousand one-hundred dollars,” Mara said, surprising me that she was so quick with math.

“Whoa,” Alex said. “That’s a lot of money.”

“I saved up three thousand dollars,” Bruce said.

“And I have two thousand.”

“Eesh.” Nick said. “You guys are cutting it close.”

“We’re going to have to save up some more money, then.” I said. “And you guys need to get jobs.” I looked to Bruce. “Bruce, tell your boss that your cousin’s wife is dying on cancer and she lives in Dublin.”

Bruce raised his eyebrows. "Really?"

"Make something up like that, because it would look really bad to say you're going on vacation."

"Okay ... how about my brother's wife is dying on cancer?"

"Whatever works."

"Because it would mean more if it was my brother's wife."

"Even though you don't have a brother ..."

"He's not going to research it." Bruce paused. "If he asks, I'll say that my brother's name is .... Austin."

"Okay," I nodded. "Hopefully he'll understand." I paused. "Now I need to see if I got my job back and you guys need to get jobs."

I got my phone out and dialed up my boss. It rang several times and the receptionist replied. "I was wondering if Stanley has considering rehiring me. It's me, Mark."

"Oh," she said from the other end of the phone. "Yeah, I've talk to him and he's said that he's already hired somebody, but really liked your enthusiasm and could still use you if you're up for it."

"Yeah, totally."

"Okay, I'll let him know — oh, he's right here." She paused and started talking to Stanley.

"Hey, Mark," it was the boss, Stanley.

"Hi," I replied.

"I have been thinking and I realized that things are going slower without your help here, and I want you back. So ... we could really use you help today. I've noticed that you seem to have the right hands for

doing drywall. It's in your blood." Or I was super strong and could easily lift it.

"Okay, when do you want me in?"

"As soon as possible."

"Okay, I have time right now."

"Alrighty, then. Come on over. We are working on drywall now, actually."

"Okay."

"It's good to have you back, Mark. By the way, how's your friend doing? I heard he was in the hospital."

"He's better."

"What was wrong with him again?"

"He had some terrible back pain that required surgery."

"Ouch ... well, okay. Come on over whenever you're ready."

"Okay."

"Alright, I gotta go. See you in a few."

"Yup, bye."

I ended the call and jumped up, punching a hole in the ceiling. "Oops." The hole was the exact size of my fist.

"You got your job back?" Bruce asked.

"Doesn't the hole in the ceiling answer that question? Would I be jumping in the air if I didn't?"

"How soon does he want you in?"

“Now.” I said and I ran to my room and got ready. I grabbed my work clothes and went into the bathroom. I quickly got a shower and got dressed and left the house, heading towards work. I was afraid that people would recognize me as one of the people that stopped Blade, but no one even looked at me. With that, I just kept walking and arrived at the job site. Workers were already hauling drywall and I immediately jumped in and helped them.



## Part 2: The Horrific Future



Several weeks have past. We had managed to lock Blade up in our basement, this time we chained him up good. He wasn't has strong as I was. We had chains that hanged him from the ceiling and that had five-hundred pound weights hanging from the other end of the chains, so he wasn't going to break the chains easily. Bruce and I have been working more hours and saving all of the money that we could for the trip to Europe. We had stopped our Kung Fu training for now, because we didn't have any money for it at the moment. Alex had got a job at the Manhattan Bakery with Bruce. Bruce had recommended Alex to his boss.

Alex got hired probably because of the energy he displayed. He was always fired up and energetic. After all, he had super speed and he had to burn his calories off somehow. He worked at the fryer all day. He boiled doughnuts all day long, but he was having fun doing it, which was good.

Nick hadn't got any work, probably because he was kind of quiet and serious. He also had the "cool" attitude, like "don't mess with me." But I don't know if that's really the reason for not getting hired anywhere.

Grace had gotten a job at a nursing home ... well; I guess that it was actually an assistant living home. Grace always corrected us when we called it a nursing home. Mara still hadn't found work either.

Rachel got back from home, visiting with her parents. She had moved in with me, in my room, since all of the other rooms were filled. She said that she had lots of fun with her parents before saying goodbye. I had explained everything that she missed. I explained what I had learned about my origin, but there were still things I didn't understand. One was mainly, what did my father, Bart, do to get us separated?

This morning I woke up in my bed and looked over to see Rachel in her bed across the room. She was already awake, staring at the ceiling. I did that a lot too. I had told my boss that we had to visit my housemate's cousin, because she was dying of cancer and that we wanted to go within this month at the latest. He understood and just wanted me to let him know exactly when.

I jumped out of bed and exited my room, walking into the kitchen. Alex had gotten into a habit of making breakfast and sure enough he was making it today. He had some eggs and bacon. We were all saving our money for the trip to Dublin, Ireland. It seems funny to call it a trip, because we're going there to take down Intex. All of our bosses think that we visiting Bruce's cousin before she dies of cancer, but Bruce doesn't even have a brother. None of us do; we are all an only child, pretty something huh?

I sat down at the kitchen table and saw that Bruce was already eating, getting ready to leave. Alex ran around super-fast and quickly filled his plate and immediately started eating. He and Bruce went to work together, since they both had very similar schedules, which was efficient if we all needed to be together. Grace had already left; she had to be there in the morning when everyone woke up. She worked three days a week.

I filled my plate with bacon and eggs and started eating. I wasn't working today and Mara, Rachel and Nick didn't have work, although they have applied in tons of places. I got through eating and took my plate to the sink and washed it quickly and stuck it in the dish drainer. I went to the living room, turned the news on and sat down.

Just as I sat down I was out and a vision appeared in my head. I was in a big city with tall buildings. There was hardly anyone around, it couldn't have been Manhattan. I found that I was a part in the vision and I walked around. I turned around the corner of a building and saw some people, but there was something odd about them. Some of them ...

looked different. One of the person's back was sticking out and — what the!?! One person stretched wings out from their back! Their wings looked like dragon wings, and the guy fly off. One person seemed to have fur all over his body, with stripes. He walked up to someone and grabbed him by his neck.

I tried running up to him to stop him, but I ran right through him, and they didn't even see me. The guy looked furious and then retracted a claw and threatened to kill him if he didn't give him his money. The guy being threatened suddenly roared and grew bigger and changed his form into a big gorilla. He pounded his chest with his fist and then wacked the guy with tiger-like fur.

Everywhere I looked; I saw people who were either part animal of some kind or could turn their shapes into animals. But there wasn't a single person who was nice. Everyone was threatening someone, hurting someone and having fun doing it. Then I realized what this was. These people were all hybrids. Hybrids between humans and whatever animal. Then I saw Intex. He was standing on the roof of a tall building. He was looking down at everyone. He had a blank expression on his face.

He did this! He was going to create this. This is what he wants to do. He wants to get rid of all the humans or change all of the humans into hybrids of some sort. He wants everyone to be like him. He hated this world, probably just as much as he hated Rexton, until it died. Everywhere I looked it was horrible. People hurting and killing each other. This would be what Intex would do if we didn't stop him.

Suddenly, I snapped out of it and looked around to see that I was back in the living room sitting on the couch. I looked around and saw that Rachel, Mara, and Nick were around me.

"Are you alright, babe?" Rachel asked me.

*Babe?* I thought to myself. "I'm ... fine," I said. "Umm ... I just saw ... a vision of ... the future or something, where Intex had turned every-

one into hybrids, but it wasn't a pretty sight. Everyone was hurting each other or killing each other. Intex will turn this world upside down. We need to get to Dublin right now and stop him."

"We don't have the money yet," Rachel said. "But you said you saw the future?"

"I'm pretty sure, or it's what the world would look like if we let Intex do his thing; it's pretty much the same thing." I paused. "But we have to stop him, the sooner the better."

They all nodded. Suddenly, at the same time, Rachel and Nick both perked their heads up, listening to something.

"What?"

"I hear screaming," Rachel said.

"And roaring," Nick added.

"It's some sort of beast or creature."

"We better go," Mara said.

The four of us jumped to our feet, through on our shoes and hoodies and ran outside. I was about to let Rachel and Nick lead the way, but right away I could see the beast. It looked human, but he was big. He was super strong too, because it was throwing cars around like it was nothing. I ran up to it a shouted.

"Hey!" I yelled at it. "It's me you want! Leave everyone else alone!"

I ran up to me and spikes retracted from its skin from all over. "You!" he yelled. "I'm going to kill you, before Intex gets the chance."

So Intex definitely created this monster, if I couldn't have taken the hint before. It ran towards me and I immediately kicked it and regretted it, for those few seconds anyway. It felt like I was kicking a metal wall.

I looked at it and saw that its skin turned into metal and then turned back into normal skin, with his spikes. My foot felt better a few seconds later, after healing rapidly.

Nick looked at the monster and spikes retracted from his skin, poking holes right through his clothes and his jacket. "Ah, darn it!" Nick exclaimed. The monster laughed at him.

"My name is the Eliminator!" he yelled at us.

"What are you supposed to do?" I asked. "Eliminate us?"

"Duh!" he yelled. He charged at me and I jumped into the air and landed on its back, right into his spikes. Sure it hurt, but I couldn't just let it keep hitting us. I punched it hard in the back, but only hit his metal skin. I groaned in pain and watched my fist bruise up and then heal within seconds. I jumped off of it and waited for my legs to heal from being stabbed by its spikes.

The Eliminator laughed at me. "How do you like it?! I'm part armadillo and porcupine."

"Armadillos don't have metal skin!" I exclaimed.

"I don't care." The Eliminator charged at me head first, with his metal skin ready.

Just a second before he would run into me, I crotched down to the ground and it tripped over me. This was going to be a difficult monster to stop.

The Eliminator quickly got to its feet and then crotched down and rolled into a ball. Then it started rolling towards me, you got that? He's only interested in me. He wants me dead; he doesn't care about anyone else but me.

I jumped up just as he was going to his me, but then he unrolled himself and hurled towards me, punching me right in the face. I was sent backwards and I felt blood roll down my nose. But just as quickly as that happened, it stopped and healed.

Mara jumped forward, jumping like a cat, and then she hissed at him. The Eliminator scoffed at Mara, but she only laughed back. She shook her head at him and held her hands out at him. Suddenly he started groaning as she shot nuclear energy at him, she was burning him up with the temperature of the sun. His metal skin and spikes were glowing red hot.

"You disgrace to nature!" Mara yelled at him. She looked furious, and it Bruce were here watching her he would flip. (He was in love with her, but would deny it if you asked him.)

I got to my feet and smiled at Mara. Just then the Eliminator jumped up, avoiding Mara's ray of ... destruction and ran towards her. I could see what was happening and I was going to let what happened to Rachel early happen to Mara. I ran after him and jumped on top of him, shoving him to the ground. His spikes pierced into my chest and I couldn't breathe. I got off of him and healed within seconds, but despite that I still worried Rachel, because she gasped.

I picked the Eliminator up over my head and threw him in the side of a building. I noticed that there were still people around, watching us

battle. He got up, still in pain from Mara blasting him with the sun's heat, or Mara's nuclear energy. Nick ran up to him and turned his skin into metal, replicating the Eliminator's power.

He jumped into the air and shoved his elbow down on the Eliminator's head. The Eliminator fell down from its feet and roared in frustration. He jumped up, punched Nick in the jaw, sending him backwards. Nick balanced himself and avoided another punch. He, then, returned the favor and socked the Eliminator in the nose and didn't hesitate to punch him again.

Too bad I couldn't do the same thing as Nick and replicate the Eliminator's metal skin power, because I was skilled in combat, while Nick only knew to punch. We haven't been taking our Kung Fu classes, because we had to save our money for the flight to Dublin. The Eliminator didn't care to get punched again and he punched Nick right in the chest, sending Nick flying backwards until he hit a wall of a building, which resulted in putting a huge hole in the wall, the brick smashed.

The Eliminator ran towards me with his spikes ready and pointed at me. He had his fist out and was about to punch me. I tried avoiding it, moving swiftly, but the Eliminator was just as fast and still managed to hit me in the stomach. I just lost my breath and the Eliminator kept punching me. Rachel ran up to him and punched him and held her fist because immediately afterwards her fist hurt from punching its metal skin. I suddenly grew very angry and jumped up, kicking the Eliminator hard in the face, despite it being made of metal.

He backed up a couple steps, saving himself from falling over. I charged at him and he expected me to punch or kick him, so he got ready to block it, but I jumped over top of him and got behind him and from behind I put my arm around his neck and immediately started squeezing hard, choking him.

At first he didn't seem to be affected, but after a few more seconds his metal spikes drew back into his skin and he started choking.

About ten seconds more his skin turned from metal back into human skin. He tried to remove my arm from around his neck, but I only squeezed harder. Nothing was going to make me let go. I dared a look at Rachel and saw that she was just as serious as I was, she wanted this idiot creation of Intex stopped just as much as I did, and this was really only one of the ways to stop him ... or kill ... it. It was an "it", just ask Mara, she even said that it was a disgrace to nature.

I continued to choke the Eliminator and became a little nervous. I was afraid that he would break free of my grip, because they say they almost anyone can protect themselves when their life depends on it. The Eliminator started to punch me, hitting me in my face. Despite the great pain, I kept my arm gripped around his neck.

I looked to Nick and saw that he had gotten himself out of the hole in the wall that he was in and looked to him for helping me out in some way as the Eliminator kept punching me in the face. Nick drew his fist out and punched the Eliminator hard in the stomach. If I wasn't already choking the Eliminator that blow to his stomach would have took away his breathe, but I was already doing that.

The Eliminator started to kick its feet and it kicked Nick away. He was squirming around in my grip, but I only held on tighter. He was very, very strong, but I was just as strong so I could keep choking him — it. This reminded me of the horrible vision of the future that I saw if Intex continued doing his experiments. I looked at Rachel and she looked nervous, just as much as I was.

Just then the Eliminator succeeded of breaking free from my grip, shoving my arm over his head. He immediately inhaled a huge breathe and I kicked him hard in the stomach. I kicked him again and knocked him over. He laid on the ground in pain. I jumped up and was about to land on him, but I stopped in mid-air, a second before hitting it. I was levitating again.

It took its chance and jumped to its feet. The Eliminator immediately turned its skin into metal and decided to charge at Rachel. I imme-

diately grew nervous, because I was stuck in the air. He got a few feet from Rachel and I found myself propelling my body towards Rachel, and fast. I swopped Rachel off of her feet, saving her, milliseconds from getting hit from the Eliminator. I flew! I flew towards Rachel and I was still hovering.

I landed softly on the ground and set Rachel down. She smiled at me. "You save me," she said. "And you flew."

"I know." I spun around and faced the Eliminator. He charged at me and I just thought of Rachel and started levitating. I tried it again and my body propelled towards the Eliminator. I grabbed him, putting my arms around his chest and started to propel my body straight up, flying up. It felt great, well except for the fact that I had spikes stabbing me everywhere and feeling punches in my sides.

I flew the Eliminator higher, looking down, causing myself to get a little nervous and started to drop, unwillingly. So I angled myself towards the ground, shoving the Eliminator face first. The Eliminator actually looked nervous and started screaming in its man/monster-like voice. It already had its skin turned into metal, but it wasn't sure if he could survive the blow to the ground. Just a second later I shoved the Eliminator into the pavement and hovered just a foot above.

The Eliminator laid in a hold about five feet deep in the pavement. It wasn't moving. Rachel walked up to me, standing behind me. I landed softly in front of the hole.

"That was amazing," Rachel told me."

"I know." I said. Flying felt awesome.

The Eliminator still wasn't moving so I knelt down at pulled him out of the hole, grabbing him by his leg. I set him on the ground next to the hole. He was either knocked out or dead. Once I looked at his head, I knew the answer to which one he was. Its head had a great big dent in it

and had a crack that went right down its metal skinned face; it was dead. It wasn't indestructible.

"Holy," Nick said.

"Crap," Mara concluded.

"No kidding," I said. I couldn't believe the damage that it gave him.

I looked around and saw the damage that we created. Then I noticed all of the people that have been watching. I noticed that police had showed up. Just then they started clapping, praising us. I looked at all of us; we all still had our hoods up, even me, even after just flying.

I heard someone in the crowd of people mention the word: superheroes. That's what we were becoming. We haven't even had suits yet.

"Sorry, about the damage," I said, trying to alter my voice a little, by making it lower pitch.

No one even cared about that. They were all happy to be alive. I looked around and saw that the Eliminator had only hurt people and not killed anyone ... thank goodness. I saw that someone was holding their injured shoulder and someone else holding their arm. The police stepped forward and the clapping died.

"We can take care of that body for you guys," they said. They looked at each other. An officer looked at us and asked, "Are you the same group that saved us from that ..."

"Werewolf?" I asked and they nodded. "Yes we are."

"What do you call yourselves?" someone in the crowd asked.

"Umm ..." I began. I looked to the others. "We're still working on it. This isn't all of us either ... we have three more of us that aren't here."

“Where are they?” an officer asked.

“Living their secret identity right now.” I paused. “I'm sorry, but we better get going.”

“Thanks for saving all of us,” another officer said.

“No problem,” Nick said.

“Much is appreciated.”

With that, Rachel and Nick retracted their wings from their backs. Mara pulled her wings out of her arms and me? Well, I just had to think of Rachel and hopefully I could fly. Nick and Mara jumped into the air and started flapping their wings and started off. Rachel looked at me and I looked at the ground. I jumped up and willed myself to levitate and it worked. Then I willed myself to propel my body up and it worked. Rachel jumped up, started flapping her wings and we flew off together. This flying was very fun.

We made it home, barely losing the sight of people all around. We had to weave through the air, to confuse people as to where we lived. We made it home in the afternoon and made some lunch for ourselves. By evening everyone else arrived home.

“You guys missed what happened today!” Rachel exclaimed.

“We’ve heard bits and pieces,” Bruce said.

“Yeah,” Alex started to add. “Something about a metal guy.”

We started to explain what had happened. We explained how we eliminated the Eliminator. How ironic, right?! We laughed about it. I explained to them that I had started flying.

“You have wings now!” Alex exclaimed.

“Since when did I get experimented on by Intex?” I asked Alex.

“I don’t know, did you?”

“No, never.” I sighed, looking back to what happened to Rachel and Bruce. “I can fly without any wings. I just ... propel my body through the air. It feels awesome ... I ... there's no way to describe it.”

“Don’t even bother,” Grace said. “We know what flying feels like.”

“Yeah I know, but I don’t have to flap any wings. Sorry no offense.”

“No its fine,” Bruce said. “But it’s fun, right?”

“Oh, yeah!” Then I remembered something. “Rachel, how's your hand?”

"It's fine," she replied and I looked down at it to see a little bruise.

"I'm sorry Rachel."

"You have reason to be sorry Mark. It's not your fault that I punched the Eliminator."

I smiled. "Well ... if you put it that way ... I'm just glad that you're alright."

"Me too." She smiled back at me.

"By the way ..." Alex started. "Where did that guy come from anyway?"

"From Intex," I said.

"No, duh! I meant how'd he get here?"

"Either Intex left him here, or he flew, or better yet ... Intex teleported him here," Nick answered.

"Probably," Bruce agreed.

"Oh," Alex said.

I looked at the TV, which was already on, showing the news. There were reports about us on there. They have been showing pictures and videos of the fight that people had been taking with their phones. They were calling us all superheroes, saying that we had saved New York from two beasts in the past two month; first from Blade and this time from the Eliminator. The referred to us as the superheroes, but I could tell that they were dying to call us by name, but we didn't have one yet. We didn't even have superhero names for each other individually. We haven't got that far yet. We were just beginning. All we had for suits were hoodies, so they weren't even suits. And Nick needed another one; he had put holes in his when he replicated the Eliminator's power of retracting spikes from its body like a porcupine.

Nick sighed. "You know," he started. "Retracting those spikes actually kind of hurt, but I think that the Eliminator must've had the power to close up the holes in his skin, because I don't have any injuries from that."

"Yeah?" I asked rhetorically. Nick nodded.

The following morning I woke up from a nightmare. It was about the Eliminator. It was hurting Rachel; it was a horrible nightmare and it woke me up once I couldn't bare it anymore. I felt horrible, drenched in sweat. My clothes were wet. I quickly got out of bed and got a shower; it was about seven in the morning.

Once I got out of the shower, Rachel was already out of bed and ready to get her shower next. We had to share the bathroom, having only two in the house. I smiled at Rachel and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek, and then she closed the bathroom door behind her. I finished putting on my work clothes, and I walked into the kitchen and sat at the table. Alex had made breakfast again. He seemed to enjoy making it. I never told him to; he just always made it himself.

He alternated each day, and today was pancakes and French toast. I threw breakfast onto my plate and gladly ate. I really loved his French toast and I told him just about every time that he made it. I ate and headed off to work today. I noticed on my walk to work that people were acting differently. They all had their eyes peeled and seemed to be paying attention to around them, more than usual. The Eliminator either scared them, or they were looking for the new superheroes. It made me smile, but I knew that we weren't doing this for them, it was to stop In-tex.

Once I got to work, I already overheard a conversation that was about the superheroes, I couldn't help but jump in.

"I'm not even sure that I believe that they exist," a man worker said, who worked with roofing and siding.

"What?!" a woman worker exclaimed, who worked in the same field.

"It was on the news," I said.

"Yeah," the woman agreed. "And they had proof."

"Exactly," I added. "Did you see what they were fighting? That thing was the beast."

"Yeah, I heard that it had spikes growing out of it. It was ugly."

"No kidding."

"Did you see it?" the man asked.

"No," I said, feeling like I just lied. But I had to think ... Mark Wills wasn't the one that saw it ... his alternate identity saw it, the superhero identity. I definitely needed a name; a superhero name.

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### Mark's House

Today was Bruce's day off. He had just finished eating breakfast. Alex had just headed out to work at the bakery. Bruce and Alex had different schedules. Bruce wasn't sure what he was going to do today, but he thought he would check up on Blade. He already started laughing just thinking about it.

Blade was chained up pretty good in the basements. Chains held him down in every way and were supported by weights. Bruce went into the cupboard and found some rolled oats. He grabbed the box and a bowl. He filled the bowl up with the cereal and headed down the stairs. When he made it all of the way down, he immediately saw Blade chained up. It sure did look painfully. Blade didn't even look up.

"I got you some food, Blade," Bruce said.

"Why even bother?" Blade scoffed at him, still looking down at the floor. "You guys chain me up and still want me alive?"

"We are not evil people. We are trying to do the right thing and you guys are trying to stop us."

"No! We are ..." Blade stopped and sighed. "Intex left me here to stop you guys. He didn't take me with him. He said that I was his greatest creation." Bruce rolled his eyes, he's heard this before. "He treated me like dirt ... after everything I did for him. He's not worth it!"

"Do you really mean that?"

"Yeah."

"Well, I'm still not going to give in and let you go. I'm not stupid."

Blade shook his head. "I'll break out of here and when I do ... I'm ..." he trailed off.

"You'll what, kill us all!?"

"No ... it's not even worth it. I don't even know what I'll do. I might just break these chains and sit here for a while."

"Here," Bruce walked up to him and held the bowl of cereal under his mouth. "Eat."

Bruce let go of the bowl, but it stayed in the air, right where he had just held it.

"Looks like you're getting better at your telekinesis," Blade said and Bruce nodded to himself.

Blade grunted and then started eating out of the bowl like a dog. "I feel so stupid," he said, taking a break from eating.

"I'm not going to loosen the chains and risk letting you escape," Bruce said. "So, don't even."

Nick walked down the stairs to see what was going on. He laughed almost immediately. He looked at Bruce who was standing back, away from Blade, using his telekinesis to hold the bowl of cereal for Blade to eat out of. Blade stopped eating and growled. Never once did he lift his head.

“How's life treating you, Blade?” Nick asked him.

Blade growled. “Just dandy, thank you for asking!” Blade was furious. Bruce could definitely tell that these two did not like each other at all.

Nick laughed. Bruce looked up at him and shook his head. “Nick,” Bruce said, and the bowl slowly started to drop to the floor. “I’m trying to be at least a little respectful.”

Nick nodded and then pointed at the bowl.

“Oh,” Bruce said. And he showed little effort and didn’t even lift a finger and the bowl rose back up to Blade’s mouth.

“I'm done,” Blade said.

“Okay,” Bruce said, telekinetically setting the bowl back down. “But, you can't keep eating like this, it's unhealthy.”

“What do you care?”

Bruce sighed. “We only have you held captive here because we don’t want you out there, terrorizing everyone.”

“But why am I chained up then?”

“Because we don’t trust you,” Nick said and he walked back up the stairs, leaving.

Bruce sighed. “I’m sorry, Blade.”

“Are you really?” Blade replied.

“Yes ... but since you worked for Intex, we can't trust you ... we don't know if you are really here because Intex commanded you to kill us or whatever.”

Blade scoffed. “He sent the Eliminator here to do that.” He shook his head. “He didn’t need me.”

“I’ll leave the cereal here,” Bruce said. “You’ll just have to use your feet or something to bring it to you.”

Blade looked up, looking at the stairs and looked back down. “Just ...” he said. “Bring it back up to my mouth ... I just didn’t want Nick looking at me while I ate.”

Bruce could tell that Blade had feelings just as anyone else did. He was offended at what Nick said to him. Nick and him probably went back a long ways at Creative Works. It was either that, or Blade was putting on a show ... Bruce knew that he couldn’t trust Blade just yet. Blade finished eating and Bruce took the bowl back upstairs and immediately put it in the dish washer.

Mara and Rachel were sitting on the couch, watching the news. Right now a weather report was being shown, saying that it was going to be partly cloudy for today. Bruce walked into the living room and sat down on the couch next to Mara.

“Hi,” Mara said.

“Hi yourself,” Bruce said, smiling. “So ... what's the weather like today?”

“Look at the TV,” she said.

“Oh,” Bruce turned his head and checked for himself. Rachel chuckled and she and Mara looked at each other, shaking their head. “What?” Bruce asked.

“Nothing,” Mara said. “Just watch.”

Just then a report on the news reflected back to yesterday, showing the heroes in the hoodies. They praised the heroes for saving them, but reminded everyone about the beast that attacked them. They speculated that this could mean that more would appear. Bruce wouldn't be surprised, because Intex would probably keep doing that until they were dead, or until they went to Dublin.

“Do you guys really want you watch this?” Bruce asked them. “The news is boring.”

Bruce grabbed the remote and changed the channel. He flipped through until he found a cartoon. Just then Mara flicked her fingers and the TV changed through so many channels until it landed on a movie channel.

“What the heck?” Bruce asked himself. “I didn't press the channel button.”

“I did it,” Mara said.

Bruce looked Mara, puzzled. “See?” Mara demonstrated it to him. She raised her hand and flicked her fingers and the TV changed the channel. “It's called techo-technopathy.”

“Oh, yeah ... I forgot you had that.”

Mara smiled and looked at Bruce and saw that he was smiling back at her. Mara looked back at the TV and barely even flicked her fingers and changed the channel back to the movie. They watched it for a

little while to figure out that the movie was a romantic type. Rachel smiled, knowing that Bruce was thinking of Mara while watching it.

Rachel knew Bruce most of her life, as well as Mark. She knew what Bruce's expressions meant, just as well as she knew Mark's. She knew that the expression on his face meant that he was in love with Mara, and Mara knew it too. She wasn't stupid; she was just shy and quiet. She didn't seem like the girl to fall for him, but Rachel couldn't judge, because she still was learning more about her. Mara was shy, but when it came to animals you couldn't get her to stop talking.

Mara just then flicked her fingers and changed the channel to an animal show, coincidentally. Probably because she didn't want to give Bruce the wrong idea by watching a movie. Right away, you could see that Mara loved this show. It didn't matter what animal it was; she oohed and ahed. When the show displayed an animal hunting another, she showed sympathy for both sides. She loved all animals.

Just then, Rachel started to hear something. At first she thought that it might've been a roar from an animal on the TV, but they had changed to showing rabbits; there was no roaring. She listened closely and realized that the roaring sound had come from outside. She heard some grunting noises too that came from Blade, downstairs. Then she heard screaming.

"Someone's in trouble!" Nick ran out of his room and into the living room.

"Yeah," Rachel added. "I heard screaming and roaring."

Everyone all jumped up from the couch and ran to their rooms. Mara blinked and the TV turned off. Everyone threw on their shoes and hoodies. It was just Nick, Bruce, Mara and Rachel, everyone else was all at work. Rachel and Nick ran out first and immediately ran towards the sound of roaring and screaming.

Everyone was expecting another ... creature or whatever from In-tex. "The sounds coming from the park!" Nick exclaimed.

They all retracted their wings and flew towards the park right away. Nick, Bruce and Rachel flapped their wings that came out of their backs, while Mara had to flap both her arms and her wings, because her wings came off of her arms. Grace was the same way, although she was working today.

It didn't take long for them to make it to the park, flying quickened things, avoiding the traffic below. They landed and found the source of the roaring. There was a bear running around, chasing people right here in the park. Nick started to walk up to it, telling it to calm down.

"Let me," Mara said.

People stopped running realizing that the bear had cornered the guys in the hoodies. Mara walked up to the bear and started making grunting noises like the bear. She was talking to it. The bear started to talk back. They went at it for three minutes and the bear calmed down and walked off, going back to where it came from. People started clapping and thanking them.

"What did you say?" Rachel asked.

“I asked him what wrong,” Mara said. “He said that he scared of loud noise, I calm him down.”

“Thank you,” a girl walked up to Mara. “You saved me! I thought I was going to get eaten. You scared it off!”

“I didn’t scare it!” Mara exclaimed. “Everyone scare *him*! He was scared and he was not going eat you. I calm him down and he go back home.”

“Well, thank you,” the girl said, and looked a little puzzled and walked back to where she came from.

Everyone in the park clapped and thanked them for saving them. They all extended their wings and jumped upwards, flapping their wings, flying. They started flying back home. They had to fly high up to lose tract of everyone’s sight, so no one could figure out where they lived. They landed in their backyard, which was very small and surrounded by a fence. Mark had picked a pretty good house to live in, which had a nice yard to land in that had fences surrounding it. All around there were houses that they had to be careful to not be seen landing next to; they couldn’t have anyone knowing that their neighbors were the superheroes.

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### Stanley’s Building Company; Building Site

Today was a pretty busy day. Everyone was excited to have me back, because this day we got right to putting up dry wall. I help them all day; hauling it and putting the walls in. They were always impressed with my endurance to handle the walls. I thought about pretending to struggle, but I couldn’t help but show off a little. Perhaps I should be showing a little struggle, so none of them would think that I have a superpower of super strength.

My work for the day was done, but most of the work left to do on the building wasn't done. But we all had our jobs to do. My boss, Stanley, had asked for me to meet him after I was done with work. I had met him in his office, under a huge tarp that they had set up at the site.

"Hey, Mark," Stanley said. "Great work today, I could see that everyone liked your help."

"Thanks," I said.

"Do you work out or something?" he was looking at my muscles.

"Well, yes I do."

"You look good."

I looked down at my biceps and saw that they have been getting bigger. "I guess I do."

"Well, Mark ... I kind of figured that you could complete your work today, that's why I wanted to speak to you. You're always working hard and you never show any exhaustion, so I wanted to give you a raise."

"Really? Wow, thanks."

"No, thank you. I really like your help. And I also wanted to talk to you about your trip that you and your family plan on taking. You said that you had to see your cousin before she dies, right?"

"Well, my housemate's cousin and it would mean a lot to him if I went with him. We are really close and I knew her too."

"Okay, well since you have finished with all of the work for the rest of the week, I was wondering if you would like to take this week end and the following week to go to Dublin."

"Well, I guess that would be fine, but I wasn't just worrying about the cost, if I have enough money to leave now."

“How much does it cost to go?”

“For two way tickets for my whole household it would be about five thousand dollars, and we have about that much, but we have bills to pay too and food to buy to feed ourselves.”

“Wow, that’s expensive. How many people live in your house?”

“Oh, well its including some of my housemate’s family too,” I started saying, trying to make it seem that I don’t have a lot of people in my house, “so it would be able seven people going.”

“Wow ...” Stanley paused. “And you guys need to go soon, because she's dying ...” Stanley thought to himself. “You guys definitely need to go ... and Mark, you are always a good worker, so I guess you deserve this: I am going to write you a check —”

“Wait, are you sure?”

“Mark, you're so modest. Yes, I'm sure I want to do this. You deserve it and you guys really need to see your cousin before she passes away. So ...” he pulled out a pen and his checkbook. “I'm writing you a two thousand dollar check.” He ripped the check out of his checkbook and handed the check to me.

“Wow,” I exhaled. “Thank you very much. How ... how do I repay you?”

Stanley smiled. “How about this? I will give you your raise later, the month after you come back and I would like you to continue you hard work and if you can, work harder. I would like at least a thousand dollars back if you can, no later than five months after this. Does that sound like a deal?”

“You got it, deal.” I shook his outstretch hand. I smiled. “Thank you very much. I appreciate this so much.”

“You're welcome. Now, Mark ... discuss it with your housemates and family and see if you can leave this weekend and give me a call, okay?”

“You bet.”

“Alright, now go on home.”

“Alright, see ya later.”

“See ya, Mark. Thanks for your help today.”

“No problem.”

I arrived home around the same time everyone else did. It was about six O' clock and everyone was home. Rachel had made dinner for us all. It was rice a stir-fry with meat, corn, green beans, and peas. It was really good, especially with some soy sauce. At the table I told everyone about today, about the check and possibly going to Dublin this weekend.

"Really?" Alex asked. "We are ready now?"

"Yes," I said. "We really need to get to Dublin and take down Intex before he gets crazy with his experiments."

"I'll have to check with my boss," Bruce said. "I talk with him about Alex too."

"Yeah, because I have to let my boss know how everything goes," I said.

Bruce walked up to the home phone and grabbed it off the hook and took in a big breath and then starting dialing the number to the bakery. Someone answered on the other end and Bruce flinched just a little bit; he was nervous, because this whole story was a lie that we all had to pitch in on to go to Dublin. "Hello," Bruce started, sounding surprising calm, which was not how he looked. "Is Albert there? This is Bruce." Bruce waited a second and then started again. "Yeah, Albert ... this is Bruce. You remember me telling you about my cousin having cancer, right?" Bruce paused and waited for Albert's reply. "Well, we don't have much time left, so this weekend we were going to take the chance to go over to Dublin. Will that work alright for you?" He paused. "Yes, Alex is coming with me too ... Yeah we all knew her, we're pretty close." He paused again, looking anxious and then relieved. "Alright, then. I just

wanted to be sure that it would work out with you ... okay, no problem. Yep, bye.”

Bruce hung the phone up and sighed. “He said that this weekend would be fine and that he wants Alex and I to be back no later than Wednesday.”

“If all goes well, that shouldn’t be a problem,” I said.

Next Grace called up her boss, and the call was a lot shorter. Grace finished it up pretty quick and then hung the phone back up. “My boss is so easy to work with.”

“So that’s a yes?” Alex asked.

“Duh!” Grace exclaimed.

“Alright,” I said. “I better give my boss a call and let him know that we’re taking this weekend off, hopefully not forever.”

“Mark, don’t say that,” Rachel exclaimed. “Nothing’s going to happen in Dublin. We are going to do just fine.”

“Well, we must prepare for the worst.”

We bought the tickets, pack some battle clothes and left on Thursday. It was quite a long flight and most of us were resting on the way, except me and one of the others; I wasn’t paying attention to anyone to see who else was up, but I knew that someone was. I was too busy thinking about how bad this could turn out. We were stressed out about getting enough money to make this “trip” that we didn’t get stressed out about defeating Intex. I started to think about how last encounter with Intex, he had us fight the Terminator. So this wasn’t going to be easy, I just knew it. I just hoped that I was ready for this. It’s what I was born to do, to stop Intex, but was I ready?

Just a couple of hours later the plane landed and we grabbed our light luggage. We just had two bags, having two pairs of clothes for all of

us to change into. We exited the plane and saw the sight of Dublin; which was pretty huge. There were buildings everywhere. I wasn't sure if we could find this building right away, but we had to get moving.

"If I know Intex well enough," Nick started saying, "His building will be one of the tallest and one of the few buildings with actual flat roofs."

"Then that's what we'll look for," I said. "Let's go."

"Wait," Mara said. "We are going to carry bags with us?"

"Umm, right. If we're going to bring down Intex we need to find a place to drop off our bags; we don't want anything to slow us down."

Alex looked around everywhere, moving his head and body around pretty fast; it looked a little strange. "There!" Alex exclaimed, pointing to an alley. The alley was pretty tight and narrow. In the alley was just a little debris and abandoned bicycles. It definitely looked like no one used that alley, even though there were bound to be homeless people around.

"Alright, let's use it," I said. "Just remember that this alley is right next to the airport." We walked into the alley and set our bags down in the corner, next to the bikes. We left as soon as we dropped the bags and started searching for Intex's building.

We walked down so many streets, seeing many buildings that all looked very similar. I could feel eyes on us the whole time; we didn't look Irish to anyone, but looked very American. We went deeper and deeper into Ireland until we seemed to have made it to the edge of town and then we saw it. It Intex was trying to hide from us, he was doing a poor job at it; a very poor job. The building was taller than any other building around it and it looked very much like American buildings. And another thing, he had a huge sign or logo on it, saying *Creative Works* and underneath it: *Intex Industries*. He was definitely not hiding. Did he want us to find him?

“There it is!” Alex exclaimed.

“Way to point out the obvious, genius,” Grace said.

At any other time I would have chuckled, but I was a little nervous about what was in store for us. “Okay, guys,” I said. “Let's go, but ... prepare for the worst. We don't know what Intex may have up his sleeves.”

“What, more fail-in-ators?” Nick asked.

“We don't know.”

We arrived at the front door, which was obviously not see-proof. It also looked pretty sturdy. I thought about how Intex was banished from Rexton, how he ran all of those experiments, and how he almost had Rachel killed. Anger started to boil through me. I had to get my adrenaline pumping.

“Alright, let's do this!” I exclaimed.

I didn't bother knocking or even opening the door, instead I kicked it down. This door was about eight feet tall by six feet wide, but nevertheless, I kicked it down and it made a loud thumping sound. The sound echoed through the large hallways.

Right away we could tell that it looked like a Creative Works building. We stepped inside and then very suddenly there he was; Intex had appeared right into the air in front of us, coming from nowhere.

“I do have a doorbell,” Intex said.

“I didn't see one,” I said. “And even if I did I wouldn't have changed how I opened the door anyway.”

Intex tried to be funny, but his smile faded and he knew what we were here for. “So, you guys think that you can stop me, huh?”

“I know we can!” Alex exclaimed.

“Well, I know you can't, Alex,” Intex laughed. “You're the weakest one here!”

Alex grew very angry and quickly ran around Intex and punched him and in the chest, but he didn't even move a bit. Intex just laughed and threw a fist into Alex's stomach; Alex wasn't prepared and groaned,

hunching over. I launched forward, charging at Intex. I threw my arms out to tackle him but I only grabbed the air. I jumped to my feet and spun around, doing a three-sixty. Intex was nowhere around, he had teleported.

“Coward,” Nick said.

“I heard that Nick,” Intex’s voice came from every direction. “But it doesn’t matter, because it’s not true, I’m using tactics. You are all just kids and you’ll never stop me, you’re all stupid and don’t know anything about combat.”

Suddenly Intex appeared behind Nick and Nick spun around to get socked in the face by Intex. Intex disappeared before Nick could do anything else.

“You know what Intex?” I yelled. “You say that, but you are not putting up a fight with us, you’re just throwing punches and cowering away. You want to see some combat skills; I dare you to fight me.”

“I don’t have to do what you please, but if you insist on fighting, then I’ll give you something to fight.”

Just then, a door opened down the hall. Out came a very large, gross-looking creature. It had all human features, but it looked retarded.

“Meet Enigma,” Intex said.

“Isn’t that a Greek mythical creature?” Bruce asked.

“Yes, but this is nothing like it. This beauty is way stronger and more powerful.”

“Beauty?!” Mara exclaimed. “It’s hideous and sick!”

“Very well. Enigma, kill them take your anger out on their harsh comments out you.”

“No problem,” it spoke in a horrifying voice. “With pleasure.”

It charged at all of us, but it certainly looked like it was heading right towards me. Sure enough, it was. It was about three feet from me and I jumped right over it, doing a back flip while I was at it. I came down to the ground, swinging my arm out and hitting Enigma in the back. It didn't even make a sound. It slowed and turned around to face me.

"You're mine!" Enigma growled. "And I'm hungry!"

"For what?" I scoffed.

"For you."

"Gross!" Mara exclaimed.

Enigma ran towards me and I ran towards it, stopping right before we hit. He tackled me to the ground and kicked him off of me, hoping I could kick him off balance, but he stood upright and punched me in the stomach. I kicked him again, right in the chest and then he rose into the air, high towards the ceiling, but slowly.

I got up and took a look at Bruce and saw him watching Enigma reach the ceiling, he was using his telekinesis to raise him up; I knew that I couldn't have kicked him that high up.

"Put me down!" Enigma yelled.

"Alright," Bruce said. Bruce telekinetically threw Enigma hard at the ground, not dropping him but throwing him; hard.

Enigma went flying straight down and hit the floor hard, creating a little crater in the floor. We heard a loud cracking sound and Enigma groaned. It just shrugged it off and jumped to its feet. He growled and then roared. Enigma's one arm was dangling about uselessly; Bruce had broken it. Enigma didn't show that it was in any pain and he charged towards Bruce, but Alex ran right in front of it, tripping it. It just got right back up, only to get hit in the face by a kick from Nick. Enigma stumbled backwards a little bit, but kept from falling.

Mara suddenly transformed into a grizzly bear and ran towards Enigma. She roared as a bear and jumped on top of Enigma, but it only kicked her off, sending her flying ten feet into the air. Enigma was still standing and he charged at me, because I was the main attraction, right?

I wasn't cowering away, though. I ran right towards Enigma and stopped short and then waited for it to get closer. I moved back and forth trying to confuse it into thinking where I would run to, but I didn't run to either side of it, but stay right where I was and punched it right in the face. Enigma looked so stupid, stumbling backwards and then I jumped and kicked it in the gut. But I wasn't going to stop at that and I continued to punch it and it fell down. It was about to get up, so I helped it and threw him over my shoulder, sending it soaring through the air until it hit a wall.

Now, these walls are made out of concrete and I threw Enigma into one and it created a huge hole in it, crumbling. Enigma yanked itself out of the wall and ran towards me. Alex ran quickly into front of it to trip it, but this time Enigma saw it coming and kicked him. Alex was thrown through the air and landed on the floor about forty feet away and he didn't get up. Grace ran up to him and checked him.

Enigma continued running towards me when suddenly Nick was running super-fast, replicating Alex's speed, and ran straight at him and punched him hard in its chest. Enigma was sent backwards through the air and then slide down the floor of the long hallway. It started getting back up, but then Nick ran super-fast and kicked him, sending him back my way.

Enigma landed right at my feet and I took this advantage and stomped on its head, hard. Nothing stopped me from stomping its head some more. I stomped until I saw blood and I stomped some more. The blood was a mix between red and green. It was disgusting.

"What next, Intex?" I asked.

Just then Enigma's hand was completely around my neck and I was yanked off my feet and thrown clear across the room until I hit a wall making a loud cracking sound in my back. I groaned and fell to the ground and I couldn't get up.

Enigma wanted to kill me right then and there, but Nick just then started punching and kicking him as fast as he could. Enigma tried hitting him back, but Nick was too fast. I laid there on the floor in pain. I couldn't move my arms or my legs. Enigma had cracked my back. I tried to move, but I could only move my head and neck.

Rachel ran up to me and was afraid to touch me, afraid that she would hurt me more.

Just then I felt like I was on fire and heat flooded through me. My back started to feel numb and then it felt very warm and was starting to shape back in place. It was starting to heal. Within just a few more seconds it had completely healed and I jumped to my feet.

Just as I jumped up, Enigma had gotten a hold of Nick and threw him my way. I was about to try to catch him when he was stopped in midair. I looked to see that Bruce had telekinetically saved his fall, and then Bruce set him down.

"You don't think I can take a hit?!" I yelled at Enigma.

Enigma laughed disgustingly, sounding like his throat was filled with phlegm. It ran towards me and I ran towards it, ready to make my move. I jumped high into the air, curled into a ball and did a few flips and then came down on top of Enigma. I kicked it hard in the hand, knocking it over. I jumped off of Enigma and kicked it in the head, over and over again.

I bent down and yanked Enigma off of the ground by its neck and spun around in a circle, spinning on my heels and I let go of it, letting it soar through the air, going the opposite direction of everyone else. With-

in a second Enigma had hit a wall, breaking entirely through it and into the room behind it. I ran towards the room and jumped into it, through the hole in the wall.

Enigma was slowly getting up, eating concrete dust that was in its mouth, which had come from the wall. Its head was bleeding badly. I charged at it and at the last second it threw its arm out to try to grab me, but I knew a Kung Fu move to avoid this and I jumped right over top of it, flipping to face it and kicked Enigma right in the back of the head. It fell to the floor face first.

I took no hesitation and grabbed it from its neck and threw it hard down onto the floor and stomped hard on its head, right on its face. I picked up a broken concrete block that came from the debris of the wall and whacked it hard across Enigma's head. I whacked it over and over, back and forth from each side of its head.

Enigma couldn't even keep itself up any longer, but I kept hitting it over and over. I threw the concrete block right into its face and then jumped over its head, pulling it by its neck, using my momentum to swing it over my head and through the air. It headed straight towards the ceiling and then came right back down flimsy, with its arms and legs dangly loosely. It hit the ground hard and didn't get back up.

Nick ran into the room and saw the sight of the lifeless looking body of Enigma. Just to make sure I ran up to it and took a big swing with my leg and kicked it as hard as I could, kicking it in the head. Its neck snapped from my kick. It was definitely dead now.

"What's that Intex about us not knowing combat skills?" I yelled. "You're a real coward to not fight me. You're a crook too. I know what you're trying to do. You want to make me weak so you can kill me, but guess what? It's not going to work."

"And why is that?" Intex suddenly appeared in front of me and Nick.

“You know it to be true, because I am going to stop you, you’ve seen it.”

“Oh yeah, what about that vision of the future that you saw, huh? Where I take over the world and live with my creations and rid the Earth of all humans?!”

“How do you know that I saw that?”

Intex didn’t answer and just smiled. Suddenly I got hit from behind from something that felt sharp. I was thrown to the ground and I quickly jumped up kicking what just hit me. I looked to see a muscular looking man who had spiked sticking out of its head.

“This here is Minotaur,” Intex said.

“Another Greek mythical creature,” I said, feeling my back already healing.

“It’s just a name; he’s it way more powerful than the Greek creature.”

Minotaur smiled and then charged at me. I got ready to fight it when I was suddenly already punched and stabbed into the chest by the spikes on its head. It had super speed.

“Smart move,” I said.

Minotaur laughed, and this failure of a creature laughed more like a human than Enigma. It charged at me again and I threw my hands out and it ran with its head down, spikes out and it stabbed my hand. I held back the pain and kned it in the gut, pulled my hand off of its spiky head and punched and kicked it in the face.

Minotaur backed up and ran around behind me. I could predict that it was going to run its spikes into my back, so I jumped straight up, doing a flip and landed right on top of it. I kicked it as hard as I could in the back, slamming it into the ground. It pushed me off of it and ran to-

wards me, fist out and punched the wall behind me, because I had moved my head out of the way.

My hand and back were already healed. My accelerated healing ability was turning into a rapid healing ability.

Minotaur was fast and it made contact with its fist and my nose, making my nose bleed right away. It didn't stop and it kept punching me in my nose. Just then an invisible force threw Minotaur through the air. I shook my head and waited for my nose to heal and to regain focus. I knew that either Bruce or Nick had just used their telekinesis.

My nose already healed and I gained focus and concentration on what was happening around me. Bruce was fighting Minotaur madly. Minotaur sure was fast, but Bruce was the one with better combat skills, using Kung Fu. Minotaur was punching Bruce like crazy, but Bruce blocked most of the punches and also used his telekinesis to block.

I got up to my feet and Minotaur noticed right away. It stopped fighting Bruce and looked right at me and smiled. Bruce kicked it in the back of the head, but Minotaur only had to take one step forward to not lose its balance. Minotaur didn't even show any sign of pain. All of these "creations" of Intex's were strong and durable.

Minotaur charged at me, running super-fast, just like Alex could. It punched me in the chest, shoving me into the wall behind me. It punched me repeatedly and I only could block a few of its punches, so it was now punching me faster than it did to Bruce. I was about to give it a good kick, but then Bruce used his telekinesis and threw Minotaur high into the air.

Minotaur was thrown through the air and its back hit a wall, putting a good size dent in the wall. Minotaur came down to the ground and tried to land on its feet, but fell forward and caught its fall by throwing its hands out. I ran right up to it and kicked it as hard as I could in the face, before it even got the chance to get to its feet. Minotaur was knocked backwards and onto his back. I jumped up to stomp on its stomach, but Minotaur rolled out of the way and quickly jumped to its feet. I spun around quickly, expecting an attack from Minotaur, and sure enough he was running towards me, with his head down and spikes out.

It stabbed its spikes into my gut and kept pushing me backwards. I shot my knee right into its jaw and then kicked it off of me. I gasped and my gut started healing. Minotaur got right back up and ran towards me. It

threw a punch, but I easily avoided it and kicked it hard in the face. Minotaur doubled backwards and I kicked it hard in the face again and again. Minotaur was trying to make a comeback, but I wasn't giving it a chance.

Rachel, Grace, Mara and Alex just ran into the room. Alex had waked up from just being unconscious. He looked at the dead body of Enigma. Its neck was setting awkwardly. Now he saw that I was beating the crap out of Minotaur.

Minotaur suddenly jumped backwards, missing my next blow. It shook its head, trying to regain its focus. That showed me that it was weak. I charged at it, jumped and kicked it as hard as I could, throwing my foot upward. Minotaur was sent flying straight up towards the ceiling and it hit the ceiling hard, creating a large hole in the ceiling. Then I saw Bruce and Nick hold their hands out at the same time, both using telekinesis. The two of them yanked Minotaur down to the ground in less than one second.

Minotaur sat in a crater in the floor. It didn't move. I ran up to it and saw Minotaur lying in the hole, groaning. I reached down and pulled it up out of the hole and threw it down hard on the floor. I stood on its shoulder with one foot and with my other I kicked it in the head, over and over. I was going to kick until I snapped its neck.

Just then Minotaur jumped up and stood hunched over in front of me. It was trying to survive, but it looked weak and pathetic. Suddenly, Mara charged at it morphing into an elephant. Minotaur threw its head down with its spikes out, but Mara suspected this and just kicked Minotaur in the chest with her elephant foot. Minotaur was thrown to the floor, lying on its back. Mara stomped on its chest and I heard its ribs crack. Mara stomped on Minotaur again, this time on its face. Minotaur was being crushed into the floor. Mara used her trunk and grabbed Minotaur around its neck, choking it while holding it in the air.

Minotaur couldn't breathe and struggled to break free and tried punching Mara's elephant trunk, but it wasn't working. After each second

his punches were weaker and weaker. About ten seconds later it started shaking like crazy, because it was getting close to death. Despite that, Mara squeezed harder and harder. It looked like if Mara were to squeeze any harder she would rip Minotaur's head off.

Minotaur stopped moving and his arms and legs fell and dangled. Mara didn't let go, she couldn't be certain that it was dead yet. She kept choking Minotaur and also started whacking it against the floor. She held onto Minotaur for a few more seconds and then with all of her might, she threw Minotaur at a wall, head first. Minotaur hit the wall hard and you could actually see a large crack in its skull. Minotaur fell to the ground and laid there in its own pool of blood. He was definitely dead. Mara snorted and then morphed back into her normal self.

"Disgusting!" Mara scoffed.

I turned around to see that Intex was there. He had just teleported. He was trying to not show any expression, but he failed and showed that he was impressed with how we killed Minotaur. I had weakened it and Mara finished it off.

"Alright," Intex simply said and then he sighed. "Now I give you, Dragon."

"Yippy!" I exclaimed, shaking my head. "How about just you and me fight, Intex?" I paused. "Why are you making us fight all of your experiments —"

"Creations!" Intex interrupted.

"That's bull crap. Why don't you fight me, Intex? You coward!"

"You want a fight, huh?" Intex yelled, furiously. "I'll give you a fight!!"

Just then a huge Dragon jumped into the room, tearing down the wall. This was Intex's "creation" the Dragon. "Dragon, kill them all, but leave Mark for me," Intex commanded.

"Yes, master," Dragon said in a hideous voice. It ran towards Nick and was thrown right over him by Bruce's telekinesis.

I looked at Intex and scowled. "I'll give you a fight, Intex. I guarantee it." I told him.

Intex and I charged at each other and just a foot away I was about to punch him, but then I teleported behind me and kicked me. I stumbled forward and then got hit from the front from Intex who had just teleported in front of me. I flipped in place, kicking in front of me and behind me and I kicked Intex behind me.

I jumped up and did a back flip and landed behind Intex. I quickly kicked him in the back before he would've teleported. I kicked him again, just as he turned his skin into metal. He spun around and faced me. He shot a bolt of electricity right at me and it hit my chest. I groaned and hunched over, immediately moving out of the way as he tried to kick me in the face. I knew my combat skills, I could suspect what Intex would try to do.

I did a back flip and then jumped straight up, just as Intex teleported behind me to kick me, but he missed me. I landed and kicked him in the gut. He stumbled backwards a little bit, but seemed to have some durability because of his metal skin. He held his hands out and a very cold breeze traveled through the air from his hands.

Suddenly I got very cold, but I wasn't going to let that stop me. I jumped forward and kicked him in the gut again, and he teleported behind me and kicked me in the back. I was about to do a back flip, but figured Intex would teleport right in front of me, thinking that he would catch on, and I was right. Intex teleported in front of me and I punched him as hard as I could in his nose, but he only flinched and nothing happened to his nose.

Just then he grabbed my wrists and they felt very cold very quickly. He was using his cryokinesis to freeze my hands. I jumped up and kicked him in the face. He tried teleporting away, but he took me with

him because I was touching him. I kicked him again and he released his grip around my wrists. I threw myself forward and grabbed his neck and squeezed. It didn't feel like I was squeezing anything but metal, and he wasn't choking.

"You can't kill me," Intex laughed. "I'm indestructible."

"I know that to not be true ... and you know it." I said.

"Yeah? Believe what you want."

I smiled and then kned him in the gut, pulled his head down by his neck and kned him in the face, and then punched him in the nose. He was out of breath and I saw that his nose was bleeding, despite him being in his metal skin.

"See?" I told him. "Not so tough now are you?"

"That's so childish to say!" Intex teleported behind me and I jumped straight up and he missed me by a foot.

I came back down and he shot lava at me from his hands. It hit me right in the chest, burning me bad. I couldn't breathe but I still tried to stand and fight. He charged at me and shocked me with electricity and punched me in the nose. I did a back flip and kicked him in the face. My chest completely healed two seconds later and I could breathe again.

Suddenly I heard a very loud banging sound and I looked to see Bruce beating the crap out of Dragon, using his telekinesis. Then I saw Mara turning into a gorilla and took her turn to beat up Dragon. Then I got punched in the face by Intex. I took a step back and blocked his next blow and punched him hard in the face. Intex didn't even flinch and he then grabbed me by my shoulders and threw me across the hallway and into the room that everyone else was battling in with Dragon.

I got to my feet and saw how everyone was looking worn out, even Nick, but except for Bruce. Bruce was looking awesome, fighting

Dragon without losing any stamina. It was Bruce and I who were the only ones who took Kung Fu training. Even Intex didn't take that training. I ran towards Intex and jumped out of the room, through a hole in a wall. Intex threw a bolt of electricity, but I jumped out of the way and continued running towards Intex. I got right up to him, threw a punch right at him, but he teleported to my side and punched me in the head.

I somersaulted to save from falling over and jumped up and kicked Intex right in the face, knocking him over. Just then he teleported and hit me from behind, and then he teleported and hit me from the side. He teleported everywhere around me, hitting me over and over again.

I just stood there and let him hit me. My Kung Fu training had given me endurance to stand this. "You don't think I can't take this?" I asked him and he punched me hard in the side of the head. "This is nothing!" I yelled at him. "Let me show you something!"

"Let me see what you got!" Intex yelled back.

I charged at Intex and he teleported behind me and I quickly spun around, doing a full three-sixty, knowing that he would just teleport back, and he did. I took the chance and kicked him hard in the chest, sending him through the air. I kicked him into the wall behind him. I ran towards him and punched him in the chin. It gave him a crack in his metal skin.

I grabbed a hold of Intex and threw him at a door of a room. The door swung inward and Intex was thrown into the room. I ran into the room and the door swung all of the way open, bounced off of the wall and then slammed shut. Intex got up to his feet and I charged at him as he shot of bolt of electricity at me. I prepare for a big shock, but it didn't feel as bad as the other shocks. Intex looked like he was going to teleport behind me, but he stayed right where he was. I charged at him and kicked him in the face.

I shoved Intex into the wall behind him in this room, and his skin flickered from metal to normal skin, and then it changed into a normal skin complexion and stayed like that. I punched Intex in the jaw, feeling less powerful. My punch wasn't as strong as before.

I looked up in the air and saw a gas forming near the ceiling. "Would you look at that," I said. "We're in a power-proof room." I smiled and looked down at Intex. "Now we can see who really is better at combat."

I allowed Intex to get to his feet and I charged at him as he tried to kick me, but I jumped out of the way and punched him in the side, right in the kidney. He groaned and hunched over. He forced himself to stand upright and tried to punch me, but I was too quick. I jumped from his one side to his other side and punched him over and over. Intex tried punching me back, but kept on missing.

"Ha, Intex! You can't touch me!"

I spoke too soon and put my guard down, because then Intex kicked his foot out and hit me in the chest. I stumbled back a few steps as he jumped forward at me and punched me in the face. I caught myself from falling over and kept my footing. Intex's next punch I blocked and punched him in the nose in return.

We went at it, punching each other over and over again. I blocked most of his punches. It was clear that I was better at combat than Intex was. I threw punches and kicks and hit Intex almost every time, but when Intex did the same I block almost all of them.

Intex's back was facing a wall and I kicked him hard in the chest and shoved him into the wall. I kicked him in the chest again, as hard as I could and shoved him hard into the wall again, actually creating a dent in the wall, even without my super strength. Intex slowly got up stepping away from the wall.

I saw something shiny out of the corner of my eye. I looked to see a metal chair bolted to the floor. This room was for prisoners with powers. But that was not what caught my eye; it was a metal pipe behind the chair. I ran behind the chair and grabbed the pipe. I saw that one end of the pipe had a sharp point to it.

Intex saw me with the pipe and gasped, as if he could see what was coming. I ran towards him and whacked him across the head as hard as I could. He fell over and tried to get up as quickly as he could. I whacked him in the head again with the pipe, hearing a crack in his head. He fell over, but was still conscious. He was struggling to get up.

Just then the door to the room broke down and Dragon was lying down in front of us. We looked to see Bruce standing in front of Dragon.

Bruce had thrown Dragon right through the door. The power-proof gas in the room dispersed. Suddenly, Intex was back to his feet and his skin had changed back into its metal form.

Intex jumped towards me and tried to grab the pipe from me, but I swung it around and whacked him in the head, making a loud clanging sound as the pipe clashed against his metal skin. Intex caught his fall and then was thrown into the air by Bruce's telekinesis. Bruce jumped over the lifeless body of Dragon. He telekinetically let Intex float in the air, and then he shoved him down to the ground fast.

Intex hit the floor hard, but he quickly got up and teleported behind Bruce. He kicked Bruce, but Bruce took the momentum into a somersault and then spun around and kicked Intex in the chest. I was wondering where the rest of the team was when I saw that there were more creatures out in the halls, fighting them. Seeing all of those creatures reminded me of what Intex would do if we didn't stop him; he would create a future of disaster. Everyone would be hybrids of some sort and would be violent and careless. It would be awful. We had to stop Intex — today.

I ran forward, towards Intex. He was fighting Bruce, and he wasn't doing badly at all. I jumped with my foot out. Intex teleported behind Bruce to punch him from behind, but I kicked him hard in the back of the head. I took my metal pipe and whacked him as hard as I could. He couldn't hold back from groaning. He jumped to his feet and kicked at me, but I easily moved out of the way and then whacked him across his face with the pipe.

*His metal skin is not invulnerable.* I heard the voice in my head.

I kind of knew that already, so what was this voice getting at?

*Whacking him won't do much; you need to penetrate his skin.*

*So I need to stab him.*

*Precisely.*

*Who are you, anyway?*

*I'm not a person; I'm just a part of your consciousness.*

*You sound like the voice of my father's that I heard from my ship.*

*Kill Intex.* The voice didn't say anything more and it didn't have to.

Intex ran towards me and I ran towards him putting the metal pipe straight out. Intex saw what was coming and he teleported behind me. I spun around and got punched in the face. I jumped backwards and then whacked him with the pipe. I put the pipe straight out and shoved it at Intex. The pipe just hit Intex's metal skin and didn't penetrate it.

Bruce looked like he was about to help me out in some way, but something caught his attention outside of the room. It was Mara; she was fighting a large ugly experiment. Mara was shoved down to the ground with the experiment's foot on top of her. Bruce ran outside and telekinetically shoved the experiment off of her.

I was left alone with Intex again, but that was fine. I could handle Intex. Intex ran towards me and threw a fist just past my face as I avoided it. I kicked Intex hard in the chest, knocking him back a few steps. Suddenly someone else teleported into the room. It was Bryan; he was still alive.

"Bryan!" Intex exclaimed. "Get rid of that pipe!" he pointed to the pipe in my hands.

Bryan teleported in front of me and Intex teleported behind me. I aimed the pipe perpendicular to the ground and jumped up and swung around in a circle, swinging around the pipe and kicking Intex and Bryan. I aimed the pipe at Bryan and whacked him hard across the face, sending him to the ground. Bryan groaned and I struck him in the back of the head with the pipe, knocking him out.

“Wow that was easy!” I exclaimed. “Now where were we, Intex?” I asked him.

“I was about to kill you,” Intex said.

“Actually I was about to kill *you*,” I corrected.

“You can't kill me!”

“Yeah I can, even when you're turned into metal.”

“Oh yeah, how?”

“Like this!”

I ran towards Intex and suspected him to teleport behind me and he sure did and I whipped the pipe around and hit him in the head. He was dumbfounded for a second. I took this chance and held the pipe straight out, and then I ran right towards Intex and forced the pipe right into Intex's chest. The pipe penetrated right through his chest and all of the way through his back. Intex gasped and looked down at his chest.

“That's how I kill you, huh?” I asked. “And you knew it too. That's why you always seemed uneasy around metal pipes and rods. Because you knew that would be how I would kill you.” I smiled.

Intex tried to pull the pipe out, but he didn't even have enough energy to. His skin changed back to normal, no longer being metal. Blood was already gushing out of his chest. He kept gasping. “I ... hate ... you.” he barely managed to say.

Nick and Rachel ran into the room and saw the sight. Both of their jaws dropped once they saw Intex. “Mark,” Rachel said. “You ...” she trailed off.

I nodded. I looked back at Intex and saw the color fade from his face. He looked angry and soon he would meet death. He struggled to try to get up to his feet, but he just fell back down, pushing the pipe around in his chest. I decided to yank the pipe out of his chest and then I stabbed

him again, forcing it down right through his heart and into the concrete floor on the other side of him.

Intex gave another gasp and shook a little bit. "Mark," he said his voice very shaky. Bruce and Mara ran into the room and saw the Intex. Alex came in next. They had just defeated the experiments outside of the room and all were now looking at Intex. "Your father ..." Intex gasped. "Betrayed me ... he ... he's not-not ... a good person ... like you might think. He used to work ... for me."

"What?!" I exclaimed. "You're lying."

"Am I? I'm dying and I'm going to ... lie ... to you? I'm telling you ... the truth. You're no different than him!" he groaned and was struggling to stay alive. "He tried to kill me ..."

"Good! And I finished it off. You're dead, Intex."

"Your father was not a good person ... so you can't look up to him ... so why'd you listen to him ... why'd you stab me."

"Because you're the one who's corrupt. You wanted to wipe out this whole planet, ridding it of all of the humans and replace them all with your disgusting experiments!"

"Mark ... you ..." Intex gasped and trailed off. His neck fell backwards and his jaw lay opened. He let out one last breath and was dead.

"What was he going to say last?" Bruce asked.

"It doesn't matter," I said. "Whatever it was, it wasn't important. He's ... he was evil and corrupted."

"What about your father?" Rachel asked.

"I knew that my father did something wrong, because he wasn't allowed to go where I went when planet Rexton died, my father's pun-

ishment was the distance between us ... but I don't know if he really did work for Intex or not."

"Yeah," Nick agreed. "Whether Intex was dying or not, he couldn't be trusted."

"But, I think I believe him," I said.

"What?" Alex exclaimed.

"My father did something wrong, but would that have not enabled him to be united with me? No, he would have to have done something a lot worse, like working with Intex. That's why he wanted me to stop Intex, because he hated him, because it was because of Intex that we were separated. He wanted Intex dead."

"And you granted his wish," Rachel said.

"I didn't do it for my father; I did it for the protection of Earth and everyone living on it."

## Epilogue

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Bryan groaned and woke up. He slowly got to his feet and felt his head. It hurt so badly. The first thing he noticed was Intex. He was lying down on the ground, dead. He had a pipe that went all of the way through him.

“I couldn’t save him,” he said to himself. “I failed.” He got up and walked up to Intex. He knelt down and looked at Intex closely. He was definitely dead. “I’m so sorry,” he said. “I’m so sorry.”

Just then he felt something hot and smelled something burnt. He looked around and saw that the room was catching flames. He looked outside of the room and saw that the hallway was filled with flames, roaring. He looked at Intex and then jumped to his feet.

He had to save himself. He was just about to teleport, but found that he couldn’t. He tried again and again. He looked around in the room, but didn’t see any power-proof gas in the air. He looked down at his arms and then he found it, there was a little hole in his arm that had dried blood on it. It was a mark made from a needle.

“They found the power negating serum,” Bryan said. “I don’t have my powers.”

Bryan had nowhere to go but outside of the room, into the fire. He ran out of the room and down the hall, headed towards the front door. His pants were already on fire and it was spreading up his clothes. He yelled in pain and couldn’t get the fire out. Within just a few seconds he was completely covered in flames. He ran out of the door, on fire. He fell to the ground and tried to put the fire out, but he was already badly burnt and then dehydrated. He stopped moving and continued burning and died.

The whole building was engulfed in flames. Fire trucks started heading to the building and the firefighters tried as fast as they could to get their hose out, but they didn't in time and the building started crumbling away.

We were in the plane heading back home. We were all relieved now that Intex was dead. We no longer had to worry about him. Bryan was probably dead by now too. It was funny what had happened and we all laughed about it. We had searched the whole building and released all of the prisoners and found a power negating serum and injected it into Bryan. What was funny was that he used all that he had left with his pyrokinesis and had shot fire from his hands while being unconscious. Then the power negating serum took over him and he lost his powers. He was the one that set the building on fire, right before completely losing his powers.

We were all relieved, but I knew that we weren't done yet. This was the beginning to our journey. We had stopped Intex, but when we get back home, we would need to continue our mission. We would need to be the ones to protect the city from crime.

Mostly what I was thinking about was what Intex told me right before he died. My father had worked for him. I was disgusted with the very idea of it. I knew that it must've been true, because I knew that we were separated because of something that he had done, just I didn't know what. Now I had an idea what. My father had worked for Intex on Rexton. So he had done illegal experiments alongside with Intex. I couldn't believe it. I stopped Intex for that very reason, and here my father used to do the same thing on Rexton. He was no different. But what could I do? I was on Earth, and my father was on Rexton.

Location: Dublin, Ireland. Intex's body was completely burned and still had the pipe stuck in him. Firefighters had put out the fire, but the building came down anyway. They were searching the building for any bodies. Then one of them found Intex. They were surprised to see that he was stabbed with a pipe. They weren't sure if it came down and stabbed him or not.

There was something inside of his clothing that caught the firefighter's attention. He opened his shirt a little and saw some sort of device. It basically looked like a blinking light and it beeped. Just then it shook and jumped out of the guy's hand. He jumped and let it go and the little device floated in the air above Intex. Suddenly the device shone a spotlight on Intex and scanned him. Then it beeped and shot some sort of energy towards the sky.

The energy went straight up and hit a satellite, and then from the satellite it sent a signal to a machine down at New York City. The machine was on top of a tall building and it roared to life. It blasted a gas that traveled throughout all of New York. Everyone in all of New York breathed in the gas and was exposed to whatever the gas was. Then the machine turned off, deactivating. It then started crumbling away, getting rid of any trace of itself.

To Be Continued ...



Every hero as a **beginning** ...

Mark discovers what he's gotten himself into

**Sacrifice, Determination, Humility**; just some of

the key factors for becoming a **hero** ...

Mark Wills was told that is the one that is

supposed to save the world, though

**complications** arise ... The Villain rises ...



MARK WILLS HAS A

NOV LOOK ON HIS

IT'S TO SAVE THE WORLD