

THE ADVENTURES OF

MW

How do you fight for freedom
without undermining authority?



The Metahumans

REXFORD RICH

Mark Wills

and the

Metahumans

Rexford Rich

Part 1: Out With the Old And
In With the New

Just a day had passed since we defeated Intex. We were finally done with him. I still had a lot on my mind though. I started thinking about my parents. I had moved away from them to protect them from Intex. Now that Intex was dead, I didn't need to be away from them any longer, but I was now away for a different reason. I had to be in New York to protect the people here. Crime was high in New York, although it wasn't the worst in the country, but it was about to become the worst.

I thought more about who we had become to New York. People were starting to notice us. We weren't much of an image to them, although some had called us superheroes, but we didn't have a name. Now that Intex was out of the picture, I knew that we had to focus on a new chapter in life, to protect New York from its villainous acts and crimes. We had only started with this new ordeal with being superheroes; we had to create a name for ourselves so that people knew us.

I was sitting up in my bed, thinking about all that had happened in this short time. I decided to check up on Blade. We still had him chained up downstairs. I got out of bed and looked at my alarm clock; it was just a bit after six O' clock in the morning. I looked at Rachel; she was still sleeping in her bed that was right next to mine. She looked so peaceful and cute when she slept. I sighed and stepped out of my room. I walked down the hallway and down the stairs.

Blade immediately saw me, lifting his head up. I walked past him and grabbed two chairs and set them in front of him. "I just wanted to talk, Blade," I said. I noticed that this time and the last few times that I had saw Blade, he was in his human form, not his werewolf form.

I walked up to the chains and unlocked them, pulling the key out of my pocket, causing Blade to get lowered to the floor. Then I unlocked

the cuffs around his wrists and ankles. Blade stood on his feet and rubbed his wrists.

“I'm sorry that we had to have you chained up like that,” I said. “Please, have a seat.”

Blade sat down, showing little expression on his face at all. “Is everyone else asleep?” He asked me.

“Yes. Did you hear about what happened?”

“Yeah, Alex talked very loud. He always excited.” He paused. “I heard that you killed Intex.”

“Yes. He had to be stopped. If we let him go, he would have wiped out everyone off the face of the Earth and create human-hybrids to replace them. I had to stop him. The thing is ... if you continue any of your villainous acts, I have to end you too.”

“So you'll kill me?”

“No, I won't kill you.”

“Then why'd you kill Intex?”

I sighed. “I don't know. I don't like killing. When I was young my father would take me with him to go hunting and I hated it. So, it hurts me to see someone get killed or for me to kill someone else. Intex was the only person that I ever killed. I killed him because of this voice in my head.”

“You have a voice in your head, other than your own?”

“Yeah. It sort of came from my ship when I touched it.”

“The ship that came from your planet?”

“Yeah. If this voice wasn't in my head, I may have just locked Intex up or something.”

“No, what you did was fine, because Intex would've just escaped.”

“Yeah, I guess. But ... what about you, Blade? Are you ... have you ...?”

“Have I changed?” Blade asked, and I nodded. “Being locked up here had made me realize some things. I got to thinking ... You know, when Intex experiments on people, he also implants new feelings into them. He gives them the feelings for craving to murder, and to hate you. But for some reason, he didn't do it to all of your friends. I think that they all fought too much and Intex gave up on them, so he just locked them up. As for Bruce and Rachel, I think you just pulled them away before he even got to it.”

Blade paused. “But being locked up down here made me think about who I was before I became Blade. I used to be Brandon Zane.” He started to smile, remember back. “I had a nice family. I had a younger brother and really nice parents. I remember how I used to always play with my brother even when I didn't want to. He would always want to play superheroes, but I wanted to play video games. My parents would always tell me to play with him, so I did. Every weekend, my parents would take us all out to eat at any restaurant we chose.” Blade's smile faded and he sighed. “That was the last thing I did with my parents.

“We finished eating at the restaurant and were headed back to our car, but it was then when Intex captured me. He snatched me up right in front of my family. He didn't care who I was. It might've been because he hated seeing people too happy being together, because he didn't have a family like that.” He paused and a tear ran down his cheek. Then he looked down at the floor and shook his head. A few more tears ran down his cheeks.

“It was awful,” he continued. “Intex threw me into the back of a van and then ... right in front of me ... he used a knife and sliced all of my family's throats.”

“Whoa,” I said. “I'm sorry, Blade. I had no idea.”

“Brandon,” he said. “Call me Brandon. I don't want to be Blade anymore.”

“Why'd you continue to work for Intex if he did all of that to you?”

“Because, he implanted those feelings into me, and I think that those feelings sort of made me forget who I was and where I came from. But being here I remembered about the past.” Blade, or Brandon, looked up at me. “I want to thank you.”

“For what?” I asked him.

“For killing Intex. If you wouldn't have done it, I would've killed him myself, but I want nothing to do with him anymore ... and killing is what Intex crafted into me, but I don't want to be like that.”

I heard some shuffling of feet moving upstairs, followed by the sound of pots and pans clashing together.

Brandon smiled. “It sounds like Alex is getting ready to make breakfast.”

“Yeah,” I said. “How would you like to have some real food for a change?”

“I would love that.”

Brandon and I walked up the stairs and ran into Nick. Nick looked at us with a puzzled face, and then he looked a little angry and then puzzled again. Brandon looked at Nick and held back any angry that he may have had and he smiled. Nick was confused.

“What are you doing, Mark?” Nick asked me.

“I'm inviting Brandon to breakfast,” I replied.

“Brandon?” Alex asked.

Alex was standing in front of the counter mixing up pancake batter, but he stopped when he saw Blade.

“Guys,” I said. “Let's treat Brandon like family here, okay.”

“Are you out of your mind, Mark?” Nick exclaimed. “You let him loose and now you're letting him eat with us! You let him brainwash you!”

“Nick!” I yelled. “Look at him, he's changed. He's not morphed into a werewolf. He wants nothing to do with Intex anymore; that was what Intex did to *him*. He says that before he met Intex, he was Brandon, so that's what we're going to call now, by his real name. Blade was what Intex called him.”

“I didn't brainwash him,” Brandon told Nick.

Nick softened his anger, but was still confused. “So just like that ... you've changed?”

“I've had time to think being locked up downstairs. I ... I remembered my life before Intex; it was a lot better.”

“Well, I want to hear it!”

“Nick,” I said. “Calm down.” I looked to Brandon. “Why don’t you wait so you can tell everyone when they get up, so you don’t have to re-explain yourself?”

“Okay,” Brandon said.

“Mark, what’s going on?” Rachel stepped out of the hallway and into the kitchen. Then she stopped and saw Blade, who was now Brandon. “What’s he doing out?”

“Rachel,” I said. “We’re going to explain everything when everyone gets up.” I looked at Alex and saw that he was slowing mixing the pancake batter. He saw me looking at him and he looked back down at the bowl and continued mixing.

Grace and Mara walked out into the kitchen, hearing us yelling at each other. The first thing they saw was Blade. They were puzzled to see him sitting at the table right next to me. Everyone was all in the kitchen and Alex quickly finished mixing the pancake batter and then poured in several spots on the griddle.

“Okay, everyone,” I said. “Brandon is going to be eating with us today, and we’re going to treat him the same way we would treat each other.”

“Who? Him?” Grace scoffed. “You mean Blade?”

“Blade worked for Intex, but Brandon had his family taken away from Intex.” I looked at Brandon. “Why don’t you explain it to them so that they all understand?”

Nick looked at me and at Brandon, shaking his head. He didn’t like Brandon, but that was because he didn’t know him as being someone else other than Blade. Brandon got ready and started telling us what he told me. He told about his family and how he remembered what his life was like before he met Intex. Alex, Grace and Mara related themselves to

Brandon. They too had nice families, but Intex killed them all. Nick didn't say a thing.

"I am just like you," Brandon said softly, to everyone that I had rescued from Creative Works. "Intex took my family too."

"This is bull!" Nick scoffed and he ran off to his room.

"Nick," I sighed, but he was already in his room.

Brandon finished explained his story to us. Alex had flipped pancakes while listening to Brandon tell his story. Alex looked optimistic about Brandon, but he wasn't as bad as Nick was. He finished making all of the pancakes and set them on the table. We all helped ourselves and Brandon slowly grabbed two pancakes.

"Have as many as you like," I told him. "This is your home now."

With that, Brandon added two more pancakes to his plate. We out poured and passed the syrup around. We all started eating and then Brandon thought of something.

"Where am I going to sleep?" He asked.

"He can sleep downstairs!" Nick yelled from his room and I ignored him.

I thought about how many rooms we had and all of them were being used. Nick and Alex shared a room, Grace and Mara were together and Rachel was with me. Bruce was by himself. "You can share a room with Bruce." I looked at Bruce to see if he approved.

"That's fine with me," Bruce nodded. Bruce didn't seem to mind at all, despite what Brandon was before. Bruce supported me, that's for sure. We were close friends.

Tristan was lying in bed, staring at the ceiling. He was single, alone in his house. He was telling himself that he had to get up to get ready for work. The only thing that got him out of bed was coffee. With just the thought of coffee, he jumped out of bed and ran into his kitchen.

He immediately started making a single cup of coffee for himself. He waited for it to finish pouring into his cup. It finished. He immediately grabbed it and poured some creamer into it, putting a spoonful of sugar in it; he stirred. He finished stirring and took the spoon out. Tristan took a sip and sighed, feeling refreshed.

Suddenly, he was starting to feel hot. At first he thought that it was the coffee, even though he only took one sip. Then it got worse and he started sweating. Just when he thought he couldn't get any hotter, he did. Then he dropped his cup because of the sight he saw with his hand. His hand was on fire. He panicked and shook it, trying to put the fire out, but the flame stayed. He stopped shaking it, and realized that he wasn't getting burnt. He didn't even feel hurt. He could feel the heat, but it didn't hurt him.

"What the heck is going on with me?" Tristan asked himself.

He closed his hand into a fist and the flame fizzled out. He had a very puzzled look on his face. Then he looked down at the floor and saw the mess that he had made; he broke his coffee cup and spilled all of his coffee. He looked at the time and cursed.

"I'm late for work!" he exclaimed and jumped over the spill and ran into his room. He didn't have time to get a shower, so he quickly threw on his clothes and ran out the door, leaving the mess on the floor.

Harrison, NY

Richard Ruth. Age: 26

Richard woke up that morning, feeling like any other morning; angry and sad. Just two years ago he had witnessed his parents get murdered right in front of him. The guy had a gun and threatened to shoot if they didn't give him his money. His parents handed over their wallets. Then the guy pointed the gun at him and asked for his wallet. Richard said that he didn't have any money. The guy with the gun asked him again. His father yelled saying that he didn't have any money and to leave his son alone. The guy shoved his father away and then shot him. His mother ran towards the guy, trying to catch his father's fall and then the guy shot Richard's mother too, thinking that she was going to attack him.

Richard remembered that day like it was yesterday. He was nineteen at the time. He wanted the guy dead. He wanted to kill him himself. He had tried to hunt the guy down, but he had no idea where to find him. He wanted to avenge his parents. He knew who his parent's murderer was. He used to see him all of the time at stores with his wife, but now Richard only saw his wife. He had gone hiding. Richard was sure that the police had asked her if she knew where he hid at, but she must've said that she didn't know. Richard was going to ask her himself, hoping that he would find her today.

First he was going to make himself some breakfast. He opened the fridge door and found the bacon on the second shelf. He reached down to grab it and a spark jumped from his hand and hit the shelf, and made the whole shelf sparkle with electricity. Richard paused and looked at his hand. He pulled out the bacon and set it on the counter. He closed

the fridge door and looked at his hand. He was confused as to what just happened. He tried to see if he could do it again.

Richard stretched his arm out and aimed his hand at the window. He tried propelling something from his hand and a bolt of electricity shot from his hand and hit the window and fizzled out. His jaw dropped. He couldn't believe what was happening to him. Then he started to smile. He held his hand out in front of him and created a ball of electricity in his hand and then threw it at the sink. He electrified the whole sink, sparkling for five seconds.

"I could definitely use this!" Richard exclaimed, but was still a bit confused.

He knew that this shouldn't have been possible, but yet he was doing it. Then he remembered hearing about this strange man who had metal skin that got killed by a flying man. He thought that it was a myth, but now he was thinking that it might have been true after all. He also heard about some werewolf, scaring people, but he wasn't sure if that were true or just a rumor.

He put about a dozen stripes of bacon into a frying pan and then shot electricity at it from his hand. He was surprised how easy it was to use this ... power — he realized that was it was a super ability— right after he had gotten it. The whole frying pan had sparkled and the bacon stripes sizzled. He did it a few more times and the bacon had completely been cooked. He was amazed at what he could do.

Richard smiled. "I will definitely put this to a good use, mother and father," he said to himself.

Manhattan, NY. Mark's Residence

I stood in the kitchen, resting my hands on the counter. I looked back and forth between Brandon and Blade. I sighed, thinking about what

I was going to say with Nick. He was not forgetting about what Brandon used to be. I knew that I was going to have to deal with Nick, but later.

“I think I'm going to work out downstairs,” I said. I turned around and walked down the steps. I saw the chains that I had Brandon strapped to. I felt bad for doing that, but that was when he wasn't himself, instead he was what Intex had made of him.

I walked to my weight lifting system and lay down on the bench. I already had about seven-hundred pounds on the bar. I lifted my arms up and grabbed a hold of the bar. I lifted it off of the rack and lowered it down to my chest and back up easily. I pushed it up and down, over and over again. I kept thinking about what to do with Nick. I hoped he would get past this and forgive Brandon.

I set the bar back on the rack and sat up, sighing. I threw my hands down on my knees and suddenly I saw a flash of green come from my hands. I immediately looked down and saw some sort of green misty energy, but then it faded. I had no idea what that just was. I hit my knee again and did it again, creating a misty green energy and then it faded again. It didn't look like any sort of destructive energy, it was just ... a green mist, basically.

I wasn't sure exactly what just happened, but I was sure that it was another power in development. I wasn't sure how many super abilities Rextonians developed. I haven't learned that yet. That reminded me of the crystal that I found in Creative Works. I had it in my closet in my room, saving it for when I was ready. I was ready now, and since I didn't have anything stopping me, I decided that I was going to see if I could learn more from my past.

I got up from the bench and walked back up the stairs. Suddenly, there was a loud banging sound and then the room lit up. There was a clasp of thunder and then it rained hard. All you could hear was the sound of the rain hitting the roof. I was amazed at how fast the weather changed. It was really dark outside, filled with clouds.

“Was it supposed to rain today?” I asked anyone.

“Yeah,” Mara said from across the room, sitting on the couch in the living room. “It was on weather channel.”

“Oh, I had no idea.” I walked down the hallway, towards my room and I felt a drop fall on my head.

I stopped in the hallway and looked up. Another drop of water fell onto my cheek. There was a damp spot on the ceiling and water kept dripping from it. I looked closely at it and realized that there was a hole in the ceiling and in the roof. I never noticed it before. Outside the rain got heavier and the dripping fastened, coming through the hole in the roof.

I walked back into the kitchen and grabbed a bucket out from the cupboard. I took it back into the hallway and set it under the hole in the roof. I knew that I was going to have to fix the roof now, but I didn't want to do it at this moment, hearing the sound of how heavy the rain was. I was about to enter my room when I realized that I could already hear the rain drops splashing in the bucket. It was already starting to fill the bucket.

I groaned and entered my room. I threw on my shoes and a rain coat. I went into my closet and grabbed a hammer from my work supplies and headed downstairs. I walked back down the hallway, passing the bucket that was already filling up with water fast, and I headed down the stairs. I found a pile of wood that was stacked up in a corner. I grabbed a tile of plywood and headed back up the stairs and headed to the door.

“What are you doing, babe?” Rachel asked me.

I turned to face her. “There's a hole in roof and I'm going to fix it,” I replied. “Look in the hallway; you can see that the rain drops are already filling the bucket.”

“Oh, well go fix it, then.”

I nodded and turned back around and opened the door. I immediately jumped outside and closed the door quickly behind me. The rain was pouring and the wind was strong. I sighed and wondered how I was going to get on the roof. I looked down and realized that it was hard to even see in this weather, so it should be no problem to just fly on the roof; no one would be able to see me anyway. I double checked my surrounding anyway and then I started levitating above the ground. I willed myself to propel upward and my body levitated higher upward and then I started to actually fly. I flew onto the roof and landed down on it.

I thought about where the hallway would be and walked towards that area on the roof. I knelt down, but didn't see any hole. I pulled up the roof shingles and then discovered a hole underneath the shingles. Rain was sliding down the roof and shingles and into the hole underneath them. I grabbed the wood and set it over the hole and I got my hammer and just realized that I forgot to grab nails. I felt so stupid.

I also thought about what would happen if I hammer the wood into the roof anyway. I didn't want to damage the roof any more than it already was and pounding nails into it wasn't going to help with that.

I groaned and pulled the wood away and looked down at the hole. If only I couldn't just fix it with the snap of a finger. I looked at the hole and placed my hand on top of it. The hole was about the size of my index fingertip. I looked at the hole and starting to imagine it fixing itself, if only it could happen just like that. Just then, my hand created that same bizarre, green, misty energy. The energy formed around the hole and stopped there. I started imagining the hole fixing again and the energy started to create the wood of the roof and filled the hole. The hole was gone.

My jaw dropped. I had just fixed the roof, with ... my ... my ... what? I just thought of doing it and fixed it. Some sort of green energy came from my hand. There was only one explanation of what I just did. I had in fact got a new super ability. Something to do with creating. I held my hand out in front of my and with my other hand I let the shingle back down. I started thinking about what I could do, what I could create. Since it was raining, I decided to try to create an umbrella. I held my hand out in front of me and the green energy started forming. I started creating a metal pole and then the top part of the umbrella. Next I created the fabric of the umbrella until I had completely created it.

I couldn't believe what I had just done. I held the umbrella above me, blocking rain from hitting me. I smiled and was amazed at the ability to create an umbrella ... out of thin air! It worked perfectly too! I had developed a new power; matter manipulation what a name for it.

Dawn sat on her couch in her living room. She was thinking about her son Stuart. He had just turned twelve years old and was going into the seventh grade. It was summer break right now. She was a little nervous about it, because middle school could be a bit much. She remembered that it was the same when she was in school. She was just a single mother, taking care of her son.

“Mom!” Stuart yelled from his room. “I’m hungry! What’s for breakfast?”

Dawn sighed and got up from the couch. “I’m going to make some pancakes!” she yelled back to him.

Dawn walked into the kitchen and got ready to make some pancakes. She got out a mixing bowl, spoon, a scooper, spatula, and a frying pan. She got the box of pancake mix and measure how much to put in, and then she added the water to it and mixed it with the spoon. She plugged in the frying pan and waited for it to heat up. Stuart walked out of his room and stepped into the kitchen. Dawn looked at him and smiled.

“What you up to?” She asked Stuart.

“Nothing,” he replied. “Just hungry.”

“Well, just wait a minute; the frying pan’s heating up.”

Stuart nodded and sat down at the couch. Dawn grabbed the scooper for the pancakes. She was about to put it into the bowl of pancake batter, but then it crumbled down to ashes onto the counter, falling out of her hands. She gasps.

“What’s wrong, mom?” Stuart asked.

“Uh ...” Dawn was dumbfounded. “Nothing, I’m fine, honey.” She looked at the pile on the counter and at her hand. Her hand was filled with ash. She suddenly felt sick after realizing what she just did. She slowly set her hand down on the pile of ash on the counter. She pulled her hand back and then slowly grabbed the spatula. Nothing happened ... at first. She went to set the spatula back down and then it too turned to ash and fell onto the floor in a pile. She had disintegrated it. She was afraid to touch anything else. She was frightened and didn’t know how to continue through the day.

Manhattan, NY

I sat on my bed in my room, already practicing my newly developed power. It was pretty awesome, but I definitely needed to practice it. I started with trying to create a lamp. I examined one that I already had that was sitting on a coffee table. I imagined it in my head and held my hands out and tried to create it.

In between my hands the green misty energy started to form. The shape of the lamp started to take form. I tried added the composition into it and the material. It started to look more like a lamp. When I thought that it looked like it was done, I let it set to the floor and put my hands down. The lamp was hideous. It was supposed to be made out of wood, but instead it had a rubbery form — a melting rubbery form. The lamp started to shrivel up and resulted in a pile of goo. It smelled awful, like a burnt tire smell. It was nothing like a lamp.

“What is that?” Rachel kidded, surprising me. I didn’t realize that she had walked into the room.

“It was supposed to be a lamp,” I replied. “But instead it’s a pile of goo.”

“Augh!” Rachel exclaimed and put her hand to her nose. “It smells! Get rid of it.”

I held my hands out and put then over the pile of goo and tried to destroy it, but instead I was only reshaping it. It was just like scientists would say, you can't destroy matter. They also say that you can't create matter, but yet I just did.

I decided to try reshaping it back into a lamp. I got the shape right, but not the texture or material. I focused on trying to make it into wood. But it seemed to be fighting me.

“Maybe you're trying too hard,” Rachel said. “Because you fixed that roof with no problem.”

“Maybe you're right,” I said.

I tried to simplify my thinking and concentration and just thought about the image of a lamp in my head. I closed my eyes and imagined the lamp finished. When I opened my eyes I saw a finished lamp. It was made out of wood, was the color of brown, and smelled like finished wood. I smiled at my creation.

“You did it!” Rachel exclaimed. “It’s perfect!”

“Just wait,” I said. I reached my hand out and poke it. It felt firm, just like wood and I poked it hard enough for it to wobble back and forth on the floor until it balanced back out. “Wow, I did it.” I smiled and sighed. “This power is going to be fun, as long as I can perfect it.”

“How many powers are you going to get?” Rachel asked.

“I don’t know. I didn’t think that I was going to get anymore. Let's see ... I have accelerated healing, super strength, levitation / flying, and now this matter manipulation. So that’s four.”

“What about that mind reading power?”

“Oh yeah, that too. But I can't even control that yet. Last time I used it I read everyone’s mind in New York City.”

“Well, you're going to need to practice that one too.” Rachel walked up and sat next to me on the bed. “Are you going to see if you can learn more about your past?”

“I was going to, and then I fixed the roof instead.” I turned and looked at the closet. I got up and walked to the closet and opened the door. I pulled out a piece of cloth that had the crystal inside of it. I sat back down on the bed next to Rachel. I slowly unwrapped the cloth, looked at Rachel, and then back at the crystal. I grabbed the crystal with my bare hands and prepared for an impact of visions flowing into my head, but nothing happened.

I looked back down at the crystal and waited. I lifted it into the air and moved it around, but still nothing happened.

“It’s broken,” Rachel said.

I chuckled. “That’s a funny way of putting it.”

“Well it is.”

“Yeah,” I sighed and bit my lip. “I wish I could learn more about Rexton and ... all of that. And ... about what happened with my family. About what my father did. What if what Intex said was true?”

Rachel sighed and gave me a smile. “I’m sorry, Mark. I don’t know what to tell you.”

“There’s nothing you can do.”

We both sighed.

“What if you went back to your parents’ house and went to your ship?” Rachel asked.

“Maybe I could do that ...” I pondered. “That might work, because the last time I touched my ship I got flooded with a little vision. Maybe it could tell me more.”

Dump left of Creative Works

Government agents stood and examined the burnt building of Creative Works in Manhattan. They walked around and looked through all of the rooms that were intact. At first they didn't really understand what this building was. They thought that it made medicines or something, but they have done research on it.

Before it had burnt down they sent in an agent and had him secretly record things that went on in there and had him take pictures. They couldn't believe what was going on in it. They were running illegal experiments on people. It was funny, they were just about to shut this building down, and then it got burned to the ground. They knew that it didn't just catch fire, someone had burned it down. Most of it was empty. They realized that it looked like it was abandoned before it was burned to the ground.

"Hey, check this out!" An agent exclaimed, calling over another agent. He was holding some papers that he had pulled out of a filing cabinet. He showed the other agent. "These are reports of people that they experimented on." Then he made a puzzled face as he read more. "It looks like these people killed their family and kidnapped them. These people just took people; they didn't even want to be here! And look at this ..." He pointed at some words. "They claimed that they gave them super powers. This one says super hearing."

The other agent took a look at it. "Would that explain the talk about these superheroes here in Manhattan?"

"What happened?" Another agent walked up and asked.

"There was supposedly a man made of metal or something and a flying man killed him."

The director walked up to them. He stood tall and was serious. "I believe it to be true," the director said. "There was also a man who took a

form of a wolf and scared off some people. These same *heroes* dealt with him, but they didn't kill him, instead they kidnapped him."

"Wow, really?" an agent asked.

"Yes. I've done my research." The director said simply. "This place was run by a man named Martin Intex. All that he has done here was do illegal experiments on people. He strapped them down to cots and ran his experiments on them. It appears that he had brainwashed some of them. For example, that *metal man* who had terrorized the city, I believe to have been experimented on by Martin Intex. The man was described as a lunatic. I believe that Martin Intex had brainwashed him, because he had killed his family as well, but nevertheless the man seemed to obey had Martin Intex had commanded him."

"The guy was mad, wasn't he?" an agent asked. "That's why he was running around New York City."

"No, he wasn't mad. Martin Intex had commanded him to do that, so they could draw attention to this hero. I believe that this hero was the one who was supposed to stop Intex. Martin Intex spoke of this man a lot, explaining that he had to stop him before the man stopped him, so he was going to make his experiments stop him."

"Where is he now?"

"Intex?" the director asked and the agent nodded. "He was last seen in Dublin, Ireland. There he had a huge building set up with the same things going on there that was here. He was doing illegal experiments there too. And all too quickly ... This whole building was emptied so quickly. Our cameras that we had set up in here at showed a room filled with cots and people strapped to them in one second ... and in the next they shook and disappeared. We at first thought that it was a glitch with the camera, but the timer on the cameras didn't even skip a millisecond."

"Whoa."

“Intex somehow teleported everything from here, to Dublin. I believe that Intex did it using his mind.”

“What!” The agent exclaimed in disbelief.

“Yes ... Agents, we are dealing with a real threat here. We now have super powered beings roaming around in New York. So far these *heroes* haven’t done any harm to anyone, yet, but we must be prepared.”

“What about the building in Dublin?”

“I believe that these heroes here in New York somewhere have beaten us to it. They had burned down that building too. They released all of the experiments there. We also found Intex dead, with two stab wounds to the chest. They killed him.”

“Well, he needed to be stop.”

“Yes, but not that way. These heroes are vigilantes, taking justice into their own hands. Who knows what they could do to one of these days. We need to find these guys and stop them, arrest them.” He paused. “Now get back to work. It’s important that we found out as much information about this place as we can.”

Manhattan, NY: *Sickles' Quick American Burgers*

Tristan had made it to work right on time. He worked at the line in the kitchen, right at the grill. He worked on flipping hamburger patties. Once they would finish cooking he passed them down to the next worker and they threw it into whatever burger requested and the other workers put on different toppings and whatnot on it.

Tristan was at the end of the line, towards the back of the kitchen. From there he slid burgers to the front. This was supposed to be a fast food restaurant, but the grill was acting up today. It wasn't heating up as fast as normal. It never did reach its high temperature. It just wasn't working properly, so it was slowing down the speed of service.

Tristan thought about how a little flame could quicken the process. He remembered back to that morning how he had created a flame right in his palm. It had scared him. He had no idea what had happened to him at that second, but he had been thinking about it as the day went on. He remembered hearing reports on the news about superheroes. Real life superheroes. They could all fly. They had wings, except one of them flew without wings. They had stopped a guy with metal skin, or metal armor or something like that.

Everyone thought it to be untrue, but all of those around had recorded it with their cell phones. They all had the same footage all at the same time; it was impossible to have been a fake video. News reporters have even took the footage and showed it on TV. Tristan believed it, but he just found it hard to believe that he was developing a super ability, one of fire. Even though he had created a flame in his hand, it was still surprising.

But he was dying to do it again. The grill was working slowly and there was no other way to speed it up. He looked up and saw that the other workers were busy working on other foods. He held his hand over a burger on the grill and focused on creating a flame from his hand. He hadn't done it since doing it at home. Nevertheless a single flame of fire shot from his palm and cooked the burger.

"Whoa!" a worker exclaimed and Tristan looked up, thinking that she saw him make the fire with his hand. "Is that grill finally working now?" She thought that the grill made the fire.

Tristan chuckled, relieved that she didn't think that he created the flame. "I hope so," he said.

He flipped the burger, since he had cooked the one side. He saw that the worker continued back to working on the other food. Then he did it again and placed his hand above the burger. He shot a single flame on it again and cooked the other side. The worker noticed the flame again, but still thought it was the grill, but she didn't say anything. Tristan passed the burger down the line and worked on the other burgers on the grill.

He thought about this new ability of his. He could definitely use this power. He was just going to make sure that every time he would use it that no one could see him. Then he realized why the grill wasn't heating up right. It was hotter on one side than the other. He noticed all of the little fires under the grills, one of them was out. There was no fire there, not even a pilot light. He took his spatula and put it towards a burger that was near the blown out flame and he casually shot a flame from his finger at the gas flame and lit it. Finally the grill was starting to heat up right now, all of the flames with lit right, flaming underneath the grill itself. All this time it was that one gas-powered pilot light that was out, and Tristan had just lit it. Thankfully no one noticed.

Richard was at the one grocery store that he most often seen his parents' murderer's wife at. He pretended to be actually shopping, looking down at his shopping list and looking in each aisle for it, but really his was looking for the wife of the murderer. He remembered her name, it was Ashley. Her husband, his parents' murderer's name was Clarence.

He walked down the bread aisle and then he saw her. He found Ashley. Anger started to flood him. Already, tiny bolts of electricity started sparkling in his fists and then they fizzled out. He fast walked towards her. Ashley looked up and saw him. She immediately panicked and thought about running.

"No, you stay right where you are!" Richard exclaimed, drawing attention to himself.

She was frightened, but pretended to not be.

Richard grabbed her by the arm. "Now," Richard whispered in her ear. "Where is your husband?"

"I ... I don't know," she replied, her voice shaky.

"Oh really? How can you not know where your husband is at?" He squeezed her arm harder.

"I don't know ... he left me."

"Is that what you told the police? You lied to them too?"

"I'm not lying."

Richard grew angry and sent her a bolt of electricity, shocking her in the arm. She jumped and held back from shrieking. "You tell me where he is, or ... I'll tase you to death!"

"I-I don't know. Honestly. I swear ... and even if I did, I wouldn't tell you ... because you would just kill him anyway."

“Fine! You're coming with me.” He yanked her by her arm, leaving her kart by itself in the aisle. Richard drew attention to a few other customers. He took her out of the store and walked her down the street, towards his house.

“Please ...” she started crying. “I don't know where he is. Don't hurt me.”

“No! You're going to tell me!” He yelled, shocking her.

This time she jumped and shrieked in pain. He gave her a big bolt of electricity from his hands. He pulled her all of the way into his home, where he already had a chair ready in the living room. He sat her down and grabbed some ropes off of the floor and tied her arms and legs down to the chair. Ashley was crying and shaking.

“Now, you're going to start talking!” Richard yelled at her and she flinched.

She didn't look up at him. “I ... don't know.”

“Look at me!” He yelled. She slowly raised her head and Richard grabbed her chin and forced her to raise her head. “Tell me: where!”

“I don't know.” More tears ran down her head. “I don't know. Please let me go.”

Richard let go of her chin and stood straight up. He walked back and forth, pacing. He was furious. Suddenly both of his fists electrified and Ashley noticed them right away. Her eyes widened. Then he shot a bolt at her and knocked her over. She yelled in pain, lying on the floor.

“Stop!” she exclaimed. “That hurts!”

“GOOD!! I'll keep doing it until you tell me where your husband is!”

He knelt down next to her and held his hand in front of her face with a bolt of electricity in his hand.

She shook. "Okay!" she exclaimed, crying. "I'll tell you ... he's hiding in ... in our deer blind in-in our woods." She paused. "But, please ... don't kill him."

"Don't kill him?!?" Richard yelled, furiously. "He *killed* my parents!! The only family I had and he killed them!" He kicked her in the face. He grabbed the chair and yanked it back up so it stood on all four legs. "I'm going to kill him. He's going to feel the pain I've felt!"

"We ... were desperate."

"So, he thought he had to kill two people!!"

"I'm ... upset that he did that too, I didn't agree with that."

"But you're still with him!!"

"No, I'm not. I kicked him out and he went to hiding."

"You're going to take me to him!!"

"No, please." She shook and cried. "I don't want you to kill him."

"I'm not giving either of you a choice."

"What's the point? You're just going to kill both of us anyway. So you might as well kill me now."

"If you don't lead me to him, I'll make you suffer."

Ashley shook and cried. She started wishing that her husband never went out that one day. That wasn't the first time she wished that either. She never agreed with that stupid choice that he had made.

"I'm not going to kill you, just your husband," Richard said.

Astoria, NY

Dawn was terrified because of what was happening to her. She started destroying things just with touching them. She was so afraid that she would do that to Stuart. Stuart was home all day because he had school off, since it was summer break. She had decided to start wearing gloves. All she had were latex gloves, so she wore gloves. So far she was on her second pair, because she had already destroyed the first.

“What's with the gloves, mom?” Stuart asked her, standing in the kitchen, ten feet from her. “Are you cleaning something?”

Dawn jumped a little. “Umm ...” she stuttered. “Yeah, I'm getting ready ... to-to clean something.”

Stuart looked concerned. “Are you alright, mom?” he asked. “You seemed ... afraid of something. What's the matter?”

Dawn tried to calm down. “I'm fine,” she said, but Stuart still didn't believe it.

Stuart was about to walk away when just then Dawn's gloves disintegrated into ash and fell to the floor. Stuart gasped, just as Dawn did.

“How'd you do that?” Stuart exclaimed.

“I-I don't know,” Dawn said. “It started happening this morning.”

“Wow! It's a super ability!”

“No ... it's not, Stuart.” She took a big breath. “It's dangerous. I'm destroying things I touch. It's a curse.”

“Mom.”

“I-I don’t want you to touch me,” she started crying. “I don’t want to ... you know ... I-I can't-can't lose you too.”

Stuart sighed and grew sad. He remembered his dad; he had died five years ago. He missed him. His father was always fun to play with, but now ... he was gone.

“I have to wear these gloves, so that if I destroy anything ... I destroy the gloves,” Dawn said. “I don’t want ... to hurt anyone, especially you, honey, so please ... don’t touch me.”

Dawn cried as she put on another pair of latex gloves. This time they didn't disintegrate. She sighed and tried to calm down. She found that calming down helped. Stuart didn't know what to say. He felt sorry for his mother. He would never be able to hug her again. He walked back towards his room and lay down on his bed and looked at the ceiling.

Stuart thought about what he had seen on the news recently. There was a report about this superhero that flew. Each news report was different than the other, saying different things about what happened. Stuart wasn't sure how to believe it, but he knew that he did, because the story was everywhere. Stuart knew that it must've been true now, because his mother was developing a super ability, but it was one that she didn't want. Stuart wouldn't have wanted that power either. It was horrible right now, because his mother couldn't control it.

Manhattan, NY

Rachel and I left our room and entered the living room at the end of the hallway. Bruce and Mara were sitting on the couch together, talking and watching TV. I wondered if Mara really had an interest in Bruce, because Bruce sure had an interest in her. They had notebooks on their laps and they seemed to be writing and drawing.

Rachel and I sat down on the couch, on the opposite side of where Bruce and Mara sat. The TV was on a news station, there was a report about the drastic rain storm that we were having. It was pouring buckets outside.

I was about to tell Bruce something, about possibly going back to parents house, but then he spoke up first. "You know, Mark," Bruce said. "I've been thinking. We need to make ourselves known to everyone in New York. We need to get known as superheroes."

"Yeah," I agreed.

"We need to make suits and have names."

"How are we going to get suits made?"

"I don't know, but I've already thought of a superhero name: Psych! Because I have telekinesis."

I nodded. "That's a start."

"What? Is there something wrong with it?"

"No, I guess it's just fine."

"Good," Bruce paused. "But, we need to create suits." He looked at Mara and at their notebooks on their laps. "We were already thinking of designs. I was thinking about having abstract-like waves to form the letter 'P' for my symbol, and I was thinking to have a mix of purple and blue."

"Bruce was helping me too," Mara said. "We are trying to think of name for me. I have animal powers, can me have name same animal ... but we are not sure what. We not want name after one animal, because my powers all animals."

I nodded. "Yeah." I wasn't completely focused on what they were saying, but I tried to think of something to say. "Yeah, you can ... shapeshift into many animals."

"Si." Mara said.

"So, we trying to think of a name for morphing into animals," Bruce said. "What about you Mark?"

"What?" I asked.

"A superhero name."

"Uh ... I don't know."

"Something that'll match your powers."

"Speaking of," I said. "I just developed a new power: matter manipulation."

"What! When?" Bruce exclaimed.

"Just now, when I fixed the roof."

"Wait, why'd you have to fix the roof?"

"Because there was a hole in it, silly," Mara told Bruce.

"Oh." Bruce paused. "So maybe you could be matter man."

"No," I said. "That's not going to happen." I chuckled.

"I was just kidding," Bruce laughed. "It sounds so lame doesn't it?"

I nodded. "Actually, Bruce ... I was thinking about something else. Umm ... lately I have wanted to find out more about my past, about my origin. I already tried that one crystal, but it didn't do anything. I think that I already viewed all of the information on the crystal. I was thinking about heading back to my parents' house, to see my ship."

“Oh,” Bruce said. “So ... are you asking me something? I mean that’s your decision, you don’t have to ask me.”

“I know. I was thinking about going there tomorrow, because I won't have work for the next two days anyway. What I wanted to ask you is if you could hold the floor here. You think you can do that? You know, keep everyone in line?”

“Yeah, of course!”

“Well, I’ll let everyone else know too. Just ... you know, keep an eye on Nick. He’s been a little angry, since I allowed Brendan to stay here.”

“No problem.”

“Umm ... Bruce, don’t fight with Nick, because you won't win, he’ll just absorb everyone’s powers and defeat you, so just reason with him. If I have to, I’ll deal with him when I get back.”

“Okay.”

“I guess ... I’ll gather everyone up.” I walked towards the end of the hall and stopped dead in my tracks as a high pitched piercing sound penetrated my ears. I stumbled and leaned on the wall for support.

“Mark, are you alright?” Rachel asked me.

There was a really loud ringing sound in my head. My head felt like it was shaking and it was throbbing. Suddenly my vision started blurring and grew dark. I couldn’t see a thing and I collapsed onto the floor.

I saw a bright light. It was like the sun, but it was all I could see. Everything else was pitched black. Just then, things around starting appearing and taking on shapes. I saw a shelf and on it were canned foods. Then I saw a freezer. A room was taking on form and I realized that it was starting to look like — then I saw my space ship. It was the cellar at me parents' house. Somehow I was at my parents' house.

It wasn't possible. I was just at my house, but then I was at my parents' house. Suddenly, the bright light focused on the ship. Everything else went out of focus and went black. All I could see was my ship.

I got up and walked towards my ship. I saw many symbols on it that were written in Rextonian. I raised my hands, holding them over the ship. The symbols lit up where my hands were. I touched my ship and was flooded with flashes of Rextonian symbols and words. It never stopped. Seconds past and symbols finally stopped flooding my vision. But now I couldn't see anything again.

I started to hear a breeze of wind. It felt a bit chilly. Then I could see outside, it was dark. It was vacant. There was no one around. There was only a house. The style of the house was unique, nothing like any house I have ever seen on Earth. I walked towards it and opened the door. I got a whiff of the smell of cookies. I had entered the kitchen.

There was a counter and on it were some cookies. I walked up to them and grabbed a cookie and took a bite. They were mouth-watering. Nothing like I had ever tasted before. They were delicious; out of this world. Then I heard some moaning. I spun around and saw a room that looked like a living room. There was a screen on the wall, completely flat. It must've been the TV. There was a man lying on the couch, sleeping. I

walked up closer and saw who it was. It was my father, Bart, my biological father.

I looked all around and saw that this must've been where my parents lived, on Rexton. That's where I was. I knelt down and laid my hands on my father. I shook him gently, but he continued sleeping. I shook him a little harder. He groaned and opened his eyes. Then he sat up, surprised to see me.

"Anthony!" he exclaimed. "How'd you get here?"

"What?" I asked. "I thought this was a vision."

"Oh," he said. "Then you're not really here, and neither am I?" Bart paused. "Did you touch your space ship?"

"Yes, I did. This is where it brought me."

"Oh ... I suppose you want to know more about your past?"

"Yeah, I do." I nodded.

"Well," he sighed. "Where to start?" he asked himself. "Anthony ... I want to tell you that I'm really sorry."

"For what?"

"For ... not being there for you. I was really selfish ... I was focused on my work and not on you or Lena, your mother." He sighed. "What ... well ... What do you want to know, Anthony?"

He kept calling me Anthony, by what was my middle name on Earth. On Rexton that was my real name. I was so used to being called by my first name on Earth, Mark. "Well, what about what happened with my family? How did we get separated?"

"Oh. Well," Bart started to tell the story and his voice trailed off. He started drifting away from me. The whole room slide out from underneath me and it became dark.

“Wait!” I exclaimed.

He was about to tell me what happened, but then he disappeared. But then another room started to enter my vision. It was some sort of science lab. I looked around and I saw chemicals everywhere. There were papers thrown about with formulas written on them. Then I saw Intex. He surprised me. He looked right in my direction and then looked away. He saw right past me. He couldn't see me.

Intex mumbled something to himself and wrote something down on some paper. Then he poured a green colored fluid into a bowl of blue colored liquid. The two formulas bubbled together and then turned into a purple color. Intex smiled and nodded and then wrote something down.

“Bart!” Intex yelled. “Get over here.”

My father ran from another room and stood next to Intex. Intex pointed at the paper. “I want you to finish this; I have other things to work on.”

Bart sighed and looked at the paper. “Like what?” Bart asked. “Hurting those little animals?”

Intex looked puzzled. “No, I'm experimenting on them. Since when do you ask questions?”

“Because ... you treat them all like dirt. You're killing them!”

“That's why I'm testing my serums on these animals.”

“But it's illegal.”

“You're the one that decided to work for me. I didn't put you up to it, so what makes you any different?”

Suddenly, law enforcers barged into the lab, breaking in from every door. They all drew their weapons and shouted. “Put your hands up! You are under arrest.”

Intex suddenly disappeared, but Bart was still there. An officer ran up to Bart and cuffed him. Suddenly, like before, this room, this whole scene fell out from under my feet, sliding away. Everything grew black. I turned around and saw a room sliding towards me. It was the living room of Bart's house. He was sitting up on his couch.

I stood in the middle of the room and Bart gestured his hand on the couch, telling me to sit. I sat down on the couch.

"Now you know the truth," Bart said. I did? "I worked for Intex. It got me arrested. King Rexford didn't approve of such harsh crimes. He wanted Intex dead, but he knew that that wouldn't be justice. Intex was thrown in prison for his crimes. He was later banished to Earth. Then you were born. I was thrown in prison while your mother was pregnant for you. Planet Rexton was getting a plant virus, something that was called ... I forget, but it started with a 'D.' Everyone was sent either to Mason or back to the Trexus Zeta gallery, no one was sent to Earth. But Rexford really disapproved my actions of working with Intex. He hated what I had done to his precious animals. I mean ... I didn't kill them or experiment on them, but I helped Intex with doing that. Rexford hated it. He considered it the worst possible crime to be committed, aside from killing another Rextonian. After all, it was his planet ... he could create the laws. But the planet was dying, so this was his last chance to govern. So ... he banished from seeing you, or in other words, he had you sent to Earth, away from me.

"I pleaded for him not to, but he said that it was final. I was going to get sent to a prison on planet Mason. I begged to at least give you some information, a way of teaching you. He said I could give you anything, except a way back. So I programmed your ship. I put in memories, languages, information about what I have done. I wanted you to know the whole truth." He paused. "I just had to let you know why I couldn't be with you. I couldn't let you think that you came from Earth. I programmed your ship to be sent to the Wills, because I thought that they

would best suit you and they seemed like a decent couple. I put some information in your ship to explain to them who you are.”

“What about the voice in my head? I know it’s your voice.” I said.

“What? Oh, the voice. I put that in the ship, so that when you touched it, I could help lead you with your life ... in a way. It’s sort of like another consciousness in your head, but I don’t know what’s going on, because I’m not actually telling you anything, but it’s a copy of my conscious that I put into the ship. I just wanted to be there guide you.”

“Oh, to help me with my powers.”

“Your powers?”

“Yeah, you know.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I have super abilities. I got them from coming to Earth, because of its radiation.”

“Oh, yeah. I forgot about that. Everyone from the Experimental and the Trexus Zeta Galaxy just now found out about Earth’s radiation. We had only recently discovered that you can get powers from it, but we considered it to be dangerous to us and to never go there.”

“But, I am fine. I can do amazing things.”

“That’s good.” Bart sighed. “It’s amazing that you have super abilities. I want you to use them for good.”

“I am.”

“Did you stop Intex?”

“Yes, I killed him.”

“You actually killed him?” Bart exclaimed.

“Yes, your voice in my head told me to kill him.”

“Oh no. At the time that I programmed my ship, I was furious. I was mad at Intex, because it was his fault that you were going to be sent to Earth, so it was my consciousness of then that was put into the ship. Of course the voice told you to kill him. Because I wanted him dead at the time. I wasn't thinking clearly.”

“So basically it's Intex's fault that I killed him.”

“Well, yes actually, it is.”

It felt strange being here in a room with my father, Bart. I knew that it wasn't real, but it felt like it was. I looked around in the room, but could really only see ten feet around me, anything further than that was black.

"You basically know it all, Anthony." Bart told me. "You already learned everything else about these galaxies out here. This is it."

"Really?" I asked. "Why do I feel like there's more to it?"

"There's nothing else. You keep seeking the truth, but you already know it all. You came from Rexton and you must save Earth from its own destruction. That's it."

"That's it?"

"That's it."

I always thought that I didn't have the whole story. I thought that I had a lot to learn.

"Sure, Anthony, there's still more you could learn about Rexton and Mason and Trex, but it's not important. I am still learning about these planets, but it's not important for you to know, because you live on Earth now. You must learn about Earth. Don't worry about me."

"Bart — dad. Don't say that."

"Anthony, don't worry about me. Forget about me. I'm not a good person. I worked for a bad guy and my punishment was for you to go to Earth. I don't deserve to be with you."

"You're with me now."

“No I am not. This conversation isn’t real. It’s something that my consciousness and yours perceive from the ship. You think that there’s more to learn, but you’ve learned it all. Now I want you to move on with your life and forget about me. I’m a bad person, don’t do as I did. Be Earth’s savior. Be the good guy.”

Suddenly the room and Bart were swept out from under my feet and the slid away. Then it disappeared. I then found myself in the cellar of my parents’ house. My hand was still on the ship. I took my hand off and then put it back on, but nothing happened. I had already learned everything that there was to learn. I looked at the symbols, they were written in Rextonian. I read one, it said my name. Then I realized that it was written in Rextonian, and I just read it. I could understand it. I had somehow learned Rextonian. That’s what those symbols were in my head; it was the Rextonian language, I had learned it in a flash.

Just then the whole room went black and then I found myself in the hallway of my house, back in Manhattan, NY. I sat up and Rachel was just now running to me. Had any time past while I was out?

“Are you alright?” Rachel asked me. She looked very concerned.

“I’m fine.” I said, but it didn’t feel right. My tongue felt uncomfortable with what I just said.

“What did you say?”

“I said, ‘I’m fine.’”

Rachel’s jaw dropped. “Mark, I don’t understand a word you’re saying.”

“What?” I asked and realized that I wasn’t speaking English. No wonder the words I spoke made my tongue feel weird. I was speaking Rextonian. “How long have I been out?” I asked, but she didn’t understand me, I was still speaking in Rextonian. Instead, I pointed at my watched and described me falling down.

Richard was yanking Ashley all around, towards her hands. They were walking through some woods. Richard was having her lead the way to her house. She was terrified of not just her life, but that of her husband's too. She couldn't stop herself from shaking. She had never been more scared in her life.

Richard squeezed her arm hard, forcing her to do what he wanted. Every once in a while he would shock her, just to let her know what he was capable of. "How far are we?" Richard yelled.

Ashley shook at the sound of his voice, while still leading the way. "About a minute," she couldn't help but sob.

"Shut up and lead the way!" Richard yelled, shocking her and she screamed. "Go ahead scream, no one can hear you. Except, maybe your husband." Richard could see it from here.

"There is it." Ashley pointed with her finger, very shakily. There was a small little deer blind. Richard still held onto Ashley and ran towards the deer blind. Anger and hatred and sadness and revenge was shown in his face.

Richard ran in front of the entrance and saw Clarence sitting on a bench in there. He was drunk and had a beer can in his hand. Clarence had a full beard and looked like a homeless guy. But Richard knew that this was him, the murderer of his parents. Clarence looked up at Richard and jumped, realizing who he was. He immediately pulled out his wife.

"I'm going to kill you!" Richard yelled. "And I won't hesitate to kill you wife!"

"Don't even think about touching her!" Clarence yelled.

“I already have.” Richard shocked her again and she shrieked. Clarence grew anger and was afraid to try stabbing Richard, risking stabbing his wife.

With a free hand, Richard created a ball of electricity in his palm and showed it to Clarence. His eyes grew big and his jaw dropped. “What the?” he mumbled to himself. Richard smiled evilly and sent a little shock to Clarence. Clarence was pushed backwards and hit the wall very quickly, breaking the window in the blind, dropping his knife.

Richard immediately let go of Ashley and grabbed the knife off of the floor. Then he pulled Clarence to his feet and his fists were electrifying. Clarence was so surprised by what he was seeing. Richard could see the fear in his eyes. He blew steam. “This is for my parents.” Richard said.

“Wait, please.” Clarence said. “I’ll do anything, just please don’t kill me or my wife.”

“Okay, bring my parents back.”

“I ...”

“Exactly!!” Richard stabbed Clarence in the gut and pulled the knife back out and stabbed him in the chest.

“No!!!!” Ashley screamed.

Richard then shocked Clarence with all of the electricity he could summon. Ashley ran and knelt down next to her husband.

“As for you,” Richard said to Ashley. “Just so you won't rat me out and since no one even knows that we're out here ... I'm going to kill you too.”

“I didn't understand any of that. How about you write it on paper again? See if you can still write in English.” Rachel suggested and I nodded. She got up from the bed and grabbed a notebook and paper off of my dresser. She handed it to me and sat back down on the bed, next to me.

I started writing in simplest terms what I had learned about what happened in the hallway. I was about to show her when I realized that I had just written in Rextonian. My jaw dropped when I saw what I had just written; it was still in Rextonian. I had to admit, it looked pretty cool, pretty ... alien, which it was. But I was also frustrated, because no matter how many times I tried, I couldn't write in English. I tried as slowly as possible to write the letter *A* in English, but I wrote the one in Rextonian still, however it looked pretty similar. In Rextonian the *A* was: Δ . A lot of the letters in Rextonian looked very similar, but the spoken language was different.

That got me to thinking, how did I understand any of my dreams and visions if they were in Rextonian? They must've been in Rextonian, because the visions took place on Rexton and that's what they spoke. They must've spoken very similar languages on the Rexton, Mason and Trex, but they must've just had different written languages.

I tried to work with Rachel. I flipped to a blank page in the notebook. I wrote an *A* in Rextonian and I pointed to it.

“What?” Rachel asked me.

I tried my hardest and tried to pronounce it in English. “Aay,” I said, and sighed, relieved with myself that it sounded like English.

“That's the letter *A*?” Rachel asked. “In Rextonian?”

I nodded. I pointed below the letter at the white space and gave her the pen. I pointed at her and at the *A*.

“What, Mark? I don't understand.” Rachel laughed nervously.

I took the pen back from her and tried as slowly as possible and wrote an English *A* underneath the Rextonian one.

“Oh, you're trying to make a chart!” Rachel exclaimed and I nodded.

Next I wrote a Rextonian *B* and Rachel wrote an English *B* underneath. “What about uppercase and lowercase?” Rachel asked, demonstrating in English.

I shook my head.

“Oh, it's the same?”

I nodded.

“Oh, okay.”

Next I wrote the letter *C* and she wrote the *C* in English. Then *D* and so on. I was going to use this for Rachel so that she could understand what I wrote about what happened in the hallway. When I was finished with the chart, I gave it to her and flipped back to the page where I wrote what happened to me with I was out for a second. Rachel understood and ripped the page out so that she could see it side by side to the alphabet chart. She matched up all of the letters and wrote them in English and deciphered what I wrote. When she was done she read it out loud and understood. I nodded.

“Well,” Rachel said. “Didn't we basically already know that? I mean Intex told us that your father had worked for him. It turns out that he was telling the truth, huh?”

“Yes,” I nodded. We were both surprised that I spoke in English. Then I tried again. “ኑህጥ ጠዕን ዘወ ሃላጎ ጥዕዚገገግ ሕገ ጠላጥ ጠዕን ሃላጎ በዐጠዘገገግ ወረዳ ጐ ረዕላገ ለኑህጥ ገደገጐግ.” And then I was speaking in Rextonian again.

“Why don't you write it down again?”

I had already written it down and I pointed to it where Rachel wrote it in English.

“Oh, yeah,” Rachel said. “Bart told you that there’s nothing else to learn about Rexton.”

I nodded and made sure that I looked like I was disappointed. Then all of the sudden my head felt like it was throbbing. I grabbed it and groaned in pain. It felt like I had needles poking it from the inside and out, from every direction.

“Mark!” Rachel exclaimed. “Are you alright?”

I yelled in more pain and then after a few more seconds it stopped. I sighed in relief. “I’m good now,” I said. “Whoa! Now I can speak in English again!”

“Thank goodness!” Rachel exclaimed. “I would hate to have to speak to you like that for the rest of our lives.”

“But what if you learned ... 2ḍX↑OḂ|AḂ?” I asked, saying the word *Rextonian* in Rextonian. I smiled at myself. “Now I can speak in both English and Rextonian. This is awesome!!”

Rachel smiled. Then she looked like she thought of something. “You know how some old Chinese woman at stores will start yelling in Chinese? You have no exactly what they're saying. You could do the same thing to someone, but instead you do it in Rextonian. They would be even more confused, because they would have never heard it before.”

“Yeah, that would be funny.” I agreed.

“I have to admit, it does sound pretty cool, pretty alien-like. But I wouldn’t want to talk to you like that for the rest of our lives.”

I thought about that. About spending the rest of our lives together. “Rachel, how about we go on a date tonight? Your pick.”

“Okay, sounds like a nice idea,” Rachel smiled.

I smiled and we both got up and started to get dressed right away. I went ahead and told Bruce that Rachel and I would head out, so I could take the floor. I told him that I wasn't going to my parents' house now. Change of plans. Instead of actually touching my ship, it must've sent a direct link to me and sent me that information. I didn't need to actually touch it. Saved me the trip down there.

Mark and Rachel had headed out, leaving Bruce to hold the roof up. Bruce sat in the living room and Alex walked up to him. He looked at the TV; Bruce was watching some strange cop show. TV producers couldn't have normal cop shows anymore; they would lose interest, so now they had bizarre cases. Bruce looked pretty into it.

Brandon walked into the room and looked at Alex. Alex smiled at him and took a seat on the couch. Alex joined Bruce and watched the show. Brandon walked towards them and sat on the couch.

"Do you guys want to play a game or something?" Brandon asked.

"I don't know," Alex replied. "Do we really have any games?"

Just then, Nick entered the living room. He looked just fine at first, but once he saw Brandon he grew angry.

"You," Nick simply said.

"What?" Brandon asked, and then sighed. "For what I used to do to you, Nick, I'm sorry."

"Sorry, doesn't cut it."

"Nick," Bruce said, taking his eyes off of the TV and to Nick instead. "Please, don't make this situation any hard than it already is. Just ... try to get along with everyone here."

"You too!?" Nick was furious and threw his hands up and then let them fall and slap his legs. He pounded the floor with his feet as he walked back to his room.

Alex sighed. "I'm ... I think I'm going to go get some fresh air."

“Okay,” Bruce said.

Alex got up from the couch and walked into the kitchen and opened the door and stepped outside, closing the door behind him. He realized that he had just left Bruce and Brandon alone with Nick. Mara was in her room, minding her own business. Alex was afraid that Nick would get in a fight with Brandon, because of what he used to be. But he figured that they would be alright for now.

Alex realized that it was pretty hot outside today. It was about mid-August and there were still some hot days. He decided to go to the park and get his mind off of home. As he walked towards Central Park, he saw how busy everything was in New York. It reminded him of when he was with his family, how they always struggled to move around in this traffic. He always had lived in New York, but mostly out of the city, but now he was back in it. He just wondered if he should have brought his jacket, because, what if he saw a crime in progress? Hopefully there wouldn't be any trouble though.

He made it to the Park, enjoying the peaceful sounds of the wind moving the trees and the smell of food and animals. He walked around and took a look at the lions, zebras, elephants, giraffes and hippos. They had a nice park here, but he never really got the chance to enjoy it. He found a bench and sat down. He looked around just to enjoy the view.

He took a look at the scenery all around and the animals. It sounded so peaceful. Then he heard some laughter. It came from a group of girls who were having some fun; there were about five of them. Alex's eyes were suddenly drawn to them. All of the girls seemed to be into the latest fashion, wearing the clothes that matched the trend going on. Alex thought that they looked hot. They were getting closer and he thought about saying something. He thought in his mind of what to say. Then he realized that he wasn't wearing something that appealing and his hair was messed up. Just then he started to get view warm. After all it was hot outside, but that wasn't it. He felt like he was starting to get warmer than

the temperature it was outside. Suddenly he felt like he was as hot as the sun. Then he heard the sound of something cracking; like the sound a fire makes.

He looked down at his hand and saw that a flame was ignited in his palm.

“Oh my god!” one of the girls exclaimed. “Look at him, he's on fire!”

The groups of hot girls ran up to Alex. “Are you alright?” they were asking.

Alex panicked. His hand was on fire, and the girls noticed him. This was his chance to talk to them, but he was on fire. He shook his hand and the flame went out and his temperature seemed to get back to normal. Then he calmed down. “I'm fine.”

The girls were puzzled as to what just happened to him and were starting to leave. Most of them gave Alex one last look and continued walking, but one girl kept her eyes on him, walking away. She seemed to be interested in what just happened, like she understood something. She wasn't as puzzled as the rest of the girls.

Alex realized that this was the very last chance he had to talk with the girls. “Wait!” he exclaimed and got up.

The girls stopped and turned around, except for one of the girls who was already facing his way.

“Umm ...” Alex mumbled to himself, thinking of what to say. “I hope I didn't scare any of you with ... um you know.”

“What, that fire?” one of the girls asked.

“Yeah, I can explain, err ... maybe I can't. I mean ... it just kinda of happened ... like just now. I-I don't know —”

“Aww, look at him,” one girl said. “He's hopeless.”

“And sweet,”

“And hot,” the girl who took the most interest in him said. All the other girls looked at her and smiled. She just shrugged her shoulders.

Alex was flattered that she thought that about him. “By the way, I'm Alex,” he said.

The girl who said that he was hot and who had took the most interest in him spoke next. “I'm Andrea,” she said.

Then the other girls introduced themselves: Sofia, Kathrine (Katy), Tabatha, and Chandra. Andrea was a brunette, and so were Katy and Tabatha. Sofia was a blonde and Chandra was a sort of a redhead, but her hair actually looked red, unlike natural redheads. She probably dyed it.

“How did you do that?” Andrea asked Alex.

“I don't know,” Alex replied. “Maybe it was the heat.”

“I don't know about that, it's not that hot.”

“Yeah,” Katy agreed.

“Like I said, I don't know,” Alex said.

Andrea narrowed her eyes. “Are you sure?”

“Yes, I'm positive, this just happened today for the first time.”

“Okay.” She paused, and waved Alex to follow them. “Walk with us.” The rest of the girls looked at each other, smiling flirtatiously and raising their eyebrows. Katy and Tabatha made an “ooh.”

“Someone's in love,” Tabatha said.

“Shut up,” Andrea told the girls and they laughed. “Come on, Alex.” She looked at Alex and smiled, and he smiled back.

"They should go out." Katy said to the other girls very quietly.

Andrea heard them. "You guys are just jealous," she told them. Then she turned to Alex. "Hey, Alex."

"Yeah?" he replied.

"I want to learn more about you."

"Me too."

Andrea smiled. "How about you come over to my house tomorrow?"

"Sure," he replied, without thinking. "Wait, I can't; I have to work, but Thursday's fine."

"Yeah that'll work. I'll see you then, okay?" Andrea pulled out her phone and showed Alex her address.

"Yeah, cool." Alex took a look at the address and put it in his phone, along with her number.

Rachel and I had a nice and simple dinner. I let Rachel choose, and she chose a cheap place to eat. She knew that we didn't have a lot of money and she respected that and chose something cheap. I told her that we could let this one slide and choose something fancier, but she opposed the idea, insisting that don't regret spending so much money and just choose something simple.

The restaurant's name was called *Christenberry's American Express*. Rachel and I had a fun time talking to each other and spending time with each other. What I liked about Rachel was that she was sweet, kind, funny and tough. I remember back when I was in school there was this one girl that I kinda liked, whose name was Karen. But she wasn't tough, just nice and caring ... Rachel was definitely the one for me, she was all of that good stuff. But what did she see in me.

"What are you thinking about, Mark?" Rachel asked me.

I sighed and smiled at her and she smiled back, resting her chin in her hands. She looked peaceful ... and tired. We had finished eating and were pretty full. "I was thinking about you," I replied. "I was thinking about all of the reasons that I like you, but I was thinking about what you see in me."

She continued smiling. "Well, what do you see in me?"

"Well, I like it that you're nice and caring, sweet, funny, but mostly because of how tough you are. Like no one can break you."

"That's sweet of you to say Mark." She paused. "I didn't know that I was tough like that."

"You are. That's what I love about you."

“I think that you're kind too, Mark. And caring, protective, determined, thoughtful, courageous, focused, forgiving, modest, respectful, responsible ... and that's just a few.”

“Wow! And I was wondering what you saw in me ... wow. I really am like that?” Rachel nodded. “Really? I never thought myself of being that ... good.”

“Well, that's why you're modest.”

We laughed. “Rachel ...” I sighed. “I love you.”

“Mark, I love you too.”

“Rachel, I've always liked you, but I was afraid that you didn't feel the same way.”

“Are you kidding? I haven't always known, but there is no one else for me, only you.”

I was curious. “Have you ever liked Bruce?”

Rachel scoffed. “Sure I think that he's cute, but he's just not the one for me. He's too ... enthusiastic. I'm not saying that that's a bad thing, but it's just too much. No ... Mark you're the one for me.”

I smiled. We remained silent for several more seconds. He just looked in each other's eyes. Then we started moving closer to each other, our facing getting closer. I put her hair behind her ear and laid my hand softly on her cheek. She leaned towards me and I leaned towards her. Then our lips touched and we closed our eyes. This was our best kiss we had ever had, ever since being together. And then we stopped.

Suddenly I had this sharp pain in my head. I pulled away from Rachel and groaned, holding my head.

“Mark?” Rachel asked. “What's wrong?”

“It’s ... my head,” I replied. I groaned louder. “Ahh! It hurts.” Just then the pain stopped and I looked up at Rachel. “Whoa, it’s gone now.”

“I wonder what that was all about.”

Just then, everyone’s voices around grew louder, as if I was picking up their voices from this far away. But I looked at all of them, but their lips weren’t moving. Most of the people were just eating. Only a few people were talking, but what I was hearing sounded like more people were talking than this. I looked at Rachel and saw that her lips were moving, but I could hear here. Then I realized that I wasn’t hearing people’s voice, but I was hearing their thoughts. I heard all of the peoples’ panicked and worried thoughts. Lots of people were stressed out with their lives, not easily getting by. Then I heard peoples’ thoughts of to keep their jobs, where to get their children’s school supplies at, feeding their pets, going grocery shopping after this, hurrying to get home to clean, to play video games, and wondering what was going on with Mark. Then it all stopped. That last thought was Rachel’s.

I snapped out of it and looked at Rachel. “I-I was hearing everyone’s thoughts with clarity. My telepathy’s getting a little stronger. Then I heard your thoughts, about how you were worried about what I was just doing just now.”

Then it started up again. This time I could hear actual sounds and peoples’ thoughts at the same time. But then it got worse. My telepathy expanded and I could hear peoples’ thought from further away and more of peoples’ thoughts at once. So many voices were in my head all at once, there were too many people here all at once. My brain hurt and felt like it was throbbing. I started getting dizzy, and the next thing I knew was that I was passing out, falling off of my chair, and Rachel catching me.

Tristan Bale's Residence

After a long day of work, all Tristan wanted to do was lie on the couch and watch some TV. He had hoped for some good news, but at the moment the news was showing the weather. For the weekend, they said that it would get cooler. That made Tristan think of his power that he was developing.

He decided to test it, to practice it. He held his hand out in front of him. And simply just by thinking of it, he created a flame in his hand. He sure felt the heat of the flame, but it didn't hurt him. But he knew that it was hot. With his other hand he put it above the flame and felt the heat, but it didn't hurt. Slowly, he moved his hand down his arm, testing the rest of his body, to see it was immune to the heat too. It was until he got down past his elbow that the heat started to hurt and he immediately pulled his hand away and extinguished the fire. So, he realized that his whole body wasn't immune to fire. Right now it was only up to his fore-arms that could withstand the heat of the fire. He wondered if the rest of his body would ever get immune to fire.

His attention was drawn back to the TV. The news had concluded their weather report and was actually now talking about the news. The current report was about a woman name Ashley Chilton was just reported missing. Her husband had left her a few years back after killing two people and now she was missing. The reporters were suspecting that she going missing has something to do with her husband.

A woman who was told to be a friend of Ashley's say that she went to visit her at their usual place that they talked at; the coffee shop, but she never showed up. She waited the second day, but she still didn't show. So she decided to call her, but she didn't answer either one of her

phones. So she then checked by her house and decided to see if she was alright, so she went inside, but couldn't find her anywhere, so she called the police to tell them that she went missing.

Another report was about how a jewelry store got robbed — again. About every third month that store would get robbed, and when it didn't, people wondered why it wasn't robbed yet.

Tristan was hoping for some good news, but found none. Lately there was nothing but bad news on TV.

Tristan thought back about work today. All day he had been working at the grill, frying the hamburgers. There was a point when he got a little ahead of himself and his boss told him to chill, to slow down. He was using his newly developed pyrokinesis. He was excited to have this ability and he didn't want to waste it, so he put it to use on the grill. The grill was a slow cooker, so he used his power to power up the flames a bit. He actually fixed the grill with his pyrokinesis. One of the pilot lights had gone out so that part of the grill wasn't igniting any flames, so he lit it with his finger.

Tristan decided that he was hungry, or maybe it was because he was bored. After all, people tend to eat when they're bored. He went down into his basement and looked on his shelves to see if he had any good food that he could heat up. Then he realized that he could use his power to heat up the food and he smiled at the thought of it. He thought about those popcorn things that you would take camping, where you roast it over a campfire. He could simply pop it with his hands. But he didn't have any popcorn.

He looked around and realized that the whole basement was made out of cement and cement blocks. He always knew that, but now it hit him; cement couldn't burn. He could easily practice his power down here and he wouldn't have to worry much about burning down his house.

He grabbed some chips off of the shelf and walked back towards the stairs. He was kinda of bored laying on the couch in the living room upstairs. He decided to stay down here. After all he had several rooms down in the basement. There was the food pantry, the exercise room and the game room. He decided to chill in his game room, eat chips and play a video game. His favorite kinds of games were racing games, but lately most of them had lame plots.

Richard Ruth's Residence

Richard was sitting in a chair in the living room and just finished watching the news. They had just recently got over with a report about Ashley going missing. Then he shut the TV off. He had killed her and her husband. He no longer felt angry anymore. After all of these years, he wanted to avenge his parents and kill the man who killed them. So now he had done it, but all he had relieved himself of was his anger toward Clarence. Now he felt awful.

He had now added guilt to his plate. There was no longer anger towards Clarence, because now he was dead, instead he felt angry at himself. He couldn't believe that he actually did it. At first he was happy and pleased with himself for showing that guy up, avenging his parents. But he realized that he didn't gain anything. His parents were still gone. He kept telling himself that Clarence wouldn't hurt anyone anymore. But it wasn't making him feel any better. He had killed him, but it didn't solve his problem. He had also killed Ashley. He felt even worse about doing that; she had nothing to do with her husband's act of killing Richard's parents. She even admitted that it was Clarence's choice to have killed his parents, not she's.

He looked down at his hands and created the electricity in his palms. He realized that his hands were shaking. He was nervous. It was because of how guilty he felt and also because of how afraid he was to get caught. After all, he had killed Clarence and Ashley right on their own

property, surely it wouldn't be long until they found them dead in their own deer blind ... with Richard's fingerprints on the knife. He thought back to it. He remembered hauling the knife over his shoulder after killing them both. He didn't dispose the knife, so it was still on the scene. Surely the cops would find it and would find his fingerprints on it.

His heart was thumping so hard in his chest, as if it were like a rhino, only it was fast. It felt like it was going to jump right out of his chest. He was so nervous. He grabbed his hair with his hands and started to create electricity. He started crying, ashamed of what he had done. He had only hoped to be relieved with himself, but got the exact opposite. He shocked himself in the head, but nothing happened. It was as if his own electricity didn't harm him. He shocked himself again, this time with a bigger voltage and still he felt fine, physically though.

He pulled his hands back down and looked at how electrifying they were. Bolts of electricity were jumping five feet from his hands. He reached towards a lamp on the coffee table next to the chair and a bolt of lightning jumped to it and lit the light up. He kept his hand there and the light grew brighter and brighter until it burst and blew out. It was too much for it.

The electricity in his hands seemed to get stronger and bigger. The lights in his house started flickering. The TV suddenly turned on, the microwave started spinning, the refrigerator starting humming louder and ice started coming out of it where you were supposed to put your cup at. The ceiling fans were spinning faster. All around him things started powering up. In the kitchen, a blender in a cupboard kicked on, running loudly. The air around started to smell like hot motors running. The lights started blowing out, and lights were lighting up in the rest of the house. Richard looked back at his hands, seeing how much more the electricity had grown. He tried again and put his hands up to his head. He surged a big bolt of electricity right through his head. For a few seconds he felt dizzy, and then everything blurred and went black. Then he passed out. Everything that was powered up turned off.

Manhattan, NY

I felt a little dizzy and I sat up too quickly. I was on my bed in my room. Rachel was sitting on the bed next to me, waiting for me to wake up. And now I was up. She looked at me, smiling.

“How are you feeling, babe?” she asked me.

“Just a tad dizzy,” I replied. “But other than that ... I'm fine.”

“So ... your telepathy is starting work more.”

“Yeah, I guess. But it's not working right.”

“You just need to learn to control it. You're drawing in too many thoughts in your head, it's more than you can handle.”

“Yeah, I need to start practicing this ... or ...”

“It could get worse.”

“Yeah.”

It was silent for a few seconds. “Mark thanks for dinner.” She paused and sighed. “It was very nice, and romantic.”

“Romantic?” I asked. I didn't think so.

“You being there made it romantic.”

“What, I'm a romantic person?”

“You're romantic enough.”

“Wow, I never thought I was.”

Rachel laughed.

“What?” I asked.

“Nothing,” she replied. It got silent for a bit and Rachel and I looked at each other and then looked away. “Mark ... I think you should try practicing your powers downstairs for a bit. Try to get a hold on your telepathy and matter manipulation. We wouldn’t want you to get another one of those headaches in public again.”

“Yeah ... or an overload of thoughts in my head.” I rolled and throw my legs over the side of the bed, and then jumped off. I headed out and went downstairs by myself to go practice my powers. I realized that I hadn’t practice anything in a while and it was a good idea to do so.

I had no reason to practice with lifting weights; my super strength was already something that I was good at. It came naturally. That’s what I needed with my other powers. I thought about these two new ones, telepathy and matter manipulation. I looked over at the weights.

I walked towards the weights and sat down on the bench. I looked away from the weights and closed my eyes. I started concentrating on creating a weight with my mind. I pictured the weight and imagined it in front of me. I opened my eyes to see that nothing had happened. I looked at the weights again and then looked at the air in front of me. I raised my hands, just to see if it would help.

I held my hands, facing them to each other. I was hoping to turn the air in between them into a weight. I concentrated on the air in front of me, in between my hands, and imagined a weight being there. I focused on trying to create it.

A minute had completely passed and I had no luck. This was not working. In my room, I seemed to have easily created a lamp. Rachel had told me that I was trying too hard, so I just imagined it and created it. So I tried this again. I closed my eyes and imagined a weight in front of me. This time I imagined it already lying on the floor, not in the air.

I opened my eyes and saw the weight on the floor at my feet. I was surprised to see it there, away from the other weights. That's how I knew that I actually created it, because it was separated from the other weights, and I didn't even touch them.

I bent down and picked up the weight. It felt like solid metal. It smelt like metal. It looked like metal and I felt like a weight, weighing as much as a ten pound weight. I realized that I didn't put much thought into making it. I wasn't thinking about how much the weight should weigh, but yet I made it. I was only thinking about the image and appearance of it, and somehow I added the weight into it.

I wondered if I tried every aspect of it if I could make it again. I held my hands out and imagined the weight in front of me as I tried to create it. I imagined its metal and its smooth texture, its weight; twenty pounds. I imagined it to be so and a green energy was forming between my hands, as I started to see the shape of a weight in the air in front of me, in between my hands. Then the green energy dispersed and I had a completed weight in the air in front of me, and then it dropped to the floor with a loud thud.

I reached down and picked it up. It felt like it was ten pounds heavier than the other one that I had just made. It felt like metal and felt smooth. I felt different. I couldn't tell exactly what it was. The air smelled fresh. It smelled new. It was my power; creating things did something with the air, giving it a fresh smell. There was still that feeling inside of me; something different to me, but I couldn't quite understand what it was at the moment, but it was still with me. It was something to do with this power, it gave me a feeling, and the feeling allowed me to create.

I decided to create something else, now that this feeling was still with me. I looked down at my feet; I wasn't wearing any shoes, because I normally didn't wear shoes while I was inside. I thought about what my shoes looked like, the ones that were upstairs in my room at the moment. I remembered what they smelled like, not a bad smell, but the new

smell that they still had. They were a pair of shoes that I had gotten when I lived in Ohio with my parents. I haven't worn them until a few weeks ago. They reminded me of high school, because any popular kid at school wore shoes like mine, because they were sort of the newer style around.

I held my hands out and tried to create the shoes. I imagined the soft feeling of the inside of it, yet keeping in mind the firmness of it. I thought of the shape of it and the laces; I had the tuck inside, because they were meant to be inside, to match the style of the shoe. The green energy was forming in between my hands. The energy was like a misty form with a mix of electric, without the crackling of electricity, yet all greenish. Within a few more seconds, I had created another pair of shoes.

I reached down and lifted them up and they felt just like they should have, just like shoes. They were just like shoes that you would buy from the store. They smelled like new shoes, because I didn't think of my smelly feet when I made them, so I had not created that smell. They had a firm feel to them, like they were broke in yet.

I set one down on the floor and put the other one of one of my feet, sliding it right over. It fit nicely and felt very comfortable, just like the pair in my room. I tied it and tucked the laces inside. I put the other shoe on and tied it the same way. I stood up from the bench and walked around in them. They felt so nice. They were just like new shoes that I could have bought from a store, but instead I had created them out of thin air.

That same feeling swept through me again; that strange feeling that I have never felt before, not before this matter manipulation power. It felt just like a good night's sleep, the feeling after just having taking a nice breath of fresh air from outside, a nice glass of water. It was refreshing. A refreshing feeling, but it was like nothing before. It was everything that made me feel refreshed, but all at the same time. I felt calm and at

peace. I felt healthy, not feeling any normal feeling from any of my nerves; they were all calm.

Every step I took gave me a sense of relief to my legs. The muscles felt calm. It was so different. Everything was easy. I thought of something else to create; a vase of flowers. I thought of the flowers nice smell and colors. Roses ... and tulips. Picked fresh. I realized that I didn't have my hands up, but yet there was a green energy emitting from my hands and it traveled into the air in front of me. A vase of roses and tulips was created out of the air. I reached out and grabbed them before they fell. The green energy disappeared.

I pulled a flower out of the vase and smelled it. It smelled fresh and beautiful. It reminded me of Rachel. I decided that I would give them to her. I took them with me as I went up the stairs. I walked into the kitchen and saw Bruce and Mara sitting together on the couch. Grace was checking her purse. The calm feeling that I was just having was starting to deteriorate as reality came back to me. The smell of the fresh air was gone. I took the vase of flowers into my room and gave them to Rachel and she gladly took them.

“Wow, these are nice,” Rachel said.

“I made them for you,” I told her.

“Really, just now?”

“Yeah. I was downstairs practicing my powers and I felt so calm and at peace and I thought to create flowers and I did. “

Rachel smelled them. “They smell nice, and fresh.” She paused and sighed. Then she tilted her head as she thought of something.

“What?” I asked her.

“You were only downstairs for a few minutes ... and you had already created a vase of flowers?” she asked.

“Yeah,” I replied. “I guess. Really? It was only that long? I had also created two dumbbell weights, one ten pounds and the other twenty, and I made these shoes.” I pointed down at them. I looked at them and looked at the shoes that were sitting next to my dresser. They looked exactly the same and out of nowhere I had created a vase of flowers.

“It’s a start,” Rachel said. “You are getting better at this power already. You already created a few things. Just keep trying.”

“Yeah.” I looked at Rachel and at the flowers that I made for her. I sighed and thought of how beautiful she looked, even though she wasn’t wearing any makeup, or at least it looked like she wasn’t. Rachel smiled and chuckled. She pointed at the floor at my feet.

“What?” I asked and looked down. There was a gap between the floor and my feet; I was levitating. I smiled and levitated higher, just by

the thought of it. Then I went back down and set my feet back on the floor.

“You're good at that power,” Rachel said.

“Yeah, that power is getting a lot easier, especially when I think of you.”

Rachel laughed. “So, your feelings for me trigger that power?”

“Yeah I guess.”

Rachel paused for a second. “So, you need to figure out what triggers your matter manipulation and telepathy.”

“Well ... with this matter manipulation I felt calm and at peace. Maybe if I just keep myself calm I can create things.”

“Try it again, right now,” Rachel said. “Make a ... I don't know ... a coffee cup.”

“With coffee in it,” I added.

“Yeah, try it.”

I held my hands out, my palms facing each other. I inhaled and exhaled, calming myself. I imagined a nice cup in front of me and the green energy started forming. The shape of the cup was already forming and I pictured the texture. I thought of the coffee next and the feeling of being at peace started coming back to me. The green energy dispersed and I reached out and grabbed the cup by its handle.

It was nice and warm and smelled awesome, just like coffee. It was refreshing. I took a sip and the whole room lit up; it was so nice.

I offered it to Rachel. “Here have some, it's good,” I said. Rachel took the cup and took a sip. She nodded. “That's some pretty good coffee. It taste like that newer coffee that you used to get ... but we ran out of it.”

“Not anymore. I could create it from now on.”

Between the two of us, we finished the cup of coffee. It was so good; it didn't even need any creamer. Maybe I added a hint of that flavor into it, but not the color, because it was black. Rachel looked at me and smiled and I smiled back.

“That was a good cup of Joe ...” she said. Then her smile faded. “I just hope that you made it right so that you don't kill me.”

My smile faded too. She had me worried. What if I did make it wrong?

Rachel laughed. “I'm just fooling with you, Mark. The coffee tasted just fine; there was nothing wrong with it.”

“Are you certain?”

“Why shouldn't I be? It tasted just fine. Don't worry.” She paused and smiled again. “Already your power is progressing. But you can still practice more.”

“Yeah, what should I make next?” I asked myself and Rachel.

I looked at my dresser and everything on it. I looked at my phone and thought to make that. But then Rachel spoke.

“Make some clothes.”

“Okay.”

I looked at my shirt and at Rachel's. I held my hands out and faced the palms together. I kept my eyes open and thought of a shirt; a blue plain colored T-shirt, nice and soft. That calm and relaxed feeling came over me again and the green energy appeared. A shirt materialized out of thin air and fell to the ground.

I gave a yawn and picked up the shirt. It felt nice and smelled nice. Rachel looked at me and smiled. I smiled back and felt more relaxed than

before. I gave the shirt to Rachel. I put my hands up again and thought of making some blue jeans. Nice, comfortable and soft blue jeans, with a little stretch to them. The green energy started and I felt more relaxed, and suddenly I felt very sleepy. Just before I knew it, a pair of jeans hit the floor and then so did I as I fell asleep.

Sands' Super Market; Manhattan, NY

Dawn brought her son with her as she went to go shopping. She normally made these trips to Manhattan once a month. This was her time to do the big grocery shopping. But she never felt more scared in her life to do it. She was so afraid to touch someone.

Dawn would normally go isle by isle, but this time she went in whatever isle was the most empty. Stuart felt sorry for his mom. He wished that her power would get better, but every time he mentioned it, Dawn would correct him and say that it's a curse.

Dawn wore gloves everywhere she went now. She always kept more pairs in her pockets. She was finished filling her cart with the groceries in this isle, so she went to move on to the next one. She was about to walk out and someone entered the isle almost running into her. She quickly spun herself out of the way so she wouldn't touch him, but she had to grab a hold of the shelf to save herself from falling. She grabbed a can of fruit in the process.

The man approached her. "Are you alright?" he asked. It was Tristan.

"I'm ... fine," Dawn said.

Tristan was about to walk away when he saw Dawn's glove disintegrate and then the can of fruit in her hand. Dawn was terrified because she knew that the man saw it. His eyes were popped out and his jaw was

dropped. Dawn quickly tried to calm herself down and reached into her pocket and grabbed another glove and put it on.

“What ...” Tristan asked.

“Just ...” Dawn stuttered. “Please ... don’t touch me ... I can’t control it.”

“Are ... you like me?”

Stuart suddenly perked up, understanding what Tristan meant.

“Do you have ...” then he started whispering. “A power?” Dawn sighed. “It’s not like that.”

“Yes it is,” Stuart said.

“No, it’s a curse.”

“I have a power too,” Tristan said. “I have fire.”

Dawn gave a little smile and then it went away. “So ... we both have power of destruction.” She paused. “So ... I’m not alone?”

“And I’m not either!” Tristan exclaimed and then immediately regretted it, realized that he spoke too loud. “I’m sorry; I never told you my name. It’s Tristan.”

“I’m Dawn, and this is my son, Stuart.”

“Nice to meet you.”

“Yeah, you too. But I don’t think that this was the best way to meet. I’m sorry that ... you had to see ... that.”

“What ... your power?”

“Yeah.”

“Maybe I can help you.”

“How?”

“I'm learning to control my power ... maybe I can help you with controlling yours.”

“Really? I would be most certainly grateful. I'm ... always living in fear of destroying something ... or worse ... someone.” She held back from crying. “I don't want to lose my son too.”

“Mom, you don't have to worry,” he said. “I'm not going anywhere.”

“I hope you're right.”

“We should get together and talk about this a little more,” Tristan said.

“Yes ... I would like to learn how to control this ... curse.”

Tristan pulled out a piece of paper and found a pen in his pocket. He wrote down his name, number and address and went to give it to Dawn, but she told him to give it to Stuart. Stuart took it and wrote their information and gave it to Tristan. Tristan looked it over and put it in his pocket.

“Maybe we could get together this evening for dinner?” he suggested.

“Yeah, that sounds nice,” Dawn replied. “At your house?”

“Yeah that's fine.”

I woke up in bed and the first person I saw was Rachel. She was sitting up in the bed, leaning over me. She smiled at me, making me feel calm, but different than before, not like that calmness that the matter manipulation gave me. I sat up and looked around. I saw a blue t-shirt and a pair of blue jeans on the floor.

I looked at Rachel. "What happened?" I asked.

"You just passed out," Rachel replied.

"How much time has passed?"

"You slept through the night."

"Really?" Rachel nodded.

"After you made that pair of jeans you looked very tired and then you passed out. I think ... that this new power is draining energy from you. Maybe you should give it a break."

"Hmm ... but this new power was started to seem easy and it gave me a sense of calmness and peace. This last time it gave me a sense of relaxation and then I passed out, but it didn't seem to make me feel weak, just ... sleepy."

"Like I said ... you should give it a little bit of a break."

I nodded. "Okay, and in the meantime I could try my telepathy." I heard a clattering of glass in the kitchen and the shuffling of feet. Rachel and I both smiled. "Alex is making breakfast."

"Yup." Just then she chuckled.

“What?”

“You snore.”

“Oh.”

“And you slept like a baby.” She sighed. “You looked so peaceful.”

“Weren't you at all worried?”

“No, because of how peaceful you looked, I knew that you were only sleeping, you weren't the same as being unconscious, like being knocked out.”

“Yeah ... well, at least I'm okay.”

“Of course you are.”

I got out of bed and looked at the time. It was only seven thirty.
“For some reason I thought that it was later.”

“Nope, just seven thirty.”

“Huh.”

I walked out with Rachel and went into the kitchen. Alex had already started eating, having finished making some pancakes and eggs.

“You have work today?” I asked Alex.

“Yes,” Alex replied. “Are you better?” Everyone knew everything in this house. Alex had already known that I had passed out yesterday.

“Yeah, just got plenty of sleep, so I'm fine.”

“Good.” Alex nodded to himself and continued eating.

I looked around and saw that no one else was up yet. Alex was the only one who worked on Wednesday. Our work schedules were getting a little bit more consistent now. Alex quickly finished his breakfast, put his plate and fork in the dish washer and threw on his shoes.

“See ya later,” he said, opening the door and then closing it behind him as he walked out.

Washington, DC: FBI

The director had a group of agents working on the assignment with Creative Works and Intex. They were gathered for a meeting to share their recently gathered Intel.

“Okay, everyone.” The director started. “Let’s began.”

“We checked with all of the paperwork and documents that Intex kept,” an agent began. “And every one of them confirms that he was doing illegal experimentation on them.”

“What sorts of people did he experiment on and why?”

Another agent began, “Intex only experimented on young people and it seems that he killed every one of their parents.”

“Did they still give in to Intex?”

“It wasn’t like they didn’t have any other choice,” another agent began. “From the video footage and all of the documents, it seems that somehow Intex was about to actually manipulate their thinking and feelings. Intex seemed to engraft feelings into them to make them want to work for him.”

“But on that footage, that one group set all of the experiments free, and they didn’t want to work for Intex.”

“Intex left behind all of the *failed* experiments behind in this Creative Works building in New York. They must've not been affected by the feelings that Intex tried giving them, so they didn’t want to work for Intex. They must've kept the memories of their families with them.”

The director nodded as he jotted down some of this information. "Who are the people who set these experiments free? The leader of this group knew about Intex and knew that he was corrupt, and this same person was the one that killed Intex. So ... we need to find out who this guy was. He seems kind of a young person; the whole group was." The director paused. "See if you guys can't find him in more footage." All of the agents nodded and took notes. "Did anyone find out any more solid information?"

"Yeah," an agent started. "This group that set free the poor people that were experimented on seemed to have teamed up with three of the experimented people." He paused. "One of the people stood out more as a rebel of Intex, showing clear hatred towards him. But I didn't see enough of the footage, parts of it is missing."

"Missing?"

"Well ... not missing, but corrupted. It has static. I'm working on filtering it out, because I can hear bits and pieces of the sound, so I know that I can still find out more about it."

"Okay ... get back to me with that, then."

"Those stories we have heard about in New York," the first agent said. "About the werewolf and the metal man ... they both came from Creative Works, so they are not just rumors. I collect a variety of photos that people had took with their phones and uploaded to the internet and compared them to the experiments to the ones in Creative Works and they match up. The thing is that all of the people they were experimented on seemed to be all hybrids of different kinds of animals." He paused. "Intex seemed to want people to be forms of human-animal hybrids."

"Okay, this is good information," the director said. He shook his head to himself. "I have to admit ... this Intex guy was really smart. He looked to be the age of mid-fifties and has a very high IQ. Find out if he took any science classes in some schooling, see if he's got a degree in medical or something. He knows a lot about that, or knew a lot about

that." He paused. "Okay, do we have anything on the Creative Works in Ireland?"

No one spoke up. "Okay, someone get started on that. Let's worked together on this and we'll get back together next week same time. Now let's get back to work."

All of the agents got up from their seats and gathered their papers. Some of them had taken notes and had gathered those up too. They all went back to their offices and got started with their computers, already doing more research. The director went back to his office, leaving the conference room. He sat down in his chair in front of his computer at his desk. He had paperwork everywhere. He had pictures scattered about on his desk. Some of them were pictures of Intex, being dead and alive. One picture he had was a picture of the team leader; Mark, but they did not know he name yet.

The next morning I woke up to find that my bed was empty. Rachel was already up and ready. I looked at the time; it was about eight O' clock. I jumped out of bed and gathered some clothes together and got them ready to change into and got a shower. Once I was done, I put on my clothes, combed my hair and shaved.

I left my room and walked into the living room. I found Mara and Bruce sitting next to each other the couch. Grace was the only one who had work today. Normally Bruce did to, but he alternated with Saturdays, which he did this week.

Bruce and Mara were talking with Rachel. Mara seemed to be getting better with her English, but she still had a hard Spanish accent. I guess she would never lose that.

"Hey," Rachel said when she saw me. She patted the couch for me to sit down next to her.

"We were just talking about superhero names again," Bruce said. "I was thinking about a name for myself. I was thinking that it would have to be something to do with my telekinesis. How about the name: Psych?"

"Psych?" I asked. "Hmm, I guess it fits. You mentioned that name earlier too."

"Yeah, I was thinking of something else, but I decided I like Psych the best."

"That what I thinking too," Mara said. "Me thought good name."

"Yeah," I agreed. "Psych. Like psychokinesis which is practically the same as telekinesis."

“Really, it is the exact same thing,” Bruce said. “In my opinion anyway. Many people decipher it as one being stronger than the other, but I view it as the same power, just two different names.”

“Yeah me too,” I said. “After all, we grew up together, we practically agree on things like that.”

Alex walked into the kitchen, looking nervous, although I wasn't sure why. I thought about my telepathy, if I could control it I could read his mind and find out.

“Alex,” Bruce said. “Why do you join us? We are talking about superhero names.”

“No,” Alex said. “I can't ... I'm meeting someone.”

“Really? Who?”

“I ... uh ...”

“Oh,” Bruce smiled. “It's a girl?”

“Yes.”

“You have a secret girlfriend?”

“Well it's not a secret anymore, now is it?”

Bruce saw how nervous Alex looked. “Don't worry about it, Alex,” Bruce tried comforting him. “You're a nice guy, and good looking, just ask Mara about that.”

“What?” Mara asked. “Alex ...” she looked at Bruce and turned her attention to Alex. She saw his nervous look. “Alex ... you are. No worry, she will like you.”

“Thanks guys,” Alex said. “I ... guess I'll be going now.”

“Okay. Good luck, Alex.”

“Don’t listen to Bruce, Alex.” I said. “You won’t need that luck, because you’ll be just fine.”

“Thanks guy ... bye.” Alex headed outside, opening and closing the door behind him.

“So what about you, Mark?” Bruce asked me.

“About what?” I was thinking that he was asking me about my secret girlfriend, but it wasn’t a secret. Everyone knew that Rachel and I were together, just as everyone knew that Bruce and Mara were getting closer.

“About a superhero name.”

“Oh, I thought you meant ... never mind.” I paused. “A superhero name? Hmm.” I sat and thought. “It should be something to do with my powers.”

“Well, what you big power?” Mara asked. “I mean, your best power ...you main power. That what I mean; your main power.”

I pondered about that. What *was* my main power? I didn’t really have one. My accelerated healing just came naturally. I used my super strength quite a bit. The next power that I used the most would be levitating and flying, with the wings. Matter manipulation and telepathy were still new to me. “Well, I guess my main power would have to either be super strength or levitation/flying.”

“What kind of superhero name can you create with super strength?” Rachel asked.

“Strong guy.” Bruce said.

I scoffed. “That’s just as bad as matter man.” We laughed. “I think it should have to do something with my levitation.”

Just then Brandon walked into the room and I offered him to sit down next to me. Bruce and Mara didn't seem to mind his presence. I guess that they were used to him.

"Hey, Brandon," Bruce said. "Have good sleep."

"Yeah," Brandon said in his deep pitch morning voice.

"We were just talking about superhero names."
"I know ... I could hear you guys from my room; you guys woke me up."

"Sorry, I didn't know we were that loud."

"You weren't. I have dog ears, remember?"

"Oh."

"What about Avian?" Rachel asked me.

"What, for my superhero name?" I asked her.

"Yeah." Bruce agreed.

"But I don't even have any wings, unlike the rest of you guys."

"But just because all of us have wings, except for you Brandon, doesn't mean that we should have a name that fits that. Otherwise we would all have similar names. We have other powers to describe us. But since you're different, the one without wings, you should be the one to describe the team ... after all you're our leader."

"I guess." I thought about that name. "Avian ... I wonder, though if I make myself wings. Like attachable wings ... with my matter manipulation."

"That's a good idea," Bruce said.

Nick walked into the room, scowling once he saw Brandon. He sat down next to Bruce, furthest from Brandon. "Leader?" Nick scoffed quietly, but loud enough for me to hear.

"What?" I asked.

"Leader. What gives you the right to be leader?" Nick asked me.

"Why do you ask? Do you think that you should be leader instead?"

"Yeah, I'm more powerful?"

"Really? Nick, I'm the one that put this whole team together. I'm the one that rescued you."

"It wasn't like I choice to be locked up."

"What's that supposed to mean?"
Nick shook his head, scowling.

"Nick." I sighed. "Why are you so angry with me?"

"Well, ever since you let that furball into this house ..." Nick trailed off, referring to Brandon. I looked at Brandon and he looked down at the floor.

"Excuse me, Nick?!" I exclaimed. "Are you questioning my authority?"

"Yeah."

"Nick, I have every right to rule this team. I started it; I got all of you guys together. If it weren't for me, you would still be locked up and Intex would still be alive and would be destroying this earth."

"No, if it weren't for you I would be with my family."

"No, Nick. Nothing would have changed about that. I'm sorry about your family, I really am. But there was nothing I could have done."

“You can't do anything, that's why I should rule this house.”

“Nick!” I yelled, getting to my feet. Bruce and Mara scooted away from Nick, not wanting a part of this. I was surprised that Rachel didn't intervene with me, perhaps she agreed with me. “If you keep up with this attitude, I'll kick you out of this house. Just see how you can live out there, with no home, no food. You have no job, so you show no support in this strange family here! All you do all day is mope around in your room. I didn't have to take you in; I didn't have to save you from Creative Works. But I wanted to. I felt somewhat responsible for all of you guys being there, even though I had nothing to do with it.” Nick wanted to say something, but I cut him off. “Nick, I came all of the way from Rexton to save you behind, and to save Earth from its own destruction. All of the way from Rexton. I have the determination to lead this team; I came this far.”

Nick holds back from saying anything else and he throws his face into his palm. He gets up slowly and lifts his face to look at mine. He was scowling. Quickly, he throws a fist at my face, but I catch it, stopping it.

“Nick, you don't want to fight me,” I said.

“Why not?” he asked. “You afraid that you might lose?”

“No, I won't lose.”

“Really!? I can absorb everyone's powers and beat the tar out of you.”

“No you can't. What's it going to prove anyway?”

“Mark, don't do this,” Rachel said.

Nick threw another punch at me and I easily blocked it, even though it hurt. We backed away from everyone else. Nick threw punch after punch and I blocked every one of them, not throwing any in return. Nick threw another punch, aiming towards my nose, but I grabbed it, twisted his arm around, spun himself around and shoved him to the floor, and put my knee on his back, pinning him down. He tried to use super strength by absorbing it from me, but I kept him down.

“Alright!”

Nick

yelled.

I got off of him and he jumped to his feet and fast walked to his room. He made no eye contact on the way. I sighed and looked at everyone else. They were all trying to hold back any expressions on their faces. Rachel looked stern. Bruce and Mara looked serious. Brandon looked like he wasn't sure what to think.

“Sorry, that you guys had to ... uh ...” I said. “Never mind.” I slowly sat back down next to Rachel. “Nick, what am I going to do?” I mumbled to myself, speaking so softly that Rachel was probably the only one that could hear me. “I'm trying my best.”

Andrea Vorce's Residence; Manhattan, NY

Alex stood at the doorstep and looked down at the paper with the address on it for the billionth time. It was definitely the right address. He didn't know why he was so nervous all of the sudden; before he was excited. He raised his hand and pressed the doorbell and it rang, seeming so loud.

A few seconds later he heard footsteps and the door opened. Andrea stood there, smiling. "Aren't you going to come in?"

Alex smiled and stepped inside as Andrea closed the door. "You seem nervous."

"Well, uh," Alex said. "I am."
"Why?"

"I-I just ... never really been ... alone with ..."

"A girl?" she asked and Alex nodded. "I understand." Andrea walked Alex into the kitchen.

The kitchen had a nice counter, sort of like a bar. It was really high up, and had tall stools beside it. It had a nice black marble top on it. The floor was made with nice black tiles.

"You live here by yourself?" Alex asked.

"Yes, just me and my cat, Geneva."

"Geneva? That's a nice name."

Andrea offered Alex to sit down on one of the stools. She had drinks ready in nice glass cups. In the cups were sparkly liquids. Andrea sat down and Alex sat down next to her.

“This is a nice kitchen,” Alex said and he looked at the drinks. “This isn’t alcohol, is it?”

Andrea chuckled. “No, it’s not. It’s cream soda.”
“Oh, good.” He took a sip of it.

Andrea smiled and Alex smiled back. “So ... where to begin, huh?”

“Well, you invited me here because of my power.”

“Yeah and I told you that I wanted to learn more about you. So, you have a fire power, huh?”

“Well, actually I have more than that. I was honest at the park, that fire power? That was the first time that I ever used it. It was a hot day and it just sudden happened and my hand burst into flames.”

“Can you try it again?”

“I can try, but I don’t know if I can.”
“Just try.”

Alex nodded and held his palm out, away from Andrea. He thought back to earlier in the week when he made the fire. It was hot, and he was checking the girls out, Andrea included and then the fire had been created in his hand. Coming back to reality, he looked at Andrea, and realized that she was sitting pretty close to him. She was smiling and had makeup on. Alex realized that she looked very pretty, no ... hot, she looked hot.

Suddenly, Alex felt very warm, like he was going to break a sweat, but then his hand burst into flames. He looked at his hand and then closed his fist, but it stayed lit. He shook his hand but the flame wouldn’t go out.

“Alex,” Andrea said. “Let me try.”

Andrea stretched her hand out and Alex jerked his hand away. “No, I don’t want to hurt you.”

“You won't.”

Alex wasn’t sure what she meant, but was about to find out. Andrea’s hand drew closer to Alex’s fiery hand. Suddenly, her hand seemed to turn somewhat blue and a cool breeze emitted from it. She placed her hand on Alex’s and the fire went out. Just a second later, Alex felt Andrea very cold hand, and then Andrea immediately lifted her hand off his.

“You ... have cryokinesis.” Alex said.

“Yes, I do.” Andrea said.

“Do your friends know?”

“No.” She paused, and was still smiling. “You said that you had more powers. Would you care to elaborate?”

“Uh, sure ...” Alex said, still gathering what just happened. “Is that why you were so interested in me? Just because I had powers?”

“Well ... I had powers too and I wanted to share that with someone ... I have been keeping this a secret for about three months; ever since I got it.”

“Oh. Well, I think that I got this fire power the same way as you, but not my other powers.”

“What do you mean?”

“Um ... it’s a long story.”

“I got all day.”

“Well, uh ...” Alex sighed. “I’m not so sure I should tell you.”

“Alex, don’t worry ... I can keep a secret, trust me.”

“No it’s not that ... it’s ... um ... well, I was experimented on.”

Andrea looked very surprised and her jaw dropped. "I ... uh. Wow. I had no idea ... I'm sorry. But, how?"

"There was this guy name Intex and he was a really smart scientist."

"Was?"

"Yeah, he's dead now. Anyway, he was obsessed with altering human DNA and adding animal DNA to it, so he could mix it together to make hybrids. Well, he did that to me." Andrea looked surprised and a little doubtful. "But yeah."

"Umm ... I don't know, Alex. I don't think I believe that."

"Well, let me show you."

Alex cranked his neck sideways and pulled down his collar to reveal at least ten different scars that were created from needles. Andrea studied it and still didn't look like she believed it. Next Alex got up from the stool and stood, looking to his left and his right. He took off his shirt and let his wings come out of his skin on his back. He unfurled them, letting them stretch all of the way out.

Andrea's jaw dropped all of the way down and her eyes popped out. She was speechless for a few seconds. "I ... uh ... Wow! Those look amazing!" she said. "I mean ... um ... is that what he did to you?"

"Yes."

"I don't know what to say. I mean, I'm sorry that you got experimented on ..."

"Don't worry about it. I enjoy having wings, because I can fly. And trust me; flying is ... wow ... amazing. It's so peaceful."

"Why did he experiment on you?"

Alex smiled, realizing that she was starting to believe him. "Because the guy was a lunatic." He paused. "He was obsessed with creation."

"Hmm ... hybrids. What about mix of a human and a wolf?"

"You mean ... a werewolf?"

"Yeah."

"Yes, he made those."

"Because, I heard rumors about some werewolves around here. I absolutely did not believe them, though."

"Well, they are real. In fact, I'm living with one."

"What?!"

"Don't worry, he's not evil ... he hates Intex and wants nothing to do with him, just as the rest of us do."

"There are more of you?"

"Yes."

"Do you all have wings?"

"Most of us do." Alex paused. "I can also run very fast." Alex demonstrated, running to one end of the kitchen and then back within no time at all.

"Whoa!" Andrea smiled. "That *was* fast."

"I ... Andrea, I don't think I should be telling you about all of this ... not yet." Alex looked down at his feet and then back up at Andrea. She looked a little disappointed, because she wanted to learn more.

"But I have so many questions," Andrea complained.

"I know, but ... I think we should get to know each other more ... you know, before we tell our secrets to each other. We should get to know each other in our other aspects of life, not just our powers."

"Yeah, I guess I understand." Andrea paused. "Hmm, I just

thought of something. I heard about this one flying man ... did you have anything to do with that?"

"Yeah ... the one that is called the flying man is one of my house-mate. He's the leader of our team."

"Team? You guys are a team?" Andrea scoffed softly.

"Well, we're not exactly a family."

"Yeah about that? Why aren't you with your families, then?"

Alex put his head down and sighed. "Yeah ... uh." He shuddered.

"My family ... is dead."

"Oh, I'm sorry." Andrea suddenly looked very concerned. "I'm sorry, I didn't know."

Alex nodded. "There are eight of us in our house and ... five of us are without families. The five of us were the ones the Intex first experimented on and he had our families killed. So ... we ... never mind."

"What? He got away with it? You guys are free now, didn't you turn him in?"

"He's dead now."

"Don't tell me you killed him."

"I didn't." Alex replied, saying the truth, because it was Mark who did.

"Well, what do you mean? Did he die or was he killed?"

"Um ... Andrea ... I think I should wait a little while later to tell you that."

Andrea sighed. "Yeah, okay. I'm asking too much. Sorry."

"It's alright. I would do the same thing, because I'm an eager person too."

"Perhaps were good for each other, then."

"Perhaps."

“Let's make this a date ... do you want to stay over and help me
make some lunch?”

“Yeah, sure.”

Alex and Andrea started getting some bowls, cutting boards, and some plates. Alex isn't sure exactly what they are making yet. Andrea pulled a bag of fruit out of the refrigerator and handed it to Alex. He grabbed it and set in on the counter.

"Go ahead and cut those fruits up," Andreas said. "We're going to have ourselves a fruit salad."

"Okay," Alex said. "Sounds good." He paused. "You know ... I'm sort of the cook at our house."

"Really, well so am I."

"No!" Alex said sarcastically and they each give a little laugh. It is silent for a bit, and Alex opens the bag of fruit, using scissors.

"Alex," Andrea said.

"Yeah?" Alex asked.

Andrea smiled. "I ... I think I like you ... you're a nice person."

"Thanks, I think you are too."

"Really?"

"Yeah," Alex said. He thought about the day the first met in the park. "You know ... you don't seem like the other girls, you know; you're friends." He paused. "They seem a bit ... too bouncy and ..."

"Yeah, you're right. I am different ... and I always have been. I like hanging out with them, but sometime they are kinda annoying. But I think that they really only act like that around themselves, but I can't be for sure because every time I'm with any one of them they act like that.

They act so ... I don't know ... talkative ... fabulous and I guess a little stuck up."

"Yeah," Alex nodded in agreement. He pulled the fruit out of the bag and started washing them in the sink. Andrea set a chef nice for him to use to cut the fruit. Alex turned around from the sink to see Andrea staring at him.

"What?" Alex asked.

"Nothing," Andrea said and she looked away. She spun on her heels and faced the fridge. She opened the door of the freezer, which was the top door. She pulled out a bag of fries and set them on the counter. She looked for something else but didn't grab anything and closed the door. She looked at the bag of fries.

"Sweet potato fries," Andrea said, pointing to the bag. "They are so good. You're going to love them. Have you ever had them before?"

"No," Alex replied. "All I ever had is plain fries. But it sounds good."

"Oh, trust me. It's good!" Andrea reached down below into a cabinet and pulled out a pan and set it on the counter. She used the scissors and cut open the bag of fries, and then poured out all of them onto the pan. She then put them into the oven and turned it on, putting on it temperature and setting the timer to twenty minutes.

Andrea joined Alex in cutting the fruit. Andrea was amazed at how well Alex could cut the fruit. Alex looked up from the fruit to look at her, while at the same time he was still cutting. She was a little worried that he would cut himself.

"Are you sure that ... uh ..." Andrea started.

"I can think as fast as I can move," Alex said. "So I can quickly feel the fruit and know where to cut it and cut it as fast as you would when

you're looking ... plus ... I have experience with cooking and cutting and all of that.”

“What's that supposed to me?” Andrea asked, looking all serious.

Alex chuckled a little, not sure what she was thinking. “It means that I took a cooking / foods service class in high school.”

“Oh!” Andrea laughed. “That’s not what I was thinking at all.”

“What were you thinking?”

“You don’t want to know ... and I'm glad that I was wrong.”

“What?”

Andrea shook her head and Alex dropped it, and he continued cutting the fruit. Suddenly they both jumped as they heard a loud banging sound that came from outside. It was followed by the sky lighting up and pecks against the windows. It was suddenly raining very hard, coming down hard, pouring.

“Wow,” Andrea said. “And just a minute ago it seemed so sunny.”

“Were we supposed to get rain today?”

“I'm not sure ... but I thought we weren’t getting any rain until Saturday.”

“Apparently, it decided to come sooner.”

Mark’s Residence

It was strange out very suddenly it was raining. One minute I was watching the news on TV, with the curtain draw open, letting in so much sunlight, and then in the next second, clouds covered the skies and the rain came pouring down. It was very loud, so much that I had to turn up the TV to actually hear it. Good thing that the TV still came in, we had off

the air TV, which was digital. If the signal wasn't strong enough it wouldn't even come in at all, but there must've been enough.

Bruce and Mara were talking to each other, louder now to hear each other over the sound of the rain. I had been noticing how closely they have been getting to each other. I always knew that Bruce had a crush on Mara, but I never knew that he would actually pursue it. As for Mara, I didn't think that she was even interested in Bruce. I have noticed, too, that Mara seemed to be getting better with her English, perhaps Bruce was teaching her.

Bruce and Mara were writing in notebooks and drawing symbols. They were trying to figure out some superhero names again. There was nothing interesting on the news, so I turned it down and decided to join Bruce and Mara. I walked over and sat down next to them. They almost didn't even acknowledge my presence, but then Mara looked at me and smiled.

"We were thinking names for us become superheroes," Mara told me. "We were trying figure out a good name for me. My super powers are animal power, so something to do with that."

I nodded and started to think of something. I looked at Bruce and noticed that he was smiling as Mara spoke, he must've loved Mara's voice. I looked down at their notebooks and saw the symbols that they were drawing. Some of them looked pretty artistic. I noticed that Bruce had drawn the letter *P* and made some abstract designs with it. It was the initial of what he wanted his superhero name to be; Psych, short for psychokinesis, which is another name for telekinesis.

Suddenly, there were several poundings coming from the back door. It was way too loud to be the rain. Somebody was knocking on the door. They knocked again, this time fast and repeated. I jumped to my feet, practically running to the door. They were probably anxious for me to invite them in, because of how much it was raining.

I was about to opening the door when it swung open, thrown open for our visitor ... or visitors. Standing in the doorway were three werewolves. Suddenly, my eyebrows started going inward, because these were the bad werewolves, and they looked angry.

They stepped inside and slammed the door shut behind them. One of them was about to shove me aside, but I grabbed his hand. "What do you think you are doing here?" I asked.

"Where's Blade?" He demanded. "Is he here?"

"Blade's not here." I replied.

"Blade!" The werewolf yelled and I let go of his hand.

Suddenly, the sound of shuffling of feet came from the hallway as Brandon and Nick came out of the hallway. Brandon stopped dead in his tracks. "What are you guys doing here?!" Brandon demanded.

"What are *we* doing here?" one of the werewolves yelled. "What about *you*?! What on earth are you doing with these buttheads?"

"They're not buttheads! They're my friends!"

"Friends?! What about us? Huh?! What ever happened to us being your friends?"

Brandon's angry look suddenly softened. "We used to be friends, back when we had the same thoughts, the same goals. But things have changed."

"Well obviously! You betrayed us and chose to live with these idiots!" The werewolves were furious. "We are supposed to kill Mark!" He yelled and looked at me.

"No were not," Brandon corrected, using a soft, mild, but demanding tone in his voice. "Who commanded us to kill him, huh?"

"Intex, of course!"

"And why would we have to obey that?" Brandon asked. "Intex is dead."

The werewolves didn't say anything, but their expressions didn't change, they were still angry.

"Guys ... I chose to be with these guys because I realized that they were the same as me."

"The same as you?!" They yelled. "We're the same as you! We're flesh and blood."

"They came from the same situation as us. Think about it. What did Intex do to us?"

"He gave us power!" the one werewolf exclaimed.

"No ... what did he take away from us?"

"Nothing! We owe him everything! Intex deserves our obedience!"

"NO HE DOESN'T!" Brandon yelled. "Don't you remember?! Don't you remember what Intex did to us?" Brandon was started to cry, but his voice remained strong and firm. "Intex took away our family! All of us! Intex took away all of our families." The werewolves acted like they were just starting to remember, as if those memories were block but were now

back. They seemed stunned and saddened to remember. "All of us come from nice families. We all had loving, beautiful families ..." Brandon's voice started breaking. "Nice ... loving families. And Intex took them all away. He ripped what was most valuable away from our lives. And then he put a mind block in our heads to block out those memories. He was evil! He doesn't deserve any of our obedience. He didn't. He's dead now, so we definitely need to follow through with anything he commanded us." Brandon just broke down in tears; he couldn't hold himself in.

It was a strange sight to see. All of the werewolves were just recently so angry and furious. But now they were all stunned and saddened. They had all suddenly remembered their families. It was true what Brandon had said; Intex put a mind block to block their memories, but just bringing it up removed them, because Intex was no longer around to make them forget. They looked as if they were trying to hold back tears, but one of them failed as his cheeks were soaked in tears.

They all transformed into their human form, forgetting to be angry. They looked like us all of the sudden. They looked like they belonged with us. They were in the same situation.

"Blade," the one werewolf started, "I'm sorry ... I ... I-I just can't believe I forgot ... my family. Oh ... how much I miss them. Blade, you're right. No wait! Brandon ... your parents named you Brandon. You're right Brandon ... Intex was ... so evil. I can't ... believe that I forgot them. I just can't believe it. Why?" he asked himself. He couldn't hold back any longer and started crying. "Why? Why? Why? I miss them so much. Why did he take them away from me?!"

Brandon walked up to him and gave him a comforting hug. "I'm sorry ... James. I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry too," the one werewolf said, James, who was in his human form. "I can't believe I just said that about all of you guys."

“Don’t worry about it.” Brandon said and he released himself from James. “You guys are welcome to stay here if that’s alright with you Mark.”

“Yeah that’s fine,” I said.

“Yeah. Come stay with us.” Brandon said.

“No ... that’s alright.” James said. “We have our own place and I kind of like it anyway. We’ll stay there ... and ...” he trailed off. He looked up at Brandon and smiled, wiping away tears. “Brandon, thank you for helping me remember.”

“Thank you,” the other forming werewolves said too, who were now humans.

“We should go now,” James said, heading towards the door.

“You don’t have to go,” I said.

“No ... I can't. I don't belong here.”

“Sure you do, do we look like a normal group of people here ourselves?”

“No, but ... I rather not. Thanks anyway.” With that the three of them opened the door and walked outside into the pouring rain and closed the door behind them.

Brandon watched them all leave and then slowly turned around to head back to his room. Nick watched Brandon go back down the hallway to his room that he shared with Bruce, and he started nodded at him as he slowly looked down at his feet. Brandon went into his room, leaving the door open. Nick stood there and looked back at the door and then at me.

Nick no longer looked angry. It was like a weight had been dropped from his body, he didn’t seem tense.

“Nick,” I said, walking towards him. “There's something I wanted to talk about.”

Nick nodded.

“About before,” I said. “I'm sorry for yelling at you. I was uncalled for. I shouldn't have —”

Nick held up his hand in protest. “No, you were right, Mark. I was wrong,” Nick said. “You have every right to be the leader of this house, of this team. I mean ... look what you talk Brandon.” He shook his head. “I was wrong to think all of those things.” He paused and looked down the hall. “I'm ... going to apologize to Brandon ... but I'll give him some time alone first.”

I smiled. Nick was realizing and was changing his attitude. I didn't need to press anything more, so I went back into the living. I wanted to get my mind off of what just happened, so I tried to get back to where we were. Bruce and Mara were sitting on the couch again. They had their notebooks out in front of them, but they weren't focused on them now and I wasn't either. I couldn't stop thinking about what just happened.

It all happened so fast. James and his two friends had come here seeking to ... do something horrible, knowing that Brandon had betrayed them and chose to be with us. But they had been just like the rest of us, except me, Bruce and Rachel; they had lost their families. They had remembered their families, removing the blockage in their minds. Intex had blinded them so much. I thought about Nick, Alex, Grace and Mara. They all were experimented on by Intex, but then they were imprisoned by him. Apparently their families were so close to them that they were fresh in their minds, so they wouldn't work for Intex. They must've all kept their memories fresh too ... always talking about them, but they didn't talk much about them now ... it was all too painful.

I looked at Rachel who was still standing in the kitchen. She was still absorbing what just happened. Nick was leaning against the wall in

the hallway, propping his head against the wall. I looked at Bruce and Mara sitting on the couch together. Mara looked like she was holding back tears. Bruce softly stroked her hair, trying to comfort her without the use of words; the best way to comfort. Often the best ways to comfort someone is to just be there with them.

It was strange how quickly it had all just happened. The werewolves were in and then they were out almost as soon as they came. They barged into my house as werewolves, with grudges and they left as humans with broken hearts and understanding. They were just like Brandon, Nick, Alex, Grace and Mara. All had nice families and they were snatched from them. I really felt for them. I felt for them all.

I sat on the couch and Rachel came into the living room and sat down next to me. She leaned into my shoulder to comfort me, even though I thought that I didn't need it, but I realized that I could use it, because I had a lot on my mind right about now. I was thinking about everyone here. I realized that my eyes were starting to water and a single tear rolled down my cheek. I really felt for everyone here. I had lost a family, but it wasn't like I was really attached to them. I have never met them. My biological family and I were separated when I was practically just born, so I had no memories of them, except for what I envisioned in the crystals and from my ship.

I had not lost my family here on Earth. They were my closet family. I loved them ... I was thankful that Intex didn't kill them, but then I felt bad for feeling like that. Was I being selfish for thinking that? Because most of the people here had lost their families, and here I was being thankful that I hadn't. I must've had the right attitude to be leader if I felt like this towards my team. I really cared about them. I felt their sadness. I understood them.

For some reason, I just thought back when Brandon was Blade, running around in the streets of Manhattan, being chaotic. He was running around terrorizing people. He had been upset that Intex had left him behind when he went to Ireland. But I'm sure that now he thought that it

was ridiculous. I was surprised that those other werewolves didn't do anything like that and I was sure that they wouldn't do anything now.

Andrea Vorce's Residence

Alex and Andrea laughed as they cooked together. They had already made up the fruit salad. Andrea just pulled the sweet potato fries out of the oven, setting it on the counter next to the oven, and the smelled filled the whole kitchen.

"Wow!!" Alex exclaimed smelling the sweet potato fries. "That smells so good ... and sweet," he said.

"Yeah, I told you," Andrea said. "They are the best kind of fries to get." She smiled. She looked at the bowl that Alex was mixing dough in. He was mixing it so fast and all she could do was watch in amazement. "That's so ... amazing."

Alex looked at Andrea and realized that she was staring at the bowl of cookie dough that he was making. He didn't realize that he was mixing it fast, probably because he knew that he already told Andrea, so he didn't have to worry about keeping it a secret. But if he were to mix something at work, his conscious would prevent him from using his super speed.

"It's ... so amazing to see someone else that's like me," Andrea said. "Especially a good looking person too." Alex smiled and looked up at Andrea.

"You too," Alex said.

Andrea cheeks grew a little warm and she gave a nervous chuckle. Alex smiled, realizing that blushing was a sign that she liked him. He knew it too, that he liked her. At first to Alex it seemed that Andrea was only interested in his powers. She had asked so many questions, but later it

seemed that she liked him, mentioning that he was nice and handsome, or good looking.

Andrea pulled out a cookie pan from out of the cupboard and set it on the only open space left on the counter. As they were baking, the counter started to get cluttered. Andrea pulled opened the silverware drawer and grabbed a cookie scooper out of it and handed it to Alex. Alex took the scooper and already started on put balls of the cookie dough onto the pan.

“I can tell that you're the cook at your house,” Andrea said. “You work so fast.”

“How do you know that that’s not my super speed power?” Alex asked.

“Oh, I don’t know, is it?”

“Well, not really. I naturally work fast with food. I've always enjoyed cooking and baking.”

Andrea nodded and smiled. “Well ... me? I cook because I have to. I live alone so I had to learn how to by myself, but not that’s it hard, but ... I probably don’t enjoy it as much as you do.”

It was silent for a long time. Alex filled the whole cookie pan with cookie dough balls and he threw it in the oven. The two of them looked at the fries sitting on the counter next to the oven. Andrea grabbed the pan with oven mites on and walked it over to the table.

“Do you want to try these fries?” Andrea asked.

“Of course!” Alex exclaimed. “They smell delicious.”

“Bring that bowl of fruit to the table.”

Alex grabbed the bowl of fruit and quickly brought it to the table, moving a little fast; not as fast as he could go, but faster than normal.

Andrea walked to another cupboard and pulled out two plates and she set them on the table. She pulled out two forks out of the silverware drawer and gave one to Alex. Andrea put a spatula in the fries.

“Go ahead,” Andrea told Alex.

Alex grabbed a few fries and put them on his plate, using the spatula. He put one in his mouth and his eyes lit up and he groaned as he chewed. “Wow,” Alex said. “These are soo good!!”

“I told ya.”

“Man, these are awesome!!” Alex exclaimed and ate more.

“Ever since I discovered them, I've never stopped getting them.”

The two of them went silent for a little bit as they put the fruit on their plates and more fries. It was a little bit awkward as they both ate in silence.

“So,” Alex broke the silence. “Umm ... where did you go to school?”

“Here, in New York.” Andrea replied. “I went to school with my friends that you met at the park.” She paused. “What about you?”

“I started school in Pennsylvania and then I was kidnapped ...” Alex said, and started to trail off, remembering the day; it was so terrifying. Andrea suddenly looked worried. He was about sixteen years old when it happened, going into his junior year in high school. On that same day Intex killed his family right and front of him.

“Alex,” she said. “I'm ... sorry.”

Alex nodded and sighed. He looked up at Andrea and smiled. “Thank you.”

Andrea decided to change the subject. “Well, Alex you're a great cook,” she said. “I can tell.”

“Yeah ... thanks. You're not too bad yourself.”

“What? I didn't really help you make anything, so how could you tell that?”

“I don't know ... I'm just trying to be nice.”
Andrea chuckled. “Well ... don't try too hard ... just be yourself.”

Alex nodded. He put another fry into his mouth and calmed down. His mouth watered because of how delicious the fry was. He exhaled loudly as he chewed, enjoying it so much. He ate some more of the fries and then finished off his fruit that was on his plate. Alex looked up at Andrea and couldn't help but noticed the window behind her. Outside it was still raining, but it wasn't as heavy as it was before. It looked awful outside.

“I don't want to go home in this weather,” Alex said.

“I know, right?” Andrea agreed. “I wouldn't either.” She turned around and looked through the window. “It looks depressing outside.” She got up, walked up to the window, closed the curtains, and flipped on more lights to light the room. “There, that's better.”

More light in the room gave calm, relaxing feeling in the air. The rain just made everything worse, but now the curtain was closed, even though you could still hear the rain.

“What's your favorite band?” Andrea asked Alex.

“Uh ... wow. I haven't really listened to music in a while, just the radio, but it's all unfamiliar. But while in high school ...” Alex tried to remember, while trying to forget about Intex. “I guess it would have to be *Katy Perry*, *Maroon 5*, *The Wanted* ... *Megan Nicole* ... and *Ellie Goulding*.”

“Wow, you remember all of that?”

“Yeah ... now I want to listen to some of them. Man! It's been so long since I've listened to any of them. I miss it.”

“Well, I have the internet, so we could listen to some of them.”

“Sure, why not?” Alex said. “What about you? What's your favorite music?”

“I like pop and rock, like *OneRepublic*, *Lifeline*, *Justin Bieber*, and —”

“*Justin Bieber*? You like him?”

“Yeah. Sorry if that offends you.”

“That didn't sound apologetic.”

Andrea laughed. “So what?”

Then Alex thought of another. “I also liked *Selena Gomez*.”

“You like her?”

Alex laughed. “Sorry if that offends you.” Andrea laughed too, realizing that he just did the same thing.

“You know that they were dating?”

“Yeah. Are they still together?”

“I don't know ... I haven't kept myself on track of them.”

Alex and Andrea talked for several more hours, trying to learn each other, asking each other what they both liked and didn't like. They played more than twenty-one questions, asking well over that in order to get to know each other. They laughed at each other's jokes, even though some of them were lame. They were always smiling. They ate some of their cookies as they talked, after all, having so many cookies that could last a couple of more days.

Alex and Andrea sat next to each other on the couch in the living room. Andrea had a pretty good size couch, but what they were really sitting in was the love seat. Andrea didn't realize it at first, but when she

did she didn't say anything. They just got through giving a nice laugh and that faded and they calmed down. They looked at each other smiling and not saying anything. Without even trying they were edging closer to each other. Alex lifted his hand up and slowly pulled Andrea's hair back behind her hair. He gently rested his hand on her cheek and they leaned closer. They got so close and closed their eyes as their lips touched.

Mark's Residence

In the living room, Bruce and Mara sat on the couch. Mara had her head rested in Bruce's shoulder. She was just grieving about her family and Bruce tried to comfort her as best as he could. He tried talking to her about it to trying to make her free better, but then she actually told him to shut up, and he listened.

Now it seemed that Mara was calming down. Bruce strokes her hair as she rested her head on him. Bruce's shirt was wet from Mara's tears. Bruce leaned his head down at kiss Mara on her head, while smelling her hair, and then kissed her on the head again. Bruce realized that this was the best way to comfort someone, to just let the silence fill the room.

Rachel was sitting across from the on the couch, watching the news while it was muted. She read the captions on the TV, which it had when it was muted; that was the way it was programmed at the moment. I sat next to Rachel and looked across at Bruce and Mara. Bruce was kissing Mara on the top of her head. I tried thinking back to any time that Bruce and Mara actually kissed on the lips, but I couldn't remember any time that they did.

I noticed that Nick stepped out into the room. He looked around as if he were seeing who was in the room. I wondered if he was looking for Brandon, to avoid him, but he didn't have his usual angry face on. I got up and walked up to him.

"Nick," I said. "I wanted to tell you something."

"Okay," Nick said.

“I'm sorry for yelling at you. I didn't mean to get so –”

“Don't worry about it, Mark. I deserved it. I've been a jerk lately and it's uncalled for. I've been mean to Brandon, that's why I was just checking here to see if was here. I want to apologize to him.”

“Oh, okay. Then I guess I'll give you guys your space.”

“Okay,” Nick nodded. He turned around and headed towards Bruce and Brandon's room.

The door was open, but Nick knocked anyway. Brandon was sitting on his bed and he looked up to see Nick. He gave a weak smile and waved for Nick to come on in.

“Brandon,” Nick said and sat next to him on the bed. “I wanted to apologize for how much of a jerk I have been lately. I'm sorry.”

Brandon looked up at Nick and smiled. “It's okay, I forgive you.”

Nick smiled. “That's it, you forgive me?”

“Yes. What did you expect something more?”

“Yeah, I had a whole speech worked up.”

“Well ... give it anyway.”

Nick gave a weak laugh and he started. “Brandon, I guess that I couldn't see past your changed heart. I always thought of you as Blade, as that nasty werewolf at Creative Works.”

“I don't want to be that person anymore,” Brandon said.

“I know and I realize that now. I realized that you came from the same situation as the rest of us ... well besides Mark, Bruce and Rachel. We have the same history, but it wasn't your fault for what you have done, so I shouldn't have blamed you; I should've blamed Intex. I'm sorry ... We are trying to become superheroes, and here I was not getting along with my fellow teammate. Can we call this a truce?”

Brandon nodded and outstretched his hand. Nick stretched his hand out and they gave a one bounce handshake. "Truce," Brandon said.

Nick nodded and they released their hands.

It was silent for a bit until Brandon broke it.

"I can't stop thinking about those ... other werewolves," Brandon said. "They were still blinded by Intex, who has been dead for a while now. But finally they can see past it and remember their families. They just ... they were just like me. Like you ... but they didn't want to stay here ... and ... I don't know. It's just that I ... I-I'm glad that they discovered the truth and are free from that blindness. Hopefully they make good choices from now on and they don't ruin their lives."

"Me too," Nick said. "I realized that when you stood up to them that you had truly changed. If it was Mark standing up to them he might have said part of what you said, but no one could have said it better. You made them see that light."

Brandon nodded.

Tristan Bale's Residence

Tristan had made a nice lunch to have while he had Dawn and Stuart over. They had come over the day before yesterday and had invited them over again. He was already making friends with them. Tristan could tell that Stuart liked him. They had played some basketball together, having a great time.

Dawn was going through depression, and was always worried about destroying anything and everything. Tristan and Stuart both tried to comfort her. Tristan explained that he was in the same situation and tried explain to her about how he was started to control his power.

Dawn stood next to Tristan as he cooked, but she made sure that she kept her distance, while she also wore her gloves. Stuart sat at the table in the kitchen, playing on his tablet. "You know," Tristan said. "I have been trying to control my power, so that I can be able to use it at will. Maybe you should try to do the same thing, to try to use it on demand so that it doesn't come unexpectedly."

"Why would I want to purposely destroy something?" Dawn asked.

"Well, it's just to learn how to control it. If you can figure out how to use your power, you will learn how to keep yourself from destroying things."

"I hope you know what you're talking about."

Tristan gave her a little smile. "I've been practicing my power, trying to use it at will." Tristan raised his hand in the air, holding it far enough away from Dawn. Then just with the thought, he created a fire in his palm and when he closed his fist, the flame distinguished. "See?"

"But, I can practically destroy anything at any time."

"You're not right now, because those gloves are still on your hands." Tristan pointed at her hand. "I could give you my old newspapers and you could practice on them and also maybe some of my firewood for the winter."

"No I don't want to waste your firewood."

"I'll just get the newspapers then." Tristan left the frying pan alone and went to the table towards Stuart. He had left the newspapers on the table and the older ones in a pile by the door. He gathered all of the papers together and set them on the counter in front of Dawn. "Why don't you take those gloves off and try to destroy some of those papers at will."

Tristan reached down and separated the newspapers from each other. Dawn looked nervous and took off her gloves, keeping them intact. She set the gloves on the counter, aside from the newspapers. She laid

her hands on one of the papers, but nothing happened. She listened to herself, hearing her heartbeat. It was beating fast. She was a little puzzled, because she remembered that it seemed like when she was nervous she would destroy something. She was definitely nervous now, but the papers remained undamaged.

“Nothing’s happening,” Dawn said.

“Try to unleash your power,” Tristan encouraged her. Dawn looked up at him when he said the word *power*; she still disagreed with Tristan and Stuart about saying it was a power.

Dawn tried to disintegrate it by just the thought of it, but still nothing happened. She felt so nervous, her heart beating in her throat. She started to feel on the edge, running off of her adrenaline. It felt like some sort of energy she had inside of her was wanting to come out, she wondered if that was her *power*. She tried to exert that energy through her hands, by taking a big breath in and pushing down with her hands, as if it would do something.

The newspapers she touched all lost its form and shape as it turned into ash. Dawn quickly lifted her hands so that she wouldn’t destroy the counter. Dawn exhaled and dropped her shoulders. She felt as if the energy inside of her was released.

“You did it,” Tristan said, while flipping a hamburger patty, which he could not get enough of. “Try it again.” Dawn looked at him, raising an eyebrow. “I want to help you control this, so you have to be able to use it by willpower. I don’t want you to have a breakdown.”

Dawn gave a weak smile and nodded, understanding. She laid her hand on the newspaper and this time it almost immediately disintegrated. She lifted her hands off right away. Dawn slowly put her hands down on another newspaper and nothing happened. She thought of that energy she felt inside of her, it was gone down. She breathed in and tried to

exert some sort of energy, not sure what though, but it worked, because the newspaper disintegrated. She quickly took her hands off.

“You're getting the hang of it,” Tristan said. “Now, you should continue to practice that. Now try to stop yourself from disintegrating it. Like ... exert that energy and then pull it back.”

Dawn nodded, not sure if she could do that though. She set her hands down on another newspaper and thought have that strange energy inside of her. She breathed in deep and pushed with her hands to exert the energy, and then she tried to stop it. It had sort of worked. The newspaper had a hole in it, where her hands touched, which was now replaced by ash.

Without allowing Tristan to say anything more, Dawn got started on the next newspaper. She placed her hands on it, and willed the energy to come out and then she stopped it right where it was at. She was starting to actually feel the energy. It was like it was a physically feeling, so precise that she could feel it buzzing in her fingertips.

“It must've worked,” Tristan said. “You didn't destroy this one.” Then Tristan was surprised, because he realized that Dawn was smiling, and he smiled back.

“You won't believe this,” Dawn exclaimed. “I can feel the ... energy. It's a tingly feeling and I stopped it in my fingers.”

Dawn could feel the energy from her fingertips slowly go back up her arms and back into her chest, and into the center of her body. She still was touching a newspaper, and she was going to try this again. She found the source of the energy and willed for it to come out through her hands. She felt a buzzing energy go through her arms, into her hands, and then outward from her fingers, and then the newspaper disintegrated. She stopped the energy and kept her hands on the counter, succeeding in not disintegrating the counter.

Dawn jumped up and shrieked. "Yes!" she exclaimed. "Thank you, Tristan! I want to give you a high five, but I don't want to risk it."

"Me neither," Tristan said. "But, just keep practicing. You're getting the hang of it."

Dawn and Tristan looked at the counter. "Wow," Dawn said. "What a mess."

"I know." Tristan grabbed the trash bin and put it in front of the counter.

He took a washcloth and pushed all of the ash into the trash. Dawn could feel the buzzing feeling in her fingers travel its way back into the center of her body, where it was stored. She grabbed her gloves and put them back on. She realized that she was still smiling.

"Thank you so much, Tristan." Dawn said. "I don't know how I could have done this without you. I questioned you before, but now I understand why you wanted me to do it. Now that I'm learning to control it, I can prevent myself from accidentally destroying it."

"You're welcome," Tristan said, unsure of what else to say.

Mark's Residence

Something woke me up in the middle of the night. I wasn't sure what it was. I sat up in my bed and looked around for anything that seemed out of the ordinary. Rachel was still sleeping, and she didn't really snore, so I knew that it couldn't have been her that woke me.

I looked outside and saw how bright it was during the middle of the night. The moonlight lit the whole sky. I saw the rain drops left on the window. Then I realized what woke me. It wasn't the sound of something, it was the absence of sound; the rain had stopped — finally.

I raised my wrist and checked my watch for the time; it was four in the morning. It had rained since the afternoon and continued through most of the night. I got out of bed and went to the bathroom. Most of the time I was just looking at myself in the mirror. I used my hand to cover my eyes and part of my nose. I wanted to see what I looked like if I wore a mask. My looks still were the same, just you couldn't see my eyes or part of my nose, but I wasn't sure if it was enough coverage. People who have seen me before; like people at work, would probably still recognize me. I decided that when I was going to get my suit made I would need a full mask.

I left the bedroom and went back in bed. Rachel was still sleeping. I watched her chest go in and out. She looked so peaceful and calm; she was sound asleep. I watched her until I fell back asleep.

I woke up later that morning at nine. I jumped out of bed, realizing that I was the only one in my room. I walked into the living room and saw that mostly everyone was in it, all sitting on the couches. Alex and Rachel were cleaning the dishes in the kitchen. Breakfast was still on the

table and a plate and fork were ready for me. I walked up to the table and sat down. I realized that Grace was missing again today; she worked two days in a row. I also worked today, but not until eleven-thirty.

I put four pancakes on my plate, the rest of the strips of bacon and pour syrup all of the plate. I was already digging in to the food, driving my fork into the pancakes. I shoved my face and moaned; the pancakes were so good, it made me wonder if Alex put sugar in them. Once I finished breakfast, I got a shower, got dressed and joined everyone in the living room until I was going to leave for work.

Bruce and Mara sat together, next to them was Brandon, then Alex, then Nick, and then Rachel. Rachel sat further from Nick, than Nick did next to Alex and Alex to Brandon. Brandon gave his distance from Bruce and Mara, letting the two lovebirds have their space. I sat down next to Rachel.

Bruce and Mara had pens ready and were writing in their notebooks. They were designing and inventing superhero names. They were discussing them with each other and the rest of the team. Nick looked at me a few seconds after I sat down.

“Mark,” Nick said. “Bruce told me that you were thinking about the name, *Avian*.”

“Yeah, I guess,” I said.

“Hmm ... but you don’t have any wings, not like most of us do.”

“I know ... I was telling Bruce this, that I don’t have much of other powers that would describe me. But being the leader of the team, I was thinking that I could have a leading name for the team.”

“You can fly, but you don’t use wings,” Bruce said, not really sure where he was going with it, but he trailed off.

I was expecting him to say something more, but he didn’t. “Are you saying I should get wings?”

Bruce and Nick sort of nodded.

“Well, it’s not like I could find those anywhere.”

“You don’t have to,” Brandon said. “Couldn’t you use your matter manipulation and create attachable wings or something?”

I slowly nodded. “I guess I could.”

“Yeah,” Nick said. “Then you could attach them to your suit.”

I nodded. “I guess that could work.” I looked at everyone else. “Did you guys think of any names?”

“Yeah,” Nick said. “Because of my juxtakinesis, we were thinking about the name *Vortex*. It’s sort of like I am sucking in powers, absorbing them, but really I am only mimicking them, not stealing them. So that’s how the name *Vortex* comes into place.”

I nodded. “It makes sense.”

“Well, do you think that it’s a good name?” Bruce asked.

“Yeah, I mean it sounds cool.”

“We’re still trying to think of names for the rest of us,” Alex said. “We were thinking about a name that would match my super speed, but at the same time something that fit my new power of fire.”

“Since when did you have that power?”

“Since the beginning of the week. I just told everyone else.”

“Oh.” I nodded.

I looked at Brandon. I wondered what name he would have. The only powers he had was werewolf transformation and I haven’t seen him use that since he was Blade. But if he was going to be a part of the team, he was going to be needed for something, he was going to have to use his power for something. He would have to release his wolf side. It’s not like

it controlled him or anything, but it's that it brings him back too many painful memories.

I looked down at my watch. "Well guys, I'm going to have to go now, so that I have enough time to walk to the jobsite."

"Okay, Mark." Bruce said.

"See ya later, Babe," Rachel said, leaning in and kissing me quickly on the lips and I kissed her back.

I got up from the couch and gave a quick big wave to everyone and headed out the door. I started walking towards work to the jobsite. We were working on a different building now and we were running along pretty well already. I was thinking about how Bruce was already getting everyone to think about their superhero names. Him and Mara were working on designs too.

I start thinking about what kind of team we would become and how we would save people in New York. I got to thinking about what challenges we might face. I wondered what it would be like if we found criminals who would try defending themselves. Bruce and I had some Kung Fu training, but the rest of us didn't. I wasn't sure what training the rest of us had. We had to get started on training again.

I thought about the cost that training was. There was no one we could all train there. But we could train each other. Bruce and I could train the rest of us Kung Fu. We were definitely going to have to get started on that. I wouldn't want to risk putting another one of us in danger, because we wouldn't be able to defend ourselves. Who knows what we would face becoming superheroes? We needed to train ourselves. We needed to be prepared to face any sort of combat while being superheroes.

Nick, Alex, Bruce, Mara and Brandon sat on the couches in the living room. Rachel sat on the only chair, and watched the TV, which had the news on. They rarely had anything other than the news on TV, getting ready for anything.

“You know what?” Bruce asked and Mara and whoever else was listening. “How are we going to get these designs onto our jackets as of now?” Bruce looked down at his notebook. He had a design of his superhero name already. It was the letter *P* made out of abstract-like waves. He had some sort of suit that he was trying to design, but what was more complete was the symbol. “I’m just not sure about how to get it on our hoodies for now.”

“What about Mark?” Brandon asked. “He has that new power. He could use his matter manipulation to change the color of the jacket where the symbol would be. You know, something simple for now.”

“Hmm, yeah. We could have Mark do it.”

“Yeah,” Alex agreed. “How else would we have our suits made when we decide on our designs? It’s not like we know someone who is good at sewing and who could keep our secret safe. We could just have Mark make the suits for us.”

“Yeah,” Nick agreed. “Although he needs to practice more.” Rachel looked over at him. “You know, to make sure he makes it perfectly, without it smelling or falling apart when you touch it.”

Rachel slowly looked back at the TV. Alex suddenly gasped. “Nick, can you use Mark’s power right now?”

“Umm ... I don’t think so.” Nick paused and looked down at his hands. “He has to be near in order for me to replicate his powers, but he's at work now.”

“Why don’t you try it anyway?” Brandon suggested.

Nick looked up at Brandon. “I’m not sure I would be any good at it, though. I have no idea how to do it anyway.”

Without looking away from the TV, Rachel joined the conversation. “Mark just closes his eyes and imagines every aspect of what he wants to create,” Rachel said. “Then he just imagines it in front of him, imaging its presence and he creates it.”

Nick looked at Rachel and back at his hands. He held them out and closed his eyes. He thought of making a hoodie. Every aspect. He had to think of every aspect. He thought about it nice, soft, cotton-like texture. He thought about its nice smell of being freshly cleaned; the smell of fresh laundry right out of the dryer. He thought about the black color. Then he imagined it in front of him, in his hands.

He opened his eyes to see that nothing had happened. His hands didn’t even as so much as spark green, like Mark’s did.

“I guess I can't do it,” Nick said, “not unless he's near me.”

Alex and Brandon looked disappointed, Alex more so. Everyone else kind of expected that Nick wouldn’t be able to do it. Rachel seemed to be glued to the TV, getting so into the news.

“I’ve got an idea,” Bruce said. “We could use crayon on the jackets. That would probably be the best thing that’ll stick.” He paused considering it. “We’ll just have to keep drawing it over and over again.”

Bruce got up and brought his notebook and jacket to the table. He gathered together some crayons. He used a white crayon first, because it was the best color to use to stand out. He looked at his notebook and

studied his design of the symbol for his superhero name; Psych. He ran his hands down his jacket on the table, making it nice, flat and smooth.

He took the white crayon and started drawing the abstract waves that all formed together to make the letter *P*. He decided that it looked pretty good, but it wasn't dark enough. He went over it several more times with the white crayon and then he grabbed a purple one. He drew over the white lines with the purple until it was a nice design of solid, light purple abstract waves that formed a *P*. Bruce turned his head back and forth, examining it. He grabbed a blue crayon and went over one of the lines, giving it just a tint of the blue.

"It looks good," Mara said, looking over Bruce's shoulder.

"Yeah," Bruce said, nodding in agreement. "It does. I like it."

Bruce set the crayons down and took the jacket off of the table and put it on. He walked up to the tall mirror on the wall, which was in between the kitchen and the living room, nearer to the table in the kitchen than the couches in the living room. He looked at his reflection and started smiling.

"It looks good," he said. "Well, for a starter suit anyway."

"Yeah," Alex simply said, nodding.

"Now the rest of you should get started on creating your symbols." Bruce turned around and looked at them. "Well, first you have to invent some names. We have ideas for some of you."

Mount Vernon, NY; Hank McDonald

Inside his house it was filled with whatever you would imagine a scientist to have. He had one main room that he had used as his lab. Hank had chemicals in vials, had pipets, condensers, beakers, jugs, micro-

scopes, balances, pulleys, and tons of papers everywhere on any table. He was a scientist.

Hank used to work in a big science lab with other scientists, back in Washington DC. But he was fired for putting too much focus on “less important things” and for supposedly not being smart enough. Now Hank was self-employed and worked at his house. He had his whole life devoted to his work, being single.

At the moment Hank was testing was testing some radiation he discovered. He wasn't sure what exactly it was, but it was in the air. He figured that it wasn't dangerous, because it wasn't killing anyone, or harming anyone. He had found traces of it in this area, but it was hard to come by. Suddenly an alarm went off.

He walked up to his computer and turned off the alarm. On the monitor it had readings of the radiation. The computer had an alert message appear on the screen. It was saying that it discovered higher traces of this radiation in Manhattan. He looked at the map of Manhattan that it showed and almost all of Manhattan was covered in red, which was infected with the radiation. Whatever the radiation was, it was all over in Manhattan, but it didn't seem to be having any effect on anyone. But Hank wanted to make sure.

He walked up to a table and grabbed a miniature radiation detector. Hank had programmed it to read this kind of radiation. He was going to go to Manhattan to try finding areas where it was strongest. He grabbed a notebook and pen for documentation, and then he headed out of the door.

Part 2: The Birth

Manhattan, NY

Rachel was still watching the news. She was getting ready for anything. She was waiting for any report that would require them to act, to help out. Bruce was getting excited about inventing names. Alex was just as excited as he was, but Rachel noticed that he seemed a little excited about something else too. Rachel knew what it meant.

Rachel sat on the couch and looked at the team. Mara was smiling, watching Bruce's face at all times. She laughed at whatever comment Bruce gave that she thought was funny. She thought that Bruce was cute, and Bruce thought the same about her. They loved each other and were always around each other. Nick and Brandon seemed to not mind Bruce helping them out with deciding names.

Bruce was already thinking of the name *Vortex* for Nick, saying that it was like his juxtakinesis. Alex was excited and anxious about thinking of a name for himself. He wanted it to have something to do with his super speed, but at the same time to have something to do with his new fire power, or pyrokinesis. But Rachel could tell that there was something else that he was trying to hide. Every once in a while when it got everyone quieted down enough, Alex would give a sigh. Rachel knew what that sigh meant.

Rachel chuckled to herself, drawing attention to her. Rachel looked up and looked right at Alex. "Are you in love with someone, Alex?" she asked him.

Alex smiled and looked down, and then he slowly looked back up, still smiling. "Is it that obvious?" Alex asked Rachel.

“Only to someone like me, who has a little knowledge about love. I know that face your making. You're seeing a girl.” She paused and smiled, seeing how sweet it was that Alex was going out with someone. “It she sweet?”

“Yes.” Alex’s smile grew wider. “She’s ... so nice and ... lovely.”

Suddenly, Rachel drew her attention to the TV. Something she had heard caught her ear. With her super hearing, she was always aware. The news was showing a live report of a high speed chase. Five cop cars were chasing a speeder down highway 9.

“Alex, look!” Rachel exclaimed, pointing at the TV. “This is your cue!”

Alex looked unprepared, moving around quickly. He threw on his jacket, which did not have any symbol on it yet.

“I need a name!” Alex exclaimed.

“How's Rush?” Bruce quickly replied.

“No, that’s my last name. I can't use that!”

“Uh, okay. If that ask, just tell them that you’re working on it. Okay? Now get out of here!”

With that Alex ran out the door within a split second. You wouldn’t find anything faster than him. One millisecond he was there and the next he was gone.

Alex ran down many streets, weaving through traffic, moving fast. To him, as fast as he was moving and as fast as his brain was working everyone seemed to be moving slow. Even though it was Manhattan and the traffic is generally heavy, it still seemed slower to him, only because he was moving fast.

Within no time, he had reached the highway. It didn't take long until he found out where the speeder was at. He just followed the sound of the sirens. He ran down the highway and found the guy speeding. Alex had no idea why he was speeding, but right now he was only thinking about stopping him. He ran down the highway and ran right up to him, going the same speed of the car. The driver saw him and suddenly looked astonished and was amazed at what he was seeing. The cops chasing him were stunned to see a person running so fast.

Alex waved at the guy, signaling him to pull over. The guy shook his head, still surprised, but he also looked scared. He was afraid to get pulled over. Alex ran faster and ran in front of the car. He then started to run backwards, turning himself around, still fast enough to stay in front of the car. The driver panicked and was afraid to hit Alex, swerving. Alex followed him closer and stayed directly in front of him, no matter what the driver did.

Alex suddenly stopped running, putting his wings out so that it would save him from falling down. His feet lifted off of the ground a little bit, but he stayed close to the road. His momentum was still going pretty fast, but was slowly down. The driver suddenly was gaining on him and would hit him. The driver slammed on the brakes and came millimeters away from hitting Alex, before he started running again to avoid getting hit, thinking so fast.

The driver had slowed down all of the way to about sixty miles per hour. A cop car slingshot past and swerved in front of the speeder, blocking him in the front. Two cop cars drove up to him, one on each side of the speeder. The speeder sped up, while I was still directly in front of him. A cop car came in close behind him, right on his bumper. Alex saw that he was boxed in and he flapped his wings and pushed off with his feet, flying just high enough above.

The cop cars slammed on the brakes and the speeder hit the cop car in front of him, smashing up the front of the car. All of the cars came

to a complete stop, with the speeder and his car boxed in the middle. The cops got out of their cars and drew their weapons, facing the speeder.

“Get out of the vehicle with your hands on you head!” they yelled.

The speeder opened his door and slowly stepped out, putting his hands up and then on his head. He looked as terrified as ever. He looked up at Alex who was flying about ten feet above them all. The cops looked up too, unsure of what exactly just happened. But they were also focused on the task at hand. A cop ran up to the speeder and cuffed him behind his back and then put him in the back seat of his cop car.

Alex landed and all of the cops looked dumbfounded and speechless. They slowly walked up to Alex. They had all put their guns back into their hostlers, but had one hand on it, getting ready if needed.

“We don’t know what to say,” a cop said.

“You don’t need to say much of anything,” Alex said, trying to choose his words carefully. “I’m just trying to help and protect this city as much as I can, along with the rest of my team.”

“Team?” one asked quietly. “Who-what ... who are you?”

“We are a team of superheroes, who want to help in protecting this city.”

“What ... do we call you?”

“We ... are still working on it ... but we’re progressing.”

The cops looked at Alex’s wings, admiring them. Alex had his hood up on his jacket still, but he could tell that they were trying to see his face.

“Are you ... human?” an officer asked.

Alex chuckled. “Yes, I’m human, just part bird.” He paused. “I’m glad I was able to help you today, and I better get going.” The cops nod-

ded, still stunned. “And I better let you guys take care of the rest of this and clear up the road.”

“Yeah ... um ... thanks.”

Alex jumped up and flapped his wings, giving himself a rough start, trying to fly straight up. He flapped his wings harder and took off, leaving the whole scene behind, flying away. All of the cops were dumbfounded and amazed, and watched him fly away. Some of them seemed excited to have seen a real life superhero. While the others tried to act professional and continued about their business, but still looked back up as Alex flew further away.

Hank arrived in Manhattan, getting slowed by the traffic. He predicted this, so he took advantage of it to read the radiation detector correctly. He had plenty of time to follow it precisely. He followed down several busy roads, the ones that seemed to be most popular, but then again it was Manhattan and every road was busy.

The signal that the device was receiving was getting stronger. Hank looked around in the area to look for anything that stood out. He drove past several tall, busy buildings. There were also tons of busy businesses that he passed up, but the signal was still getting stronger; he hadn't reached the radiation's strongest point yet. It led him down onto a different road and he found that there were only a few tall buildings on this road.

Suddenly the signal spiked as he drove past a tall, vacant building. As he went past it the signal decreased so he knew that it was coming from that building. Hank couldn't just easily stop, so he had to take another street and he ended up parking by the back of the building. He looked at the radiation detector and saw that it had went back up. He got out of his car, bringing the detector and his paper and pen with him.

He walked towards the building, getting a little nervous. He told himself that he had no need to get nervous, because if the radiation was dangerous, it would've infected people in Manhattan and make them ... ill, sick, or dead. Hank exhaled and walked onto the steps. He put his hand on the door knob of the back door. He turned it, but it didn't budge; it was locked.

Hank looked in through the windows, there was definitely no one in here; the place was totally dark and empty. One thing he noticed was that there was a very long hallway, and very many doors. He tried to fig-

ure out how to open it, and then wondered if he could get in through the front door. He walked around the building, seeing very few windows. The windows that were on the side of the building were very dusty and tinted. Hank tried to see through them, but couldn't.

After walked around to the front, Hank tried to the door. He noticed that it had the writing on the front of the building: *Creative Works*. He wondered what kind of business this used to be. He turned the knob and it opened. He was kind of surprised that it was left unlocked. Then he wasn't so surprised, because he saw how the building was trashed. There were holes in walls, but something about the holes seemed peculiar to Hank.

Hank walked up to one of the holes and saw that it was about six feet tall. The hole looked as wide as a human would fit in through. He was puzzled to see that it seemed to be made by a human, which didn't make much sense to him. He tested the walls to see how hard it was by tapping it; they were pretty sturdy, but there was no way to break through them. He stepped through the hole and noticed that there was another hold on the wall to his right, the same exact size as the previous one.

Stepping through that hole in the wall, Hank realized that there were quite of few more holes that followed. A couple of the holes looked bigger than the first ones. Maybe those ones were created by something bigger. But all of the holes in the wall seemed ... unnatural. Then Hank remembered why he was here and looked down at his radiation detector. It was reading a very high exposure to radiation, but he wasn't at the strongest point. He had to find the origin of the radiation.

It seemed that he was starting to reach the center of the building as the radiation started to get stronger. His heart rate was increasing, and he wasn't sure if he was nervous, or excited ... or both. Finally he seemed to have found the strongest point of the radiation. He was standing in the hallway and had two doors on either side of him. He tried the door on his

left, opening it. He stepped into the room and saw a chair in the center, with chains around it. He looked around the whole room, finding nothing. There was nothing but the chair in the room. Hank walked out of the room and opened the door of the room across from it.

In this room he knew right away that it was coming from this one. Sort of in the center of the room was a pile of smoking ash. Directly above the ash was a hole in the roof. He walked towards the ash, noticing traces of metal and saw small metal shards. He looked up at the hole in the roof, realizing that someone the ash fell through the roof. It would seem likely that whatever it was before, it was some sort of metal ... something, and that it deteriorated and rotting the roof and fell through. Now it was sitting on concrete so the floor was stable.

The radiation detector was giving a steady flat reading. This was definitely the source of the radiation. Hank looked at the ash closely, and he noticed that some sort of gas was emitting from it. It sort of seemed like steam, but that would have meant that it recently deteriorated. Hank looked up at the hole and noticed that it had already weathered, so he knew that this didn't just happen. But ... he couldn't figure out why it was still smoking.

He slowly edged closer to the ash, one step after another. He dared himself to touch it, feeling it in his fingers. It felt exactly as it looked, like metal shards. He inhaled and felt suddenly dizzy, realizing that he just breathed in the gas. He took several steps back, stumbling. He lost his balance and fall down, landing on his hands and behind. He looked around and saw that he vision was blurry and he was seeing stars. A few seconds later his vision cleared and he could see just fine. He looked at the pile of ash and metal shards.

Suddenly he felt very weak and tired. He felt himself nodding his head off, but was trying to keep awake. He was panicking; knowing that he had just became infected to the radiation and did not want to suddenly die. He knew that the radiation was in the air and realized now that he

wasn't truly infected with it until now. It must've been that you must've needed high amounts of it, which he got just now by breathing it in. He tried to stay awake. He shook his head as he nodded off. He jumped to his feet to try waking himself up, but there was no point. He fell face first towards the floor, but couldn't catch his fall and passed out.

Alex dived towards the ground, folding his wings in. At the last second, he threw his wings out and slowed his fall and landed softly. He was in the backyard of Mark's house, inside the fences. It seemed that no one saw him fly down. All of them always made sure that they would be unnoticed.

Alex walked up to the back porch and into the house. Rachel, Bruce, Mara, Nick, and Brandon were all in the living room waiting for Alex. The TV was on the news and they were still watching the news reporter about the speeder. It showed what they could of Alex, wearing his hoodie and they zoomed on his wings. They were calling him a mysterious hero. Everyone noticed Alex's presence and looked at him. It was like they expected him to say something.

"I uh ..." Alex started and walked into the living room. "I stopped him." He sat down on the couch and looked at Bruce.

Bruce was smiling. Then he started nodding. "Good job ... we saw it live on the news. It looked like the speeder was about to run into you, so he slowed down, but you ran out of the way just in time. Obviously you can think fast."

"Yeah," Alex said. He paused. "You know, sure enough they asked what my name was ... all I could tell him was that we were working on it." Alex paused for another second. "We need to get working on some names for ourselves right away."

"And we are. I already have one for myself and I already made a symbol and put it on my jacket."

"I know, but the rest of us need some."

"I kind of have one right now;" Nick said, "Vortex. It seems like a good name for now, but I'm still not sure if it should be a definite name."

"It's seems to fit right and it sounds cool," Bruce said, and Nick nodded in agreement. "Maybe we could add a vortex into your symbol and use a letter V."

"Yeah, I guess." Nick scratched his head, thinking about how it would look.

"We were thinking about you name," Mara said. "Soon ... I mean ... uh recently, you got fire power; ... pyrokinesis," Mara said slowly, making sure to articulate. "Maybe you have superhero name that mean both fire and speed."

Alex stroked his chin, while giving a small nod. "Yeah," Alex agreed. "Maybe ... let's see ... brisk, no ... breeze, no that's cold ... um ... this is hard." He paused. "What other words can you use for fire and speed?"

"Maybe you could use a thesaurus," Brandon suggested.

"Great idea," Bruce agreed.

Bruce and Alex got up at the same time, but Alex was already walking to the bookshelf, so Bruce sat back down, putting his arm around Mara.

Harrison, NY

By now, Richard had a full beard. He hadn't shaved in days, nor had he ate. Richard sat down on the couch in his living room, drinking beer. He was feeling horrible. For the past few days this was all he did.

He thought that he would feel relieved after avenging his parents, but now he wasn't. He felt so guilty, and he felt as if it was like he killed a random person rather than his parents' killer. He wished he felt relief,

but he felt so guilty. He thought about what Ashley had said; that Clarence and her were desperate. That needed money, so Clarence mugged his parents and killed them. He tried to bring back that hatred that he once had. Richard tried to remember back when his parents were killed, they were mugged, by Clarence. Clarence had taken them away from him. Richard tried to bring the hatred back, and then he saw the knife going into Clarence and all of the guilt came back to him.

He sighed and took another drink from his beer. He set it back down hard on the armrest of the couch, making it splash a little. He threw his face into his palm, stroking his forehead between his eyes. He rested his chin in his hand. He shook his head, so angry with himself.

He got up to his feet and took a step and went to take another, but his other leg didn't keep up with him and he tripped. He groaned and slowly got up to his feet, grabbing the couch. Suddenly he was started by a banging on the door. Then someone yelled.

“Police! Open up!!”

Richard got right to his feet. He thought to himself. Did he want to turn himself in? He felt so miserable; would this make himself feel better? The police banged on the door again and yelled another time. Richard wasn't sure what he wanted, but he knew that he wanted to stop feeling miserable.

Suddenly the police barged through the door, holding their weapons up at Richard. There were about four of them.

“Put your hands in the air!” they yelled. “Richard Ruth! You're under arrest for the murder of Clarence and Ashley Chilton!”

Richard just stood there, unsure of what he wanted. The police slowly walked closer. Richard stood still, looking drunk, but not scared.

“Put your hands up!” they yelled again.

A cop pulled out his Taser and shot Richard. The electric dart hit his chest, but nothing happened. The cop looked surprised that Richard wasn't shaking or showing any clues of being electrocuted. Richard had shocked himself, but he couldn't get shocked by something else.

Slowly Richard raised his hands up, deciding whether to shock the police or not. He had seconds to decide, and he could already feel the buzzing in his hands. Just then his hands electrified, but he didn't shoot any bolts at any of the officers.

The officers looked puzzled that the Taser dart finally started working, but realized that his hand was producing electricity and he wasn't shaking. They looked surprised to see that a ball of electricity was being created in both of Richard's hands.

Richard wasn't sure if he wanted to do this. Suddenly he was feeling angry. He concentrated on the feeling and realized that he was angry with himself, not the cops. His guilty feeling came back to him; he had killed two people.

"Put your hands on your head!" an officer yelled.

Richard slowly raised his hands to his head, still electrifying. He placed his hands on top of his head and electrocuted himself and knocked himself out. He fell forward, his body limp. An officer caught him and then cuffed him. He pulled Richard to his feet, but Richard couldn't keep himself up, he was out.

"He's ... out of it," the officer said. He coughed, turning his head away. "Wow! He reeks of alcohol; no wonder he's out."

"Let's take him to the station."

Richard woke up in a holding cell, sat up and looked around. He was pretty much the only person in any of these cells, because these cells were for criminals who weren't transferred to another penitentiary. There was one other person, a man. He was in a few cells down, across from the hallway in between the cells.

The man looked angry and kept mumbling something to himself. Richard wanted to feel like that man, but instead the guilt of killing two people came back to him. He sat up and felt dizzy. He coughed and could smell the smell of beer in his breath. He was hoping that he would feel better here than he did at home, moping.

Just then two guards and a man in a suit walked up to his cell. "Hello, Richard," the man in the suit said. "I am Detective Mullins. I would like for you to come with me. I need to ask you a few questions."

Richard got up to his feet, but slowly feeling drunk. One of the guards was getting ready to unlock the cell.

"I would love..." Richard started to say, "to ... talk, but ... I don't know if now's a good time. I feel ... really drunk."

"Really?" the detective raised a finger in front of Richards face, in front of the cell bars. "Look at my finger." Detective Mullins waved his finger back and forth and watched Richard's eyes as they slowly tracked his finger. "Okay ... you're right; you're drunk." He paused. "I'll give you a couple hours, and then we'll talk."

Richard gave a weak smile and then dropped it, feeling upset. He turned and sat back down. The detective and the guards started walking away.

“Do you need a confession?” Richard asked and the detective stopped and turned around, but didn’t say anything. “I did it. I killed them.”

“Hmm,” the detective said. “I guess that makes things easier ... but maybe you could tell me more later; I need the whole story, even though all of the evidence points at you.”

Richard nodded, making himself feel dizzier. “Yeah, okay.” Richard sighed, feeling miserable. He thought that if he would just admit to killing them that he'd feel better, but he still felt horrible. “Someone please kill me,” he mumbled to himself.

“What?” the detective asked, not sure if he heard that right, looking at Richard. He walked up to Richard’s cell.

Richard raised his hands. They were already buzzing with electricity, sparking. A few bolts jumped to the metal bars of the cell. The detective looked dumbfounded with what he was seeing, and the guards looked even more stunned. Richard increased the electricity and brought his hands up to his head. The electricity jumped from both of his hands, going through his head.

Richard suddenly shook, and the electricity stopped in his hands. He looked pale all of the sudden and his eyes looked blank. His body became slumped and he fell forward, hitting the floor without catching himself.

“What just happened?” Detective Mullins asked himself. “Open it up!” he told one of the guards.

A guard stumbled for the key and took a second to grab the right one. He stuck it in the keyhole and turned it, unlocking it. He opened the door of the cell and Mullins walked in. He bent down to his knees and laid a hand on Richard’s neck, checking for a pulse. At first he didn’t feel anything, but then he felt a very weak and slow pulse.

“He's still alive,” Detective Mullins said. “He just knocked himself out ... with that electricity ... without using ... any sort of ... Taser or something.”

Creative Works; Manhattan, NY

Hank woke up, and immediately got to his feet, backing up. Then he realized that he had just been passed out. He was trying to distance himself from the pile of metal shards directly under the hole in the roof, but he realized that it didn't matter, because whatever radiation that it put off had already infected him.

The device that read the radiation was beeping rapidly and has been all the time that he was passed out. He bent down and picked it up and turned it off. He figured that since he was already infected that he better get right to studying it, before he died. Hank pushed that thought aside.

He couldn't be dying, because the radiation had already infected most of everyone in New York. They would've been dead already ... but he did get a high dose of it than everyone else. It emitted its radiation into the air, but he hadn't gotten infected until now.

Hank grabbed his briefcase and pulled out a container to use for evidence. He walked up to the pile of metal shards and knelt down next to it. He paused for a second before scooping some of the metal shards into the container with his hands, figuring that he had nothing to lose because he was already infected. His hand felt like it was buzzing with energy from the shards.

He set the container down, putting the lid on top of it and then he set his hand on the pile of metal shards. The metal felt warm, but it wasn't like heat. It was like the feeling of warmth from electricity.

Suddenly, Hank heard something melting. He looked down at his container and saw that the metal shards was eating away the container, melting it. Within a few more seconds the container totally disintegrated and the metal touched the concrete floor. The metal shards couldn't do anything to the concrete floor, though.

Hank looked back up at the hole in the roof. Whatever this pile of metal shards used to be, it was sitting on the roof. But then it disintegrated into shards and eroded the roof and fell onto the floor. Hank imagined that it was some sort of machine once before, but had no idea what it did. Whatever it did, it emitted radiation.

Hank didn't have any other container that he could take a sample with; otherwise they would disintegrate too. He looked around the room and saw a metal hollow pipe with two bends in it. He could use that to carry some of the shards. He grabbed the pipe and scooped metal shards into the metal pipe. He waited for anything to happen to the pipe, but it stood intact. Hank was just going to have to keep the pipe held upright so that he didn't dump any of the metal shards out.

“Umm ... director,” an agent said.

The director of the FBI in this agency walked up to the agent. The agent was pointing at the computer screen in front of him. On it were the cameras of Creative Works. He was pointing at one of the video footages of a room that had a pile of metal shards in it, and a man in there, holding a metal pipe.

“Who is that?” the director asked the agent. “Have you seen him in any other video footage?”

“No I haven’t. This guy is new.”

“What's he doing?”

“It seems like ... he's grabbing some of ... whatever’s in that pile.” The agent paused. “Should we send someone in after him?”

“And do what?”

“Umm ... arrest him?”

“For what? Trespassing a vacant building?” The director looked at the man. He watched as he grabbed a briefcase and the metal pipe and walked out of the room. “No, don’t arrest him. Hmm ... maybe we could just bring him in for questioning. Find out what he was doing there.” The director thought more about what he saw. “He seems like some sort of scientist, you know, by the way he was studying that pile of metal shards.”

“Oh, that’s what that pile is.”

The director considered his options. "Okay, send someone to just follow him; keep an eye on him. Let's not question him yet. Maybe we can learn something from him."

"Okay," the agent said, getting up. He got up and walked towards a group of field agents. He started discussing it with them. They looked at the computer screen to see what the man looked like and they took off to follow him.

The director studied the man a bit more. He wondered what this man had to do with Intex. He had found out much about Intex already, but had only learned about some of his "creations" and one of his workers named Bryan. But this guy looked like he was studying what he first discovered; he didn't look like anyone who knew what he was doing there, he looked like he didn't know where anything was in the building; he didn't work for Intex. He was a scientist, and he had just discovered something from the pile of metal shards.

The agent got back to the computer and sat down, seeing that the director was still looking at the screen. "Take it back to when he first walked into the room," the director told him. The agent rewound the video, showing the man falling back asleep and waking up and stepping backwards to the entrance of the room, and then the agent played it. The man walked through the room, holding a device. There was a meter on the device and it was spiked up. The director was guessing that it came from the pile of metal shards. The man looked up at the ceiling. He walked towards the pile and touched it. The man took several steps back, and then fall down, landing on his hands and behind. The man looked and then at the pile. The man suddenly shook his head as if he was nodding off. He jumped to his feet to try waking himself up, but then fell face first onto the floor.

"Hmm," the director said. "Whatever that stuff is; it made him pass out, but ... he knew something about it. He had a device that was reading it. That's why he went there; he was reading it." He paused.

“Let's see if we can find out anything about what the pile is.” The agent nodded.

Manhattan, NY

I woke up the next morning in my bed, thankfully. I had gotten home late last night from a hard day of work. I had never lifted so much dry wall in my life. Not that it was too heavy, but it was exhausted, hauling it back and forth. I worked overtime, even though I didn't want to, but I needed the money, because we were so hard up; after all we are living in New York City, and yet somehow I had to still pay back my boss for the money for the plane tickets we used for Ireland.

I looked over for Rachel, but she had already gotten out of bed. She was more of a morning person than me. Lately she hadn't waited for me in bed; she had helped Alex with breakfast or something. I wondered why she didn't stay until I woke up. I didn't wake up too late.

I jumped out of bed, expecting to feel sore, but instead I felt refreshed. I got a good night's sleep, but I didn't have any pains that I should have been having after the work I did yesterday. I had my accelerated healing to thank for that, which has been working better than just accelerated healing lately.

I walked into the bathroom and cleaned up a little bit. I got dressed and I headed out into the living room. Rachel was sitting on the couch, waiting for me. She had a seat open next to her and she was watching the news on TV. Rachel saw me and smiled, patting the seat next to her for me to sit down. I smiled back and gladly took the seat, sitting down and putting my arm around her.

“Have a good sleep?” Rachel asked me, taking her eyes off of the TV.

“Yeah, I did,” I replied. “Thank you.”

“Hard day yesterday?”

“Yup, but I feel great. I don’t have any sore pains from it.”

“That’s because you have that healing power.”

“Yeah. It’s awesome. So ... have you guys thought of any name for you?”

“Bruce and Mara have been trying to think of something for me, but we can't think of anything good for right now.” Rachel looked at Mara who was sitting alone; Bruce worked today, despite it being a Saturday. He alternated between Saturday and Thursday, also working on Tuesday. “But I have been thinking ... you are thinking about the name Avian ... and since you're the leader, you're naming the team after you: The Avians. Well, since you and I are ... together, I was thinking about having a similar name to yours; something to do with avian, birds, and wings.”

“Hmm,” I nodded. “Sounds like an idea.” I paused. “So a name that is similar to Avian ... definitely not bird.” Rachel gave a soft chuckle. “How about a type of bird, or a name of a bird? Hmm ... what about a dove?”

“Well ... maybe. What about something to do with wings?”

“With your wings?”

“Well, whatever. I mean we all have the same kind of wings; they are all white.”

“Yeah, like an angel.” I sighed and stroke Rachel’s hair. I leaned forward to kiss her.

Suddenly she pulled back. “That’s it!” Rachel exclaimed.

“What?”

“Angel.”

“Huh?”

“That could be my superhero name; Angel.”

“Angel?”

“Yeah, why not? You're Avian and I could be Angel.”

I nodded and smiled. “It fits perfectly,” I said. “Now ... where were we?” Rachel leaned towards me and I put her hair back behind her ear. I rested my hand softly on her cheek. Our lips touched and we started kissing. Suddenly, I felt so calm, like nothing else mattered. Rachel was like an angel to me; my angel. As we kissed, she made me feel so relaxed.

I already miss Bruce.

I jerked back. “What you say?” I asked, but I realized that I wasn't asking Rachel, she was kissing me, and she couldn't have said anything.

“I didn't say anything,” Rachel said, and chuckled. “Silly, I can't talk and kiss at the same time.” She paused and tilted her head. “Did you read my mind, perhaps?”

Then I understood. I turned my head and looked at Mara. She was looking at us and turned away to stare at the wall. I realized that I had just read her mind. She was looking at us kissing and thought of Bruce.

“Never mind.” I said.

We leaned closer to each other and started to kiss again ... but we were interrupted by the sound of someone clearing his throat. Rachel and I stopped kissing, opened our eyes and separated. I turned my head to see a tray of food being handed to me by Alex. I shifted my body and grabbed the tray of food from Alex.

“Thank you,” I told him and he took off.

I looked at Rachel and she smiled. “Well ... you gotta to start your day sometime.”

“Well, I thought that I was starting it.”

I started eating my food, which were pancakes, bacon, sausage links, scrambled eggs and toast with jam. It was a great breakfast. Alex had given me three pancakes, four slices of bacon, three sausages and a pile of scrambled eggs. I ate it all up, enjoying it all.

Alex came back to me and took my plates and tray from me. He ran into the kitchen and set them in the sink and came back in a heartbeat with orange juice for me.

“Thank you,” I told Alex, taking the juice. I took a sip. “Why are you being so nice?”

Alex smiled and looked at his feet then back at me. “Well, I wanted to thank you for holding this roof over our heads and for being a good leader.”

Rachel looked at Alex and back at me, and I looked at her. She smiled at me. “Alex’s meeting someone today.”

“Oh,” I said. “You're meeting someone? Who?”

Alex smiled. “I already met her. I met her at a park and I have already been to her house on Thursday and I'm going there again today.”

I smiled back at Alex. “Where’d you meet?”

“At the park.”

“Is she nice?”

“Oh yeah, she's very nice and ... sweet and so ...” Alex trailed off.

“What?”

“Hot.”

I shook my head. I felt happy for Alex. I was about to say something more, but Rachel caught my attention. She suddenly jerked her head towards the TV. The news was on and it was showing a live report. I saw cops with their cop cars surrounding a building. The building was a bank and they all were knelt behind their cop doors, with their weapons drawn. Inside the bank were three robbers. It was a bank robbery in the works.

I jumped to my feet. I ran to my room and grabbed my jacket and came back. I looked at my jacket and saw that I had no symbol on it. Rachel looked at me and I looked at my jacket then at Mara.

“Where the crayons?” I asked her quickly.

She pointed at the table in front of her. She had her notebook and crayons there on the table. I laid my jacket out on the table. I grabbed a light blue crayon with a mix of green in it and used it to draw the letter A onto the jacket. I darkened it as good as I could, put the crayon down and put on my jacket.

“Mark,” Rachel said. “It’s in Rextonian.” She was pointing at my jacket.

I looked down at my jacket at the symbol that I had just drawn. I realized that the letter A that I just drew was indeed in Rextonian. I shrugged my shoulders. “I think it looks cool.” Rachel nodded, agreeing.

“Okay,” I said. “I’m going to go to that bank and try to bring down these robbers. Who’s with me?” I looked around. Rachel, Nick, Alex, Grace, Mara, and Brandon were all home. Nick and Brandon stepped forward. They looked at each other, feeling a little awkward stepping forward at the same time. “Okay you both come.”

Nick and Brandon ran to their rooms and came back with their jackets. Brandon put his jacket on, but Nick didn’t. Nick runs to the table

and sets down his jacket. He grabs a purple crayon and draws the letter V on it, darkening it as much as possible.

“What about me?” Brandon asked. “I don’t have a name yet.”

“If they ask, we just tell them that we are working on it,” I said. “Now let's go!”

Nick threw on his jacket and the three of us ran out of the door, closing it behind us. Nick spread his wings out and I cringed, looking around to make sure that no one was looking. After all we had a small yard and all of the houses were close together, but no one was looking at the moment. Nick jumped into the air and started flying towards the bank. I grabbed Brandon around the chest and flew straight into the air, lifting with my feet and getting a much faster start than Nick. I had the power of flight whereas Nick had to use wings, so he had to work to fly, so I definitely could get a better start.

While we were in the air I got Nick’s attention. “Nick, next time, before you go off to save someone, be sure that no one is looking when you spread your wings,” I told him.

“Oops, sorry,” Nick replied, realizing that he wasn’t even thinking about that.

Within seconds we made it to the bank, since we were not that far away. We were right over top of it.

“Let's drop down on top of it,” Brandon said.

I looked down at the roof of the bank. There were a few windows on the ceilings, made to bring in sunlight. “Good idea,” I said. “Alright, let's do it.”

I let myself fall, headed towards one of the windows. “Brace for impact,” I quickly told Brandon. Nick was right behind me, tucking his wings in, falling. We had already put our hoods up.

My feet hit the window and it shattered immediately. I went through and Nick followed, breaking through another window. We landed on the floor at the same time as the glass. Everyone panicked shielding their eyes. The robbers raised their weapons at us, after shielding their faces.

I let go of Brandon and he stood on his own. He looked nervous, afraid that he could get shot, because he couldn't heal like me. So I stood a little closer, standing in the line of fire so Brandon wouldn't get shot.

"Stop!!" one of the robbers exclaimed. "Who are you?!"

I smiled. "My name is Avian," I said, trying to make my voice sound deep and broad.

"Avian," he mumbled to himself.

"Please, put the weapon down." I raised my hands, trying to calm him. The robbers looked up at the broken windows and at Nick's wings. They were nervous, scared, and dumbfounded at Nick's wings, but were also trying to be focused at their task at hand, or ... crime.

I took a step forward and all I heard next was a bang. The guy shot. Suddenly I felt a sharp pain in my chest and saw smoke coming from the barrel of the nearest robber's gun. I grunted and looked down at my chest. There was a hole in my jacket and blood was coming out of my chest. I resisted the temptation to grab my chest to relieve the pain, and instead I just waited and the pain eased as the wound healed within three seconds more. The bullet popped out of my chest, since it was foreign to my body, it rejected it and healed up my wound. I sighed, feeling much better now.

Everyone in the room, even Nick and Brandon, had their eyes wide open. Some had their jaws dropped. At first, everyone was stunned by how we crashed in through the roof, next they were by the sight of Nick's wings, and now they were surprised to see that I healed from the bullet wound within seconds.

“Ouch,” I said. “That hurt.”

The robber that shot me was suddenly frightened. I stepped forward one more step. "Please, set down your weapons," I tried telling the robbers. "All of you."

"Yes," Nick added. "Let's bring an end to this agony."

One of the robbers eyed Nick, not showing the same nervousness. Nick took a few steps forwards and he shot Nick in the chest, right where I was shot. I gasped, not sure if Nick could heal from that. Nick grunted and fell to his knees. He already had blood dropping onto the floor. I noticed movement outside and saw cops panicking. Yeah ... shots were fired, cops.

Suddenly, Brandon transformed into his werewolf form. I got a flash of Blade, because I haven't seen him like this ever since then. But he didn't look at evil as he used to, but he still looked fierce, like a werewolf should. Suddenly, he was already running past the first two robbers and was already to the one furthest away. He quickly grabbed the gun from him and bent it in his hands and threw it across the floor.

The two robbers closest to me spun as Brandon ran past, getting their weapons ready. They looked like they were just about to shoot Brandon.

"Hey!" I yelled at them, running towards them.

I ran up to the robber closest to me and I kicked the gun out of his hand and punched him in the nose. I moved so quickly that he didn't have any time to react. Within another second I had knocked him out.

Suddenly Nick ran past me and jumped over a chair and landed in front of the other robber. He had healed from the bullet wound, thank-

fully. He was about to throw a punch, but the robber handed him the gun and held up his hands. Nick looked at Brandon and bent the gun in half and threw it on the floor. He had replicated Brandon's strength.

Brandon grabbed the robber at his side by the arm and took him to the center of the floor here in the lobby. I dragged the robber that I knocked out next to him. The robber that Brandon took down knelt down and put his hands on his head. The robber that Nick took down walked up to the other two and knelt down, putting his hands on his head.

"You are all okay now," I told all of the hostages.

Everyone started to get up, looking relieved. Some of them were crying. They all looked frightened and thankfully. Suddenly the doors were thrown open and the cops barged in. They looked at the robbers in the middle of the room and then at the three of us. They held their weapons up at us; there were open seven of them that barged in and more followed.

Suddenly, the hostages all got to the feet and cheered at us, clapping. They were cheering and crying tears of joy. Many of them were thanking us. The cops looked at each other, knowing what just happened. They had seen most of it from outside, but now they were fitting the rest of it together. One of the cops put his gun down and back in his holster. He gestured for the cops to do the same. Slowly, one after another the cops lowered their weapons.

We stepped away from the robbers and towards the police just a few steps. The cheering and clapping slowly died off. Some of the hostages quickly ran out of the bank, terrified that something else would happen if they stayed in here any longer. The cops walked up to us slowly.

"You ..." one cop began. "You guys stopped them."

"You guys ... have ..." one cop started and he was looking at Nick's wings and at Brandon's werewolf form.

“Powers?” I finished his thought.

“Yeah.”

“Yeah ... we do.”

“Who are you?” another cop asked.

“For now ...” I started and looked back and forth between Brandon and Nick. Brandon was transforming back into his normal form. “We are The Avians. I am Avian.”

“And I'm Vortex,” Nick said.

The cops looked at Brandon. “I'm still working on my name,” Brandon said.

“For whatever threat or crime may arise, we will try to be here to stop it,” I said. “That’s what we are here for.”

“So ... you're superheroes?” one cop asked.

“You’re sure right we’re superheroes!” Nick exclaimed, smiling.

“Well!” I exclaimed. “I don’t want to hold you guys off any longer, so we better be going.”

The cops nodded, even though they look like they still wanted us there. Some of the cops looked like they didn’t want us to leave, because they wanted to keep us here to investigate, but the matter has already been resolved; we stopped the robbers from robbing the bank.

Nick flapped his wings and jumped up, flapping harder lifting into the air. He got up to the window and tucked his wings in at the last second and soared through, flying away. I grabbed Brandon around the chest and I shot straight up into the air, right through the window, flying off faster than Nick did. I loved my power of flight ... no wings. Not that there was anything wrong with wings, it’s just that I had a stronger liftoff.

Nick, Brandon and I flew away from the bank, while watching it get smaller as we got further away. The cops, the remaining hostages in the bank, and everyone outside watched us fly off. The people outside were still watching us fly. There was a news team outside, zooming in their camera on us.

“Whoa!” Brandon said, groaning. “Next time, Mark ...” he started, allowing himself to breath, taking deep breaths. “Please consider a slow takeoff speed. That ... was a little too fast.”

Oh,” I said, “sorry.” I chuckled.

“Are you guys alright?” Rachel exclaimed as soon as we made it through the door. We had just maneuvered our way around the city, to confuse people to where we were going. When we lost sight of everyone, we landed in our backyard and went into our house.

I looked down at my chest, knowing what Rachel was referring to. “Rachel,” I said. “I’m sorry I didn’t mean to scare you, but I’m fine. I healed from the bullet wound.”

Rachel embraced her arms around me, giving me a nice big hug. Nick and Brandon walked past me, smiling. They were excited and felt good about what we had just done.

“I’m glad you’re okay,” Rachel said.

“Of course I’m okay.”

We released ourselves and Rachel gave me a long kiss, and I kissed her back. Once we were done, we walked into the living room. The TV was still on and the news was on, summing up the report of ... us and the bank robbers that we stopped. The reporters just got through with interviewing the cops. They explained how we were called The Avians, and our names were Avian, Vortex, and the wolf man guy was still working on a name.

Brandon sighed, feeling a little upset about that remark. “I definitely need to start thinking of a name.”

I nodded and looked at all of us around. We were all here, gathered in the living room, except for Bruce. “Guys,” I said and I easily got everyone’s attention. Everyone was excited. “We need to be more aware of what’s happening here in New York. There’s a high crime rate here and

we have to step it up and start looking out, to get ready to save people and protect people.” They all nodded.

“So, we are going to need to have names,” Alex said.

“And suits,” Mara added. She was holding her notebook that had her designs and brainstorming in.

“Yes,” I said. “We need to become a team ... and need to get well known by New York so that criminals become aware of us and maybe they’ll back down. We need to give people hope.”

“Let’s get to it!” Brandon exclaimed. “Let’s start inventing names, and designing suits!”

Everyone sat down on the couch, getting as close to Mara as she allowed. They were already trying to think of good names to use. I looked at Mara and could tell that she looked a little sad. I concentrated on her and read her thoughts. *Oh, how I wish Bruce were here*, she thought. Her English was getting better, because she was thinking in English now. *I can’t do this without him*. I smiled, understanding how she felt.

Alex laughed and pointed at me.

“What?” I asked.

“You’re going to need a new jacket!” Alex exclaimed and we all laughed with him. I looked down at my jacket and saw the hole in it. I also had blood stained. I had to get washed up, as well as Nick. He had a bullet hole in his jacket too.

Mount Vernon, NY

Hank drove back to his lab, feeling better now. He was nervous and excited at the same time. He was ready to research this radiation or virus.

Government cars parked behind him a few houses down. One of the agents quickly got out of the car and started walking his direction. He was wearing something inconspicuous, so he would draw attention. Hank just opened the door of his car and started to step out. The agent had a small bug in his hand, ready to attach it to Hank.

Hank step out of his car and closed the door behind him. He was already walking towards his house, but the agent walked into him, putting the bug on Hank's neck, brushing his hand down his shoulder.

"Sorry, excuse me," the agent said, trying to pretend that he was walking and didn't see Hank coming.

"No problem," Hank said, watching him walk away. Hank shrugged it off and walked into his house.

Did you plant the bug? The agent in the car asked the other agent through the earpiece. The agent stopped and turned around and nodded to the agent. "It's planted," he replied, and he started walking back towards the car.

Hank entered his house and outside, the agents could hear and kind of see what Hank was doing. The bug was put on his neck, which was untraceable and practically invisible. It was so small and stuck to human skin. The agents had a laptop in their car and where watching Hank's every move.

Hank set some of his stuff down and he immediately took the sample bag of the metal shards into his lab. He didn't bother to put on his science coat and just powered up the microscope. He grabbed a small microscope plate and he opened the bag of metal shards. He poured a couple shards onto the plate and set it on the microscope.

He looked into the microscope right away and gasped at what he was seeing. Something was alive in the metal shards. It looked like a living organism. Whatever it was, it was something that Hank has never seen before. He studied it a bit more and determined that it was categorized

between a virus and a parasite, but ... the organism's goal didn't seem to make its victims sick or die. It was something else. The organism seemed to emit some sort of gas from it. It looked like the same gas that made it look like the pile of metal shards was steaming. Hank began studying it for the rest of the day.

Manhattan, NY

New York City was crowded ... as always. Alex had just texted Andrea to see if he could stop by, and she said yes. Alex was walking on his way, thinking about how he could get there quicker, but it would be risky and would involve flying, but he decided against it. He couldn't reveal his secret to everyone, especially the public. He realized that he hadn't even told anyone in the team about telling Andrea his secret.

Alex walked up a street that had houses so close together. You would think that it would be hard to find the right house, but Alex had the number memorized. It wouldn't be long and he would know exactly where it was.

As he was walking up to her house, he got to thinking about how she could afford to live alone. He walked up the steps of her house and was about to press the doorbell, but Andrea opened the door.

Andrea smiled and Alex stopped himself from pressing the doorbell, and smiled back.

"Come on in," Andrea said, waving a hand.

Alex gladly walked inside, smelling a nice scent. Alex suddenly was drawn to the kitchen and the living room, which were the only rooms that he could see; so he was drawn to everything. There were no lights on, just candles. Candles lit, placed everywhere. Alex's smile grew wider. Everything smelled of apple cinnamon.

"Wow," Alex said, practically speechless. "This is nice."

Andrea smiled. "I'm glad you think so."

Alex then discovered another scent, it was pumpkin. Alex breathed in through his nostrils. “Wow, it smells really nice ... do you have pumpkin baking?”

“Yeah,” Andrea replied. “I’m baking pumpkin pie. I threw it in the oven as soon as you texted me.”

Alex couldn’t smile any bigger.

Andrea looked at him and smiled back. She waved him over to the couches in the living room. “Come, sit.”

Alex walked around the couches and sat down next to her, again they sat on the love seat.

“I was thinking,” Andrea began. “It was funny how we met ... but I’m glad we did.” Andrea paused.

“Me too,” Alex said.

“I like you Alex, you’re ... so nice and funny ... and handsome.” Alex gave a nervous chuckle and blushed. “You really think so?”

“Of course!”

“Well ... I think you’re ... hot.”

Andrea blushed and Alex laughed. “Thanks,” Andrea said.

“So ...” Alex said. “I was wondering ... how is it they you can afford to live here?”

Andrea’s smile faded just a little. “Well ... it’s kind of a long story, but I’ll tell you anyway. I used to live with both of my parents ... here in this house, that’s why I have two bedrooms ... and one bathroom. But my parents weren’t good with each other. They would always argue and I hated it. My dad would always seem to act like he knew what he was talking about and acted like he was never wrong. I ... I came to side with my mom, so I didn’t always support my father. Later my parents got di-

vorced; that was about five years ago. About three years ago, my mom had suddenly got breast cancer and she died about seven months later ... we had discovered it too late.”

“I'm so sorry,” Alex told her, and he put his arm around her.

“So ... I was left home alone. My father visited me for the while that time mom had died. But we still didn't get along, so he went back to his home. But he must still love me, or he must feel that he owes it to me, because he sends me some money every month, plus I have a job at a barber shop about four times a week. It's a different schedule every week though.”

Alex nodded. “Well ... I don't know what to say ... but you have it rough.”

“Yeah, but you don't have to feel sorry for me, Alex. I've made some friends and I get out enough to keep myself busy. And now I have met you ... so things are going good now.”

“Okay ... that's good.”

“Yup.”

Alex and Andrea turn their heads at the same time, meeting eye to eye. They couldn't look away. Andrea's eyes were watery from just telling her story. She blinked and a small tear rolled down her cheek. She sniffed. Alex reached his hand out and wiped the tear off of her cheek. They leaned closer together and Alex stroked her hair. They leaned closer and closed their eyes as they kissed.

They kissed for about ten seconds and then an alarm went off, scaring them both. They both jumped and then laughed. Andrea slowly backed away from Alex, smiling.

“That's the pie,” Andrea said.

“Well, we better go get it, before it burns,” Alex said, getting up with Andrea.

The two of them walked into the kitchen and Andrea put on oven mitts and opened the oven door. Just by taking a look at it, both Andrea and Alex knew that it was quite done yet.

“Nope, not done yet,” Andrea said and she looked at Alex, realizing that he already knew that. She closed the door and set the oven mitts on the top. “You know how to cook and bake well.”

“Yep.”

“I can tell.”

“We have things in common.”

“Yeah, that’s good.” Andrea reset the timer for the pie, setting it at six minutes. “So, Alex ... I know that you don’t like to talk about your family, but I want to know what they were like. I mean ... I’m sorry to ask, it’s just that I told you about mine.”

“No, it’s fine,” Alex said. “I’ll tell you.”

Nick took a stroll outside. Even though it was very busy in Manhattan and crowded, it was necessary for Nick in order to get out of Mark’s house; he had been in there for months without much time being outside. He decided to check out the city.

He was also prepared. Since New York was high in crime, Nick wanted to be ready on this walk. He brought his backpack with him and inside he had his hooded jacket that he had now put a letter *V* on. It stood for *Vortex*. He was sticking with that name, deciding that it best suited him.

Nick walked down several streets, getting bumped into by many people. He walked down onto another street, one less busy and he chose

to stick with this one. This time, people could prevent bumping into each other, because it was less crowded. Down this street, there were less buildings and stores. Some were the back of buildings which had its front on another street. He walked towards some taller buildings and found some allies. There was trash cluttered everywhere in these allies and there were dumpster right next to them, but no one bothered to clean it up.

“Hey!” someone yelled and Nick spun around.

Nick saw a man holding out a knife in someone’s face, pulling him into another alley across the street. Nick was about to run after him, but realized that he didn’t have his jacket on yet. He ran into the alley nearest to him and threw his backpack off. He quickly unzipped it and pulled out his hoodie and threw it on, zipped it up, and put the hood on.

He ran out of the alley, across the street and into the other alley. The man was holding the knife up to the other man still, threatening unless he gave him all of the money that he had. Nick ran up to the mugger, surprising him. He grabbed his wrist, the one holding the knife. Then he punched him in the face and shook his hand to make him drop the knife, but he wouldn’t.

The other man was about to run off, but stopped to see what Nick was going to do. The mugger fought with Nick, pushing Nick off of him. He still had his knife out and slashed the air in front of Nick. Nick backed up and kicked the man in the chest, knocking him into the wall of the building behind him in the alley. The man ran forward, towards Nick and slashed the knife at him again. Nick backed up and threw his arm up to block the blows.

Nick kicked the mugger again, wishing that he had Mark’s strength, but he was not around, so he couldn’t replicate his power, but maybe if he found something around him that he could copy. His power including more than copying people’s powers, but he had never used it

that way. Nick was stunned for a second after being hit in the face by the mugger. Suddenly the mugger stabbed Nick in the chest.

Nick gasped, so wishing that Mark was here, so that he could absorb his power of healing. The mugger pulled the knife out and starting running off, but Nick grabbed his wrist of his hand. Nick yanked him back, throwing the mugger to the ground. He was still in pain from just being stabbed. Nick could hardly breathe, the knife had gone into one of his lungs, but he was fighting it.

With all of the energy that he could harness, Nick kicked the mugger hard in the head, stunning him, but not knocking him out. The mugger rolled over and yelled in pain, grabbing his head. Nick unzipped his jacket and looked at his stab wound. He tried to see if there was anything that he could do about it. He had the power of vasokinesis, which meant that he could control blood and wounds. He concentrated on his chest and started creating a scab. He slowly sealed up the wound, until there was no trace of ever being stabbed, but he couldn't fix the hole in his lung, but no one watching knew that.

The mugger gasped at the sight of Nick's chest. Nick grabbed the mugger by his shirt collar and yanked him to his feet. Then he shoved him into the wall, temporary disabling him. The mugger fell to the ground, groaning.

The man who Nick saved was still standing there, watching in amazement. "Thank you," he said, looking at Nick's chest. "Are you ... alright?"

"I'm fine," Nick managed to say, trying to make his voice sound strong.

"Who are you?"

Nick forced a smile. "I'm Vortex, from the team called The Avians."

“Are you a superhero?”

“You bet I am.” Nick said, holding back the pain in his chest. He released his wings, unfurling them. “But I better be going.” Nick said and the guy nodded, backing up, admiring his wings.

Nick started flapping his wings and jumped up, taking off. Nick felt like he had to flap his wings even harder to keep flying. The hole in his lung was not helping. He flew off, away from everyone who was watching and towards Mark’s house. Nick was hoping that Mark didn’t leave home.

Nick was just a few houses away from Mark’s, but he couldn’t keep flapping his wings. He couldn’t breathe in enough oxygen and it took all of his energy to keep flapping his wings. He dived towards Mark’s house and crashed onto the porch in the back. He gasped for air, but he couldn’t breathe and his lung felt like it was on fire. He tried getting to his feet to open the door, but he failed and fell back down, useless. He felt like he was about to die. His vision was fading and he started to feel dizzy.

In the living room were Rachel and I, Grace, Mara, and Brandon. Alex went to visit his friend, someone I had no idea about. Bruce had work and Mara was left alone, except for his friend Grace. The two of them talked with each other, but through their minds. Nick had left to go for a walk.

Suddenly, I felt hurt. I didn't realize what it was. I felt like something had actually hit me in my chest. Then I felt someone's presence from outside; someone who was panicking. I felt the person thoughts, but they were incomplete, and scared. Just then Rachel jumped to her feet. She heard something.

Rachel looked up at the ceiling and gradually her eyes met the door. I jumped to my feet and saw Nick fall down onto the porch outside. He had his wings out and he looked like he was in great pain. He tried getting to his feet to open the door, but he couldn't and he fell back down.

I ran towards the door in the kitchen and opened it. I pulled Nick inside the house and looked for any blood, but did not see any. I closed the door behind him and knelt back down next to Nick. I had no idea what was wrong, and then suddenly he gasped and woke up, panting.

Nick sat up and sighed in relieve. He looked up at me and smiled. "Thank you," he said.

"What happened?" I asked.

"I was stabbed in my chest ... right in one of my lungs."

"I looked around you, but I didn't see any blood."

“That’s because I controlled the blood and disposed it, sealing up the stab wound, but I couldn’t fix the hole in my lung. And now I could, thanks to you, Mark.”

“But what happened?” Rachel asked.

“I went for a walk and saw someone getting mugged. So I went to stop him and we fought and he stabbed me. I sealed up my wound to make him think that he completely healed from it, but I didn’t. I told the guy ... the guy who almost got mugged who I was and about our team, but that was it and I flew here.”

“Well,” I said, not sure exactly what to say. “I’m glad that you took the initiative to go after him ...”

“But?” Nick asked, waiting. “What?”

“None of you guys got training like Bruce and I did. You weren’t exactly ready to handle someone without the help of us to absorb our powers. With our powers you can do it, but what about if you are alone again, or what if ... we encounter super villains?” I pondered. “We need to train you guys.”

“Well, thanks again, Mark.” Nick got up and sat on the couch.

I sighed. “You’re welcome ... I’m glad you’re alright now. But I would like it if we could prevent this in the future.” I looked to Rachel and she nodded. She had a worried look, which wasn’t as bad as it was when we first saw Nick.

I looked around the living room. Everyone was here, except Bruce and Alex. Everyone looked concerned. Nick sat on the couch, next to Grace and Mara. Brandon was sitting on a chair going back and forth from watching the news on TV and looking at us. Rachel was standing next to me, looking at me. Nick looked up at me.

“I think you're right, Mark,” Nick said. I turned and looked at him. “We need training, but it's not like we could go through it the same way that you and Bruce did.”

“We can train you guys,” I said. “We can make room in our schedules to train all of us ... in our basement.”

Everyone nodded; everyone that was here. They all agreed that it was a good idea for Bruce and I to train them. Even though they were experiment on at Creative Works, they probably learned ways to survive, fighting whatever Intex may have thrown at them, but it wasn't enough. They needed our help.

Now that I was thinking about it, I realized that Bruce and I hadn't gone to see our sensei in a while; we hadn't gone for Kung Fu training. We had been so busy that we hadn't been trying to prepare ourselves for things like this. Nick got lucky, but I wasn't so sure that we would always be like that. Something worse could always happen, and we needed to be ready.

It was late when Alex came home. Most of us were already in bed in our rooms. Rachel and I were both settled in, getting ready to fall asleep. I could hear Alex walk in, making noise as he clattered through the kitchen, bumping into things. I heard shuffling of feet and then it was quiet; he had gone into his room.

Alex was spending more time with his new girlfriend lately. He never talked to me about their relationship, or what she was like.

I stared at the ceiling because I couldn't go to sleep. Rachel had her eyes closed, but I knew that she was still awake. I thought about today. It felt like a really long day and it was now finally over. We had stopped a bank robbery and Nick had also stopped a mugger, but he had almost died. I wasn't sure if Nick was going to be able to sleep well either. He must've been thinking about today too.

I got to thinking. If I thought today was busy, then what would the future look like. Once we start doing more superhero ... work our days would be more hectic than this, a lot more. Today was nothing, but I knew that my team, our team, was not as skilled in combat as Bruce and I; they were going to need training to endure as a superhero.

The Frequent Journal; Manhattan, NY

Kara the journalist sat at her desk late at night. Normally she went home a lot later than this, but she couldn't let this story go. She had investigated the bank robbery. She was writing about these heroes that had saved everyone inside the bank and stopped the bank robbers.

She was looking over photos and videos of the heroes. There were three of them. They called themselves *The Avians*. She had interviewed many of the hostages about the heroes. Their names were Avian, Vortex, and the other one was still working on a name. The strange thing was that they all had super abilities. One of them was claimed to be invincible, or indestructible. His name was Avian, the one who had gotten shot and survived after pulling the bullet out. Another one was part wolf. That made her think of the story about a werewolf who terrorized the city about a month ago.

"Kara?" the editor in chief asked, standing behind her. Kara spun around in her chair and smiled, looking tired. "What are you still doing here? Why don't you go home?"

"I ... I can't," Kara said. "I can't put this story down. These heroes? They are ... spectacular and so ... bizarre. I mean ... heroes, people that have super powers? This is so amazing, I just can't —"

"Kara. Please, come back in tomorrow and work on it then. Get some rest." The editor smiled. "You my best reporter. That's why I wanted you to be the one to investigate this story, but I want you to get good sleep. So go home."

Kara nodded. She looked at her desk and stacked up her research into a pile. She left it on her desk, not worry about anything happening with it. All journalists left their paperwork out on their desk, because no one else went into the building to tamper with it.

Kara sighed and got up from her chair. The editor was already walking towards the elevator, while putting on his jacket. Kara grabbed her jacket off from her coatrack next to her desk. She put it on and followed the editor. She was going to go home, but she wasn't sure that she would even get sleep.

She started wondering about that abandoned building. It was one of the bigger buildings, but it was vacant. She thought back to the name: Creative Works. She often wondered what the name meant. Thinking back to today with these superheroes, she wondered if they had anything to do with this building.

Kara knew that the Creative Works building had something to do with science. Now she was starting to wonder what kind of science was done there and if the heroes had something to do with it. Maybe they were created there. She had only one way of finding out.

Washington, DC

The agents had already gotten to work the next morning. They were already hearing about this bank robbery in Manhattan. They already knew that they were the same people that were at Creative Works. The same people that freed the other victims from Creative Works in Ireland.

“Alright, agents,” the director started. “As of yesterday, the metahumans from Creative Works have made an appearance at a bank in Manhattan. I’m sure that most of you have already heard. They seemed to have good intentions and stopped the robbers from robbing the bank, but he can’t be certain. We need to see what we can learn from this bank robbery. We need to see how it was planned and how these metahumans acted. I need someone to pull up the video footage of that bank.”

“On it,” an agent said, getting ready at his computer.

The director nodded to him. “Let’s get to work. If we find out that these metahumans only intention was to in fact stop the robbers, they are still wanted for vigilantism. Because they do not work for us or any part of the government, they are to be stopped. They do not work under the law. We need to track these metahumans down.” The director paused. “Now let’s get to work.”

Agents started off, going their separate ways. They all went to their desks and computers, getting ready to investigate the metahumans.

“Sir,” an agent said, addressing the director. The director nodded to her. “Forensics had found a fingerprint on that metal rod from Ireland; the one that was used to murder Martin Intex. It came from the leader of

these metahumans, but we are still working on discovering the identity of the person who's this fingerprint belongs to. We are searching it in our databases, but it might take a while before we find something, because I don't think that he is in a criminal record ... but I could be wrong."

"I guess we'll just have to wait and see. Once we discover the identities of these metahumans they *will* have criminal records for being vigilantes. Keep working on it and let me know if you find out anything."

"Will do, sir." With that she took off.

"Sir," an agent waved his hand for him to come over. He was in front of his computer screen, sitting at his desk. The director walked over. "This is the camera from Creative Works ... we have a reporter checking this place out." On the screen a female reporter was walking through the main entrance, checking out the sights in front of her. It was definitely her first time in the building. "This is the second visitor we've had to check this building out ... and she's a reporter."

The director leaned closer to the screen to get a better look. "What are you suggesting?" he asked.

"Umm ... what if she learns everything about this building?"

"What are the chances? We had brought all of the paperwork from that building to here. She won't find much. It shouldn't be enough to make a story ... but even if she does find something ..." The director thought to himself. "If she discovered anything, that reporter would write about it. But ..." the director paused again, thinking this through with himself. "She would publish the story and the public would know all about this building. They would know what happened at Creative Works, and then they would understand how these metahumans came to be. Or they would partially understand."

"That's not what we want, is it?"

“Hmm ... I think ... that the public deserves to know how these metahumans came to be.”

“They’ll learn about Intex if this reporter finds out.”

“Yes, well ... let's let her see what she can discover and we’ll go from there. I will discuss this to see whether the public should know about this or not. So ... see what she can find out about Creative Works and keep me posted about it.”

“Okay. Sure thing.”

The director walked away, taking a stroll around the lobby, passing agents and their desks. He thought about these metahumans. They were vigilantes, working for themselves, and not for the government. They were also dangerous; they needed to be stopped. Hopefully they could discover their identities and arrest them before anything gets worse. If not, shamefully they would have to track them down by waiting for crimes to happen, and then they would find them there to try to stop the crime, only the government would arrest them.

Harrison, NY

Richard left the court house with words ringing in his ears: *guilty as charged*. He deserved it. He knew that he was going to be pronounced guilty, but now that it was over he didn’t feel as nervous anymore. He was surprised with how fast it took. The court session went pretty quick. After all, there was hard evidence and everything was pointed at Richard. He had motive and all other evidence pointed at him.

Police officers were taking him into a police cruiser to transport him to a prison. *Sentenced to ten to fifteen years in White Plains State Penitentiary*. The words still rang in his head. That’s where he was headed. He felt guilty for murdering two people, and he was telling himself that this is what he deserved; this is what he would get. Ten to fifteen years in prison.

The officers had him cuffed and put him in the back seat. There was an officer sitting next to him and two officers that sat up in front. The car was already started and they drove off. There was a police car in front and behind him. They always made sure that when they transfer criminals that they were taken to the prison with the least amount of problems, so that they wouldn't try to escape.

But Richard knew that he could escape. If he tried, he could knock out all of the cops in this car all at once. He could feel the electricity buzzing in his hands. He could be seconds away from his freedom, but ... he felt that going to prison was what he deserved. He felt guilty for what he had done. Once he was taken to the prison, if he wanted to escape, he could easily. He didn't need to try it now ... so he held it back and the buzzing in his hands calmed down.

The officer sitting next to him looked down at Richard's hands; they were in fists. He suppressed his electricity and unfurled his fists. The officer just watched Richard suspiciously, wondering what he was thinking; watching him sit with his head down.

Richard rested his head down in his palms. The silence in the car was killing him. These cops were all serious about transferring someone to prison; they didn't talk. Richard's guilt started to poke him hard in the chest. He realized that he had his hands touching his head; he could shock his head and knock himself out. Only he could knock himself out with electricity, other electricity wouldn't work on him. That made Richard think of the electric chair. If he had gotten the death penalty that was one way of getting put to death, but it wouldn't work on Richard.

Richard thought about knocking himself out again, but he thought about the officers. What would they do? They would have to carry his body out, into the prison, and into a cell, or at least hand him off to the guards. He would wake up in his cell. He didn't want to give the officers any more work than they had to, so he brought his hands down, but he kept his head down, still so ashamed of his actions.

It wasn't long and they had arrived at the penitentiary. The car came to a complete stop and the officers lead him into the prison. The prison guards took over, taking him to a cell.

"Welcome to White Plains State Penitentiary," the warden said to him, leading him to his cell with the guard captain next to him. Richard didn't respond; he just walked. "You will be locked in your cell by yourself for now. You will have lunch periods to leave your cell to go to the cafeteria. There will also be periods to walk about inside and spend time outside for fresh air, but only for an hour before you will return back to your cell." Richard nodded, following the guard.

The guard took him to an open cell that had two empty beds, a toilet and a sink. Richard step inside and the closed the cell up, locking it.

"Let me give you a tip," the guard captain said. "Try to make friends here and respect the other inmates, because believe me ... you do not want to have enemies in here."

Richard nodded, understanding, even though he wasn't worried. He could easily knock out any one who got in his way. He sat down on the lower bunk and then lay down, staring at the bunk above him. He realized that he was going to be doing this for a while.

Manhattan, NY

Today the only one of that was working was Alex. It was strange ... lately it seemed that Alex was hardly ever home. He was either working, or going out with his new girlfriend; someone I knew nothing about. I decided that once he got home that I would ask him about her. It was a Sunday, and I felt sorry for Alex having to work on the weekend. Yesterday, Bruce worked.

Alex still had time in the morning to make breakfast. But once he was done, he ate his breakfast and left for work. It always seemed that I would wake up after almost everyone else, except when I had work. I got out and had some breakfast that Alex had made just before he took off. Yet again, Alex was missing from home.

I sat down on the couch in the living room and sat next to Rachel to watch the news on TV. I guess we were going to be on the lookout for trouble, using the news, but we also had Rachel; she had super hearing so she could hear for any trouble. Bruce and Mara were sitting across from us, on the other end of the couch.

The two of them were always having fun talking with each other. They were definitely getting closer. They would do everything together. Right now Bruce was checking out his cell phone, not sure exactly what though.

Bruce groaned in frustration. Something was wrong with his phone and he couldn't get it to work.

"Hold on," Mara told Bruce.

Mara grabbed the phone from him and just held it in her palm. She already knew what Bruce was trying to do with it, so she knew what to do. She closed her eyes and when she opened them the phone did what Bruce wanted.

“Wow,” Bruce said. “You fixed it.” Bruce smiled, working with his phone with ease.

“I used my computer power,” Mara said. “Umm ... technopathy.”

Bruce nodded, smiling. “Can you give me more minutes?”

“Umm ...” Mara thought. “Yeah I can.” She touched the phone with two of her fingerprints and immediately Bruce got more minutes; she didn’t even close her eyes this time. “Now you have five thousand minutes.”

Bruce looked down at his phone. “This is awesome Mara!” he exclaimed. He looked up at Mara and just stared at her. “You're awesome,” he said slowly. Mara and Bruce leaned closer together and kissed each other on the lips for a good three seconds.

Bruce backed off and sighed, catching his breath. He looked at Mara, smiled and she looked back, smiling. “I uh ... I'm going to go something for us to drink,” Bruce said and he got up from his seat.

Mara watched Bruce walk off as he went to get some drinks.

Mara. Mara jerked, hearing her name, but realized what it was. It was Grace’s voice and she was communicating with her, through their minds. Their minds had some sort of connection so they could communicate telepathically. *You are starting to love Bruce now?*

Yeah, Mara thought looking at Grace, who was sitting towards the middle of the couches. Nick and Brandon weren’t in the living room at the time.

I thought that you didn't like him.

Well, I not like him much at first, but now ... I do. I thought he was weird, but now ... I love him. He's ... he funny and ... cute, boy is he cute.

Grace laughed. She felt happy for Mara and Bruce. *I'm glad you two are good with each other. I'm happy for you, Grace thought. I'm glad you found someone for you.*

Gracias, Grace.

Bruce came back into the room holding two glass cups of some sort of red drinks. Mara took one cup from him and Bruce sat down, holding his cup.

"What is it?" Mara asked.

"It's fruit punch," Bruce replied.

"Oh." Mara took a sip and smiled. "It taste good."

Mara took another sip and handed it to Bruce and he set it on the coffee table next to the end of the couch, which was where they were sitting. Bruce then set his cup down on the table. Mara rested her head on Bruce's shoulder and Bruce gently put his head on top of hers. Bruce started to stroke her hair very gently, feeling it through his fingers and smelling it. Mara giggled and Bruce gave a little chuckle back and put his arm around her.

I decided to see if I could use this time to practice my telepathy. Recently it looked like Grace and Mara were just communicating through their minds, but I could've been wrong. It made me think of my telepathy and about how I need to practice it.

I thought of Grace. She always seemed shy, not talking very much. I wondered what she thought about. I focused on her mind, not trying to

look at her. I wasn't getting complete thoughts, but it wasn't a problem with my telepathy, it was Grace. She had a lot on her mind, and she wasn't thinking about a certain thing.

I focused on her mind more and picked up images. She seemed to be thinking about a recent memory. She was thinking about Bruce and Mara when they were working on creating designs for their suits. She thought about how she hadn't thought of a superhero name yet.

She changed her train of thought around. Grace started thinking about her work at the assisted living home. She was thinking about all of her patients that she worked with. Then she thought about how almost everyone here had someone they loved, but she didn't. She thought how Rachel and I, and looked over our way. Then she thought about Mara and Bruce and looked at them. Then she looked back at me and then made a puzzled look. Then she realized something.

"Mark?" she asked me.

"Yeah?" I asked in reply.

"Are you reading my mind?"

I chuckled nervously. "Yeah I was. Sorry."

Grace gave a weak smile. I could tell that she didn't want me inside of her head. "No ... it's alright, I know you're trying to practice your telepathy, to get stronger at it."

"If you don't want me in your head I'll get out."

Grace smiled. "I would ... appreciate it, thanks."

I felt bad for getting into Grace's mind. She wasn't expecting me to be invading on her thoughts. She was in her whole mind and I didn't ask to intrude. She had her right to privacy. It just didn't feel right for me to get into her head without her knowing.

I nodded at Grace and looked at Rachel. She looked at me and smiled, and then looked back at the TV. There was a report about the gas prices; yes they're expensive and are not going to get lower anytime soon. It's the same each year.

I thought about Rachel and I. We seemed to be getting closer together. I thought about how hectic our lives were, and we still had some time for each other. While still watching the TV, Rachel rested her head on my shoulder and I rested my head on top of hers.

Astoria, NY

Hank had been working on tracking down the radiation, but still wasn't sure what it was exactly. He had studied it in his lab and discovered that it is also much like a virus, in which the radiation is a type of gas that it emits.

Hank had used his radiation detector to bring him to Astoria. It would bring him to Manhattan too, but it was practically everywhere in Manhattan so he couldn't really narrow it down; not until he could strength his device, his detector. He first had to tweak it so it wouldn't read off of him, because he had become infected with it. For now he wasn't showing any side effects or other symptoms.

The detector led Hank down to a block. He was slowly driving in his car trying to determine which house that it was coming from, or if it was even from a house. Someone behind honked; he was impatient with Hank driving slowly. Hank pulled off the side of the road to let him pass, and then he pulled back onto the road. The device was showing that he was getting closer and closer.

He passed three more houses and then he gave a steady beat. He passed one house and the beeping slowed. He looked at the house that he just passed, but there was also one on the other side of the street too. He pulled off to the side of the road, parked and turned off the engine.

He got out and walked toward the other side of the street and the beeping barely slowed, but still it was enough for Hank to detect. He started walking back towards his car and past it towards the house in front of him. He walked onto the sidewalk; walking up to the house and the beeping couldn't get any faster, so Hank turned it off, knowing that

this was the house. He put the detector into his pocket. Hank sighed, not really thinking this through. He wasn't sure what he would say.

He walked up to the door and rang the doorbell. The door opened about thirty seconds later. A boy who looked like he was thirteen years old came to the door.

"Hello," Hank said. "Would either you mother or father be home?"

The boy, Stuart, smiled. "Yeah, my mom is," he replied.

The boy walked back into the house and came back with a woman who was wearing gloves.

"Hello, how are you doing?" Hank asked the boy's mother.

"I'm ... I'm doing fine," the woman, Dawn, replied. "What can I help you with?"

"Well ... My name is Hank McDonald and I am a scientist and I was doing some research that led me to this neighborhood. I don't want to alarm, so I'm just going to try to be as simple as possible. I had found some sort ... radiation in the air and I ... I'm just wondering if you have noticed anything that it is a little ... off or ..."

"Radiation?" Dawn asked, soundly dumbfounded.

Stuart looked up at Dawn, showing a faint smile. He gave a little gasp of excitement, but held it back as much as possible. Hank looked at him, wondering if he knew something but he didn't push it, instead he looked back to Dawn.

"I umm ..." Dawn said, and then sighed. "I uhh ..." Dawn wasn't sure if she felt comfortable telling him, but she realized that if he was a scientist, then he could help her. "Yeah ... I have noticed something different, something completely off. And I think that this radiation must have something to do with."

Stuart smiled, not holding back. "Radiation?" he asked himself. "I never thought of it that way ... but more like a virus."

"You ..." Hank said. "You're right, it is like a virus. But ..." Hank looked to Dawn. "What ... um what has it done?"

"Well ..." Dawn paused. "Please come inside, I don't want ... the neighbors watching."

Dawn stepped out of the way of the doorway and Hank walked inside. Dawn closed the door behind him and offered Hank to sit down at the table in the kitchen, walking across the living room.

"Umm ... Stuart," Dawn said. "Get something ... deemed worthless."

"Okay," Stuart replied, completely understanding what she meant and walked off to grab something.

Hank was confused by what that meant. Stuart came back with an old pair of shoes and he set them in the middle of the table.

"What I am about you show you ..." Dawn started. "I think ... is from the ... radiation. It's ... what has been a little off; a little different. Or a lot different."

Dawn slowly took her gloves off and walked to the opposite side of the table from Hank. She set her gloves down on the table about three feet from the shoes. She put her hands over top of the shoes and let her hands drop onto them. She sighed and the shoes disintegrated from her touch, turning into ash.

Hank jumped from his seat and stood up. His jaw dropped and his eyes were practically popping out.

"What?" Hank asked, not sure of what else to say.

Dawn moved her hands away and grabbed the gloves and put them back on. Hank stepped closer to the table and drew his hands close

to the pile of ash. He grabbed some of the ash, feeling it in his fingers. He looked at his fingers when now were had collected a grey powder from the ash. He whipped his fingers with his other hand and backed from the table.

“That’s what the radiation did?” Hank said.

“I guess it was the radiation,” Dawn replied. “But ... I could be wrong.”

“I ... I think you're right, because this led me here.” Hank pulled out his radiation detector. He turned it on and it gave a steady beep and he turned it off. “It’s reading a high amount here.”

“Is it ... contagious?” Dawn asked.

Hank gave a little smile. “You ... uh umm. Well, all of New York in infected with it, especially Manhattan. So it’s spread everywhere, but you shouldn’t worry. It’s not harmful, otherwise everyone would be dead. It just ... does ... this, which is ... uh wow ... uh.”

“It gives people powers,” Stuart said. “That’s a good way of explaining it.”

“Gives people powers?” Hank repeated.

“Umm ... Stuart would like to call it a power,” Dawn said. “But ... we met someone else who has a super ... ability, I guess. He has a fire power.” Dawn paused. “He's from Manhattan ...”

“Wow,” Hank said. “I never thought that this is what the ... radiation or virus would do. This is ... strange and ... so bizarre.”

“Is it reversible?”

“Reversible?” Hank asked. “I don’t know yet. I have only recently discovered this, so I am still learning it. But I supposed that it is.”

“Because I don’t want it.” Dawn sounded determined. “I want it gone. I hate feeling worried about destroying everything or hurting people, or killing people. I haven’t had any problem yet, because I have been careful. I have been using gloves and I have been working on controlling it. But I don’t want to keep worrying about it.”

“Okay,” Hank said. “I uhh ... I want to help you, so ... I’ll have to do some more research on it to see what I can do. Like I said, I have just recently discovered this. So let me give you my information and I’ll let you know if I can suppress this virus.”

Hank pulled out a business card from his pocket and handed it to Dawn. She grabbed it, having gloves on her hands, just to be safe. Dawn looked at it and grabbed a piece of paper off of the counter top and grabbed a pen from its holder. She wrote down her contact information and gave it to Hank.

“If you have any questions, please call me,” Hank said. “I want to help you as much as possible. I will see what I can do and will make sure I will let you know of my progress.”

“Thank you,” Dawn said. “Thank you for coming here and ... giving me hope.”

Hank nodded and smiled. “You’re welcome.” Hank was still surprised with seeing what Dawn had done. He looked back at the pile of ash on the table, and shook his head, still working on believing it.

“I will call you back,” Hank said. “And I will tell you how soon I can work on suppressing your ... condition.” Hank paused. “I will see you later then.”

Dawn nodded.

“I’ll see myself out.” Hank said and walked to the door and opened it, going through the living room.

“Bye,” Dawn said. “And thanks for coming by.”

“Yup, bye now.” Hank said and walked out, closing the door behind him.

Hank walked back towards his car, still working on believing what he just saw Dawn do. He was so amazed with it. The radiation/virus gave people super abilities. It was amazing. But it was awful that Dawn got the worst ability to have. She mentioned someone from Manhattan with a fire power. So it worked differently on other people. Hank knew that he was infected, but he wasn't sure what he had yet.

Hank got into his car and started it up. He started driving back to Mount Vernon, not really even focused on the road, but just cruising along. He could hardly believe what he just discovered. He was getting excited with this, while a little saddened or worried about Dawn. She had to live with this *power* of disintegrated touch. Hank was determined to figure this out. He had to make this suppressible, for Dawn.

All of the while, Hank hadn't realized that FBI agents were tailing him. They had already recorded his conversation with Dawn and took pictures of what they could.

The Frequent Journal

Kara sat at her desk, typing away on her computer. She was trying to research that abandoned, burnt down building called Creative Works. She tried to remember what brought her to it. Somehow when she was working on the *Avians* story she thought of the Creative Works building. She had just got the story published and was ready to do more research.

Looking all over the internet, Kara had found very many different website explain the founder of Creative Works and what the intentions were for the building. It was built for creating medicines and cures, and would be used as a science lab for discovering viruses and diseases to be cured. So Kara knew that her suspicions about it being a science building were right. But, she was still wondering why she was drawn to it in the first place.

She found out the owner's name: Martin Intex. *What a strange last name*, Kara thought. She wondered where he came from. She tried looking it up somewhere, but couldn't find much information about him. Then she found something about Ireland.

Kara discovered that there was another building that he had built in Dublin, Ireland; after the one here in New York was burned down. She continued on reading the article on the website and scrolled down. She read to find out that the building in Ireland burned down too, and Martin Intex was found dead with a stab wound in the chest.

Kara was shocked. She took a minute to process this. Why would someone stab him? Or ... why wouldn't they? She really didn't know much about him yet. All she really knew was that he was the owner, and

creator of Creative Works, and a scientist. But ... whatever work he was involved in ... someone hated him for it; hated him enough to kill him.

She turned back to the screen and read on. He was definitely killed; because there was no way that he accidentally fell onto a metal rod. Reading on, she came across the word hybrid and her eyes were drawn to it. Kara read to find out that his real intention was to create hybrids of animals, but his experiments successes and failures were unknown to anyone. No one knew weather he succeed or not with his hybrid creations of animals.

Martin Intex was known to be a psycho to most people. He was obsessed with his work. Kara read anywhere she could, but could not find out what Intex really did do. She had the gist of what he did in his labs at Creative Works, but it wasn't enough for her. She knew that there was more; after all someone had killed him for it — whatever *it* was.

Kara had taken notes on her notebook. She got up from her seat and walked towards the elevator, taking her notebook with her. She makes it outside and walks down several streets, pushing her way through the heavy crowds of people. She makes it to the entrance of Creative Works and steps inside. She walks down a very long hallway, with the smell of smoke everywhere.

Mark's Residence

“Hey, Bruce?” I asked.

Bruce was sitting on the couch across from me, next to Mara with his arm around her. The two of them were talking together and were looking at their notebooks. He looked up at me once it registered in his brain that I said his name. “Yeah?” he asked in reply.

“I was wondering if you could help me set up a training course downstairs.” I gave a small pause. “We need to train the rest of us who aren’t that great with combat, so we need something to practice with.”

“You mean like punching bags and stuff?”

“Well, I also mean something to use that we can all practice our powers with. But we also need to clear some space up so we can move around in.”

Bruce nodded and looked at Mara. “I’ll be back and a little while,” he said to her and kissed her, and then got up from his seat.

Mara grabbed his arm. “I’ll go with you,” she said. “I want help. I want *to* help.” Mara got up from the couch and followed Bruce and I down to the basement.

The three of us looked at the basement floor. It was cluttered with a lot of dirt that was tracked in from our shoes. There were some boxes sitting around and my weight lifting equipment was in the middle of the floor. There was a trash can about five feet from it. I heard a set of footprints coming down the stairs. I turned around to see Rachel coming down.

I smiled at Rachel. “Hey, you want to help to?” I asked her and she nodded.

“Of course,” Rachel replied smiling back.

“Okay.” I looked to Bruce, and then back to the basement floor. “So ... I think ... I should move my weight lifting equipment off to the side wall ...” I trailed off, thinking.

“I got this,” Bruce said.

Bruce was looking at my weight lifting equipment. He narrowed his eyes to stare at it. There was the sound of metal screeching against concrete and the weight lifting equipment was sliding across the floor. All

of it. I was surprised. I took a look at Bruce's face; it was red or anything, he was just concentrated. Bruce's power of telekinesis was definitely getting stronger.

With just two more seconds, Bruce had telekinetically slid my equipment all of the way up against the side wall, but gave me enough room to work with. Bruce slid some boxes up against the opposite wall.

"Bruce," I said. "Don't do all of the work." I laughed and he laughed back.

"Why not?" he asked. "I'm having fun."

Within just a few minutes, the four of us had cleaned the whole floor and swept it. I had crushed all of the boxes down so they all were crunched together, saving some space. The trash can had all of the dirt in it and was now against the wall with the boxes. The four of us looked at each other, ready to set up whatever I wanted to be set up for training; but all we needed to set up for training was our bodies, because the best way to practice combat skills was to practice on another person. Bruce and I would be the trainers.

Rachel wanted to start first. I offered to start training her, but she chose Bruce instead. She gave the excuse to not wanting to see me get hurt, even though I would heal rapidly from it. But maybe she just didn't like seeing me get hurt, weather I could heal fast from it or not. But she had no problem hurting Bruce apparently, even she hadn't yet.

Bruce had her try to punch on in the nose. She didn't hesitate, but neither did Bruce and he already had an arm up to knock the punch out of the way. Rachel tried again, but Bruce had blocked it again. She tried again and this time Bruce had moved his head out of the way, dodging the punch. Finally after very many swings, Rachel had hit his nose.

Bruce groaned, grabbing his nose, crouching down. He took a few seconds before he stood back up, rubbing his nose. It was bleeding, but it was red. "Nice job," Bruce told Rachel and she smiled. "Wow ... you're strong."

Rachel nodded and gave a *duh* gesture. "I have enhanced physical traits, which includes a little bit more than average strength."

"It shows," I said, looking at Bruce's nose.

Bruce chuckled. "You still have some work to do, Rachel."

Bruce had his hands down, looking so unprepared, and Rachel took advantage of this. She threw her fist at Bruce's cheek, but he had quickly thrown his arm up and blocked them punch and smiled, seeing Rachel's disappointed expression.

"This is going to take time, Rachel," Bruce said.

The Manhattan Bakery

All of the time at work, Alex was thinking about Andrea. At the same time, he made sure to keep working hard. He didn't want the manager, Albert, to notice anything. Alex was known as one of the hardest workers here, and he didn't want to lose that title. He was even told by Albert that he was a harder worker than Bruce, but he didn't want to rub it in Bruce's face, so he didn't say anything about it.

He put a dozen doughnuts into a basket, and set it down into the fryer. One doughnut fell out of the basket and into the grease alone. Alex looked around to see that no one was paying any attention. He looked at the tongs, but decided to not use them. He wondered with this new power of pyrokinesis if he was immune to heat.

He looked around once again and saw that no one was looking. He stuck his pinky out and slowly inched it closer to the frying grease. He stuck it into the fryer and waited for a stringing feeling and cringed. But nothing happened. He stopped cringing and looked at his pinky; it was definitely in the fryer, but it looked perfectly fine, no burns. He looked around once again to see that he was clear and he stuck his whole hand down into the fryer and grabbed the doughnut out and put it back into the basket.

Alex smiled, thinking that it was so cool that his pyrokinesis gave him immunity to heat. He realized that he forgot to set the timer. He quickly set it to two minutes and thirty seconds, figuring that he was thirty seconds off.

He thought about how he could tell Andrea this. She would probably think that it would be cool. But then Alex realized that he thought of sharing this information with Andrea before sharing it with Mark or anyone else at home. He realized that he hadn't even told anyone else about Andrea knowing his secret, knowing that he had powers, or even about her having powers. No one at home knew anything about Andrea, but ... it wasn't like they needed to know anyway ... right?

Alex had been working since eight in the morning and would be done at five. He had already had his half hour break, so he was going to be working for eight and a half hours. He was getting tired already, not that he never worked so late, it was just that he didn't work so often; he only worked twice a week. But he normally worked about seven hours, today that we working him long.

Alex looked up at the clock on the wall above the fryer. It was four O' clock right now. All he could think about what leaving here at five and going straight to Andrea's house. There was so much that he wanted to talk about. It made him think back to when they first met; they didn't even know what to talk about, but now that couldn't stop talking.

Alex sighed just thinking about her. Suddenly he snapped out of it, hearing the alarm go off for the doughnuts. He pulled out the basket and took a good look at the doughnuts; they were fully fried. He poured the out onto a tray and passed them on to another worker, who was going to either glaze them or, fill them with filling, or frost them. He watched the worker take the doughnuts and all he could think about was baking with Andrea.

"Hey, Alex," Albert said, resting his hand softly on Alex's shoulder. "Nice work today."

"Thank you," Alex said.

"You seem awfully quiet today. Is something bothering you?"

Alex smiled and gave a nervous chuckle. "Umm ... no it's not about that. I just ... I miss someone."

"Oh." Albert nodded, understanding. "You're in love with someone, huh?"

"Yeah."

"Gotcha. Well, whoever this girl is ... she is lucky to have you; a great cook and baker."

“Yeah,” Alex smiled. “She knows it too. We both had already baked and cooked together. It ... it’s been so much fun.” Alex sighed just thinking about it.

Albert laughed. “Well, take good care of her.” He gave a pause for just a second and then he took his hand off of Alex’s shoulder. “Keep up the good work here ... and,” Albert pointed at the line. There was a paper hanging up. “There's an order ready for you to make.”

“Oh.” Alex quickly grabbed the paper to read it and Albert walked away. Alex now had to bake some long johns.

Part 3: The Invasion on Earth

FBI Agency; Washington, DC

“Umm ... director,” an agent called.

The director walked over to the agent’s desk. “Yes, agent?” he asked.

“It seems that the reporter has returned to the building, but this time she is taking more interest in it. She seems to be recording things in her notebook.”

The director looked at the video footage on the screen. He narrowed his eyes, watching the reporter. She was walking from room to room, taking everything into account, recording everything. She took note of every hole in the wall, ones made from burns and others from people. Then she went into the room with the pile of metal shards.

“Director?” the agent asked, wondering what he was thinking.

“Yes?”

“Umm ... should we escort her from the building?”

The director tilted his head. “Why?”

“I thought that we didn’t want the public to know about the truth about Creative Works and about Intex.”

“Maybe so,” the director said, giving a long pause. “But ... it’s not like she’s going to find out much of anything.”

“Oh, okay.”

“Just ... make sure to keep an eye on her.”

“Will do, sir.”

The director took off in another direction and the agent continued to watch the reporter on screen. She was in the room with the metal shards and was admiring the steam that was being created from it. She wasn't brave enough to go near it, so she took a note instead and left the room.

Manhattan, NY

“Ouch!” Bruce exclaimed, immediately grabbing his nose. “Wow, that ... hurt!”

Rachel smiled; she had finally made contact with Bruce, but since she was so determined, she had hurt Bruce. At least she didn't feel too bad. Rachel took this chance and kicked him in the knee and Bruce fell forward to his hands, letting go of his nose. Rachel threw his foot out to kick him in the face, but Bruce quickly pushed himself off of his hands and back up to his feet, only to do a back flip and kick Rachel in the chest at the same time.

Rachel stumbled backwards, but she caught her fall. Bruce smiled at Rachel, proud of what she accomplished all in one day, but it came with consequences ... for him.

“Okay,” Bruce said. “I think that'll do for today, Rachel. Thank you and good job.” Bruce was starting to sound like a teacher. “I am pleased with how fast you have already learned some combat, but still there are some things you could work on ... but we'll get there.”

Rachel laughed at him. “Is that how your sensei talked?”

“Umm ... sort of.” Bruce felt his nose and immediately regretted it; because he felt a sharp pain the instant he touched it again.

“Sorry about your nose,” Rachel said, trying to sound sympathetic.

I laughed, because I knew Rachel well. She was holding back from laughing.

“Don’t worry about it,” Bruce said. “I’ll have to see if Nick can do something for me.” Bruce looked at Rachel and I.

He started to go into a haze, thinking about something. I remembered about my telepathy. I wanted to see if I could control it better now. I concentrated on Bruce’s mind. I started to pick up his thoughts: *it’s pretty amazing ... for ... come ... and now here ... are*. I wasn’t sure if I wasn’t picking up all of his thoughts or that he wasn’t thinking clearly; because, I don’t know about you, but *I* don’t think clearly to myself.

“I was just thinking,” Bruce said, looking at me and Rachel, moving his eyes back and forth. “Remember when it was just the three of us? Remember where this all started?”

“Yeah,” I said.

“We’ve been through a lot,” Rachel said.

“Now look how far we have come ... look at where we are now; becoming superheroes in New York City.” Bruce paused for a second. “Back in high school, did either of you ever have imagined doing any of this?”

“No, not at all,” I said. “Even when I first learned the truth about my origin. I had no idea what it entailed.”

Bruce sighed. “Yeah ... well, I’m going to see Nick.”

Bruce walked past us, smiling, and walked up the stairs and out of sight. Now it was just Rachel and I left by ourselves. Grace, Mara, Brandon and Nick were all upstairs. They were most likely in the living room; that was the most popular place in my house. They were all waiting on Rachel to finish her training with Bruce for the day. But now whoever wanted to be next would train with me.

I looked at Rachel and she smiled; I was already smiling. “Remember when you went back to your parents’ house for a week?” I asked.

“Yeah,” Rachel replied. “That was the week my wings developed.”

“You couldn’t stand to be away from me for that long, you just had to come back.” Rachel giggled.

“Yeah ... I missed you for that little bit.” Rachel pulled her hair back behind her ear.

I looked at her bangs that lay loose at her forehead. Then I started to pick up her thoughts. *Oh, Mark ... when are ...* she trailed off and she stopped smiling. She looked like she was trying to stop herself from thinking anything more. *Um, Mark ... could I have my privacy please?*

Sorry, I thought back to her and got out of her head.

“Thank you,” Rachel said.

I felt bad for making Rachel feel uncomfortable. “Rachel ... I don’t really know what good this telepathy is here at home. I feel like I’m invading everyone’s privacy.”

“Well,” Rachel started. “Here at home, babe, you are. But ... your telepathy would be put to great use out when we encounter villains. You could use it to find the right one to take out first ... or to calm down someone or ... you know, whatever.”

“I guess.”

“So ... umm. Mark, I was going to go out to get some fresh air.”

“Okay,” I turned around to face the stairs to go with her.

“Alone.”

“Oh. You mean by yourself?”

“Uh, yeah,” Rachel laughed softly. “That’s what alone means. “

“Oh, well go one ahead; I’ll be in the living room.”

Rachel grabbed my arm to stop me from going upstairs. She pulled me close to her and into her face. She had a beautiful smile on her face, making the cutest face.

“Mark, babe, I love you.”

“I love you too.” She pulled me in and we kissed.

Kara sat down at her desk, reflecting on the Creative Works building. In the little time she had spent learning about Creative Works, she had learned a lot. She looked through the papers she had just put on her desk. She had found them at Creative Works.

They looked like reports of lab experiments. She read them, first thinking that they were reporting about chemicals, but disregarded it when she found the word: *he*. She read on to see that it related to a person. Kara switched through the pages and saw a picture. It was a profile of a young boy who looked about ten years old. The year that the report was made was 2004, so it was almost a ten year old report. Kara read more about the profile of this boy. His name was Nick, and she came across some words that troubled her: *experimented on, disobedient, a rebellious experiment, personality refused to alter, no longer a candidate, locked up ...*

Kara was dumbfounded by what she was reading. It seemed that this poor boy had been experimented on at Creative Works, but he fought, not giving in to anything that the ... scientists or doctors there tried to force him to do. They then locked him up. It made her wonder if he was still alive, but she doubted it.

She read on, finding out more things that stunned her. She knew that Creative Works was not a building used to make cures for sicknesses and diseases, that's why she went there in the first place; to find out what it really was. Instead, it was used to run experiments ... on *people*. Kara shuddered, but she read on. She realized that that was why there were cots with straps in several rooms at the building. But then she also remembered some rooms that had chairs bolted to the middle of the floor. She wondered if those were their forms of prisons, but there were

also the rooms with metal chains hooked to the walls. Those were definitely some prisons, not to mention the biggest room in the building at the end of the long hallway, which had nothing but metal bar cells.

She thought about the founder of the building: Martin Intex. He must've been the worst person on Earth, a man with no conscious. All of this brought nothing but disgust to Kara, but yet here Martin ran hundreds of experiments on humans, each day. Martin was dead now, murdered, probably by one of his experiments ... hopefully by one of his experiments. Maybe it would've taught him something right before he died ... or not.

It made Kara actually wonder ... what experiments were run there. What did Martin Intex do to all of these innocent people? Kara looked back at the profile of the young boy of ten years of age. It mentioned that he was crafted with avian DNA, that of a hawk and an eagle. Kara narrowed her eyes to see if she was reading this right. The papers said that he was giving the ability to create wings that came out of his back. It said that he was also given the ability to make any person fall asleep instantly.

What struck Kara the most was the wings. Avian DNA? That made Kara think of these heroes coming around. The Avians. Avian ... Psych ... Vortex ... and a few others who didn't have names yet. They all had wings; they were all part avian. Kara looked at the picture of the boy. He had dark hair that came down to his eyebrows, which laid flat. He had brown eyes and a skinny face, probably because they didn't feed him good at the Creative Works building. Kara tried thinking of one of the heroes who might have been this person. She couldn't. She wasn't sure what any of heroes look like, they all wore hoodies. They wanted to keep their identities safe and Kara couldn't blame them; she would want to also.

Kara starts typing on her keyboard, getting started on writing the story. Since all of this information was fresh in her mind, she wanted to

put it down. She still had to do some more research, but she wanted to get out everything she knew onto the computer first. She had a feeling that she would get this done by the end of the day, because she knew that stories like this she couldn't just simply drop. She knew, though, that her boss and editor and chief would force her to take a lunch break.

It seemed like it was the first time that I had seen Alex in ages. He finally had come home and it was about six in the evening. He saw me in the living room, along with Rachel and Nick; everyone else was in their rooms. Nick sat across from me, and Rachel was lying down on her side, spread out, watching the TV with Nick. I was sitting there watching the TV, but in a haze more so, but now my attention was drawn to Alex.

I waved at Alex to come sit next to me. He gave a small smile and sat down next to me on the couch and sighed.

“So ...” I said. “Who's this girl? I want to know about her.”

Crap. Alex thought.

“Why? What's wrong?” I asked Alex.

“What,” he replied. “What do you mean, ‘what's wrong’?”

“I mean ... what do you mean by ‘crap’?”

Alex sighed and narrowed his eyes for just a second. “You read my mind.”

I nodded. “Sorry, I'm just trying to control my telepathy.”

“Okay ... well about ... Andrea,” Alex started and relaxed immediately after saying her name. “She such a sweetie, a babe.” I chuckled, but Alex continued. “She's funny and strong. She knew how to cook too! We cooked together and baked together.” Alex paused to think back to those times, all of the while he couldn't help hold back his grin that went from ear to ear.

“Wow, you really are in love.”

“Uh ... yeah, I guess.”

“How close are you guys?”

“We’ve kissed.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah ... she's rich,” Alex tried to change the subject a little. “She has a very nice house But she's like me, she doesn’t have a family. Her father is still alive, but they don’t live together, they don’t like each other. So I told her about my family.”

“Wait, what? If you told her about your family, then you must've told her more; otherwise she wouldn’t understand.”

“Well ... I didn’t tell her much ...” Alex said quickly, getting nervous. I narrowed my eyes.

“You can't go around telling our secrets.”

“I ... no it’s not that. Mark ... hear me out.”

“What? You told her?” I demanded.

“Not right away.”

“Alex ...” I sighed. “I think I see why you never talked about her. Because you told her everything about us and you didn’t want me to know.”

“I didn’t tell her everything, and I only told her about me. She knows nothing about you.”

“Does it make a difference? She shouldn’t know about us, because now she knows who the Avians are.”

“She's not going to tell anyone.”

“And how can you be so sure?”

“Because, she has her secret too.”

“Which is?” I paused, waiting. Alex didn’t want to tell, he probably promised. “You told her your secret, let me hear hers.”

“She has a power too.”

“What?” The wind changed in the room, although there was no wind. “Oh, is that why she told you?”

“Mark ... could I start from the beginning please?” Alex asked, hating to explain everything out of sequence. I allowed him to continue. “We met in the park. I was sitting on a bench and I saw her walking with her friends. It was a hot day and I was staring at all of them, because I thought that there were all hot. Suddenly, my hand bursts into flames. The girls see my hand and I quickly shook the fire out. All of the girls looked frightened, wondering if I'm okay, but Andrea looked the least frightened, she looked like she knew what I was going through. She took more interest into me than the other girls.

“She offered me to visit her two days later. She asked me if I had a super power. I couldn’t lie because she saw me use my newly developed fire ability. So I decided to just tell her the truth, that I had just now got that power; I never had it before. I thought you were going to drop it there, but she didn’t. Later she told me that she had a power too, that’s why she was so drawn to me. But then later we started falling in love.

“I asked her about how she could afford to live in such an expensive house in New York. She told me about her family. I had told her a little about my family, so I told her a little about Intex. She believes everything I told her, because it all makes sense. Andrea told me that her mother died, and that her father supports her with money every month, but they don’t see each other.”

“You're not going to tell me her power?” I asked Alex.

“She has cryokinesis.”

“Alex ... I'm not too happy that you told someone else about you having powers, but I guess I understand the situation a little better, but ... couldn't she have told you first, before you told her that you had powers?”

“Andrea saw me use fire at the park. She knew I had powers, but she was just like I was; not sure if she could trust me. But when I got to where I didn't want to say much more, she told me had a power and that's why she was interested.”

“I see.” I paused. I was still mad for what Alex did. I look at Alex's head and I started seeing images. I saw Andrea in Alex's head. I saw them cooking together, talking with each other. It was Alex's memories of her. “Oh,” I said.

“What?”

“She ... she seems like a nice girl.”

“Did you read my mind?”

“Yeah, I saw her in your head. It seems like you two are getting to know each other pretty well.”

“Yeah, well enough to make out with each other.”

I scoffed. “Alright, Alex. I forgive you for telling her ... as long as she can keep our secret.”

“She will, and besides she only knows about me, not about you and your origin, even though she knows that there are seven other people that I live with. Andrea doesn't know the truth about the rest of you guys ... just me.”

“Okay.” I paused for a second, thinking. “Well ... I'm glad that I finally heard about this girlfriend of yours. You've seemed so distant lately.”

“I'm sorry.”

“I understand; she's always on your mind and you can't stop thinking about her. I don't need telepathy to figure that out.”

Alex nodded, giving a smile.

That next morning I quickly got up, showered, dressed and ate breakfast before heading off to work. Lately, work had been the same old thing. We went from one job to the next. I was put into the dry-walling crew, since I was really good at lifting the walls. But my fellow workers had no idea how easy it was for me; I just pretended that it really was heavy.

Grace was the only other one at home that went off to work too. She had to take care of older ones at an assisted living home. She seemed to enjoy it, since none of them had any mental problems, it's just that have a hard time taking care of themselves. So Grace would take care of them all day, but I wasn't exactly sure what she did, but what more could you do at an assisted living home? Not much else.

I was walking down the sidewalk, trying to avoid bumping into anyone on my way to work. Some days it was totally crowded, other days it wasn't. Today was a less crowded day in town. There were still a whole lot of people walking around in Manhattan, but we all had tons of space in between us, giving us way more than enough elbow room. We actually had three arm lengths space in between us.

Still with all of the space in-between everyone on the sidewalks, someone still managed to bump into me. As a natural instinct, I checked my back pocket for my wallet; it was still there, the man didn't pick pocket me.

I looked forward and continued walking. I had three more streets to walk until I would make it to the jobsite. Up ahead I saw a man grab a woman by her coat, yanking her in between two buildings, into an alley. The woman screamed and people nearby just watched as they walked past. I towards the man, determined to save this woman from whatever

this man intended to do, but then I realized that I didn't have my hoodie with me.

I took an alley just before the one that the man grabbed the woman into. I checked to make sure that no one was watching, but no one was, they were all too busy. I concentrated on my clothes and started to create a long sleeve shirt and I turned it into a hooded jacket. I materialized the letter A onto my chest of the jacket in Rextonian.

I threw my hood on and ran out of the alley and into the other one, with the man and the woman. The woman screamed again, as the man pulled her close to him, holding a knife to her throat.

"Leave us alone, or I'll kill her!" the man yelled at me, holding the knife against her skin. He had the woman's purse in one of his hands, and held the woman with the other, holding the knife there.

"No," I said.

The man tilted his head, pressing the knife against her throat, but not enough to penetrate her neck. Suddenly I had an idea. I concentrated on my right arm and materialized some rock around my whole arm. Now I had a very huge rock fist. I started levitating and floated towards them. The woman's face was already panicked, but now the man's face was shocked.

"Let her go and give her back her purse!" I demanded.

The man hesitated. "No!"

I wasn't sure how I was going to save the woman with my rock fist. I didn't want to hurt her at the same time. I looked right above the mugger's head and saw a metal staircase, being held to the building side. It was just in line with the mugger, but not the woman.

I concentrated on the air above the robber's head and created a rock about the size of a television. The rock landed and hit the mugger in

the head. He immediately dropped his knife, the woman ran and he fell to his knees, holding his head as if it would relieve his pain.

“Thank you!” the woman said, still frightened. She was about to run off, but the mugger still had her purse.

“Wait ... your purse.” I gestured one finger at her and ran up to the mugger.

He held the purse in his hand and I ran up to him and snatched right out of his hand, even though he resisted. I ran back to the woman and she took her purse, thanking me again. She looked like she was about to run off, but she decided to take another look at me.

I turned around to face the mugger just as he threw his knife at me and it pierced into my stomach. I grunted and the woman screamed. I looked down at the knife and looked back up at the robber and smiled. Then I started laughing and the woman stopped screaming.

“You think that this little knife is going to stop me?” I asked, speaking loudly.

The mugger looked puzzled, wondering how I had enough strength to even talk. I pulled the knife out of my stomach and it healed within seconds. I held the knife out in the air and with three fingers I broke the blade into three pieces, cutting my palm, but it healed two seconds later.

The mugger looked stunned and so did the woman as she gasped. I looked back at the mugger and smiled. I walked up to the mugger who cowered away. He was about to run away, but threw my rock fist out far enough and hit him in the back of the head, knocking him out. I grabbed a hold of the mugger and threw him over my shoulder. Just then I heard a police cruiser’s siren.

I walked out of the alley with the mugger over my shoulder. A cop stood behind an open door of the police cruiser. "Put your hands in the air!" he yelled, holding a gun out, and crouching behind the door.

I walked towards the cop and put the mugger down next to him. "This is who you were looking for," I said, gesturing to the knocked out mugger. "He tried to rob this woman." I pointed to the woman, who thankfully was still around.

"Yes of course," the cop said. "You're that ... Avian, right?"

"Yes," I said, starting to levitate. I looked down at my fist and summoned it to return to normal, getting rid of the rock fist.

The cop lowered his gun and looked back and forth between me and the knocked out mugger. "So ... I guess I'll ... take care of this-this guy." The cop seemed to respect me.

"Yes, please." I nodded to him and smiled. "I better be going and let you take care of this?"

I started levitating higher, and was about to fly off. "Wait!" the woman asked, stopping me.

Everyone around was watching, even the cop and already had the mugger cuffed.

"Uh, who are you Avian?" the woman asked.

I tried to think of a smart answer. "I am ... this city's new protector. And I am not alone. I have my other teammates to help me out. We're called the Avians." I nodded at her and flew off before someone else interrupted. I was going to be late for work.

I flew over a few building tops and landed into another alley. I materialized my work clothes on me, getting rid of my jacket which had a hole in it and had my blood on it. I stepped out of the alley giving it a mi-

nute and then walked down a block and made it to the jobsite, where some other workers were just showing up as well.

Several weeks have past. Things were going along as normal, but we were starting to make more appearances to the public. We kept our ears open for any trouble or crime. Yes, we were looking for trouble.

People were starting to get to know us. People knew us as “the superheroes” or as “the Avians”. Still people were still working on our names individually. We still had a lot of work to do though. We wanted to give this city hope. We wanted them to feel secure, but there were still tons of crimes that we needed to stop. We were just beginning.

This morning, being a Sunday, Alex was the only one that had to work. He hated it. He worked on days that the rest of us didn’t. Alex still made breakfast for all of us, but he quickly took off. Alex was awesome. He always wanted to help out with breakfast and I gave up on stopping him. He was definitely humble.

The rest of us trained each other; Bruce and I were sort of like coaches. We took any day that we could, unless we had to fight crime. We usually had Rachel and Nick for that; they could use their super hearing to pick up anything from outside or from the news on the TV upstairs. Rachel would pick up the sounds first, because it’s her power of super hearing; Nick has to absorb it in order to use it, so it doesn’t come naturally to him.

Today I trained Nick, Rachel, and Mara. Bruce trained Grace and Brandon on the other side of the basement. And the day began, after enjoying Alex’s breakfast of pancakes.

We all grabbed a few pancakes and filled our plates, getting ready to train. Brandon made sure to put plenty of syrup on his pancakes.

“Uh?” I said to Brandon. “Do we have enough of that to go around?”

“Sorry,” Brandon said, pulling the syrup away from his pancakes, stopping it in mid-flow. He handed the syrup to Grace.

I chuckled and started eating my pancakes. I took a look at the newspaper. My attention was usually drawn to the main article, but today it was drawn to the second one, because of one word: *Intex*.

“Mark?” Rachel asked me, noticing the expression on my face. “What's wrong?”

I read the title: *The Mysterious Creative Works Building: Secrets Revealed About its Founder; Intex*.

“Mark?” Rachel asked again.

“It's Intex,” I replied.

“What?” Almost everyone said, looking up from their plates.

“It says: ‘The Mysterious Creative Works Building: Secrets Revealed About its Founder; Intex.’” I read on. “The Creative Works building was always known to be a strange, deserted building that set in the middle of Manhattan, New York. One day it was burnt to the ground. What really happened there? Some have thought that scientists created medicines and cures there. Now we are about to find out for sure what really happened inside.

“After weeks of research, it is confirmed. This Creative Works building was used for running illegal experiments on human beings, particularly young people. No one really understood what happened inside, but they didn't think to investigate it either. It was foolish that none of the local law enforcements ever bothered to investigate this building.” I paused for effect and looked at the curious faces around the table, urging me to continue reading. “The building consisted of very long hallways

with few many doors, which either led to storage or informational rooms, prison cells, science labs, or torturing rooms. It is sad that none of this information was discovered until after the building caught fire. The founder of the building, Martin Intex, experimented on young people, trying to alter their DNA. We have found paperwork on various “*subjects*” as they called them. They were all engrafted with animal DNA of a wide variety. It is uncertain what Martin Intex’s planned to do with all of these poor innocent children, but nevertheless he was a cruel man. It is obvious that he was hated, because he was later killed.

“But before that, Intex’s building here in New York was burnt down. There was almost nothing left of the building. No bodies were found inside, so that means that any who were experimented on were released or transferred. Martin Intex had set up another building across the ocean in Dublin, Ireland. Not long after he had it set up, it too was burnt down. Someone knew what Intex was trying to do and they stopped him, but it is certain that the killer of Intex is still at large, because it was the law enforcement that killed him. The law enforcement checked up on the second building in Ireland after it was burnt down. There they found Intex’s body, finding multiple stab wounds to the chest.”

I stopped reading and looked up at my team. They were all surprised and so was I. “All of this is true,” I said. “I can’t believe how all of this is very accurate.”

I looked at the author of the article: Kara Sanford.

“This reporter, Kara, she must've went inside Creative Works.”

“Yeah,” Nick agreed. “She must've found whatever paperwork was left behind ...”

“And all of the evidence was there,” Grace said. “All of the cots, prison cells, torturing chairs ... all of it was left behind, just brunt.”

“The killer is still at large,” I mumbled to myself.

“Yeah,” Brandon said, hearing me with his dog-life ears.

“At least they don’t know who I am. Otherwise I would have been arrested already. I killed Intex, but the police don’t know that yet.”

Everyone looked worried very suddenly. Then it struck me all over again; I had killed someone. But I reminded myself that this wasn’t just a random criminal, this was Intex. The destroyer of the world, or who would’ve been, if I didn’t stop him. He was a man, or Rextonian, with no conscience. He had to be stopped.

I read on. Everything in the newspaper article was true, right down to every detail. Pretty much everything that there was to possibly know about Creative Works was revealed, except the truth about Rexton. Everything was only linked to Earth, not Rexton; they had no idea about Intex’s origin, so they didn’t know about Rexton. But I just could hardly believe how reporters had found out all of this in just a few weeks. They said that the killer was still at large ...

FBI Agency

An agent sat at her desk and looked at her computer screen. She was reading the Frequent Journal's website. She found the article about the superheroes, and then the one about Creative Works. She gasps and read on. She read the whole article, surprised that the reporter had found out almost everything. It was all accurate.

"Sir!" the agent exclaimed, grabbing the director's attention.

"Yes, agent Harper?" the director asked in reply, walking up to her desk.

Agent Harper pointed at the screen. "That one reporter, Kara Stanford ... she found out about Creative Works. She wrote a story about it and it is all true."

The director looked closely at the screen, already starting to read the story. He shook his head. "We should've stopped her." He paused for a good five seconds. "Or ... maybe the public deserves to know what happened at that building. I say ... good for her. This reporter is ... obviously very smart and takes advantage of her resources." He paused again. "This is our fault, because he didn't gather up all of the paperwork that survived the fire."

The director read the rest of the article.

"She wrote all about how it is very possible that the superheroes came from the Creative Building," Agent Harper said. "She wrote all about Intex, his experiments, how he is likely to blame for that metal man in the city, those werewolves ... and she explained that Intex is now dead and that the killer is still around, most likely one of the superhe-

roes.”

“Or vigilantes.” The director paused. “But she doesn’t have it all ... I say we tell her everything and let her write the stories and tell the public everything; they all deserve to know the truth. But we also need to let her know that these *superheroes* are disobeying the law and need to be arrested. I will get a bill made to tell the local law enforcement to arrest them.”

There were several agents who were sitting at their desks in the same area. They were all working on the same project or mission. The director looked at them.

“Agents Fletcher and Hanson,” the director said. “Meet this reporter, Kara Stanford, and tell her everything. Explain to her that the public deserves to know the whole story. They deserve to know about Intex and how cruel he was.” The director paused and nodded. “Go on now. Go to Manhattan and tell her.”

The two agents got up from their stations and grabbed some notes with them. They headed off to get ready. The director picked up a phone and dialed a number, getting the plane ready for them.

Manhattan, NY

I sat at the couch in the living room, thinking about some of the crimes we had stopped recently. I thought about some of the muggers. The one incident I had to materialize my jacket, because I was unprepared, heading towards work. I stopped the mugger and destroyed my jacket and materialized back into my work clothes. My matter manipulation was getting stronger.

I could create better suits. Maybe one piece suits. I got up from my seat and took a look at Bruce and Mara’s notebook, grabbing it off of the coffee table. Bruce and Mara looked up at me wondering what I was doing.

I flipped through the pages and found a section about me. They had my symbol, making it look three dimensional and they drew some designs for suits. They had two piece suits and one piece suits. I took a look at the one piece suit. It had a metallic three dimensional Rextonian letter A, with wings coming out of it as the symbol on the chest. The suit was made out of cloth, and had line designs separating different colors throughout the suit. The whole suit blended from a turquoise color from the top, to a blue, and then to a purplish-blue color at the bottom. Some of the line designs separated different shades of the colors, and some didn't but just gave it design. The legs had a line design that separated the purple from a dark bluish-grey. For hiding the face, or my identity, it had a hood.

I closed my eyes and held my hands out in front of me. I pictured the suit in front of me. I opened my eyes and looked at the drawing of the suit. I imagined that suit in real life. I imagined the cloth; nice and soft. The smell of fresh laundry. A green energy emitted from my palms. The suit was materializing in the air in front of me. The symbol was made out of leather with a metallic shine to it, maybe with a little rubber mixed into it.

Within just a few more seconds I had created the one piece suit. Everyone was in the living room, watching. I finished materializing the suit and it fell to the ground, folding on itself. I picked it up and stood up, holding it up to myself. Bruce and Mara got up.

“Wow,” Bruce said.

“It looks nice,” Mara said.

“Yeah ... and that was our design!”

I chuckled. “Yeah it was. Thanks for the design,” I said. “My power is just getting stronger, so I wanted to test it out.”

I brought the suit up to my nose and smelled it. It smelled like it just came out of the dryer, smelling fresh. I looked up Bruce and Mara, and then I looked at everyone else; Grace, Brandon, Nick and Rachel.

“I could get started on the rest of the designs for all of you,” I said, but I was looking at Mara and Bruce more. “After all, Bruce and Mara, you two made a lot of these designs.”

“Yeah, let us pick out our favorites and we can have you make them.”

Bruce picked up the notebook and flipped through some pages and made it to his section. He picked out a design and showed it to me. It was basically all purple, with shades of dark blue separated by similar line designs. The symbol was the same as before; the letter *P* made out of abstract waves of purple and blue. It had unrealistic wings coming out of it.

I looked up at Bruce and nodded. I studied the picture and held my hands out and started imagining the suit. Again I thought of the smell, the feel, and the size in my head. Before I knew it, I had created the suit.

Bruce immediately telekinetically picked it up off of the floor, right after it had fallen once I created it. He smelled it and sighed, feeling refreshed by its freshness. I looked at Rachel and she smelled it from where she was sitting; she had her enhanced senses to help her.

Mara picked out her suit and I looked at the notebook, studying her drawing. It was made up of a one piece suit that went down just above her knees. There was a waist band, long wrists bands, and a band that went around the neck of the color, which was wide and lay on the shoulders. All of the bands had a shiny look to it. The symbol was a metallic, three dimensional letter *S* that had faint pictures of a wolf and an eagle inside of it. She had shiny, leather boots to go with it and a mask that covered her eyes, nose and cheekbones. I didn't think that it would conceal much of her identity, but she really wasn't known to anyone and didn't get out that much to worry about it.

I concentrated and pictured the suit in my head and under a minute I had already created it. Mara immediately grabbed it, before it fell to the ground. She held it up to her admiring it. She had a grin from ear to ear.

“This awesome!” Mara exclaimed. “Nice to see in ... real life, not in notebook.”

“You're welcome.”

I concentrated and made her the boots and the mask. She grabbed the boots off of the floor and the mask off of the smaller coffee table that it fell onto, which was next to the bigger table, but was about the same height.

I looked through the notebook to see that only Nick had a design in the works. He was the only one that actually had a superhero name. Then I looked at the S on Mara's suit.

“What does the ‘S’ stand for?” I asked Mara.

“Shift,” Mara replied. “I can shapeshift into different animals. So it means I shapeshift, or short: shift.”

“Oh ... that's a good name for you.”

Frequent Journal

Kara had just come into work from home. She had the day off, but she needed to write several more stories. She had to get them done while they were fresh in her mind.

FBI agents came to her house and explained her more about the truth of Creative Works. Now it was all she could think about. They had told everything, even about how they plan on arresting the superheroes. The superheroes were engrafted with their powers at Creative Works, but they escaped and chose to do exactly what Intex didn't want them to do. They wanted to stop Intex and save the world. They stopped Intex by killing him and they set out to save the world. Kara knew that the FBI despised that, calling it vigilantism. They wanted to stop the heroes, because they weren't working for them, but for themselves.

Kara didn't agree with the FBI, but she didn't say anything about it, she kept it to herself. She appreciated the Avians being around, helping out New York, but the government didn't. They wanted to stop them. Kara knew that the next thing that they would do would be to command the police to arrest them, but Kara didn't think that the Avians would go down that easily. The Avians would flee, Kara just knew it. They wouldn't let the police stop them from saving the world, or at least New York.

Kara wasn't even sure if the police wanted to stop the heroes. At first they were unsure, but lately they seemed to commend the heroes, appreciating their help. However, the government didn't want their help, at least since they weren't working for them.

That was all Kara could think about, but that was not the main point in what she was supposed to write. She was supposed to explain

about Creative Works, Intex and how the superheroes came about, and at the last bit that the heroes needed to be turned in.

Kara began typing away, writing the story. She started from the beginning about Creative Works and Intex. She was going to re-explain everything, not that she had it wrong before, but she didn't want the readers to have to piece it all together.

The Avians' Secret Hideout; Mark's Residence

Bruce and Mara put on their suits and couldn't stop smiling. They loved them so much and thanked me so many times. I had put on my suit and enjoyed how soft it felt. I was proud with how it resulted, proud of myself. My power of creating was getting stronger. My abilities were getting stronger and more developed. It made me wonder about my telepathy, but every time I used it I felt like I was invading people's privacy.

Rachel perked her head up. She was definitely hearing something. She jumped to her feet. She looked at the three of us with our suits on.

"Since you guys have your suits," Rachel started, "then maybe you should go out." She paused. "I just heard an alarm go off at some store, and it's still ringing." Rachel paused to listen. "It's a jewelry store, somewhere close."

Bruce, Mara and I were already ready and we ran out of the door and into the backyard. We ran and jumped into the air, spreading our wings quickly out; Bruce from his back and Mara from her arms. Our suits already had slits in the backs and on the arms for our wings to go through, so we didn't tear the suits. However, my suit didn't have any slits, because I didn't have any wings to use to fly with. I just flew without wings.

Mara had her mask on and I realized that Bruce and my suit didn't have any masks, but it did have a hood. I threw my hood on and noticed

that Bruce already had his hood on; probably when we took off the ground.

From a bird's eye view, we could see enough to find out where the jewelry store was at. I noticed, too, that we could see clearly. I never realized it but those of us with wings, probably had eyesight like birds. Me? I just had good eyesight to begin with; I wasn't experimented on by Intex.

The three of us swooped down in front of the jewelry store. Immediately, people around us on the streets saw us and stopped to watch, knowing that we were about to save something. But they were also astonished, seeing that we had new suits. The robber of the store was still inside. He had a ski mask on, was carrying a bag that had the jewels inside and was trying to open the doors, but he couldn't. The alarm system was smart and locked the doors from the inside and out.

From inside, the robber saw us and gasped. I heard the sound of tired screeching and doors opening of a vehicle. I took a glance to look and saw that there was already a camera crew here, recording us in action. For some reason I was starting to get nervous. I heard the sound of sirens in the distance.

I looked back at the robber inside. Bruce smiled at him and telekinetically split the doors apart, opening them up. We walked forward, into the store and I could feel the presence of the news crew getting closer to us, giving me a chill up my spine.

"Drop the bag," Bruce told the robber.

The robber panicked and drew his gun.

"That's not going to work."

The robber dropped the bag and still had his gun up, aiming it at Bruce, then at me, back at Bruce, then to Mara and then back to Bruce. He was definitely nervous; his ski mask couldn't hide that. He might have

been even more nervous that we were here ... and the police. The sounds of the police sirens were stronger now, and I could hear them getting closer to the store.

“Please,” I told the robber. “Save some trouble for yourself, and put the gun down.”

The robber aimed the gun at me. “No,” he said, his voice shaky.

The police came closer, and two officers came into the store behind us, with their weapons up. One officer had a weapon on the robber, and the other turned his weapons on us.

“Everyone put your hands in the air!” the officer exclaimed, the one pointing the weapon at us.

I raised my hands and Mara did the same. Next, Bruce slowly raised his hand.

“Put down your weapon!” the officer told the robber.

Another police officer ran into the store, aiming his weapon at me. He looked down at my chest and whispered to himself, “Avian.” Without really even trying, I read his mind. *They got new suits*, he thought.

The robber looked at us and at the police. He was completely surrounded. I looked at the counter and saw two employees standing behind it. They didn’t look scared, at least not anymore.

The robber still held his gun down.

“Please, listen to the police,” I said. “Let's not cause any trouble or commotion.”

“You!” an officer yelled at me. “Be quiet.”

I nodded and kept my hands up, closing my mouth.

The robber still had with weapon out and I knew that it was already ready to fire. Bruce took this chance, before anything happened.

“Now, officers. Don’t shoot okay?” Bruce said.

The officers seemed to prepare themselves for whatever. Bruce used his telekinesis, keeping his hands in the air, and yanked the gun out of the robber’s hands. The gun floated through the air and softly landed on the floor at an officer’s feet. The officer looked over at Bruce and looked down at his chest to see the symbol; he knew that it was Psych.

The officer quickly walked up to the robber and cuffed him. The rest of the officers still had their weapons drawn and pointed them at us.

“Okay,” I said. “You stopped the robber, now what's this?”

“It’s us, the Avians,” Mara said.

“We have to place you under arrest,” They said.

“What?” I asked.

“The U.S. government wants us to arrest you for vigilantism,” an officer said. “So keep your hands in the air.”

I looked at Bruce and Mara. We couldn’t just get arrested. I looked at the officers. Just by seeing their faces I could tell that they didn’t want to do this. I started to read their minds. *I don’t want to do this ... why should we arrest them, really? The FBI is stupid for wanting to stop them.*

“Hands on your heads,” an officer told us.

“We don’t mean any harm,” I said.

“We know, Avian.”

I put my hands up, not wanting to make a bad name for myself. I looked at Bruce and Mara and they did the same, following my lead. I looked at them and concentrated on sending them both a thought. *We aren’t going to let them arrest us. Just let them cuff us and when we get outside, let’s take off. I will break my cuffs with my strength, Bruce you use your telekinesis to break yours and Mara’s. Don’t worry, they won’t shoot at us; they don’t even want to arrest us, but they aren’t given a choice.*

Bruce and Mara nodded at us; they got my message. My telepathy was getting stronger too, all of my abilities were. I was starting to be in more control now.

The cops walked up to us and nervously cuffed all of us, putting our hands behind our backs. There were about five police officers with

us, but just three were walking us out. Now they all had their guns put away in their holsters. They walked all of us out of the store. One officer took the robber, and the three had a hand on our shoulders and I could tell that they were nervous; their hands were shaking.

Now we had clear skies above us. I looked at Bruce and Mara and nodded. I heard the click of Bruce's hand cuffs and I pulled my hands apart and broke my cuffs. Bruce's cuffs fell to the ground and mine did next. Bruce was already into the air and he used his telekinesis to push the officer away from Mara and break the cuffs off of her wrists. Mara jumped into the air, spreading her wings out of her arms and started flapping, flying towards Bruce. I took off into the air, following them.

Sure enough, the cops did not shoot at us. I looked back and saw the one officer get up, the one that Bruce knocked down off of Mara. He didn't look angry, but relieved. They watched us all fly off, but none of them reached for their guns. The three of us flew off out of sight.

We circled around several different blocks before diving down into our backyard. Bruce and Mara already sucked their wings back into their backs and arms. The three of us ran into our house, closing the door quickly behind us before anyone would notice.

Everyone was in the living room, ready to hear the story. Bruce and I put down our hoods, and Mara took off her mask.

"So?" Nick asked.

"We stopped the robber," I said.

"Yeah, with the help of the cops," Bruce said.

"But," I continued. "The cops were ordered by the FBI to arrest us, but we escaped."

"FBI?" Bruce asked. "I thought they just said U.S. government."

"They did, but I read their minds and heard the FBI."

“Oh. Well, they cuffed us, but we broke free and flew off.”

“Did they shoot?” Rachel asked, very concerned.

“No,” I said. “Don’t worry. They didn’t want to obey the FBI, but it’s not like they had much of a choice. Otherwise, they would probably be put in jail for denying arresting us. So we just escaped from their grasps and they didn’t shoot, because they didn’t agree with the FBI. In fact ... as we flew off, absolutely none of the police drew their weapons; they kept them in their holsters.”

Bruce and Mara nodded in agreement. Rachel, Nick, Brandon and Grace looked surprised.

“The FBI wants us to stop?” Brandon asked. “Why?”

“Because,” Bruce said. “The police said that we are breaking the law for being vigilantes. I guess if we are going to be saving and protecting this city, we are supposed to be working for the government.”

Nick scoffed. “Yeah right like I'm doing that!”

“I know.”

I took a minute to think and took the time to look at my suit again. “This means that we are going to need to be careful and be one our best behavior. We do NOT want to make any trouble with the police, not any more than we just did.”

Everyone nodded.

FBI Agency

Agent Treadwell sat at his desk, reading his report about the case in Dublin, Ireland. He had been one of the agents they investigated the Creative Works in Ireland. He was going over the metal rod that was used

to kill Intex. There was a fingerprint of the killer on it. It was from one of the heroes, they were fairly certain.

They ran the fingerprint their almost all of the databases to find out who the fingerprint belongs to. The program has been running for about a month now, so it was down to days to finding who it belongs to.

Treadwell was getting anxious, getting the feeling that it was going to be found today. His attention was drawn to a folder that landed on his desk. He looked up at an agent walking away. He recognized the agent from forensics. Treadwell opened the folder and found a paper with the fingerprint. It had come sooner than he thought.

It had a profile of a nineteen year old. It showed the picture. It was a man with dark brown hair, cut short just above his eyebrows and it laid slightly parted off to the side. He was smiling, making himself look innocent, but Treadwell knew that this was the man who killed Intex. He looked at the name: Mark Anthony Wills.

“Director!” Treadwell exclaimed.

The director marched over. “Yes, agent Treadwell?” he asked and looked at the paper. “Is that the identity of the fingerprint?”

“Yes, it is.”

They both read the profile. They saw an address; it showed Ohio.

“Can you find a closer address?” the director asked. “I am certain that he must live in New York now. He can't be in Ohio; the vigilantes are in New York.”

“Yes, of course.” Agent Treadwell was already running Mark through a search within seconds. He found two addresses: the one in Ohio, and one in Manhattan, New York. 22nd street in Manhattan.

“We found him,” the director said.

We were all in the living room, all watching the news. There was a report about us; Bruce, Mara and I. There was a news crew on scene that had gotten all of the footage. The reporter was talking about the whole story and interviewed some officers. They explained that they had to stop the heroes, but the reporter didn't ask about why they didn't shoot at us; they knew why and they didn't need to ask.

I took my suit off as did Bruce and Mara. We didn't want to have them on all of the time. We didn't want to ruin them. We were now in our ... regular, casual clothes.

I got to thinking about the FBI. They ordered the police to arrest us, but obviously the police didn't want to, but they were willing to. We were definitely going to continue to need to be careful on our way home from stopping crime. Anyone could figure out that we are the heroes, by tracking us to our house. Suddenly the back door opened.

Alex walked into the house, closing it behind him. I looked at the time, looking at the atomic digital clock on the wall; it was five pm.

Alex answered our confused looks. "They let me out of work early today," Alex said. "Albert said that I work hard enough."

Bruce smiled. "That Albert," he said. "He's a character."

"Yep," Alex agreed.

Alex walked into the living room and sat down on the couch. He took a look at the TV. "Hey, that's you guys!" he exclaimed. "You got new suits!"

"Si," Mara said. "Mark create them."

“Wow, those look nice,” Alex said. “A lot better than just a hoodie.” Alex sighed, looking disappointed with himself. “I still haven’t thought of a name for myself.”

Suddenly the back and front doors were blown open. Men with guns charged inside. They had us surrounded within seconds.

“Hey!” I yelled.

“Hey!” they yelled back. They all wore suits, looking very professional. They were all wearing body protection. “Put your hands up! All of you!” They yelled. One looked at me. “Yep it’s him!”

One of them pointed at all of us, as if he was counting us. “Yep, there are eight of them total! It’s the Avians.”

“Mark Wills!” one of the men shouted. “You’re under arrest for the murder of Martin Intex. And also for vigilantism and the same goes for the rest of you!”

Alex looked like he was going to bolt. *Alex, don’t!* I thought to him, and he heard me, turning his head towards me. *Just let them arrest us, we have nothing to hide; we are all innocent.*

“Who are you anyway?” I asked.

“We’re the FBI.”

They cuffed us all, and yanked us around, pulling us out of our house, carelessly knocking over anything in their way. They threw us into the back seats of their black sedan cars. They fit three of us into this car, and for the other two cars I wasn’t sure.

“Now sit tight!” an agent told Nick, Grace and I, who were in this vehicle. “It going to be a long ride!”

He threw on his sirens and took off. I sat up in the seat, just as Nick and Grace did. Nick looked furious. He looked at me, asking if we

should escape with his face. I shook my head to him. I focused on Grace and Nick's minds. *We need to let them take us, I thought to them. We have nothing to hide, because we are doing nothing wrong by stopping crimes, except not working for the government ... so let's stay put.*

Yeah. Nick thought. *But you killed Intex. You're a murderer.* Just then Nick chuckled; he wasn't being serious. He hated Intex.

"Hey you!" an agent yelled at Nick. "Be quiet!"

I looked at the seats in front of us; they were turned to face us. This car was sort of like a limousine, where the seats faced each other. There were three FBI agents facing us. In the front there was an agent in the passenger seat and obviously an agent driving.

"So," an agent asked, looking at me. "Mark Wills. You're the leader, aren't you?"

I looked at him and didn't say a word. I didn't even make another head gesture.

"Well?"

I still didn't say anything; instead I just leaned over and looked at the floor.

"Hey!" He stomped the floor. "If you think that you are at all innocent, then you will speak!"

"I have the right to remain silent," I said. "I should sue, because you didn't tell me that. You didn't tell any of us that. You didn't give us our Miranda rights."

The agent laugh. "It doesn't matter; you are in custody of the US Government. You are not getting out of this."

After a long pause I broke the silence, but kept my head down. "You know ... I could easily escape," I told them. "But I'm innocent, so I have nothing to flee from."

"We know one thing for sure; it's that you're not innocent; you killed Martin Intex. You're a murderer."

I gave a soft chuckle. "And ... do you know who Martin Intex was?"

"Someone who should have been brought to justice, but not by you."

"Now," another agent spoke up. "Don't say another word. We have a long drive, and we don't want any commotion. So, yes, you have the right to remain silent."

I smile and leaned back into my sight. I close my eyes just to rest them. There was no way I could fall asleep in here, not even if I wanted to.

So what's the plan, Mark? I heard Grace think.

There is no plan. I thought back to her.

At last we made it to Washington, DC. The agents brought all eight of us into the federal building. They walked us past rows of desk, all with computers that had the screen savers on. They didn't want us to see any classified information. I also noticed that all of the papers on the desks were all neatly stacked and covered by folders.

The agents took us down several hallways and put us each into different prison cells, or holding cells. I looked down the hallway further and could see what looked like rooms, maybe for prisoners who were here for a while. But for now, we had these crappy uncomfortable cells.

The agents un-cuffed us and locked up the cells and started walking off, back from where they came. One agent stopped at my cell. "Now ... stay put," he said. "Later we will be interrogating you; all of you."

I sighed and sat down on the cot in the cell. There was just the cot, a toilet and a sink. There was nothing else in the cells. I looked at the cell next to me; Brandon was in it. Mara was in the one next to him, then Bruce in the next. Across the hall from me were Nick, then Rachel, Grace, and Alex. There was no one else in any of these other cells. If they had any other prisoners, they must've been in their nicer cells.

"Mark?" Brandon whispered. I looked over at him. "Shouldn't we just break out of here?"

I shook my head. "No," I replied. I looked to everyone, looking at each one of us. "We have nothing to hide. We need to be submissive to these guys, because ... our intentions are good. So like the agent told me: 'stay put.'"

Everyone slowly nodded. I could tell how they didn't want to be here, well neither did I, but we couldn't cause any trouble.

We sat there in our cells board out of our minds. I communicated with them through our minds. We talked about random stuff, trying to get our minds off of what was happening. We must've been here for several hours. I started to fall asleep.

It seemed that we had slept overnight there, very uncomfortably. These cots were rock hard. I sat up and pushed on my back, cracking it. I groaned, trying to get the sleep out of me and I stretched. I looked around and saw that Nick, Rachel, Grace, Mara and Brandon were up; Bruce and Alex were still asleep. The two of them were rolling around in bed, not sleeping good at all, thanks to these beds.

Just then I heard the sound of shoes clanging against the tile floor, coming our way. The sound was loud enough to wake Bruce and Alex, because there were no other sounds, nothing if the sounds of an air vent; there didn't seem to be any around.

A man walked in front of our cells, wearing a nice suit, all buttoned up. He stood with confidence. He looked at each and every one of us, looking from cell to cell. He turned his head and looked back at me.

"Mark Wills," he said. "My name is Director Montgomery." He shook his head at me. "You're the leader of this little clan here."

"Is that a question or a statement?" I asked.

"You tell me."

I didn't say anything.

"You are the leader. Otherwise, you wouldn't be the first to talk to me, would you be? Now what are you idiots trying to achieve?"

“I thought you were going to interrogate us.”

“I am.”

“Here?”

“Why not?”

“Because these cots are very uncomfortable.”

The director smiled at us. “Very well.” He walked up to my cell and pulled a key from his pocket. He stuck it into the keyhole, turned it and unlocked the cell, opening it up for me. “Come with me.”

I got up from the cot and walk up to the director. He grabbed me by the arm and took me down the hallway. We turned to the right down to another hallway and stopped in front of the third door. He turned the knob and opened the door.

He pushed me inside. There was a table with two chairs, one on either side. One looked very comfortable, having nice cushion on it, but the other one only looked soft enough to be comfortable for about twenty minutes.

“Sit down, please,” the director pointed at the least comfortable chair, of course.

I walked over to it and sat down without causing any trouble.

“So, Mark, let's begin. Tell me ... how'd you get your powers?”

That's the first question? “From ...” I began. I didn't want to tell him the truth, especially not to this government official. “From birth.”

He made a puzzled look. “Intex put your powers into your mother's womb while you were a fetus?”

I suppressed a laugh. “Believe that if you want.”

“I know that you got your powers from Intex, just as well as the rest of you group.” He took a moment to keep his cool. “Why did Martin give you powers?”

He didn't. “He gave me powers, because he hoped that I would end up working for him.”

“And do what?”

“Intex wanted to rule the world. He wanted to create hybrids by mixing animal DNA into humans. He tried to do that with us, but we all escaped.”

“How did Martin intend for you to work for him.”

“Most of his experiments were engrafted with a personality adjuster, to make them want to work for him. But all of us were taken off of his experiments too soon, or we resisted the urge, or pushed aside the new personalities.”

“Interesting. So ... you killed him?”

“I thought we were going to work through this whole story, not jump around.”

“You escaped! Then you destroyed his building in New York, then went to Ireland and destroyed that building! Next you killed him!” He paused. “You're a murderer! Because you do NOT work for us, you did not serve justice!”

“I didn't intend to kill him,” I said.

“What?” the director scoffed. “Really? Well, didn't you hate him, for what he did to you?”

He didn't do anything to me, but he did to my whole team. “I killed him, because I realized what his true intentions were. He didn't just want to run illegal experiments on humans and engraft them with various animal DNA. He wanted to make all of them his soldiers and command

them to rid all of the normal humans on Earth. He wanted to wipe the planet of everyone so that it would just be him and his *creations*. He wanted to fill the whole Earth with his experiments, using these poor innocent people! If I let him go, then he would go about with this plan of his! No prison would stop him!”

“Are you questioning these prisons here?”

“What you think I can't just walk out of here?”

“Then why haven't you?!”

“Because I'm innocent!”

“No you're not! Sure Martin Intex may have been evil, but it was not your place to kill him.”

“Do you even believe me? Do you believe what Intex was really planning?”

“We know everything. We investigated it all. We know it all. We know everything about you.”

“Are you sure?” I chuckled. “You know *everything* about me?”

“Yes, of course we do!”

“Really? Then why do you believe that I got my powers from Intex? I didn't!”

“Then where did you get your powers from, Mark Anthony Wills?”

“If you really think you know everything about me, then you would know that that's not my real name.”

The director looked confused. He shook his head. “You're just trying to mess with me. Your name is Mark Anthony Wills and you got your powers from Intex.”

“No.” I shook my head, smiling. “That is my name ... on earth. And I didn’t get my powers from Intex; I got them from Earth’s natural radiation.”

“What?” The director paused. “Quit fooling around with me! You killed Intex, taking the law into your own hands. So you're going to be locked up here for a long time. You don’t know your place.”

“Actually, you don’t know *your* place. I was meant to stop Intex, and only I. I was meant to bring down Intex. After all, he and I are from the same soil.”

The director scoffed. “I see what you're trying to say now; you’re from another planet.”

“Yup.”

The director laughed for about ten full seconds. “Right! That’s hilarious!”

“You don’t believe me?” I shook my head. “How else do you think Intex could run these impossible experiments on innocent humans, defying all of Earth’s laws?! It’s because he used all his knowledge and elements that he gathered from Rexton!”

“Rexton?”

“My home planet.”

“Are you all from there?”

“No, just me and Intex.”

“That’s bull! You guys are not aliens! That stuff is so fake!”

“Well, so is have super abilities, but yet here I am.”

The director shook his head and got up from his chair. “I’m getting tired of this nonsense.” He walked around the table and grabbed my arm. “Get up!”

I got up and let him take me back to my holding cell. He threw me inside, but I didn't fumble forward, but stood firmly. Director Montgomery closed and locked the cell behind me. He mumbled something to himself and walked off.

"Well?" Alex asked. "What happened?"

"I told him what he needed to hear," I said, sitting down on the uncomfortable cot. "But I'm not sure that it sunk in."

They kept us locked up for the rest of the day. They only came by to give us some food. None of us wanted to use the bathroom in front of each other; we weren't that close to each other. It was pretty decent food that they gave to us, but this was ridiculous. They had us locked up for a stupid vigilante law.

Throughout the rest of the day no one came down to check up on us. It was completely boring. If only we had TV. I closed my eyes and tried to focus my mind on any agent. I focused down the hallways and into the main room, or what may be called the lobby. I could feel them. I could feel so many moving bodies, walking around all around the room, all busy. I couldn't actually see them, they all felt like silhouettes.

I focused on one mind, finding an agent. It was a girl, I could just tell. Things in the room became a little clearer to me now that I was inside of her mind. *Excuse me?* I thought to her. *This is Mark Wills, the leader of the team that you guys arrested and threw into the holding cells. I just wanted to let you know that we are completely and utterly bored. So could you please get us a nice television for us to enjoy?*

I could feel the agent jerk around in her seat. I could feel her looking all around her.

I'm not anywhere knew you. I'm still in my cell. I'm just communicating through thoughts.

I ... I'll see what I can do, she thought back.

I opened my eyes and my mind came back to the surroundings of the cell bars and my team. Back to boringness. Hopefully we would be getting some TV now. At least we may have something.

In the meantime, I had tons of time to think to myself. The director of the FBI knew a lot about Intex. I was really surprised to find out that he knew a lot about everything already. Despite it all, he believed that we were from Earth; he never considered the possibility of another planet. Intex and I were from Rexton, and I was sent to stop him. Or really I had no choice but to come here, but my father, Bart, gave me a mission while I was here. The FBI didn't know that part, but they didn't believe that I was from another planet; neither did they believe that Intex was.

I looked around the cells, looking at my fellow team. Everyone looked completely bored. Alex sat in his chair, looking miserable and bored at the same time. I could imagine that he was missing Andrea. I looked at Rachel and she looked back at me. We smiled at each other, not sure what to do but wait.

I wished we didn't have to be here, but I didn't want to cause any trouble with the government. All we were trying to do was save the world, one place at a time. Well ... at least New York, for now. I had stopped Intex, but now the government had us locked up because of it. They were so loyal to their laws that they couldn't bend them for us. If it weren't for me, this world would be chaotic. Perhaps I didn't make that clear enough. Maybe I would have another chance to explain that.

I wondered how long we would be here. A few more days? Another week? Month? Year? I guess I thought that we would get out of here sometime, but now I was sure if it would be any time soon.

In the office of Director Montgomery, he was looking over paperwork, dealing with these vigilantes. He hated them for what they were doing. They were not working with the law enforcement, so therefore they were vigilantes, which was illegal, so they were against the law.

But he was thinking about what one agent had thought. One of the agents was stupid enough to admit that he thought that the vigilantes were doing something good. The director disapproved immediately, but now it got him thinking. They had investigated so many reports about these *Avians*. All of the reports turned out the same; they all had records of the Avians stopping some sort of crime, and saving any lives of those whom were victims of the crimes in the works. The Avians took the criminals down and allowed the law enforcements to do their jobs and bring them to justice.

Director Montgomery knew how the Avians were liked by the fellow New Yorkers. They were all thankful for them. None of them feared them, except for the criminals. They looked up to the Avians, looking to them for their source of saving. Even the journalists wrote good stories about the Avians. So then they had explained everything to that one journalist, Kara. They made her understand that the Avians needed to be brought in. They expected her to write that into a story, but she didn't. But it didn't matter now, because now they had them locked up here.

Montgomery had issued this warrant to arrest the Avians, but it wasn't up to him to keep them locked up here. He had to discuss what to do with them from now on. He wanted them locked up forever, but he would just have to see what the higher authorities would intend to do.

A whole week has past. We got no attention, except when they fed us. If we wanted to use the bathroom, we actually had to use the toilets in our cells. It was very embarrassing to each other, but we all had to do it. When we did, we all turned to face the opposite way, and we wouldn't turn back until we gave ourselves the "okay."

At least they gave us some television. It was decent enough to have. They gave us two televisions, one to face each side of the hallway in between our cells. They set the channels to change every hour, show-

ing only the news, cartoons, sports and a weather channel. At least we had something to keep our sanity.

Right now the television was set on a news channel. Right now they were talking about the economy; boring. But at least it was something rather than nothing at all. Just then the TV changed channels to a nature channel. This was not one of the channels that was programmed for us to see. But I knew that there was only one of us that loved nature that much.

Mara. She had used her technopathy to change the channel. I smiled, glad that she changed the channel, because I would some much watch this rather than the boring news about economy. Though it made me wonder about my house and my bills. None of us had shown up for work and it just past the end of the month, so all of our bills were due. But we were home to pay them.

I looked across the hall at Rachel. She looked at me and smiled. She looked at Mara and back at me, and we knew that we were both thinking about how much Mara loved her nature channel.

I wondered about how New York was doing. I had an idea of how, because one of the news channels had news all over the US. It talked about New York, saying that its crime rate was going back up. They said that the Avians had brought it down, but since they disappeared without a trace the crime has gone back up. If only the FBI could see that.

I looked back to Rachel and saw her watching the channel. I was watching it too, but I was thinking at the same time, zoning out; it was all I could do in here. I thought about how easily we could escape. I was sure that the FBI knew that as well. Shouldn't it tell them something if we could escape but chose not to? Just then I saw a worried look on Rachel's face. She perked her head up and stood to her feet; she was hearing something.

“Mark!” she exclaimed. “There's something going on outside.” Nick started to listen, replicating Rachel’s power. “I can hear police sirens ... and gun sounds. People screaming. A bank robbery ... and it sounds like it’s about twenty blocks from here.”

“We can't just stay here and do nothing about it,” I said. “Let's go.”

“We don't have our suits,” Grace said.

“We can't worry about that right now.”

I was already on my feet and I walked up to the bars. I placed my hands on two bars and pulled them apart, bending them. Rachel tried to do the same, but her strength wasn't that strong. Bruce telekinetically separated two bars apart and already stepped out. Nick came out next, replicating Bruce’s telekinesis. Mara transformed her arms into that of a bear and shoved the bars apart, using a lot of effort, but she managed.

I stepped out of my cell and Mara did next. The rest of us help all of out. We all looked at each other, and then an alarm started blaring.

“How do we get out of here?” Alex asked.

I looked around and already saw agents running down the hall. “Up.” I shot upwards, already flying at full speed. I flew right into the ceiling, punching a hole into it with my fist. Everyone else was right behind me, flapping their wings. Nick was holding Brandon.

We made it to another story of the building. Where we were at was the center of an unoccupied room. It looked like an office, but no one was in it. I looked around the room and found a window. I ran towards it and jumped out, flying outside and the rest of my team followed. My arms were cut from the glass, but they healed within seconds.

All of us were already out of the building in so little time. Well so little time when we decided to; it wasn't like we were planning on something, we just did it.

"Alright, Rachel," I said. "Lead the way."

Rachel flapped her wings and flew towards the bank. As a team, we all flew over several blocks. I could fly a lot faster than any of us, but I didn't know where we were going. Washington DC was definitely a city; very busy, but not so crowded. So far no one looked up to see us, not that we were aware of.

We flew all the way to the bank and we now directly above it. This bank had no skylights. So we were going to have to either make a hole of the roof, our go in through the main entrance. In front of all of the entrances were cops. There looked like about twenty police cruisers here, so going through the entrances would be difficult.

I dove fast towards the roof and threw my feet first. I hit the roof hard and broke a hole right through it and through the ceiling. I landed on the floor in a lot of pain. "Man!" I yelled. Wow that hurt, but with just a few more seconds I the pain faded. I sighed.

There was about five robbers here, all standing next to some hostages. There were quite a lot of people here; this was a crowded bank. Three of the robbers aimed their guns at me. One shot me, hitting me right in the shoulder. I backed up a few steps, holding back my scream from the pain.

I looked down at my shoulder. "Hmm, you're not that bad of an aim," I told him. Just a few seconds later the bullet popped out and the wound closed up and healed.

I could see that the robbers looked stunned, even though they wore ski masks. The rest of the team came in through the hole in the roof. Suddenly, things got crazy. We took no time at all to stop these robbers. Two of the robbers started shooting, but Bruce stopped the bullets

in the air and let them drop to the ground. Alex sped around behind a robber and grabbed the gun from him and slid it across the floor, away from him.

Grace quickly jumped over the counter and kicked her leg out, hitting one of the robbers in the chest. He took a few steps backwards to save his fall. Next Grace quickly kicked the gun out of his hands, and Nick replicated Bruce's power and telekinetically took the gun and set it on the floor next to the other one.

Hostages around the bank were looked stunned and hopeful at the same time. They couldn't believe their eyes, but they were happy that it was happening; we were saving their lives.

Grace blocked a punch from the robber, quickly moving her arms around. The robber kicked his leg out and Grace bent backwards at her waist, almost making a ninety degree angle at her waist dodging the kick. She held her hands out and a metal beam was yanked from inside of the wall and bent into a shape made easy for Grace to hold onto. Grace took the beam and wacked the robber across the head, clearing knocking him out and he fell to the ground, falling limp.

A robber turned to Grace and shot at her, but she quickly turned her body out of the way, and she immediately threw her hand out and stopped the bullet while it floated in the air. Metal was the only thing she could control like that, but to everyone else it looked like telekinesis. She turned around and threw the bullet at the robber, hitting him in the shoulder.

Brandon transformed into his werewolf form and went after the robber that Grace threw the bullet at. The robber fell to his feet, trying to get away; he was terrified of Brandon's form. Brandon roared at him, and the robber dropped his gun, regretting it, because he wanted to use it to shoot at Brandon. Too late.

Mara ran towards a robber, already transforming into a bear. She pounced on top of him, and he shot her in the shoulder. Mara acted like she didn't feel it and grabbed the gun out of his hand with her bear mouth. She chomped down on the gun, completely breaking. She spit the gun in the guy's face, or whatever was left of it. She grabbed the robber by his shirt, using her mouth, and threw him clear across the room. She shapeshifted back into her normal self, as a human. She looked at her shoulder and pulled the bullet out groaning. The bullet wound was starting to heal. I remembered that she had accelerated healing, but it wasn't as great as mine, but it would heal.

Rachel charged at a robber and slid like she was sliding towards home plate and tripped him. She immediately grabbed his gun and she broke it with her bare hands. Now *that* she could break with his enhance strength; it wasn't that strong of a weapon. She came up from behind the robber, yanking up to his feet by his collar and whacked him across the head, knocking him out.

Alex was still fighting the robber that he grabbed the gun from and slid across then floor. He wasn't as good with his Kung Fu, because he was still learning. But he was better than the robber and was moving a lot faster than anyone in the world. He dodged every hit and made contact with the robber's face multiple times, but he didn't knock him out.

The fifth robber had a bullet in his shoulder from when Grace threw it at him, using her ability to control metal. Nick walked up to him along with Grace. Brandon had just had his fun scaring him, but he was going to let Nick have his fun. The robber put his hands up, having already dropped his gun. Nick walked up to the gun and stomped his foot down hard on it, breaking it into several pieces. Nick mimicked Bruce's telekinesis and pulled the robber towards him and he grabbed a hold of his collar.

"You are a failure," Nick told the robber, and he nodded at Grace.

Grace looked at Nick and then at the robber and held her hand out at her side. The small metal beam that was now like a bat drew into her hand. She swung it and hit the robber across the head, this time not as hard, but hard enough to immobilize him.

All of us looked at each other. We had brought all of the robbers down. We moved so quickly, not even ten seconds had passed, but we had stopped them. We dragged all of the robbers together to the center of the floor. We looked at the hostages. They all looked relieved.

“Don’t worry,” I told them all. “You’re safe now.”

“Are ... you guys the Avians from New York?” a former hostage asked.

I nodded. “Indeed we are.” I smiled at her. “I’m sorry, but we better go.”

With that, all of us took towards the ceiling, to the hole. Brandon transformed back into his normal form, or human form, and Nick was holding him, carrying him through the hole. The cops already were storming inside the bank. All of us were flying out of the building already and made it outside. We flew several blocks away and slowed up.

“Mark?” Nick asked. “We aren’t going back to the agency are we?”

I sighed. “Well ...” I started. “If we don’t ... what message will that give the FBI? Maybe if we go back, they’ll see us differently and hopefully change their decision with us. We have to go back; otherwise they will hunt us down forever.”

Everyone nodded, even though they didn’t want to go back. We all flew back towards the FBI agency. Nick was still the one holding Brandon.

“But,” I said. “If they don’t change their mind, we can always escape again.”

We all flew back to the building and went through the same window we escaped through. There were several agents there. They held their guns out, ready to shoot. Bruce and Nick threw them out of their hands. We ran to the hole in the floor and landed in the hallway of the prison cells. There were fewer agents there. They all threw up their weapons, just as we all went back into our cells. They all looked very confused.

I bent my bars back to the way they were. Mara turned her arms into bear arms and bent hers back, and then she changed her arms back to normal. Brandon transformed into his wolf form and bent his back, and then changed back. Bruce and Nick telekinetically bent their bars back, along with the rest of our cells.

All of the agents stood there, wondering why the heck we came back. They slowly lowered their weapons, so confused. Director Montgomery ran into the hallway and saw that we all had come back. He was confused as well.

“Why did you guys come back?” he asked, kind of demanding.

“We went off to stop a bank robbery,” I told him. “We saved about a hundred people.”

“But ... why'd you come back?”

I didn’t answer at first. “I’ll let you figure that out.”

The director shook his head, furious with us, upset that we left in the first place. “No TV for you guys anymore!” he looked at the agents. “Get these TVs out of here!” With that the director gave us all snotty looks and walked off angrily.

“Oh great,” Nick said. “We lost our TVs; our source of entertainment,” Nick said sarcastically.

We all gave soft chuckles and the agents pushed the TVs down the halls on their carts.

Montgomery sat at his desk, thinking about how easily the Avians escaped the building. It made him hate them even more. He was angry with them, but he needed to keep his cool; any outrage could cause him to lose his job. He couldn't afford that.

All he could think to do of at the moment was take away their TV, but he knew that that wouldn't stop them. Somehow they always knew of something bad going on, they knew trouble was around. It was as if they could see it coming, or hear it coming. He was fairly certain that at least one of them could hear anything from a far range. That was how they always knew of crimes that would be happening at that moment.

He was starting to get a little confused. They had all left to stop that crime. There was a bank robbery about twenty blocks or so away from the federal building. They left so easily. They went and stopped the crime and allowed the police to take care of the rest. They quickly took off and came back here and they went right back into their cells. Montgomery just didn't understand why they did that. Did they want to look good? Montgomery wasn't going to let anything cloud his judgment. They had committed another crime; they had escape from their custody.

But yet that had come back. He shook his head and rubbed his forehead. It seemed that all they did was help people ... stop crimes ... They never seemed to intend to hurt anyone. He knew what was coming. The higher authorities would want them to go. They were willing to make an exception with vigilante laws with these *Avians*. Montgomery knew that he really didn't have a say in this. He had to think of something.

He had to create a plan.

We were now back to being bored, but at least we had time to think. We had recently just had a lot of action, so now we were recalling back to it, reliving it. It gave us something to think about, instead of just sitting on our cots board out of our minds.

I wondered if coming back would really change the FBI's decisions about us. The director seemed confused about why we came back, but he was not happy that we left in the first place, of course. But I wasn't sure that he changed his view about us. We were just going to have to wait and see.

The next morning, we all woke up when they got us some breakfast. The food they were giving help was slowly getting better, but today it was worse. It was spelt flour pancakes and mashed, grey eggs. It tasted awful, especially the pancakes. Spelt flour tasted awful and they didn't give us any syrup. This was our punishment for escaping.

I began to think that they were never going to let us go. They didn't even take us to court in the first place, and it has been several weeks. We were missing our winter. Time was going by outside, but we were trapped in here. It was so depressing. I was worried about what would happen with our house and our jobs. I knew that if we escaped again, the government wouldn't support us; they wouldn't take care of our problems for us. But if we stayed, would it make a difference? I wasn't sure. Right now it didn't seem like they were reconsidering anything.

Director Montgomery walked down the hallway and stopped in front of my cell. He just glared at me for a long time before saying anything. "I would like to speak with you," he said. He pulled a key out of his pocket and unlocked my cell, opening it up.

I got to my feet and walked towards him. I let him lead the way. He grabbed my arm tightly, but it didn't hurt. He took me to a similar room as before; an interrogation room. I sat down on the least comfortable chair and the director sat in the other chair. We were separated by a

table in the room. There were cuffs connected to the table and he cuffed me to them.

“So,” director Montgomery said. “We looked into that bank robbery and saw the footage of the cameras. It seems that you saved everyone in that bank and left the cops to handle the rest of the situation.” He paused and sighed. “All of the hostages appreciated you and your group’s help. They wanted to give their thanks ...”

“But?” I asked, trying to see where he was getting at.

The director kept a straight face, not showing whether he was mad or glad, happy, or sad. “But, I still don’t agree that it was your place. It is the police’s job to handle the crimes.”

“But, what would’ve happened if we didn’t show up?”

“The police would’ve handled it.”

“Really? What if people died?”

“Someone did.”

“Well, that must’ve been before we got there.” The director didn’t say anything; I was right. “Some job the police did, but ... I am not trying to say anything bad about the police, but they could use our help. But in the end, we always let the police handle the rest of the situation.”

The director inhaled deeply through his nose and exhaled. “I understand what you guys intend to do. You want to help out ... but what you don’t understand is that it’s illegal. It’s vigilantism. You are not working for any law enforcement.”

“What does it matter? Are you trying to tell me that we should become cops to justify our actions?” I asked calmly.

“No, I’m not saying that.”

“Then what?”

The director shook his head and remained silent. He was silent for about a minute. I hadn't anything else to say so I didn't speak.

"I know that your intentions are good, because you came back," Director Montgomery said. "You left to save some people from a bank robbery, which could've become a disaster, and you came back here. I can see that you don't want to cause any trouble, but you also don't want to let crimes happen. Let me tell you ... I understand your concerns." He paused for a moment. "But tell me about your good intentions with killing Intex?"

I sighed, smiled and put my head down, looking at my feet. I looked back up at the director. He was waiting patiently for my reply. "Do you not believe what I told you earlier?"

He scoffed. "Of course not."

"About what?"

"Being aliens. That's total nonsense."

"Okay. But what about Intex trying to wipe out the planet."

"I don't know if believe that."

"Okay," I said, taking a minute to think. "Let me try to explain this. What do you think Intex was trying to achieve with creating human hybrids?" I asked him, and he didn't reply, but he was thinking about it. "Sure you could say that he was engrossed in science, so he wanted to experiment with it. That's how he started, but his desires changed. He became to despise humans. He wanted to either alter their DNA, adding a mix of animals, or wipe them out. He chose some humans to experiment on, and he planned on destroying the rest of the planet. He wanted all of Earth to himself."

I let the director think about that for a minute.

“He tried the same thing on Rexton, but they casted him to Earth, banishing him. So instead, he tried to achieve this on Earth.”

“I told you I don’t believe about you two being aliens.”

“Well ... what about Intex?”

The director thought about it, but whatever he came up with he didn’t share. It became silent for several minutes.

“Okay,” I said, breaking the awkward silence. “I know that I shouldn’t have killed Intex, but should’ve got him locked up or something. I just feared that if I did that, he would only escape and try to continue with his plan to destroy the Earth. I feel guilty for killing him, in fact. I only did it because I heard a voice of my father from Rexton in my head tell me to. I know that that must sound crazy, but it’s true. Plus, he hasn’t talked to me since, only because that’s all he wanted is for Intex to be dead. Now that he is, the voice has stopped talking to me. But now that he’s dead, I have the chance to make things right, to make a difference. My team and I have been lowering the crime rate in New York in that short little time, but now that we are here it’s going back up. We need to be out there, saving people, saving lives.”

The director glared at the table, thinking. “You know, I just wanted to have this talk before letting you go.”

“What?”

“All charges against you and your *‘team’* are being dropped.”

“Really? Well then why did we have this talk?”

“I wanted to hear you say it; I wanted to hear you say that you felt guilty.” He looked up at my face, showing a hint of anger. “Congress officials have gone over it and determined that all you ever do is try to make peace and fight crime and save lives. They made an exception with your team. So they are letting you go.”

Finally! “Hmm, but what about our home, our bills, and our jobs.”

“Don’t worry about that. We are taking care of it and we will explain it to them, to your bosses.”

“Explain what?”

“We’ll think of something.” He paused. “But we are going to need to know your whereabouts at all times.”

“What, you want us to report where we are at all times?”

“No, you won’t have to do that. We will inject all of you with a serum with nanotechnology trackers. That’ll enable to know where you are at all times.”

“At all time?”

“For about a year, yes. In a year, they’ll wear off.”

The director got up from his seat and pulled his keys out of his pocket. He un-cuffed me from the cuffs from the table. He walked me back to the cells, but he didn’t put me back in the cell.

“Good news,” the director told the rest of my team. “You are getting out of here.”

Everyone stood up from the cots.

“No way,” Alex said.

“Yes, but we are going to inject all of you guys with trackers. We are going to need to know your whereabouts at all times. I’ll let Mark explain the rest of the story to you all.”

The director went from cell to cell, unlocking them all. He let us push the cells open ourselves.

“Alright, all of you ...” the director started. An agent walked towards us carrying a box. He opened the box and inside were needles with the serums. “Okay, now I'm going to need your cooperation.”

We all stood still as the director injected all of us with the serums. He stuck the needles into our necks, giving us a very uncomfortable feeling. We all felt dizzy for just a second before turning back to normal.

“Okay,” the director said. “We'll lead you out now. And Mark ... you better stop all of those metahumans, since it's your fault that they're here.”

“It's not my fault,” I defended myself.

“It's Intex, whatever. But he's not here anymore, so just do as I said.”

“No problem.”

FBI agents took us all of the back home. It seemed to look just like the way we left it a month ago. It was all strange how they released us, but the congress had made a decision. A good decision I might add.

“So, Mark,” Rachel said. “How did you get him to change his mind?”

“I didn’t,” I replied. “The congress decided to let us go, as long as they knew where we were at all times.”

“Then why did he talk to you again?” Alex asked.

“He said that he wanted to hear my say that I felt guilty for killing Intex.”

Brandon scoffed. “Intex deserved it anyway, but even if you let him live —”

“I know. I told him that; if we let him go, he would escape from whatever prison and destroy the Earth anyway.” I paused. “Anyway ... he said that they would cover for us with our house and jobs for the while that we were gone. So we don’t have to worry about that.”

“Just like that?” Grace asked.

“Yeah. But, the director didn’t seem too happy about it, but he wasn’t holding it in. But it was the congress that made the decision.”

We all walked into the living room and took a seat. We all finally seemed relaxed. We all looked at each other, all happy that this was over. Alex turned on the TV and we started watching some stupid show.

“How’s some coffee sound?” Alex asked.

“That sounds great,” I said.

It was great to be back home.

FBI Agency

Montgomery hung the phone up. He smiled. The agents just brought the Avians back to their house. He was looking at his computer screen in front of him. There were dots on a map of Manhattan, New York on screen. There were eight dots; the location of all of the Avians.

He was smiling because he had the Avians fooled into thinking that it was the congress' decision to put trackers into them, but it was in fact his idea. The congress knew nothing about the FBI know the Avians whereabouts. Montgomery wanted to know where the Avians were all of the time. He was looking for them to slip.

He clicked a button on the keyboard, switching modes in the program. The program on screen shrunk the image of the map down to a small box. There was about five other boxes the size of the map. There were videos of the Avians. Videos showing live footage of cameras installed in their house. The cameras were installed by an agent that Montgomery assigned to do; it was done without the congress knowing.

The cameras were so small, that there was no way possible that the Avians would discover it. Montgomery was sure that they didn't have a power to discover that. Since the cameras had wide lens, they showed the whole rooms that they were installed in. There was no need to zoom in or pan around; so there was no worry about any of the Avians using their super hearing to hear the cameras moving, panning around.

Montgomery's smiling grew wider, because of seeing how clueless the Avians were to the cameras. They were so oblivious to their presences in their house. There were four bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, two bathrooms, and the basement. So that was a total of eight

cameras; there were cameras in every room, two in the basement, but they had respected some privacy so had none installed in the bathrooms.

Montgomery was sure that he had no reason to worry about not having cameras in the bathroom. He could listen in on everything that happened in that house, except in the bathrooms. It wasn't likely that they would secretly say something in the bathrooms, because they didn't even know about the cameras. Montgomery was so sure about it.

Mount Vernon, NY

Hank flipped through his papers. He had visited Dawn several times now. He recorded all of his findings. The radiation that Dawn was infected with had given her super abilities, just had it did to Tristan. Most of the times that Hank visited Dawn Tristan was there. He was supporting Dawn, knowing exactly what she was going through.

Dawn had told Hank that she wanted the power gone. He could blame her. She had one of the worst powers to have; a power of destruction. She was afraid to touch anything without destroying it. She was learning to control it and only use it at will, but still ... she had outbursts and destroyed things. She always wore her gloves to be safe.

Hank could only imagine that fear that Dawn was always living with. She was afraid that she would kill her son, her only family left. Hank was determined to find a cure to this; something to suppress that radiation inside of her.

Recently, Hank had read about the newspaper article from Manhattan; the one about the Creative Works building. He had done a little investigation with that building himself. It found that it was a strange building and that was where he had found the source of the radiation. He touched the pile of metal shards, so he was sure that he was infected too, but he had no idea what he may have gotten, but maybe he got nothing at all. After all, it was in Manhattan and it was exposing all of Manhattan,

but only a few people had gotten super abilities. So it couldn't have possibly affected everyone.

Hank was sure that the pile of metal shards used to be some sort of machine that projected the radiation. Maybe the radiation had in time deteriorated the machine and destroyed itself. But it still was the strongest source of the radiation.

Now Hank had known more about the Creative Works building. The owner and founder of that building was evil. He ran illegal experiments on humans, young innocent humans. He had combined animal DNA into them, creating human-animal hybrids. Hank was now more certain than ever that everyone getting powers was the result of something in that building. Martin Intex had done something with that machine that was now a pile of shards and projected this radiation to give people abilities.

Hank wished that he understood it more. He wanted to figure out how to suppress it, for Dawn. She had the worst power to possibly have ... well maybe not the worst, but it was pretty awful. Dawn couldn't have it. She always lived in fear of killing someone. Hank didn't want her to have that all of her life. He needed to create a negating serum, a suppressing serum of this radiation ... or energy ... or virus. That was basically what it was really. It was a virus more than anything else. It took over part of the body and gave it super abilities. Hank was trying to figure out to disable it from doing that.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the front door. He practically jumped. He was so focused on his work that the sound of a knock startled him. He neatly stacked his papers up and left his desk. He walked up to the front door, leaving his lab. He opened it and saw two men, both wearing expensive suits. He knew exactly who they were; the FBI.

"Yes?" Hank asked.

“Hank,” one of the agents said. “I think you know who we are. We would like for you to come with us.”

“No,” Hank said, backing up. He closed the door, but the agent stuck it foot out, stopping him.

“I don't think you understand, Hank. You don't have a choice.” He paused for a second. “Take all of your research and bring it with you. I believe you know what research we are talking about.”

“Why do you guys need me?”

“Because you are going to create a super ability negating serum for us. We need to ... never mind. That's all you need to know. We need you to create that serum.”

“Umm ... maybe you don't already know this, but I'm already trying to do this.”

“And you haven't succeeded. That's why you need to come with us. We will give you our tools and resources. You will have this serum completed in a week at the most.”

Hank sighed, giving up on trying closing the door on them. He had worked with the government before, as one of their scientists. He knew the drill. If he was ordered to do something, he had to do it. No questions asked. These agents were just doing their job. They were ordered to bring Hank in, so Hank had to come in, but he did not want to work for the FBI again. He was done with that. Hopefully it would only last for this week.

“Okay,” Hank said. “Let me get my stuff.”

The next morning was a Wednesday. We had all slept in. We just had to enjoy our sleep, being in our own beds. Alex missed work that morning, but we were sure that the bosses would understand one more day not being at work. After all, the FBI said that they would explain something to all of our bosses. Sure they would understand one more day of being gone.

There was no way any of us would be able to work right anyway. We would have been so tired, but we got our sleep, finally. They say that you can't make up sleep, but we have felt this great in a month; not since we were sleeping at the agency. Their beds were so uncomfortable.

I finally got out of bed and looked over at Rachel's bed. She was already up and out of it, nowhere in the room. She must've been in the living room, where all of us went when we weren't in our rooms. I looked at my alarm clock; it was a little past ten. I was only a little shocked to see that time. I hadn't slept in that long since I started working.

I thought back to those days when we had summer breaks and other breaks in school. We would sleep in for so long on those days. We tried to enjoy our sleep, because we got up so early for school. We really did get up early for school, because I always waked up later for work now. I normally started work at eight for the earliest. So that meant waking up at seven. When we had school, I had to wake up at five thirty. School was cruel. But I had been done with it for a while now, so I pushed it aside. I was done with it.

I walked out of my room and down the hallway into the living room. Almost everyone was up. I looked at all of the bodies in the living room. Brandon and Nick were missing; they were still sleeping. I looked in the kitchen and found that Alex was making breakfast; what a shocker.

I walked over to the seat open next to Rachel on the couch. I sat down next to her and kissed her softly on the lips. I pulled away and she smiled at me. She sighed and I knew what she was thinking; he were finally done with the FBI, except for them knowing where we were everywhere we went. Not that it was a big deal. Rachel rested her head on my shoulder. We started watching the TV and obviously the news was on. We had to catch up on what we missed while we were lock up.

We were also waiting for anything that needed saving. Right now, it was Bruce, Mara and that had something that looked more like a suit. The rest of us still had jackets; the rest of the team still had to make up designs.

“Alright,” Alex said from the kitchen. “Breakfast is done and already to eat.” He looked at the clock on the microwave.

We all got up from the couch and walked into the kitchen, gathering around the table. We each grabbed a plate and fork for ourselves. We couldn't all sit at the table, so some of us ate at the counter and in the living room, sitting on the couches. Most of time we didn't eat at the same time, so we never had this problem before.

Alex wasn't sitting at the table, but was standing by himself, in between the table and counter. He was quickly eating, already finished with three pancakes. He just finished his fourth one, eating fast. He ran over to the drinking water faucet and poured himself a glass of water. He gulped it down and put the glass cup in the sink.

“Alright, guys,” Alex said. “I'm going over to Andrea's house. I don't want her to be worried for this long.”

I looked at Alex and smiled at him. I nodded and he took off, closing the door behind him, and he disappeared from our sights.

FBI Agency

The agents took Hank into the federal building, leading the way. Hank knew most of his way, remembering where everything was, having been there before. He noticed that very many things and rooms have changed, but for the most part he knew where he was.

They took Hank to a lab, different from the one that he used to work in. He had the whole lab to himself, whereas before he had worked with other scientists. Hank knew that this was because only he would know how to create this serum.

The agents allowed for Hank to take it from here, because he knew what he needed to do. "Director Montgomery will be here to brief you shortly," and agent told Hank.

Hank nodded and the agents left the lab, closing the door shut. He sighed and set his box of things onto a countertop. He shook his head. He had wanted to create this serum, but not here. Hank knew that he may very well be able to create the serum in a week here, because of all of the advance technology here. The FBI had a computer program that he could use to simulate his formulas, but at home he had to physically test his formulas; so it would take a lot longer.

Hank thought of Dawn. She really wanted to not have her power. She was the reason that he started this in the first place. One of the reasons, anyway. He had wanted to do this before meeting Dawn, but because of Dawn he wanted to do this sooner. Now the government wanted him to do this. Hank could only think of one reason why the government wanted him to do this for them; they wanted to stop the Avians. He had heard about the issuing of the arrest warrant for the Avians, or the vigilantes. The government wanted them stopped, and they were going to use Hank.

Hank knew that the Avians were good people. Many New Yorkers depended on the Avians. They were starting to give people hope. Hank

believed that all they wanted was to help people and do good things for everyone. But the government couldn't see past their one crime of vigilantism. It was all up to Hank to rid the heroes of their powers; no one else could do it, but him. Since he didn't want this for the heroes he had to think of a plan.

Manhattan, NY

Kara sat at her desk at the Frequent Journal. For the past few weeks, all she should think about was the Avians. She had learned very much about them, and about how they came to be. She learned about Creative Works and Intex. Martin Intex was the reason they existed. A psychopath had turned these people into heroes, only because they despised him so they wanted to do everything in their power to not do what Intex wanted. But now he was dead.

Now the heroes were brought in by the government. The FBI had arrested them. Now all of the crime in New York was rising. Right now she was writing a story about it. She wanted to mention that the FBI had made a mistake by arresting the heroes, but she wasn't sure if she would get in trouble or not by saying it. She had already typed it, but she was ready to delete it. Then she thought about her constitution rights. She had the freedom of speech. She decided to keep that in the story, having every right to express her opinion.

The editor walked past her, taking a glimpse of what story she was writing. He smiled as he past and nodded to himself. He saw the title of the story. Kara knew that his expression meant that he approved of the story. Surely, he felt the same as any other New Yorker; he was fed up with the FBI's decision to arrest the heroes. All it had ever caused was more crimes and trouble. The crime rate was going back up, because of the FBI.

That made Kara wonder: Who was the FBI more concerned about? Fellow people in New York, or the Avians? Everyone lives in New York were being put back in danger, only because the Avians were

stopped from protecting them. She was starting to get angry all over again.

We were back to watching the news, having finished breakfast. We waited for any report of some crime happening at the very moment that we were watching it. Surely there had to be something happening right now, but there were no reports yet on TV.

Bruce and Mara were talking to each other, like they used to. But they were closer together than before, literally. They were separated for so long at the FBI building. They leaned against each other and every other minute they kissed each other. I chuckled to myself, thinking back to how they got together; Bruce always liked Mara, but Mara didn't always like Bruce. She thought that he was a bit too silly. But now she loved him for who he was. They loved each other.

Suddenly my attention was drawn to Rachel. She jumped up from the couch. Not even a second past and I jumped up to. Suddenly, my suit had already materialized over top of me. I couldn't believe that I had created it just like that, without really thinking about it. And it happened so easy.

Rachel looked like she was listening to something. She had that expression on her face when she did. "I hear punching," Rachel started. "I'm trying to figure out where it's coming from."

Nick stood up and absorbed Rachel's power of super hearing. He tried to listen too. Rachel was starting to look frustrated with herself, because she couldn't figure out where it was coming from.

"Let's just get out suits on right now," Rachel said. "Let's go and I could try following where the sound is coming from."

The rest of us got to our feet and went to our rooms. I already had my suit on, so I stayed put. Everyone returned from their rooms with

their suits on. Everyone was here, except Alex. He was at Andrea's. We all ran out the back door and looked around to make sure no one was watching. Like always, no one was.

Everyone who had wings expanded them. Mara and Grace extended their wings from the inside of the arms. Everyone jumped up, starting to flap their wings right away. I could tell that it was difficult to start right off, trying to fly right into the air without a running start. I grabbed Brandon and easily lifted both of us into the air, already in flight.

We allowed Rachel to lead the way, flying out in front. She flew with a look of certainty. She knew how to follow the sound, but she couldn't tell exactly where it was.

"It sounds like it's coming from inside a small building," Rachel told us, still leading the way.

We continued to follow Rachel and she spun her head directly to her right.

"It's coming from that house."

We landed in front of a house, which was right next to very many other houses on this street. Suddenly I could hear it. It was loud enough for anyone to hear. There was a fairly decent crowd walking around on the sidewalks. They all stopped to watch us. They were all surprised to see us.

The sounds were coming from inside the house. Sounds of yelling, screaming, and hitting. Rachel charged towards the house and banged hard on the door multiple times; it was hard enough that it took a few chips out of the wood.

Suddenly the sounds of yelling, screaming, and punching stopped. All of us were backed away, except for Rachel. She stood firmly in front of the door, looking determined, despite having her hood over her head like the rest of us.

Someone came to the door, looking irritated. “What!” the guy asked very impatiently. Just then he realized who we were and who Rachel was and his expression on his face fell. He was dumbfounded and stunned that we were here.

“What do you think you are doing?” Rachel asked.

The guy started stammering. Rachel looked past him, over his shoulder and saw a woman lying on the floor, looking terrified. Her face was all beat up. There were several kids inside too, all of them were scared. Just then Rachel’s eyes were drawn to one child in specific. He was lying on the floor, not moving.

“What have you done?!” Rachel demanded, and she pointed at the child.

The man didn’t even turn to look, because he already knew who Rachel was referring to. “I ... uh ...” the man stammered again. He couldn’t explain himself.

Whatever happened must've been a result of a big argument. Or maybe this guy was just really abusing and hit these poor family members just for the fun of it. We all could tell that this guy was mean.

Brandon turned and got the attention of someone standing, watching from the sidewalk. He looked curious, waiting to see what we would do.

“Hey,” Brandon said. “Could you do us a favor and call the police for us?”

The guy nodded, pulling out his phone. He looked a little confused as to why we needed the police, as if we couldn’t handle this.

“We need the police to take care of this situation when we are done,” Brandon finished.

The guy understood and the police had already replied. He started to explain the situation.

I walked towards Rachel and the abusing father and husband. "Please come with me," I asked of.

The man hesitated, knowing who I was. I was Avian, the leader of the Avians. I had the team named after me. He looked a little worried.

"What if I don't?" he asked, showing a little fear.

I twitch one of my fingers and the man flinched just a little. I would've smiled by the sight of it, but I held it in, controlling my face. "You will be brought into the police no matter what you do. But you are not getting away, so just please cooperate and come with me."

The man slowly left the opening of the door and walked towards me. Immediately Rachel and Nick ran inside, followed my Mara. They immediately checked on the kid lying on the floor. Rachel was listening to his breathing and heartbeat, but it didn't look comforting. The boy was not moving. Nick placed his hands on the boy's chest and closed his eyes, concentrating.

The father and husband looked at the children, showing a hint of anger, but his expression change to sorrow. I could tell that he didn't mean to hurt his child, at least not that much. But I knew that from the looks of everyone in that house he had abused them all. They all had old and fresh cuts, scars and bruises.

I grabbed the man by his arm to keep him from going anywhere, and he flinched, but realized that I wasn't going to do anything.

"You better hope that Vortex can save that poor boy," I told the man, keeping my grip around his arm.

The man did look worried, but I knew that he had hurt them all purposely, but hadn't expected it to get this bad.

I looked inside the house and watched Nick continue to try to save the boy. Rachel continued to listen for any sign of life from the boy. The mother and wife was crying, ignoring the pain that it caused from the bruises on her face. She would have a worse pain if her child died, which was worse than physical pain.

Mara really looked worried. She was a very caring person, but all she could do was watch and hope that Nick could save him. Nick looked like he was starting to doubt himself. But he wasn't giving up. He placed his hands on the boys head for about ten seconds. Then he placed on hand back on the boy's chest, keeping his other hand on his head. He concentrated trying to heal the poor boy. With his power of vasokinesis, he could control blood, wounds, injuries and pain. All of that was basically the power of healing. But right now ... it wasn't enough. The boy was not showing any signs of life.

The police showed up in two cruisers. They were surprised to see us there. I could tell that they were considering if we escaped from the FBI. The FBI hadn't told them yet that we had been freed. But they pushed aside their confusion for now to focus on the matter at hand.

They saw the man I had in my grip and the mother with her three children inside the house. They saw the boy lying unconscious on the floor. Two cops ran inside the house, and the other two cops stayed with me.

"What happened?" an officer asked Nick.

"He was beat to ..." Nick didn't want to say the next word. The mother sobbed. Nick tried to do something, keeping his hands on the boy. "I'm trying to heal him. I have ... vasokinesis, but ... nothing is happening." Nick stopped talking to focus on his power.

Rachel looked up at the officers. She pointed at the father and husband that I was holding onto. "He was abusing everyone in this house," Rachel said. "I could hear him from a mile away. I heard the screaming, yelling and hitting. We came here and found everything the way that it is now ..." Rachel looked at Nick and at the boy.

The officers watched Nick, hoping that he could do something.

"I can't," Nick said. "It's not working." He started to pull his hands away.

"No!" the mother exclaimed. She grabbed Nick's hands and put them back on her son. "Put your hands back on him! You-you hafta help him!" she sobbed. "Save him!" She was demanding.

Nick put his hands back on the boy, but he wasn't having any more faith in himself. He didn't think that he could bring the boy back. He was already gone when they arrived. He may have been dead for too long.

An officer took the man from my hands. He nodded to me. "Thanks, but I'll take it from here."

"No problem officer," I said and I let him take the man.

The officer cuffed the man, but looked back at the boy on the floor.

Nick kept his hands on the boy, still trying. He didn't want to give up, but he didn't really have a choice either, because the mother didn't want him to stop. I had a feeling that Nick wouldn't be able to bring him back. His power should've worked by now. Suddenly, I had an idea.

Clear your mind, I thought to Nick. Focus your vasokinesis on the boy. Concentrate. You can heal him. You can! Clear your mind.

I wasn't sure if that would help Nick out at all, because I wasn't sure if Nick's worry was diminishing his power or not, so I gave that a shot. Nick didn't seem to notice that I spoke into his mind, but I knew that he heard me, because I started to see something determination in his face.

I looked to the boy and wondered if I could send a thought to him, considering that he was pretty much dead. I tried anyway. *Wake up! You have a family and mother to go back to!* I thought to the boy, but I wasn't sure if it went through. *You have to come back to your mother. She loves you so much and she can't lose you. You can't lose her; you must come back to her. You must wake up!*

I wasn't sure if the boy heard any of that, but it was worth a shot. I knew that there was more than just communicating by thoughts with

telepathy, there was also the power to command someone to do something. I wondered if it would work with this situation.

Walkers on the sidewalks stopped and stared. There was about twenty different people lining up and standing side by side to watch. Thirty people we crowded behind them, watching, waiting for something to happen. They were blocking off the road. The four officers were all watching Nick. Every one of us was watching, hoping.

The mother was crying, Mara was crying, and so were the siblings of the boy. The father was starting to cry, regretting what he had done, but it was already too late to take any of it back. Nick closed his eyes and willed his power to do something.

Suddenly there was a gasp of air coming from the boy. Then violent coughing. Nick took his hands off of the boy. The boy sat up, coughing and breathing heavily, in and out. There was a sigh of relief that came from almost everyone, even from the father. The officer that had cuffed the father took in the police car and shut the door. It felt like there was a huge boulder on my shoulders and it had just fallen off. I felt so relieved that the boy had lived. Nick had saved him.

The mother and son braced themselves, hugging and kissing each other so much. The mother was crying even more, hugging and kissing her son over and over. She was so relived and happy that he was alive.

“Thank you!” the mother told Nick. “Thank you; thank you; thank you so much. Thank you for bringing me back by son. My ... my poor son. My son.”

“You're welcome,” Nick said, smiling. He looked so relieved. He sighed and leaned back and let himself fall onto his back on the floor. I read his lips as he whispered to himself. *“I did it.”* Just then he looked at me. *Mark, you said something to me. Didn't you? In my head?* He thought.

I smiled, looking at him. I nodded. *Yes, I did.* I told him in thoughts. *It seemed to have worked.*

Thank you, Mark. It helped.

Well, I also told the boy to wake up and come back to his family, back to his mother.

You talked to the dead boy?

Well, you know even after you die, your brain is still functioning? I must've got to him.

"Mom," the boy said.

The mother brought her son away from her chest just a little bit. "Yes, dear?" she asked her son, still holding him, hugging his head.

"God spoke to me," the boy told his mother. "He told me to wake up. He told me to come back to you that I couldn't leave you. He said that you couldn't lose me, because you loved me so much."

His mother sighed and hugged him again. "Well, thank you for listening to God."

I smiled. I had told him. Nick sat up and I looked at Nick and he was already looking at me. He smiled at me, nodding. We understood each other; my thoughts did get to the boy, he did hear me.

The police officers arrested the father and were already taking him to jail. They had shooed off all of the rubberneckers. They were all blocking the street and they told them to scatter.

More police came to the scene. The officers that were there first talked to the mother. They made sure that she was alright and she was now. They tried comforting her and she never looked so happy in her life. The officers asked her questions and she made it clear that her husband had abused them all, and for so long. She explained that he didn't have any patience. He got angry over the littlest things and it only got worst from there.

"You know," an officer came up to me. "I was about to arrest you guys ... again, but I decided that I'm not going to. Because if it weren't for you guys that boy would be dead." He paused, giving him time to breathe. "We still have the warrant to arrest you guys. Last time the FBI arrested you guys, but now you are back. Could you please explain that to me?"

I smiled at him. "We did not escape from the FBI," I said. "They let us go. I'm surprised that they did not explain everything to you guys yet. That should've been the first thing that they did. But they didn't like letting us go, because it wasn't up to them, but the congress made the decision to free us. So ... I guess that the FBI decided on taking their time to let you guys know that we were released."

"I guess that I'll just have to take your word for right now," the officer said. "So ... I'm going to let you go, because you guys done great work here." He looked at Nick. "Thank you Vortex. You have been a great help. You saved this child's life, and spared his mother's agony. Thank you."

“I try,” Nick said, still feeling nervous and excited after having done so. “You're welcome.”

“Well,” I said. “We gotta go.” I don't know why we had to go, but maybe it was because I didn't feel safe around the police any longer. Maybe because we always felt awkward around the police.

“Wait,” one officer said, stopping us. “Isn't there one more of you?”

I nodded. “Yes there is. However something had come up with him, so he couldn't make it.”

The officer understood and nodded, though not at first. He didn't ask for any details, because they respected our privacy, our identities. I appreciated that. With that, the seven of us took off into the air. I grabbed Brandon, since he couldn't fly.

We circled around several blocks, gradually getting lower. We zig-zag from different streets until finally we landed in our backyard, certain that we had mislead any watchers where we had landed.

Andrea's Residence

Andrea and Alex sat on the couch in Andrea's living room. They were hugging, bracing each other, just like they did when Alex appeared at Andrea's door. Andrea was holding back tears.

“I missed you so much, Alex,” Andrea said. “I have been so worried about you.” She paused and released Alex so that he could breathe.

Alex smiled and gave an expression of sadness. “I missed you too.”

“Where have you been?” Immediately after she asked that question she held up a finger to correct herself. “The FBI. I saw it on the news. They arrested you guys.”

Alex looked at the TV by the mention of the news. The news was on the TV at that moment, but the TV was muted.

Alex looked back at Andrea and nodded. "I ... I ..." Alex was unsure of what to say at first "I wasn't sure how ... how long we were going to be there. But in the back of my mind I knew that we would leave. We could've left and escaped sooner, but we wanted to be loyal; after all this was the government that we were under custody with. But the FBI wanted us to stay locked up. It took a whole month until they took it over with the congress and president and all of them and they released us." Then Alex started to whisper. "But, it came at a cost ... they put trackers in us."

"What?" Andrea whispered back in disbelief. "Can they hear us?" She asked even quieter.

Alex shook his head and started to smile. "I don't know so. I don't even know why I'm whispering. I have nothing to hide about what I'm saying. But they do now know our whereabouts wherever we go, but I'm sure that they can't hear us." Alex paused. "Not unless they have mikes in our house or something, but I don't think so."

Andrea considered that. "Well, considering how you said that the FBI really didn't want to let you go, maybe they do have mikes set up in your house."

Alex considered it too, pondering on the idea. We started wondering where they would be if there was anything like that in their house.

"But then again, Alex, maybe they didn't set anything up."

Alex came back to reality and looked at Andrea. "I hope you're right." Alex sighed, pushing the thought aside. He looked into Andrea's eyes and smiled. "You're so beautiful ... I miss you."

Andrea smiled back at him and leaned closer to him. Alex leaned in and gently put his hand on her cheek. He placed his other hand on the

opposite side of Andrea's face. He leaned in and their lips touched and they closed their eyes and kissed.

After a couple of minutes they pulled away. Andrea sighed and smiled, looking closely at Alex's face. "Oh, Alex," she said. "I was so worried about you ... I missed you so much."
"I know. I missed you too."

FBI Agency

Director Montgomery sat in his chair at his desk in his office. He was alone in his office, pushing aside some papers. His computer screen had gone to sleep because he hadn't touched it in ten minutes. He was just sitting there, thinking.

He sighed and was growing angry with himself, but more so with the congress' decision and along with the president. He had wanted the vigilantes kept locked up. Now they were released and there was nothing he could do. He was supposed to have already called all of the local authorities in New York, to let them know that they were released, but he hated the vigilantes and hoped to make it harder for them. In fact, he wouldn't mind if the police locked them up. That was actually what he was hoping for.

Montgomery wiggled the computer mouse and the screen came to life. He minimized a document and a database. He pulled up the program that showed the heroes movements. He saw that most of them were all at home, except one. He hovered the mouse over the one; it was Alex Rush. Montgomery scoffed at the name, knowing that it wasn't his real name, but he had no other identity so that was all that he had.

He switched over to the video mode on the program, which enabled him to view all of the cameras in their house and any nearby street cameras and traffic cameras. He couldn't see Alex, because there were no nearby cameras at the house that he was at. He looked over at the

cameras in Mark's living room. He saw that all of the vigilantes were watching a news report ... about themselves. It was a report about them saving a young boy. Vortex had saved him, bringing back to life.

Montgomery shook his head. He hated the heroes, but he could see that what they did was for the good of others. Every time he saw them, they were only doing good things for people. But he knew the law and they were breaking it, but the congress worked around the law and gave them the approval to break it.

He closed the program out, deciding to check up on Hank. At some point he was hoping that Hank would finish the power negating serums and that he would inject them into the heroes. He left his office, walked into the elevator and took it down one level, going to the labs. He found the lab in which Hank was in and entered.

Hank looked up immediately, looking directly at him.

"How are things coming, Hank?" the director asked Hank.

Hank looked a little nervous. He was standing in front of a computer. It was running a program that was used for creating serums. Right now Hank was testing some formulas, using the program to stimulate an artificial serum.

"Umm ..." Hank started. "Well, things are going. I am ... getting close." Hank knew that that was what the director wanted to hear, so that's what he decided to tell him. Truly Hank was getting close, but he was moving faster than he had wanted. But he decided that he wanted to create a power serum at the same time, just in case ... for whatever reason.

"Good," Montgomery said, interrupting Hank's thoughts. "Let me know when you are done. We need to be prepared for when the heroes turn."

"When'?"

“Yes.”

“Why are you sure that they will turn?”

“Oh ... they will and when they do we'll be ready for them.” The director nodded to Hank and left the room, letting the door shut behind him.

Hank sighed, relieved that he had left the room. Just when the director had entered the room, he quickly switched the program to the serum from the power serum to the negating serum; but it wasn't like the director would notice the difference anyway.

Hank had lied to the director. He said that he was close to finishing it, but really he had already created it; that was another thing that he worried that the director may have noticed. He had already used the computers to create five power negating serums for himself. He had put them into a secret compartment in his briefcase. But now he was working on creating power serums. He was almost certain that if the heroes were injected with these that it wouldn't have any effect on them, because they already have powers. But he had to perfect the formula first.

They had told Hank that with this technology he would be able to create the power negating serum in a week. Hank had done it in a day. He had a feeling that he could do it faster anyway, because he had worked here before, so he knew how the computers worked, but they worked better than he had thought. He had already made up some formulas at his lab at home and now he had already tested them in the computers and they worked. Now they were created into the five serums that he had put in his briefcase. Now he wanted to finish this serum to stimulate powers.

This makes Hank recall back to when he investigated the Creative Works building. He had discovered that the source of radiation had come from the pile of metal shards, which really was a virus that emitted radiation. Hank had touched it. He knew that it affected him, because he had

even passed out from all of that radiation going into him at once. He knew that he had some sort of ability, but he had no idea what. He hadn't displayed any sort of abnormality, but that wasn't his main concern right now. He was focused on creating the serums.

Hank knew now that he may finish by the end of today or tomorrow. This serum would be easier to make than the negating serum. All he had to do was replicate the virus and put it into a serum. Now it was only a matter of time until he finished it. Hank was sure of one thing now; Montgomery wanted the heroes powerless, so it was up to Hank so that wouldn't happen.

We sat at our couches in the living room, not really listening to the news on the TV by now. I was thinking about going to work tomorrow. It has been so long since we have been to work. I started to wonder about how the FBI didn't even let the police know that they released us. It made me wonder if they took care of our jobs for us. I sure hope they did.

I looked up to the sound of the back door opening. Alex just walked in and kicked his shoes off, closing the door behind him. He looked peaceful, which meant that his visit with Andrea went well.

"I take it things are good with Andrea?" Grace asked Alex.

Alex looked up and walked towards the living room. He smiled. "Yes, things ... are great," he replied.

Alex stepped into the living, found an open space on a couch and sat down. Bruce, Brandon and Mara explained about the boy that Nick had saved. They told Alex about the whole situation.

Alex looked at Nick, who still looked pretty shaken up. Nick was so worried that he wasn't going to be able to save the boy and would let all of those people down, especially the mother of the poor boy. But he had saved him. I had helped Nick clear his mind and spoke into the boy's mind, but I wasn't sure if I really did do anything for him; it could've been all Nick's doing.

Alex drew this all in, looking amazed. "Wow, Nick ... good job ... I-I'm proud of you."

Nick smiled and gave a little chuckle. "Yeah, sure, thanks." "So," I said. "How's work going to work out tomorrow?" I got eve-

ryone's attention and they all considered my question. 'You know that the FBI didn't tell the police that they released us.'

"Yeah," Bruce said. "They don't like us. At least that director *Montgomery* doesn't." Bruce mocked his name, saying it nastily.

I nodded. "Yeah, it makes me wonder if they will do the same with our work. I'm not sure if they explained their *stories* to our bosses. We could end up going to work tomorrow and our bosses may wonder where we have been and say that they have already fired us."

"Yeah ... I wonder —" Bruce said, suddenly getting cut off by the back door being thrown wide open.

Suddenly, there were men and women, armored up, storming into my house, through the back door. They were FBI agents for sure. I jumped to my feet, already furious. I can tell that everyone else was too.

"What is the meaning of this!?!?" I yelled.

"You're under arrest for harboring illegal immigrants," an agent told me as calm as possible.

"What?!"

"And the rest of you are under arrest for concealing them and being illegal immigrants." The agent pointed at Mara, and Brandon. They were the Hispanic ones, from Mexico. Then he pointed at Alex and Nick. "You two have fake last names. You are illegal citizens."

I shook my head. "They are NOT illegal immigrants or citizens!"

They didn't even say anything about that and just went about with cuffing us all. They grabbed us all by our wrists, yanking us outside, around our house, and into their black sedan cars. All around people were staring, gawking at the sight of FBI agents arresting us. I felt so embarrassed, but I shouldn't have been. I could have easily beat these guys

up, but that would give them more reason to arrest us, plus it was against the law to resist arrest; duh.

I sighed as I sat in the seat of the car. Rachel and Alex were next to me. I closed my eyes and shook my head. Suddenly my head was hit hard with the back of a gun. I jerked my head up, already rubbing it and looked at the agent that hit me.

“Stop shaking your head,” the agent told me. He obviously didn’t like me, as did the director.

Furious, I quickly grabbed the gun and forced it out of the agent’s hand. I quickly snapped it in half and threw it back at him. The other agents in the car went on alert, getting their guns ready. But they realized that I wasn’t going to do anything else; I just sat back to my seat again and put my head down. As I did, I saw the look on the agent’s face; he was scared. He must’ve regretted doing that. I smiled and quickly got rid of it, even though my head was down and they would’ve have seen it.

I knew why we were getting arrested. It wasn’t because of any illegal immigration or citizenship, because we were all legal citizens. It was because the lame-o director Montgomery hated us and wanted to think of a reason to arrest us. Nick, Alex, Grace, Mara and Brandon all came from American families, but now they went by their own made up last names. However, any documents or papers or job applications they used their real names. We were all legal citizens. Well ... maybe I would be an exception.

I laughed softly to myself. I’m from another planet. I would be considered the illegal alien; using both definitions. They should’ve arrested me for being an illegal alien, rather than harboring the rest of us. Lame. But they didn’t know the truth about me. My parents were able to get me adopted at a hospital, fooling the hospital into thinking that a doctor delivered a baby and the mother disappeared, so there was a baby left undocumented; me. The plan worked, because not even the FBI

knew about it, even though they tried to act like they knew everything about me; they were full of it.

This time we made it to the FBI agency a whole lot faster. They put on their sirens and sped the whole way here. They violently yanked all of us out of the cars and into the building. They immediately took us to the same cells that we were in before; the very uncomfortable cells. They had better cells, more comfortable ones, but they hated us and wanted us to feel uncomfortable.

After being there for roughly over an hour, the director finally entered the hallway in between us all. He appeared with another man who had a briefcase with us. The man wore a long white coat. It looked like a lab coat for scientists.

The director looked at all of us and smiled. "You guys would have to be idiots if you bought that reason for why we arrested you," he said.

I got to my feet and walked to the bars and stood a foot from the director, who stood on the other side. "We know exactly why you arrested us," I said. "You hate us so much and you want to stop us. So you thought that you had to think of some other lame excuse to arrest us."

"Well it got you here."

"Only because we cooperated. Next time we won't."

"Oh!" Montgomery laughed. "There won't be a next time. That's why I have Hank with me here."

I looked over at the man standing next to him, Hank. He looked nervous and without really trying I read his mind. *Please one of you guys be a telepath. Please one of you guys be a telepath. Please one of you guys be a telepath. Please one of you guys be a telepath.* He repeated it over and over.

I smiled at him. *I'm a telepath*, I thought to Hank. He looked around, and then realized that it was my voice, after already hearing me speak a few seconds before. He nodded at me and I gave a soft nod back. *Yes, me. I'm the leader of our team, I have telepathy.*

“I had Hank work on creating some serums for you guys,” Montgomery said, and started grinning. “The serums will strip you of your powers.”

I laughed. “Well thank you for telling us your plan!” I exclaimed. “You do realize that we could just escape now after you told us what you plan to do?”

“Not if you want to get killed.”

Just then agents appeared in every direction, walking out of their hiding places. Rachel didn't seem surprised to see them all, maybe because she already knew they were there by already having heard them. They all had their guns out and ready.

I created power negating serums, Hank thought. I gave a little nod to him to let him know that I heard him. But the ones in this briefcase are power serums, not the negating ones. I hope that they will not harm you guys.

Well they shouldn't, I thought to Hank. Because we already have powers.

That's what I thought too. But ... I want you guys to pretend that you are powerless; it's the only way to make Montgomery believe he's won and stop doing this. He may even let you guys go.

Let's just wait and see.

“Mark,” Montgomery said, smiling. “I would like to start with you.”

Montgomery started to unlock my cell and agents walked towards it. I was already standing in front of the opening. Suddenly my head hurt and all I could hear for three seconds was a ringing sound.

Montgomery laughed. "I don't care if you are pretending to be hurt for whatever reason, or if you actually are. I'm going to inject you with this serum no matter what!"

Just then the pain stopped. I had no idea what it was at first. I looked around the room and saw all of the concerned faces of my team mates. I stopped when I looked at Nick; he looked like he regretted having just done something wrong. Suddenly it hit me. Nick had tried to replicate my telepathy and read my mind. Since I am a telepath, another telepath cannot read my mind. I could read Nick's only if he wasn't replicating my power at that moment.

Nick must've realized that because then he allowed me to read his mind, and stopped replicating my telepathy. *Mark, do you have a plan?* Nick thought.

Don't worry, I thought to him. *These are not the power negating serums. Hank, the scientist, doesn't agree with Montgomery either. Instead he's put normal ... power serums in the briefcase, which shouldn't do anything to us. Tell that to the rest of the team for me.*

Nick nodded at me.

Suddenly Montgomery grabbed me by my shoulder and yanked me forward. Hank opened his briefcase and nervously pulled out a needle. Montgomery gladly took his from his hands and stabbed it in my neck. I didn't even so much as flinch. I just looked directly into Montgomery's eyes. I held back any smiles. Just then I could feel Montgomery injecting the serum into me, feeling the serum course through me.

I expected to feel dizzy or something, but nothing happened.

Sell it, Hank thought. *Shake or something.*

I pretended to suddenly shake and fell to the floor. I held my breath for a few seconds before gasping and sitting up. Montgomery laughed at me and kicked me hard in my stomach. It hurt really bad, but

only for a second until my healing power took over. But I pretended to be in pain still and groaned.

Montgomery yanked me to my feet and threw me back into my cell, knocking me to the floor. I pretended to be in pain from his kick still. He closed the cell and locked it back up. Montgomery never stopped smiling. I had to force myself to not smile in return.

Just to reassure my team, I sent them all a thought, all at once: *Don't worry; the serums won't work, because we all already have powers.* But as for me, I thought to myself, I'm a Rextonian so none of these serums would do anything to me at all. At least I wouldn't think that they would.

Montgomery went on down to the rest of the team. This time not opening the cells. He asked the rest of the team to lean against the cells to get close enough. Instead of stabbing them in the necks, he injected the serums into the rest of my team's arms, after grabbing the serums from Hank.

We all pretended to shake and feel dizzy. Montgomery laughed at all of us.

"I can't believe how gullible you all were!" he laughed hysterically. "As if you think that being submissive I would let you go!"

Hank looked worried. He was hoping that Montgomery would let us go. Montgomery scoffed and shook his head at all of us. By now we all we sitting up, pretending to have come to. Montgomery grabbed a gun that an agent held out for him.

"Now for the final part of the plan; the part I *didn't* tell you." Montgomery said.

He raised the gun and pointed it through my cell, aiming it right at my head. He loaded it and got ready to pull the trigger, smiling away.

I gave up on pretending. I jumped to my feet. “Are you seriously considering killing me?”

Montgomery looked surprised to see me jump to my feet so quickly, but quickly shrugged it off, still assuming that I was powerless.

“Of course! I don't care if I even cause myself to lose this job. As long as I've stopped you guys. Now any last words, Mark Anthony Wills?”

I laughed because he really didn't know anything about me and also for the fun of it. “Tell me my real name,” I told Montgomery.

He shook his head, still smiling. “I don't know why you insist that we have your name wrong. You are Mark Anthony Wills, whether you like it or not.”

“I sure don't mind that name, but that's not my Rextonian name.”

“What?!” he scoffed. “You still want me to believe that you're an alien!?”

He laughed at that, still aiming the gun at my head. He got ready to shoot and at the last second he aimed the gun at my chest and pulled the trigger. The gun barely made a sound. It was one of those guns that shot silent bullets, because of not shooting as fast as the speed of sound.

I barely even moved. I stood firm and smiled at him, although in a lot of pain, feeling holes in my lungs and broken ribs. I put my hand up to my chest and let the bullet fall into it. The wound — lungs, ribs and all — had already healed up all in a matter of ten seconds. All of the while I kept my eyes on Montgomery, watching him from looking excited to stunned.

I laughed again. “You believe me now?” I asked him.

Suddenly he looked furious. He aimed to gun back at my head, looking very determined to pull the trigger. I didn't know if I could survive a bullet in the head, but I could survive it anywhere else.

“Well, then what was it?”

“It ... it was gibberish?”

“Consistent gibberish?” I shook my head. “You should just accept it. I'm not a linguist; I'm a lawyer.”

“I refuse to believe such nonsense!”

“How about some cognitive recalibration?” I suggested.

“Do that and you will be in here for the rest of your pathetic little life.”

“No I don't think so. I believe what you said earlier, that you are going to lose your job, for stepping out of line and disobeying the congress' orders. You rearrested us. I don't even know if that's a word, but maybe it is.”

I realized that I have been holding Montgomery's collar for a while now. He was trying to free himself from my grip but it was impossible. Instead he started to tear his shirt. I was holding back the urge to hit him as hard as I could.

“Do you realize that all it would take for me to kill you is one hit?” I asked him.

No, don't Mark. I heard Rachel think.

“But I'm not going to,” I said. “I'm not that kind of person. Unlike you, I wouldn't kill someone because I don't like them.”

I finally let go of his collar and pushed him into the cell behind him, the one that Brandon was in. He hit the cell hard and landed onto his hands and knees. Then he couldn't help himself but roll in pain from hitting his back against the cell's metal bars.

I looked at the agents, wondering if they were going to shoot me or something, but I realized that there guns were already destroyed. But

they didn't seem to want to stop me. They didn't even as so much as help Montgomery up.

"Agents!" Montgomery yelled. "Get him back into his cell!" Montgomery barely managed to say, still rolling in pain.

"Don't bother," I told the agents. "I'll do it by myself."

I walked back into my cell, through the opening of the two bent metal bars. I turned around and pulled the two metal bars back together, closing up the opening in the cell. The agents didn't even move in the first place. I think that they were beginning to realize that Montgomery was being stupid and they didn't approve of his actions.

We all waited — my team and I, the agents, and Hank — for the director to recover from his pain. Finally, after what seemed like three to five minutes, the director got to his feet. He wobbled around, slowly standing up straight. He looked at us all, still furious. Now I just wanted to laugh long and hard, but I held it back.

"You ... haven't seen the end of me," Montgomery said, looking only at me.

"Yes, he has," a man said, walking into the hallway. He wore a nice suit, just like the agents and Montgomery himself. He looked like person in a higher position than Montgomery. "Montgomery, you are no longer fit for your duty as director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation." He walked up to the director and signaled the agents to arrest him. They obediently cuffed Montgomery. "You are under arrest."

I smiled at the sight of it. The last of Montgomery.

"Go lock him up somewhere," the man said. "Somewhere uncomfortable, maybe here."

"No, we have a place worse than here," an agent said.

“Take him there.” The man nodded to Hank. “Doctor, you can go ahead and unlock these cells.” He took the keys from Montgomery and handed them to Hank. “I’m going to follow these agents to take Montgomery to his cell.”

Hank took the keys and the man walked back down the hallway with the agents and Montgomery cuffed. I watched them until they were out of sight. Hank used the keys and unlocked all of our cells.

Epilogue

“So ...” Hank said to me. “Are you really an alien?”

“Yes.” I replied. “I wasn’t making up anything that I said.”

“Would that explain how many people are getting super abilities all of the sudden?”

“Yes, that would be because of Intex.”

“Martin Intex?”

“Yes, that’s him. He ran illegal experiments on people, wanting to create human-animal hybrids and when he died, he must've programmed a toxin to infect New York with something.”

“A gas,” Hank said, sounding certain. “He used a machine from the Creative Works building, but now the machine deteriorated and it nothing but a pile of metal shards.”

I was puzzled. “How do you know all of that?”

“I did my own research and I saw it for myself. I was researching a reading of the radiation that gave people powers and it came from that building.”

“Hmm.”

“I used my own resources and had a device that tracked the signal all of the way to the building.” Hank seemed to hold back from saying something else and because of that I respected his right of privacy so I didn’t read his mind.

“So ...” Bruce said. “Do we just leave?”

“Umm ...” Hank started, sounding uncertain. He looked around and realized that it was just the eight of us and him. “I don't know. I was kind of expecting that man to do something with you guys, but he took off with Montgomery.”

As if right on cue, the sharply dressed man of higher authority came back into the room, or hallway. He looked at all of us and smiled. “I'm sorry that you guys all got back into this mess. At least this time it wasn't as long, right?” He chuckled.

“Who are you?” Grace asked.

“I am now the new director of the FBI. Director Gustavo Morgan is my name. Montgomery tried to have to have you guys arrested again, but since it's against the law to get tried for the same crime he couldn't do that. We have already relieved you guys of your supposed *crimes*. You guys are free to go.” He paused. “Allow me to escort you guys. I will take you guys to your rides back home. In the meantime, I will give a call to the local law enforcement to not arrest you. Sound good?”

“Yeah, thanks,” I said. “Umm what about our jobs. How can we be sure that we still have them; I mean none of us have gone to work for a month.”

“Not even for that day that you were released?”

I shook my head and the new director nodded.

“No problem. I'll give all of your bosses a call.”

“Do you need their numbers?” Alex asked.

Morgan chuckled. “No, I have my resources. We know everything about all of you.”

I smiled. “Even about me being an alien?”

“If you say that you're an alien, then I believe you.”

“Well, I am. I'm a Rextonian, from the planet Rexton in the Experimental Galaxy, which is originated from the Trexus Zeta Galaxy.”

Director Morgan nodded, grasping that. “Hmm interesting.”

I wasn't sure if he believed me or not, but he might have. I didn't read his mind to see if he did or not, because I didn't feel that it was important. After all, this man was releasing us and dropping all charges on us. I didn't care if he believed me or not. We were free.

“Doctor,” Director Morgan asked. “You can either go back to your lab or go back home. Your choice.”

“Well ...” Hank said. “I would like to go back home, but I would like to finish up some things here first.”

“Be my guest.”

Hank headed off towards the labs, walking down these hallways on the way.

Morgan took us through the main lobby, passing the very many desks. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of the floor and we all stopped behind him. Agents all around we very focused on their work, however a few of them took a few seconds to look at us and at their new director. The director turned around to face us.

“For now ...” the director started. “To give you guys a start on catching up, I'll give you some money. After all you all have been without work for a month, and surely you will need some help.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out his wallet. He looked at his money, counting several twenties, fifties and hundreds. “Hmm ...” he thought to himself. He counted the money, debating with himself as to decide how much to give us. Unexpected he pulled out all of his money and handed it to me.

I slowly reached my hand out and took the money. Morgan nodded at me as I took the money.

“That should help you out in the next few months ... or so,” he said.

I was tempted to count the money right then and there, knowing that it was a lot of money, but I resisted it and just put it into my pocket. We continued to follow the new director to the parking garage. Agents were ready for us with their black sedan cars. I was so happy that this would be our last ride in these cars. We were finally done with the FBI being on our backs. We were free. No worries about the FBI any longer. No more Director Lame-O Montgomery. It was his fault that we were arrested in the first place. He put out the arrest warrant. But now we had no more reason to worry.

The ride back home was a lot more peaceful. There were no agents sitting in the back with us carrying guns. We all were in the back amongst ourselves. They had a car that could fit all of in it, because they didn't put as many agents in it. They didn't need that many, because we were not treated like criminals any more.

I sighed, feeling tired and so glad that this was over. We finally made it home and we all collapsed either on the couches in the living room or on our beds in our rooms. I collapsed on my bed in my room. Rachel was lying on her bed across from mine.

I thought about what we had to do now. Hank had asked us about me being a part of the reason that people are starting to get super abilities. He was right. It had a part to do with me. It was because of Intex. He was no longer here, but he still affected our lives. He left a problem for us to deal with. We now had super-powered people among us that we had to deal with; Metahumans. Surely many people would not make wise choices with their new powers, so we had to be there to stop them. But that wouldn't be our only problems; we still had to fight off the crime caused by normal people. Double whammy. Double the fun ... and work. I never thought that I would become a superhero, but I knew now that I wanted to be nothing other than a superhero. It was my destiny. This was

what I wanted to do, what I wanted to be ... what I had to do ... because these people needed this, they need this hope and assurance; assurance that The Avians would be there to save them.

“Umm ... Mark?” Rachel asked, grabbing my attention, pulling me from my haze.

“Yeah?” I asked, sitting up, realizing that she was sitting up on her bed looking at me very sweetly.

Rachel sat there and smiled. I watched her move her hands behind her back, shaking them nervously.

“What is it, Rachel? What's wrong?”

Rachel shook her head. “Nothing’s wrong Mark. Nothing at all.” She paused, put her head down for a second before looking back up at me, and she smiled. “I wanted to ask you a question.”

“Shoot.”

“I know that things have been hectic for us ... for all of us ... but I don't think that things are going to slow down very much.” I nodded, wondering where she was getting at. “I’ve always loved you and I know you feel the same. So ...” She pulled her hands back in front of her from behind her back, pulling out a ring that looked like it came from a gumball machine. “Will you marry me?”

To Be Continued ...

Even after stopping a villain you are left with
the aftermath.

Mark now is faced with an uprising of the
government as well as what Intex has created
for him.

One battle ends ... another battle begins:
the fight for freedom.



A villain's look
is like;
it's to the world