



THE ADVENTURES OF

MW

Mark Wills is not alone in this world;

Penny Kelvin is here ...

Outside of Mark Wills:
Shocking Moments

REXFORD RICH

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Shocking Moments

Rexford Rich

Part 1: Unearthed

Lancaster, Ohio

Penelope "Penny" Kelvin

Penny has this dream millions of times. She is sitting on the floor, her back against a chair. She is trying to shield her face from a silhouette of a man. He is hitting her over and over. Her arm hurts and her face stings with bruises. It all feels so real to her every time.

This time, something in the dream differs. The silhouette becomes clear and she can see his face. This is the first time it becomes clear for her, but what she sees frightens her even more. She gasps realizing who it is; it's her father. Her father grabs a knife and whacks her in the face, giving her a deep, gouging cut. And then he hits her in the head with his fist, knocking her out.

That's when she wakes up, and that's when she normally wakes up when having that dream. She is panting really hard, sitting up in her bed, drench in sweat. She gently touches her face, feeling the scar that is between her right eye and her nose. It had really happened. She did get cut. In her dream, she normally couldn't make out the silhouette's face, but this time she could; it is her father's. Her parents always told her that the scar was from a cat scratch, because she was too young to remember it, but now she has this dream, which felt so real and still does. To her, it seems that it was just like a memory; like it had actually happened.

Penny tries to picture her father being abusive, but can't. He has always been so ... what? She doesn't really know. Her father hasn't done much with her. He's never really talked with her.

She knows that he throws fits and hits her mother sometimes. He has a temper and doesn't control himself. Every time she tries to remem-

ber back, her mind goes blank about the knife incident. But now, in her dream, she's sees that it's her father that cut her.

Her father always seems angry. Her mother continues to stick it out with her husband. Penny's father doesn't seem to care about how she feels.

Penny feels like she doesn't fit in with her family. She does not feel close with her parents at all, and she's an only child. Penny is just little bit open with her mother but lately she has been losing that connection, and she rarely talks with her father.

She thinks about that dream. She never remembers how she got the scar; her parents lied to her about how it happened. But Penny kind of already knows how it happened, because of her father. Now she is certain because of the dream, which is most definitely an actual memory.

Penny tries to think about other times her father has hit her, but she can't seem to recall any. It all comes up blank; her father hasn't abused her ever, only in this dream. She begins to question it — But, no. It felt so real; it has to be her father hitting her; cutting her.

She doesn't understand how she can wake up the next day with fresh bruises though. Her mother will tell her that she's so clumsy. Penny sits up in the bed, looking at her arms. They are black and blue. She feels her face again; it feels fine, except for the scar.

Yet again, Penny doesn't know where these bruises came from on her arms. She doesn't remember falling at all yesterday. But she already knows the answer if she were to ask her mother; she would tell her that she's so clumsy. That's what she always says. But ... it's been a while since Penny really talked with any of her parents.

Penny looks at the clock; it's four in the morning and it's a school day. She is halfway through her junior year in high school. Lightning strikes outside, followed by the thunder. She wonders if she'll still have school, or if they'll cancel it.

Penny jumps out of bed, ready for a shower. She is soaked in her own sweat and feels icky. She's already awake, without the chance of going back to sleep. That dream put her on edge. She hates having that dream, because every time she has it she can't go back to sleep.

A couple hours later Penny gets on the school bus. Her parents didn't even bother to check to see if she was ready for school; they were still asleep. She sits by herself on the bus.

Once she arrives at school, she grabs some breakfast and sits down. Her parents never provide her breakfast, expecting her to buy her own from the schools; same with lunch.

Penny starts eating; a decent breakfast sandwich, even though it's made from school. A girl comes and sits down next to her at the table. The table has some chairs missing from it. The girl is the only person to sit with Penny. Her name is Lucy Lowe. She has bleached blonde hair, whereas Penny has dark blonde. Normally she would see Penny on the bus in the morning, but something had come up, so she came to school by other means.

"Hey, Penny," Lucy says.

Penny finishes chewing. She nods at Lucy. "Hi," she says, glumly.

Lucy smiles at Penny, knowing how Penny typically is. Being used to it, Lucy takes a glance down at Penny's arms; they are covered by her long sleeves.

"Ah," Lucy says.

"What?"

"You're wearing long sleeves again." She pauses. "Were you ... *clumsy* again?"

Penny scoffs. "Yeah, I guess. Actually, I didn't ask this time. I haven't really talked with mom in a while."

“I see. What about dad?”

“What? I never talk with dad; he's always so ... grumpy and acts like I take up his time if I talk to him.”

“I know. Sorry for bringing him up.”

Penny shakes her head. “It's alright.”

Penny finishes her sandwich and they get up to walk towards their lockers; towards the junior pod. They walk in silence. Lucy feels bad for Penny, knowing that she does not have great parents. They gather their things together to go their separate ways to their classes. They smile at each other and walk away.

Penny walks upstairs into the English department. She hates having an English class early in the morning, but it is too late to change; not that she even wants to. The hot boy is in this class, so she keeps it.

Adrian Douglas; he's the hot boy. Penny walks past him as he smiles at her. She takes a seat somewhere behind him. She sighs, loving the way he smiles. Every girl likes him. Even the guys like him, like a friend, that is. Adrian is very well-respected because of how he treats everyone. He gives everyone respect. He seems to make it a goal to treat everyone fairly.

Just like every girl at this school, Penny fantasizes being with him. She sits behind him just so she can get a good look at him.

Class starts in two minutes. Most students are preparing for class; opening their books, getting out paper and pencils. Penny just sits, looking ahead, but taking frequent glances at Adrian. There are other girls in the classroom that do the same thing. Adrian knows it, but he does nothing; he's not the sort of person to think highly of himself; he's modest.

The English teacher prepares for today's outline. She moves some things around on her desk and shifts some papers. She gets up to write

the date on the whiteboard, but is interrupted by the phone ringing. She answers the phone, looking surprised with what she hears.

The teacher hangs up the phone and turns on the TV; a very unusual start of the day. Normally they hardly watch the TV. She turns it to a news station.

Everyone gasps, watching the report on the TV. It is about New York. The reporter's name is Kara Sanford. The headline on the lower-third of the screen states: *New York — Finally free from Intex!*

The reporter, Kara, goes on to explain how The Avians had gone about to bring Intex down. A few scattered claps go around in the room. Some people whoop. Some sleeping kids wake up and look around; they immediately see the TV on and jolt awake fully at the sight of the heading.

Penny finds herself smiling at the news report. It is so calming. Now the rest of the world does not have to worry about Intex branching out; he is stopped — dead. Penny sighs.

They watch the report until it finishes; everyone being silent. The report goes on for a half hour, taking up about half of class time.

Penny sighs again. She is as grateful as the rest of the students in the classroom are for The Avians having stopped Intex. Now Intex is no longer a threat to the rest of the world. At last they are at peace.

Penny wonders what will happen with New York. Will they really restore it back to normal like they intend to? The Avian must be able to help with that. There will need to be a lot of work to be done. But ... meanwhile Penny is going to live life as normal, here in Ohio.

Lightning continues striking outside, alarming everyone inside the school. Some teachers wonder why the superintendent allowed for school to be open, as the students obviously do.

Penny wonders if it being the end of the year has anything to do with it. Maybe if today were off, they would have to make up days. Obviously, like most schools, no one wants to make up days, even the teachers. There are about three months left in this school year.

Penny tries to focus on her schoolwork for the rest of the day, but struggles. First, she starts the day with the nightmare. Next, she learns about New York, feeling excited and happy that it is all over with; no one has to worry about Intex attacking Ohio and Pennsylvania next. There is also the lightning storm that is upsetting everyone. It's so strange; it has been going on for the whole day — non-stop.

Penny is currently in her math class; Algebra 2. The teacher has already gone through the lecture and they are doing the work. Penny tries to finish it up, but has a hard time focusing. She looks off into space and realizes that a boy is staring at her.

This boy has always been known for staring at her. Up until now she's just ignored him. She decides to change it this time around. She jolts her eyes at the boy without turning her head. She stares at him back, making him realize that he's been caught. He quickly turns to his paperwork. Penny realizes that his eyes were fixed on the scar on her face. All this time — for who knows how long — he has stared at her scar.

She thinks of the nightmare she's had this morning. According to the dream, her father is responsible for the scar. She was told that it was a cat and that's what she told everyone else ... except Lucy.

Lucy is a good friend to her. Penny feels open with her, not fearing to tell her anything. Sometimes Penny feels that she needs to vent on her, and Lucy will gladly listen without interrupting. Penny sometimes wishes that she did the same for Lucy.

This morning Penny felt the need to tell Lucy about the nightmare. It has scared her very much. It makes sense to her now; her father has always seemed to be the sort of person to harm her, but yet she has no recollection of him being abusive — to anyone, or anything. She does, however, know that he loses his patience and goes off on a rampage, but he does not harm anyone.

The teacher walks up to Penny, leaning in front of her.

“Are you doing alright, Penny?” he asks.

Penny looks up, realizing that the teacher is standing in front of her.

“Uh, yeah, sorry,” Penny stutters, grabbing her pencil and looking back at the book. “I’m just ... it’s this lightning; I can’t focus.”

“Ah, I understand. Well, just try and get some work done. Okay?”

Penny nods. He nods back and walks down the aisles to see how the rest of the kids are doing. Penny returns her attention to the math book, but still struggles to accomplish some work.

Penny inhales through her teeth, trying to hold back from a sudden pain in her arms. A second later the pain leaves. She feels her arms; they don’t feel bruised like they were this morning. They feel ... healed.

Penny relaxes, knowing that her arms have healed. She knows they must’ve. She has been developing this for about a month now. She wonders if she's like The Avians in a way; one of the metahumans like in New York; although the virus did not spread its way out ... yet.

Flashback: One Month Ago

Penny rises out of bed, stretching. It is a nice morning; beautiful outside, and sunny. She smiles, feeling happy for some strange reason. She doesn't know why she's so happy. She has a strange feeling that yesterday wasn't a good day, but she can't recall anything bad that happened; it's kind of blank.

Puzzled, Penny walks out of bed to go into the bathroom. She looks in the mirror, seeing that her hair is standing up in every direction. Something catches her eye from her cheek. She rubs it and collects makeup onto her fingers.

She gasps, realizing that her cheek hurts. She rubs all of the makeup off her cheek, noticing that her cheek is black and blue; bruised. She looks at her arms, noticing that they have makeup on them too. She pulls them together to rub the makeup off with her hands. Underneath the makeup bruises are revealed.

Penny gasps with the sight of it all. This is not the first time she's waked like this. She's given up asking her parents the reason, because they always say the same thing; she's clumsy.

Yet again, Penny is confused. How can she hurt herself and not know? How can she not remember anything bad happening and wake the next morning hurt?

Penny decides to just get a shower instead of brushing her hair first. She grabs a change of clothes from her bedroom and returns to the bathroom. Suddenly she drops her clothes onto the floor because her arms start to throb. They pulse with pain. She feels it in her cheek. She looks down at her arms to see what's happening. They look normal — for a second.

She gasps at the sight. Suddenly the pain stops and the bruises on her arms start to fade away — literally. Her jaw hangs open as she watches the bruises ... heal ... right before her eyes. She presses her fin-

gers against her arms, but feels no pain. All evidence of being harmed in gone.

Penny looks in the mirror and notices that the bruise on her cheek has disappeared as well. She shakes her head, disbelieving this all.

Present Time

Penny remembers that morning with vividness, but she didn't remember the day before, or most of it. She knows now that it must've been because of her father.

She finds it hard to believe, but she is starting to think that her father is responsible for her injuries. This morning she had the dream again, but this time she pictured her father in the dream. Her father was the silhouette of the abuser.

It is starting to make sense. Her father fits the description as to why she wakes up injured.

Penny tries to focus back to her math book, knowing the teacher has already taken notice of her drifting off into space. She can't help but wonder what is going on.

Somehow Penny is regenerating quicker than usual and she is noticing memory loss. Something is happening.

Penny thinks about telling Lucy about what happened a month ago, but isn't sure if she should. She decides that she'll hold off on it for now.

The bell rings for that class period to be over. She grabs her stuff and leaves the room quickly so the teacher doesn't think about stopping her. Lucy meets her at her locker.

"Whoa!" Lucy exclaims, looking at Penny.

“What?” Penny asks, puzzled. She puts her math book in the locker.

“You looked ... fierce for a second.”

Penny scoffs, thinking Lucy was exclaiming about something else.

“You had a stern face and ... with your scar ... and all ... you can be pretty cool.”

Penny looks at Lucy and smirks. She chuckles. “Sometimes I wonder ...” she trails off.

“I’m just saying, Penny. You wonder why boys look at you.”

“Boys do?”

“Yeah, they do!”

“Who does?”

“No one Adrian.”

“Adrian!” Penny exclaims, trying to keep her voice low.

“Of course.”

Penny stops moving and thinks about how cool it would be to be with Adrian; the hottest, nicest boy in the school. She sighs.

“Okay,” Lucy says, scoffing and putting her hand up. “I was kidding.”

“What?!” Penny looks into Lucy’s eyes, realizing that she was kidding. “Don’t do that to me! That’s mean.”

“Sorry.”

“I mean it.”

“I said that I was sorry.” She pauses. “Wow, you are scary.”

Penny shakes her head.

“But I wasn’t kidding about how you’re fierce-looking. Some people are afraid of you.”

“Afraid?”

“Well ... it’s more like respect.”

“Oh.”

“Well ...” Lucy trails off. “I guess I’m going off to class.”

Lucy waves at Penny and walks towards her class; the last class of the day. Penny walks the other direction heading deeper into the technical center. She has food services, or culinary arts, for the last hour of the day; sixth period.

She looks back to see Lucy walking towards the main part of the school where the core classes are. Lucy has to go to her English class. Lucy walks with confidence in her step. Penny smiles, knowing that Lucy is a great friend despite anything she might slip up and say. Penny turns around and heads towards food services.

In the last twenty minutes of school the power goes out. It surprises everyone, but it's not a complete shock; it has been lightning all day.

The school just lets everyone go on home since school is almost over anyway. They call the buses to come earlier; the bus garage is right there so it takes them no time at all. The bus drivers are known to be ready way ahead of time anyway.

Penny gets onto her bus, sitting next to Lucy who is already on. Penny remembers about what Lucy joked with her about Adrian. Lucy pretends that she doesn't remember it, being the one to speak first.

"Hey," Lucy says to Penny. "Hopefully we can get home without being struck by lightning."

"Don't say that," Penny says. "Maybe we might if you say it."

"I'm just kidding ... I hope. I don't want to get struck by lightning."

"Well, they say that the chances of getting struck are very slim."

"Yeah, I know. It's bound not to happen." Lucy pauses. "Penny, I'm sorry about what I said earlier."

"Sorry for what?" Penny wants a full apology.

"I'm sorry ... about teasing you into thinking Adrian likes you." She smiles. "But I may be right. Maybe Adrian does like you; just forgive me for teasing you about it and for teasing you about your scar."

Penny sighs, containing herself. "It's alright, Lucy. I forgive you."

The two of them remain silent for a while. The driver takes off once the kids sit down. The bus is full and the driver goes about with his route. This will be a little longer than a normal drive because of the weather and also because he won't drop off anyone at the corners, but at their houses.

Penny and Lucy are one of the last ones to get off, so they have a while more.

“So,” Lucy says, breaking the silence between them. “You saw the news report this morning?”

“Yeah. I can't believe it.”

“I know! It's amazing! Awesome. The Avians freed New York; we could've been next, but they stopped Intex.”

Penny chuckles. “Yeah. The reporter said that too, but we all know that Avian just killed Intex a second time.”

“Yeah ... a second time.”

Penny sighs and nods. “It makes you wonder if he'll come back.”

“But ... Avian sounded very confident that Intex wouldn't be coming back. He said that somehow he would be stuck on Rexton ... I don't completely understand it.”

“Me neither.”

Lucy sighs and slouches a little in the seat. “Well ... it is just so comforting that Intex is gone. Avian freed us all. Even though it was only New York that was under his rule, it had the rest of the US on edge. Now that Intex is gone, we can all relax.”

“Your right. We have all been scared that Intex would spread out, but Avian ... defeated him.”

“It makes you wonder; why aren’t they pressing charges against The Avian for murder?”

Penny scoffs. “He just killed the man responsible for a million deaths and for illegal experimentation. Intex even had the death penalty. The FBI was practically giving The Avian permission to kill him ... again.”

“Oh.” Lucy nods. “Right.” She pauses. “But ... does that make him the good guy?”

“Well ... what choice did he have? Where was Intex going to go? Intex wasn’t going to stop at anything and he wouldn’t stay locked up forever here on Earth.”

Lucy nods slowly. She grunts. “Hmm.”

She smiles at Penny, pausing. Thunder collapses outside, making Lucy jump in her seat. Penny sits still, not frightened. Lucy looks down at the floor.

“What is it?” Penny asks Lucy.

Lucy looks up from the floor and clears her throat. She sighs. “I ... I just ... I-I didn’t think Avian would kill someone.”

“Well, he's only killed Intex; no one else.”

“I know, but ... he *killed* someone. I just feel ... I don’t know the word for it, but ... Avian has *killed* someone, and I just feel that he's not a good guy anymore.”

“Are you kidding? Avian did it to save everyone.”

“I know ... but ... does he not feel ... guilty?”

“Lucy ... I'm sure that if he had another choice he would have choice a different path. But ... he *didn't* have any other choice. He had to kill him; there is no place to contain him, not any place dependable enough.”

“How would you know?”

“I ... don’t really, but I just know that that’s the case, otherwise he wouldn’t have killed him. And ... Lucy, I’m sure he feels guilty for doing it ... but it’s not like he’s dead; he’s alive on Rexton.”

Lucy nods and sighs. Penny realizes that Lucy looks up to the Avian. She respects Avian and feels let down for him having killed someone.

Everyone is whipped forward in their seats as the brakes squeal on the bus. Up ahead on the road is a large puddle from the heavy rain. The bus driver drives slowly through it.

Penny and Lucy look to see where they are at. Penny is two stops away from home. Lucy will get off two stops afterwards.

The bus driver continues while Lucy and Penny are silent. It comes to be Penny’s stop, so she gets up to leave. She smiles at Lucy and she smiles back.

“See you tomorrow.”

“See ya.”

Penny walks to the front of the bus and runs outside. The bus drives on down the road, leaving her behind. Penny stops to watch the bus leave as she stands in the pouring rain.

She runs towards the house, but stops. Both of her parents are home; both vehicles are here and she can hear the two of them arguing to each other inside. She stops in her tracks, outside in the rain still.

Lightning strikes in the distance, but she doesn’t move; it doesn’t scare her. Penny thinks about her father. If she enters the house now, she is bound to interact with him. She knows that it would turn out good. For one, he is already mad with her mother about something, and secondly she is home early; he might think she is ditching for the rest of the day, despite their being bad weather.

Suddenly Penny is blinded by a bright light all around her. She hears a loud boom, but then everything goes silent. She blinks to try to clear her vision, but she is still blinded.

She feels shaky all of the sudden and the air smells of ... electricity. It feels as if all of the blood has drain from her face.

Slowly her vision clears. She feels the rain pounding on her as she begins to hear it. She realizes that she is lying on the ground, some twenty feet from where she just stood.

She tries to makes sense of what happened; it's pretty obvious though. She just got struck by lightning.

Penny sits up, shakily. She can feel the electricity coursing through her. She exhales, panicky. She can't believe she is alive.

She starts panting. "I ... I," she says to herself. "I just got struck ... by lightning."

Penny slowly gets to her feet, expecting to feel dizzy or something, but realizes that she feels fine, just shaken up.

She walks towards the house, soaking wet. Lightning strikes in the distance, startling her this time. She runs into the house, in fear of getting struck again. She runs past her arguing parents in the kitchen. They don't even seem to notice her.

She runs into her room, closing the door without thought. Penny throws off her backpack and jacket. She sits down on her bed, trying to make sense of it all.

"I can't believe this; I'm alive."

Penny looks down at her hands, as if expecting to see electricity crackling still. Nothing is found on her hands except dirt, but there is something different on her left forearm; something dark, like a very small

triangle. She rolls up her sleeve to realize that the small triangle was the very tip of a lightning bolt. A dark lightning bolt is on her arm.

She gasps.

It looks exactly like a tattoo. It has not been there until now. And ... she had just gotten struck by lightning.

“What the what?” she exclaims to herself, whispering. “How ...”

Penny sits up in her bed, still soaked in water. She sits there for hours, just looking at her arm, studying the lightning bolt. Her parents don't bother to check on her and she has been home for two and a half hours.

She cannot make any sense of it. She was just struck and now has a tattoo. She begins to fear what her parents would do once they see it. They would get mad. No matter what Penny does, they get mad. They would definitely get mad to see that Penny got a tattoo.

Penny recalls to the month that just past. She experienced a super ability of some quickened healing. She has noticed it more and more. Now ... this ... lightning bolt. She just got struck and a bolt to match it is inked on her forearm.

She feels the skin; it feels normal. It feels like anyone's tattoo would feel like; nothing at all, other than skin.

Penny shakes her head disbelieving.

"I must be dreaming," she tells herself, barely audible.

Penny gets up from the bed. She is nervous, afraid her parents might find out. She rolls down her sleeve. She runs to the bathroom, letting her bedroom door swing about.

She locks the door shut. Looking in the mirror, Penny sees a pale reflection. The scar on her face looks purple compared to her pale face. She gasps, noticing a major difference. Her eye color; it changed from brown to blue. Surely that would be noticeable.

Penny feels her face, feeling her scar and touching the area under her eyes. She shakes her head, looking at the color of her eyes.

“This can't be ...”

Penny has lived with brown eyes her whole life, but now they are blue. She doesn't understand how lightning could do that. The strike gave her blue eyes and a bolt tattoo on her forearm.

Penny runs back to her room and returns to the bathroom with a change of clothes, without her parents even noticing — or maybe they don't even care why she ran from the bathroom, to her room, and back.

Penny places the change of clothes on the sink counter, after making sure it is clean and dry. She stripes down, steps into the shower and turns it on.

The water is just the right temperature as always, because she is the only one who uses this shower; her parents have their own shower in their bedroom.

Penny realizes that she still has the feeling of the electricity coursing through her from the lightning. She still feels on edge, running off adrenaline. It has been about a few hours after being struck, but she still feels tense.

The water feels great; nice and warm. The next second the water stings her. She naturally steps back. She felt like she just got shocked ... again.

Penny looks down at her arms, seeing the lightning bolt on her forearm immediately. Instead of being black, like a tattoo it was appeared to be before, it is now glowing bright blue. Electricity sparks between her fingers. She fights herself, keeping herself from gasping out loud; she doesn't want to alarm her parents.

A minute earlier it felt as if electricity was still coursing through her, but now it's even more so. Electricity sparks fly from her arms and fingers.

Penny breathes in and out, slowly. She tries to calm herself down. She closes her eyes, inhaling and exhaling. Opening her eyes, she sees that the bolt on her arm has returned black; not glowing. She feels relaxed and comfortable now. It doesn't feel as if electricity is flowing through her any longer.

She steps back under the water — slowly — and feels fine; she doesn't get shocked. Penny looks back down at her arms.

“What is happening?” she asks herself.

Birds chirp loudly from outside, waking Penny up. She looks at the time; it is the morning. Penny gets out of bed to get ready for school. She pulls the curtains back. It is a sunny day, very unlike yesterday.

Yesterday.

Penny immediately looks down at her forearm. The black lightning bolt tattoo is still there. She wasn't dreaming. She knew that she wasn't, because it felt so real.

Penny puts on a green long sleeve shirt, despite it being warm outside. It is just barely spring anyway. She takes off her pajama shorts and puts on purple skinny jeans. She looks in the mirror in her room to brush her hair.

Penny finishes getting dressed and steps out of her room. Like always, her parents are still asleep. They don't bother to make sure she makes it to school.

Penny goes outside to wait ten minutes for the bus. She gets on and sits next to Lucy. She debates with herself whether to tell Lucy about

the lightning strike or not. She hasn't even told Lucy about having an ability to heal rapidly, which she has gotten a month ago.

"What's eating you?" Lucy asks Penny, breaking the ten minute silence.

Penny realizes that she has been staring at the seat in front of her, zoning out. Penny sighs and smiles at Lucy.

"It's ... nothing," she tells Lucy.

Lucy nods. She respects her and doesn't push anything. She just sits with Penny to comfort her.

Penny rubs her left forearm. She is tempted to roll up her sleeve to look at it, but decides against it. She catches Lucy looking at her arm, wondering why she is stroking it.

Lucy smiles, looking away. "I'm sorry," Lucy tells Penny.

"For what?" Penny looks up at Lucy.

"For ... what your dad did to your arm."

Penny looks down at her arm. She scoffs very softly to herself. Lucy thinks that Penny's father hurt her arm, which would be a reason why she is stroking it. "You don't need to apologize ... It's not ... you have nothing to do with it."

Lucy smiles at Penny. "But I allow it. Why?" Lucy sighs. She very gently places a hand on Penny's shoulder. "I should be doing something. I can't believe I let your father do this to you."

"What are you going to do? What *can* you do?"

Lucy shrugs. "I don't know, but ... I hate seeing you like this. I don't like seeing you hurt."

Penny sighs, looking down. "I'd rather not talk about this."

“You always say that, Penny.” Lucy pauses, thinking. “You should tell a counselor.”

“I can't. You don't understand. My dad ... he'll ...”

“He'll what? There will be nothing he'll do. The counselors take those kinds of matters seriously.”

“But ... my dad would convince them that I'm delusional. He wears a mask and easily fools people.”

“He's not fooling me. I could go with you.”

Penny sighs. Slowly she starts to nod. “It sounds like an idea, but ... maybe later.”

Lucy sighs, shaking her head.

“Besides ... Lucy, that's not why I'm rubbing my arm. My dad didn't touch me at all yesterday.”

Lucy tilts her head. “No?”

Penny shakes her head. She quivers her lips. “Yesterday, I got ... okay ...” she exhales deeply. “Don't act surprised or exclaim; I don't want anyone looking.”

“Okay, I won't. Just tell me.”

“I got struck by lightning.”

Lucy raises her eyebrows and lowers her chin. “But ... you're ... *fine?*”

“Yeah.”

“But ... your arm ... does it hurt ... from that?”

Penny shakes her head. “That’s not it.” Penny makes sure that no one can see; no one is looking at them. She rolls up her sleeve, showing Lucy the black lightning bolt tattoo.

Lucy gasps softly. “That ...” she trails off.

Penny rolls her sleeve back down. “It came from the lightning bolt. I ... got struck and ... next thing I knew ... I had this ... *tattoo*.”

“You feel fine, though?”

“Yeah. I could feel the electricity inside me, though. I took a shower and the water stung me, like I was surging electric.”

“Well ... wow. Lightning does have a lot of electricity ... and it put all of that into you.” She pauses, shaking her head in disbelief. “But ... you're ... fine. How?”

“I don’t know.”

“And how in the world is it possible that a bolt appears on your arm because of it?”

“I have no idea.”

Lucy shakes her head, scoffing. “We have to figure this out.”

Penny looks Lucy in the eyes. She is shaking her head still. “Lucy. You have to promise me that you won't tell anyone about this.”

Lucy nods. “I never tell anyone what we talk about, Penny. We are great friends; what we talk about stays with us — always.”

“Okay, thanks.”

“I haven’t even told anyone about your father.” She pauses. “But ... I think you should talk with the counselors. I won't, but I will go with you if you'd like.”

“Maybe ... some other time.”

“Okay, Penny.” Lucy sighs and rubs Penny’s arm for comfort.

Lucy puts her hands back into her lap. The two of them look down at the floor, thinking.

“Lucy,” Penny says. “Thanks for being a great friend to me.”

Lucy smiles. She smirks and looks up at Penny again.

“Since when did you get blue contacts?”

“Oh,” Penny smiles, chuckling. “That’s from the lightning bolt too; it literally changed my eyes blue.”

Both Penny and Lucy enter the high school thinking about the same thing; what has happened to Penny.

Penny enters the cafeteria, aware that she has onlookers. She is used to that, but she realizes that she must look different for people to stare more than usual.

Penny looks down at her hands and arms to see if something seems different for people to stare at. Her sleeves are rolled down so her lightning bolt isn't showing. Penny scoffs quietly, realizing what it is. Since she has been thinking about what happened yesterday, she must've had her serious face on.

Penny is aware that she looks fierce when she is thinking deeply about something. Lucy has even said so herself. People around were looking at her curiously or drooling over her looks — concerning the boys, hopefully — but Penny is sure that it leans more towards the curiosity of her well-being.

Or maybe it's that people could notice her blue eyes from a distance. Hopefully they would just be thinking that she's using blue contacts.

Penny grabs the usual breakfast sandwich for breakfast. Lucy grabs some cereal. They begin eating, wondering what to say if they decide to talk about something; both of them are thinking about the same thing but know better than to talk about that now.

They finish eating and head to their lockers.

"So ..." Lucy starts. "I guess I'll see you later, huh?"

“Yeah.”

Lucy smiles at Penny and sighs. “Penny,” she says. “I want you to know that I do not think any less of you. I love you, okay? Nothing is going to ruin our friendship. We are great friends, so this is not going to pull us apart.”

Penny smiles back and nods. “I know.”

“Okay, see you later.”

“Later.”

They split off. Penny heads to the English department, not realizing that she puts on her serious face. To everyone around her face looks fierce; like the look: you-can't-touch-me. Penny realizes this and purposefully leaves it on her face just to see everyone else reactions.

Penny smiles inside, knowing that the people are not thinking less of her, but respect her. She notices a boy standing by his locker down the hall as she walks that direction. He gawks at her. Penny looks up at him, just eyeing him down. He jerks his head away in fear.

Penny has never realized that she had this ability to force people to respect her; it's all in her face and her scar. She smiles to herself. She could have fun with this.

Penny enters the English classroom. It is half full and the warning bell just rang; now the last group of people should be coming in. Penny dares a glance at Adrian. He is already looking at her. Penny keeps her eyes on him. He smiles for her and nods a hello. Penny just smiles at him and then gets to her seat, looking away from him.

Penny sits, realizing that he is still looking at her. Penny is sitting in her usual seat even though there are no assigned seats. Adrian gets up from his seat and walks over to sit right next to Penny.

Penny can't help but look up at him. She tries her best but fails to conceal her smile.

“Why are you trying to hide your smile from me?” Adrian asks. Before Penny can blush, he continues. “You have a nice, warm smile. Don't hide it.”

“Thank you. You do too.”

“Thanks.” He pauses. “So ... I notice that your eyes are ... blue. Are you ... wearing blue contacts?”

“You-you *noticed?*”

He nods, smiling.

“Well ... I uh ... yeah, it's blue contacts.”

“Well, I like them. Are you planning to continue wearing them?”

Penny smiles. “Yeah.”

Adrian nods. “They sure look nice.”

Penny feels like she can't breathe. Adrian is looking right into her eyes. She starts burning up. She becomes afraid that she'll start to sweat.

Adrian narrows his eyes. “Your eyes ... it doesn't look like you are wearing contacts, though They look ... natural.” He pauses, continuing to look into his eyes, still giving Penny a calming smile. “The irises surely do look blue; not fake, and not your usual brown.”

Penny stammers. “I uh well ... I said that they are contacts.”

“Hmm.”

“How else could my eye color suddenly change?”

“Unless you were wearing brown contacts before ...”

Penny chuckles softly and looks down.

“I'm just playing with you, Penny. Your eyes look beautiful no matter what color they are. Your eyes are ... perfect; *hermoso ... beautiful.*”

Penny sighs, smiles looking into Adrian's eyes. She feels that his eyes are perfect as well. She leans close to Adrian, feeling a kiss coming on.

Adrian lets her lean closer. They are interrupted by the teacher.

“Good morning everyone,” the teacher starts out the day.

Penny and Adrian pull apart, but Penny keeps sneaking a glance at him. She knows now she will not be able to focus at all in class. Adrian is sitting next to her. Adrian loves her eyes. And ... they *almost* kissed!

The teacher rambles on with his lecture, but Penny cannot hear a thing he says. His words jumble around in Penny's head. Her heart is racing, about ready to pounce out of her chest like a kangaroo. Promptly her body starts to feel tingly like it did yesterday. She starts to shake her hands in nervousness.

“Are you alright?” Adrian whispers to her. “You're ... pale.”

“Uhh ...” Penny whispers back, uncertain. She's afraid that she'll burst out electricity from herself like a broken down power line.

Adrian puts his hand on Penny's for comfort. He feels the electricity immediately, but he doesn't pull away.

“Wow,” Adrian whispers.

“I uhh ...”

Adrian smiles at Penny. “I can feel ...” he stops himself, not wanting to offend Penny. He begins to whisper more quietly, almost inaudible

for Penny to hear. *"It feels like electricity is going through me."* He speaks as if he speaks to himself.

"I'm ... sorry."

Adrian is shocked, unsure what to say. He knows that Penny must be a metahuman. She is creating electricity; not enough to be seen, but enough to feel.

"No," Adrian whispers. "It's quite alright."

Finally he pulls his hand off, feeling relieved, but shows little to prove that he was even hurt in the first place; he just gives off a little sigh.

The teacher comes teaching the class, uttering on about his lecture, but fails to notice Adrian and Penny talking to each other.

"You, Penny, are something else." He smiles.

Penny tries to calm down, but feels panicked. She fears she might explode. She breathes short, quick breaths."

"You'll be alright, Penny." He pauses. "I'm here."

Adrian shows no fear to Penny as he places his hand back on top of hers. He uses all of the strength inside to keep himself from groaning from Penny's electricity.

Gradually, Penny calms down with the help of Adrian. She stops surging electricity through her body and color returns to her face. Adrian doesn't feel the electricity on the palm of his hand, but still he keeps his hand on top of Penny's.

Penny sighs, feeling relaxed now. She grasps the fact the Adrian has retained his hand upon hers. Her heart stays steady as if Adrian is regulating her anxiety.

Words form from the teacher's mouth now as Penny is rejoined with reality. Adrian keeps his hand on hers, giving Penny so much reassurance.

Penny wonders how this could've happened. Is it her new eye color? Has Adrian wanted to do this for some time now? Does he love her? Penny hopes so. She just can't believe that she is the girl that he chooses.

After about ten minutes into the class, Adrian pulls his hand away. Penny looks at Adrian and he smiles back at her. Although the warmth of Adrian's hand has left her, the warmth of his smile is still there to comfort Penny.

Penny sighs, loving this. The two try to focus on the teacher for the rest of the lecture until they are given an assignment.

“Wow, you're completely the opposite from this morning,” Lucy tells Penny. “Your face is *beaming*. What happened?”

Penny looks at Lucy and smiles, both standing at their lockers.

“Adrian ...” she sighs. “He touched my hand. We almost kissed.”

“Whoa ... you're serious?” she pauses, studying Penny’s face. “You are! How ... he ... what?!” Lucy smirks, feeling excited.

“He told me that I have beautiful eyes. I started to ... electrify and he touched me. He didn’t let go; it was like he wasn’t hurt by it.”

“You ... are lucky, Penny. Girls would kill to be touched by Adrian.”

“I know ... and he touched me. I didn’t touch him.”

Penny sighs and practically slams her back into her locker. She holds her books and looks at the ceiling with peace within.

“Wow, Penny. I ... I am happy for you.”

Penny looks at the ceiling for a minute before looking at Lucy, smiling. “You're jealous aren’t you?”

Lucy scoffs. “No!”

Penny tilts her head. “Really?”

“Okay, maybe a little, but ... Adrian deserves a girl like you, not me.”

Penny eyes catch sight of Vanessa. She is one of the popular girls and a cheerleader. Vanessa is also in her English class. She has been

known to bully Penny in the past ... and she is charging angrily towards her.

“Vanessa, hi,” Penny says after Vanessa approaches her.

“I saw you touching Adrian!” she whispers firmly. “You. Keep your hands. Off. Him.” She speaks through her teeth.

Penny scoffs and chuckles. “Actually, he touched me.”

“No, you ... you just —”

“You're just jealous, Vanessa.”

“Adrian is *mine!* You back off!”

“Adrian does not *belong* to anyone!” Penny talks back with the same conviction, her tone changing, annoyed with Vanessa. “Adrian made the choice by himself to get up and come over to sit by me. He made the choice to touch my hand. He made the choice to almost kiss me.”

Vanessa hits the locker next to Penny, almost denting it. She exhales through her nose. Penny decides to keep her stand. She pushes herself off the locker, standing tall before Vanessa.

“What are you going to do about it?” Penny demands.

Vanessa curls her nose, wrinkling her whole face with anger. She quickly throws her hand up to pull Penny’s hair, but with lightning speed Penny grabs her hand by the wrist.

Penny grows angry at Vanessa and her hatred from her having bullied her in the past returns. She squeezes her wrist. Vanessa throws her other hand up, but with the same speed Penny grabs it with her other hand.

People start to stand and gawk. Groups start murmuring amongst themselves.

Angry, electricity builds up inside Penny. She starts shocking Vanessa, making her shake. Then with strength she never knew she had, Penny hurls Vanessa across the hallway, bashing her into another set of lockers.

Vanessa falls on her back, rolling in pain. Slowly she gets to her hands and knees, still shaking a bit.

Penny looks around to make sure that there are no teachers looking. There aren't. She is also relieved to see that Adrian is not in sight; she wouldn't want him knowing about this.

"Come on, Luce. Let's go."

Lucy listens, following Penny away from the crowd and from Vanessa. They get far enough away from everyone before speaking to each other.

"What was that?" Lucy asks.

Penny looks at Lucy and shakes her head. "I ... I don't know." She pauses. "I lost control."

"You think?" Lucy pauses, and then scoffs. "What the hey, Penny! She deserves it anyway. She's been mean to you all of these years and then claims you did something you didn't. She has every right to be ... thrown across the hallway."

"I uh ... I just can't believe I did that."

"I can't either ... What did that lightning strike do to you?"

Penny shakes her head, not knowing the answer. "Did you see how fast I was?"

Lucy nods.

"The lightning gave me speed."

“That’s for sure.”

“Hopefully no one tells the principle,” Penny worries.

“Don’t worry. No one would be brave enough to do that to you; not even Vanessa herself. She will respect you from now on.”

“Are you sure about that?”

“I’m ... pretty certain.” Lucy pauses. “Maybe it won’t be immediate, but definitely in time she will respect you.”

“She will fear me first.”

“That is what respect is; is it not?”

“I guess so ... in certain cases.”

“It is in this case.”

“What if Adrian finds out? He wouldn’t like me anymore.”

Lucy sighs. “I ... I don’t think he would not like you anymore, just ... Adrian is a nice guy, he won’t hate you for it. Besides ... he may not even find out.”

“He’s out. Everyone going to find was watching. The news will spread.”

“Don’t worry about it Penny, Adrian will not think any less of you. I’m sure of it. He’s too nice of a person to do that to you. Besides he must like you since he went over to sit by you, so that must mean that this little ... incident means nothing to him. Don’t worry.”

Penny sighs. “Okay.”

At the end of the day Lucy and Penny meet up at their lockers again. They shove their books into their lockers, both of them not needing their backpacks since they finished their homework in class, like usual.

Lucy smiles at Penny for comfort. Penny looks around cautiously. She fears that Vanessa will run after her from nowhere. Currently she is nowhere to be seen.

Penny spots Adrian. He is at his locker, putting in some folders and notebooks. He grabs his backpack after putting one folder and one notebook inside. He does not look Penny's way.

Penny panics. *Oh, God. He knows,* she says to herself in thoughts.

Adrian steps back from his locker and turns around. He starts walking her way, still not looking at Penny. He gets right up to Penny and stops in his tracks. He turns and walks up to Penny, finally looking at her.

He smiles. Penny relaxes a little. His smile calms her.

"Hey, Penny," he says. "Do you have a bus to catch?"

"Yeah," Penny replies. "But I have time."

Adrian looks at Lucy. "Hello, Lucy. Nice to see you. Are you doing well?"

"Yeah, I am thank you."

Adrian nods and looks back at Penny. "So ... how are *you* doing, Penny?"

Penny shrugs. "I'm alright."

Adrian smiles, letting the silence build for a few seconds. "I know about what happened and I want to let you know that I don't hate you for it. To be honest ..." he leans closer to Penny, starting to whisper. "Vanessa has been getting on my nerves. She thinks that I like her, but I

don't. I'm only being nice to her." Adrian pauses, seeing Penny smirk. "And you were right; I don't belong to anyone ... else."

Penny tilts her head back, raising a brow. "'Else?' What do you mean?"

Adrian chuckles and looks down. He starts to blush. Penny smiles at him. He looks so cute; she has never seen him blush.

"I ... uh ..." he laughs. He looks up at Penny, smiling warmly. "I was wondering Penny ... um ... will you go out with me?"

Penny's heart skips a beat and then starts racing. Here Adrian is acting lowly, respecting Penny and asking her out. Penny thought that she would have to be the one to ask that question.

Penny starts to blush and her voice cracks up. "Yes," she barely manages to say.

Lucy stands back, smiling to herself. She places a hand over her mouth to try hiding her smile. She thinks the two of them together would be great.

Adrian sighs, seeming relieved, which is surprising. "Okay then ... I will see you tomorrow Penny. Umm ... maybe ... Well, I will make some plans for us to do this weekend. Sound fine?"

"Of course." Penny nods. Her parents don't care what she does; as long as it doesn't bother them.

"Alright. See you tomorrow."

"See ya."

"Later, Lucy," Adrian tells Lucy and she waves at him.

Penny looks at Lucy after Adrian walks away. "Wow."

Lucy chuckles. "Yeah. Well ... let's go catch that bus."

Both Penny and Lucy get home and meet up later at Lucy's place. Penny rings the doorbell from the front porch. Lucy opens the door and steps outside.

"Let's take a jog; my mom doesn't want any noise right now," Lucy says.

Penny nods.

The two of them go out and start jogging on the side of the road. Penny starts smiling, thinking of today's outcomes. It has been a good day for her.

"Excited, huh?" Lucy asks.

"Yeah," Penny sighs. She shakes her head in amazement. "I just can't believe that Adrian asked me out."

Lucy smiles. "It was funny. He was funny. In the way he asked you he seemed like any other normal boy asking politely and nervously. That's not his normal ... tone. He's usually bold."

"Yeah. I guess he goes weak around me."

Lucy laughs. "Ha!"

Penny chuckles along with her. Lucy starts taking deeper breaths as they continue their jog.

"It is amazing, though, Penny. I can't believe it either."

"I know. Me of all the girls in high school? He chooses me?"

“All the other girls are stuck up. You heard what he said; he's annoyed with Vanessa. Obviously ... he doesn't like those kinds of girls. He ... likes you.” Lucy stops talking to catch her breath, but they continue to jog.

“Yeah.” Penny sighs. “He's just ... so ... nice. Caring, respectful.”

“Hot, sexy,” Lucy adds on.

“Oh, stop,” Penny scoffs.

Penny begins to think about how it would be to be with Adrian. Lucy allows Penny moments to herself to let her mind wander off. They jog in silence for about ten minutes.

Unintentionally, Penny starts to jog faster and Lucy speeds up to stay with her. They continue to jog for another five minutes.

Lucy pants hard because of not jogging at a comfortable speed. Penny just continues to jog, not feeling worn out at all. Finally Lucy stops.

“Hold up, Penny!” Lucy says out of breath.

Lucy holds her hands at her knees, gasping. Penny stops and takes a few steps back to stand by Lucy.

“You're tired?” Penny asks, confused. “How?”

“How are *you* not?” Lucy pants. “We have been jogging at ... a decent pace ... and then ... you speed up. We were practically running for five minutes. Did ... you not ... feel tired? I'm ... exhausted.”

Penny shrugs. “I don't feel tired at all. I feel like I could jog for another hour.”

“At the speed you were going?”

“Yeah.”

“Then that’s not jogging, that’s running. You're saying ... you could run for an hour?”

“If you call it running, yeah.”

“It is running. You were going fast.”

Penny shrugs again.

After a few minutes Lucy starts out and Penny follows. They continue jogging. Penny starts to think about it and realizes that she does not feel worn out from this jog one bit. Lucy starts to pant harder, but Penny doesn’t at all.

“So ... you're not tired?” Lucy asks Penny.

“No.”

“Wow ... you're crazy.” Lucy pauses to catch her breath. “I wonder if ... that lightning bolt had anything to do with it.”

Penny thinks about the lightning strike and the actuality of it. She should be dead, but somehow she has survived. Penny’s heard about some people surviving lightning strikes, but nothing like her situation. The lightning strike gave her a tattoo-like bolt on her forearm. How is that even possible?

Penny wonders if anything else will happen to her.

She begins to think about her father. She knows that he must be abusing her, but for some reason she doesn’t remember any of it. She only remembers that dream. All this time the silhouette hitting her in her dream has been her father.

“I know who you are,” a mysterious voice of a man’s says from behind Penny and Lucy.

They stop dead in their tracks, spinning around quickly. The man is covered in hair — no; fur — from head to toe. His fur looks like stripes of a tiger's. He is looking directly at Penny, staring her down.

“Who are you?” Penny asks, quivering her voice.

“Your father is Drew.”

“How do you know?”

“We ... met in the same place before. I didn't know he had a daughter.”

Penny looks at Lucy. They are both mystified as to who this stranger is.

“Nice tattoo,” he tells Penny.

Penny tries hiding her arm.

“A lightning bolt must've killed you; that's how you got that tattoo.”

“What?” Penny scoffs. “*Killed me?* I'm not dead.”

“Well not now.” He pauses. “Look at me. What do you think killed me? I'm covered in tiger stripes.” He pauses, not clearing up the confusion. “You must think that you're alone in all of this, besides your parents of course You are not alone.”

The guy suddenly jumps off the road, high into the air. He runs off, down on all fours, just like a cat would run.

“Who was that?” Lucy asks.

“No idea,” Penny says.

“He knows your father.”

“Yeah, and if he's a friend of my father, then it means he's just as bad. And ...”

“He runs like a tiger ... and looks like one with all those stripes. And ... he said that you're not alone. What does he mean?”

“I have no idea.”

“What is going on?” Lucy pauses for emphasis. “You get struck by lightning and this guy figures it out by looking at your arm. How could he know about that?”

Penny shakes her head, not knowing the answer. “He ... he said that the lightning killed me.”

“He's crazy, that's for sure, because you are not dead.”

“Obviously.”

“Wait a minute ... Is that guy a parahuman?”

“A what?”

“A parahuman; a hybrid ... You know? He could be from Intex.”

“I have no idea who or what he is. He just ... I ... he ... he knows my father. He said he met him in some place.”

They are silent for a minute, trying to piece this together, but they fail at clearing up any confusion.

“No one saw you get electrocuted, right? Not even your parents?”

“Yeah, no one saw. I was standing out in the open though, but I was alone; by myself.”

“But ... he knows.”

Penny stares off into space, confused as ever.

Penny and Lucy head on home, walking instead of jogging. They talk among themselves, trying to make sense of who the man was and what he meant. They come to no explanation.

They depart at Lucy's house. Lucy enters her house as Penny heads back to hers. It'll be a long walk, so she decides to jog.

Curious about what Lucy was saying earlier, Penny starts sprinting. She sprints past five houses and realizes that those five houses indicate one mile. Penny comes to realize that it has only been four minutes since she started sprinting; she ran a mile in four minutes.

Yet ... Penny doesn't feel exhausted. Penny scoffs and keeps running. She has already run a mile and a half, but has five more to go.

Penny keeps running, maintaining her speed. She surprises herself when she arrives at home five miles later, because she does not feel a bit tired.

You are not alone. The man had told her.

Some things are happening to Penny and believing that she is just a metahuman does not begin to explain it.

When Penny got her first ability of healing at an accelerated rate she thought herself to be a metahuman, but not now. It has become more than that. She doesn't feel a bit tired from running nearly seven miles. She got struck by lightning and feels fine, but now has this lightning bolt tattoo.

The man said she was killed by it. How could she have died if she is still alive?

Penny walks up to the back door, entering the house. She begins to walk into it, but suddenly finds herself in her bed. Penny looks around and realizes that she is sitting up in her bed in her room.

“How did I get here?” she asks herself.

The bedroom door is closed. She moves her jaw in pain. She groans. Her body aches all over. She looks at herself, seeing fresh bruises and cuts all over. Her shirt is ripped. She feels her head; there is blood and a bump forming.

Penny looks down at her fingers; they are covered in dried blood, along with the added wet blood from her head.

She painfully gets out of the bed and looks at the mirror above her dresser. She looks like crap. There is a bruise underneath her left eye. Penny looks like she just came from a horrible bar fight.

“What happened?” she asks herself.

Penny tries to recall what happened. She only remembers last walking into the house, then waking up in her bed.

The alarm clock on her nightstand catches her sight. There hours have passed. Penny gasps.

Penny can only make sense of one thing: her father must've done this. Somehow Penny has been waking up at times being bruised all over, but having no memory of it. Yet it has happened again. Her father is the only explanation.

Penny recalls back to the nightmare of the silhouette cutting her, giving her the scar she has now. The silhouette is her father.

She swallows; her throat is dry. It suddenly feels as if her body is buzzing all over. The buzzing of her body actually feels good, making the pain lessen. Looking back into the mirror Penny sees that her wounds are

healing. She sees that the bruise on her face is decreasing. She is healing right before her eyes.

Fury builds up inside of her. She knows that her father did this. He's going to continue to do this if she doesn't stand up for herself. She steps towards the door, her heart racing.

Penny stands in front of her door for a few minutes, trying to build up the bravery to confront her father.

The longer she stands there, the harder it gets. She exhales, quickly throwing her hand atop the door handle. She closes her eyes and turns it. Finally she swings it open, opening her eyes.

She sees the hallway. She steps out of her room. Her heart feels like its bouncing about in her chest. She turns down the hallway, entering the living room.

Her father is sitting on the couch, watching TV. He's holding his arm in such a way that it looks like it's in pain. Her mother is sitting in the chair reading a newspaper. She looks up to see Penny.

"Penny," her mother says.

Penny just stands there, scowling. Her father turns to look at her, scowling back.

"Look who decided to leave her room," he says. "I thought I told you to stay in there for the rest of the night."

"Drew! You probably erased her memory of you telling her that."

"Erased my memory?" Penny asks.

Her father scoffs. "Whatever." He groans, holding his arm.

"What's wrong with your arm?"

He looks at Penny, growing angrier. "You broke it, you idiot."

Penny raises an eyebrow. She smiles inside; she had defended herself, but ... she actually broke his arm?

“Apparently you are getting your abilities already,” he says. “Too bad my rapid cellular regeneration has healed my arm yet.”

“What are you talking about?”

“You’re so clueless,” he laughs. “You're pitiful.”

Anger builds inside Penny. She has no idea what is going on.

“What's happening to me?” She asks, not realizing that she shoats.

Her father jerks his head to look at her. He scowls. He looks at her mother. “Joan, tell the kid what she needs to know. I'm not speaking to her.”

“Penny,” Joan says.

“No, not in here! Take her to her room!” he yells at her mother.

Penny’s mother nods to her father, getting up from the chair. She walks Penny into her room. She closes the door.

“What is going on?” Penny asks her mother.

“Penny,” her mother says. “You are from another planet.”

Penny’s expression on her face drops. Somehow that makes sense. A weight feels like it has been lifted from her shoulders. It makes sense as to what's happening to her. “So ... I'm like the Avian.”

“Kind of. Avian is from the same galaxy as us, but not the same planet. We are from planet Mason.”

“I'm a ... Masonian.”

“Yes” Joan rolls Penny’s sleeve up. “We’ve noticed the lightning bolt You got struck by lightning.”

“Yeah, then I got this. How?”

“Masonians have the ability of power resurrection. It’s where you get the ability from the source of your cause of death, after being resurrected. The lightning bolt killed you, so now you have its abilities. It also gave you that ... tattoo.”

“So ... are you guys my real parents? You're from Mason too?”

“Yes, we are your parents.”

“I was born on Mason? But I don’t remember it.”

“You were only two weeks old when we left.”

“Why did we leave?”

Joan smirks, sighing. “We didn’t just leave ... we were banished here.”

“Banished?”

Joan nods. “We were first sent to prison on Mason for abusing and killing animals and children.”

The truth pains her. Penny scowls. She begins to hate her parents even more than before, giving more reasons to. She starts to back up from her mother.

“We escaped but were caught. So, then they sent us here.”

“So ... they ... just sent their problems elsewhere.” Penny looks down, started to cry. “I can't believe you did all of that. Why can't ... why Some parents you guys are!”

“We weren’t planning on having you. We were wanted criminals, so we didn’t ... plan.”

Penny shakes her head, scoffing. "How's that supposed to make me feel better?! You guys are murderers and you weren't planning on having a child?! You weren't planning me; I'm a mistake!" She pauses, crying. "I find out I'm from Mason, but you guys were murderers from there. You ... you also abused children, like you are with me! I'm ... I'm ... leaving and never coming back!"

Penny shoves her mom, intending to just push her away, but she flies through the door, breaking it down. Penny gasps, not realizing her new profound strength.

Penny spins around and grabs her old, empty backpack that she used last year and fills it with clothes. She runs out of her room, past her mom. Her father stands, blocking the front door.

"Don't dare think you can leave; not after knocking your own mother over like that!" Drew yells.

"Really?!" Penny yells back. "Look at me! You guys hurt me! You abuse me and then ... you try to erase my memories! I know it was you that gave me this scar, not a cat!" She points at the scar that goes down her face.

Penny hits her dad in the chest, throwing him over onto his back. She jumps over him and darts out the door after opening it. She takes off running towards Lucy's house. She runs and runs, not once looking back. She hears her father yelling something at her, but she can't make out what he says, but she doesn't care. She keeps on running.

Penny pounds on the door of Lucy's house. Her mother comes to the door.

"Penny!" she exclaims. "My god, what happened?" She looks sympathetic, looking at Penny from head to toe.

"I uh ... I ran from my parents' house."

"They did this to you?"

"Yes."

"Come on in! Please."

Penny steps into the house. Lucy runs from the hallway, having heard Penny's voice.

"Penny!" Lucy gasps. "You look like hell."

Penny realizes that she is still covered in blood; her own blood. She has bruises and cuts that are healing at the moment, but since there are so many she still looks horrible.

"My dad ..." Penny says. "He ... did this to me."

"I'm calling the police," Lucy's mom, Kim, says.

"No," Penny says quickly. "You can't. He'll do something to me He'll"

"Penny," Lucy says. "The police will protect you. You'll be alright."

"Are you sure?"

"We'll be here. We won't let your dad get away with this."

Lucy's mom is already dialing 911. The police answer in a second. Lucy's mother explains the situation and that Penny fled here.

"Can I stay back with Lucy?" Penny asks Lucy's mother. "I want to tell her something."

"Uh, yeah. Sure. The police will be here soon, though. They'll want to make sure you're alright."

Penny nods. She and Lucy go to her room.

"What happened?" Lucy asks once they enter the room.

"I arrived at home, but in the next second I was sitting up in my bed. I don't remember anything. I was ... I felt hurt all over. My dad beat me, but I don't remember him doing it. He erased my mind."

"Your dad ... has powers?"

"Yes. My mom told me the truth about us. We are all ... from planet Mason; in the same galaxy as Rexton."

"What? You're ... an alien. Like Avian?"

"Yes."

Lucy gasps. "They know about your ... tattoo?"

Penny nods. "All of this time they didn't tell me. They don't care about me. They don't teach me or talk to me about anything. My mom just told me that they didn't plan to have me, that I'm a mistake." Penny starts to cry again.

Lucy places her hand on Penny's shoulder for comfort. "I'm ... sorry, Penny."

"Thanks, Lucy ... thanks for being a good friend to me."

"You're welcome. I will always be here for you, Penny."

Penny explains everything she has just learned to Lucy. Minutes past and Penny realizes that she should be hearing police sirens, but she hasn't.

"Aren't the police coming?" Penny asks.

"Yeah," Lucy says. "They should be here, shouldn't they be?"

Lucy jumps up and Penny follows her out to the living room. They look through the living room window to see the peaceful outside. No police in sight.

"Where are the police, mom?" Lucy asks her mother.

"I ... I don't know. They should be here soon though," she replies. "Although, they should've been here minutes ago."

Just then a car pulls into the driveway. Penny gasps.

"That's my father," she says.

"Hide," Lucy's mother says. "Lucy, go in your room and ... pretend you're doing your homework. Hide Penny somewhere."

Lucy and Penny take off to Lucy's room. Lucy's mother sits down at the couch.

Penny's father walks up to the door. Lucy's mother gets up from the couch, walking to the door. She opens it.

"Hello, Drew," she says. "I wasn't expecting to see you here. How are you doing?"

He smirks. "Just fine, but ... you can cut the crap," he says dryly. "I know Penny's here. You called the police on me, but we already took care of it; the police are not going to come after me."

"What?" she asks. "You took care of the police?"

“Yeah, they don’t remember why they came after me. They don’t even remember what they we doing in the first place.”

“What do you mean? What police?”

“*What police?* I said that you can cut the crap! Now, bring Penny to me! Now!”

“But ... Penny is not here.”

“Yes she IS!!” Drew yells, stepping inside, furiously.

“Look, Lucy is doing homework, so she's by herself. Penny is not here.”

“Shut up!! She is here, so stop LYING to ME!!” he hits Lucy’s mom, sending her across the room.

Drew runs to the end of the hallway, finding Lucy’s room. He kicks the door open. Lucy sits on the bed, looking surprised. She has a math book open on the bed and a notebook with a pencil in her lap.

“Where’s Penny?!” Drew demands.

“I don’t know; she's not here,” Lucy says in a panicky voice.

“Quit playing me!! I know Penny is here! Now, return her to me, NOW!!”

Lucy startles once Drew yells.

“Whoa,” Lucy says. “Mr. Kelvin, please calm down; Penny never came here. She did earlier, but she never entered the house. She's not here now.”

“Come here you!!”

Drew runs towards Lucy, wrapping his hands around his neck. Lucy starts choking, unable to free herself from his powerful grip.

Penny jumps out of the closet, pouncing at her father. She tackles him over, forcing him to let go of Lucy. Immediately, Lucy starts gasping for air. Drew kicks Penny off of him and hits her hard in the head, making her temporary immobilized.

Drew snatches Penny up, pulling her by the hair. Penny screams and kicks the back of his knees, sending him down. She bites down on his arm, forcing him to release her hair. Penny rubs her head and kicks her father in the back.

Drew spins around and blocks Penny's next blows. Penny tries to hit him again, but he grabs her hands, putting them together with just one of his hands, making her defenseless. With a free hand, Drew hits Penny in the face ... over and over ...

Lucy's mother runs into the room, limping. "Let her go!!" she yells. "Stop it!!"

Drew acts as if he can't hear a thing. Penny feels horrible, being socked in the face over and over, but somehow ... she doesn't feel weak. Penny struggles, but she finally breaks free. She kicks Drew between the legs and in the chin.

On his knees, Drew rolls over in pain, holding his crouch and groaning. Penny kicks him hard in the back. Drew jumps to his feet, recovering suddenly. He spins around and grabs Penny's foot to stop her from kicking him. He throws her to the floor.

Drew kicks Penny in the stomach, knocking the wind out of her. Penny tries gasping for air, but Drew hits her in the stomach again.

"STOP!!" Lucy's mother screams.

"Stay OUT of this!!" Drew yells back.

Lucy jumps from her bed onto Drew's back. Drew throws her across the room; she hits a wall and lands limply to the floor.

“Oh God, no,” her mother whimpers.

Penny jumps up, suddenly able to breathe. She kicks Drew in the chest as hard as she can. Her force sends him into the wall, knocking down some pictures. She charges at Drew, shoving him back into the wall as he starts to step away from it.

With her new profound strength, Penny punches Drew in the stomach over and over. Drew gasps for air, but Penny doesn't stop. She grabs Drew's head, shoving it into her knee that's thrusting upwards.

Penny throws Drew to the floor and lands on top of him, screaming. She punches him in the face and stomach, going back and forth.

“How do *you* like it?!” Penny exclaims, screaming.

Images flash in her head of her father abusing her; things she doesn't remember happening. Somehow she is remembering some of the things he's done to her. Horrible things. Very abusive things. Penny's anger only builds and she hits him continually, harder and faster. Suddenly, Penny hits her fist into his face and stomach at lightning speed; her fists blur and lightning sparks jump from his fists.

Lucy and her mother watch in awe. They push aside their amazement and focus on their concernment of Penny's wellbeing and not the father's.

After a minute, Penny is still beating the crap out of Drew. He starts to bleed out onto the floor.

“Okay, Penny!” Lucy's mother yells. “Penny, he's had enough!”

Penny stops suddenly, looking at what she's done. She jumps off of him, gasping.

“What ... did I do?” she asks herself.

Drew lies on the floor, looking dead. His face is covered in blood. Penny is panting hard, but doesn't feel worn out. She looks down at her hands; fresh wet blood is added to them.

Lucy, her mother, and Penny all look down at Drew, worried that he's dead.

"Umm ... Penny, don't worry," Lucy's mother says, trying to calm Penny down and give her reassurance, but she does so in a panicky tone. "We will take care of this. Why ... don't you wash up and go in the living room. I'll —"

She is cut off by Drew gasping for air. Drew snaps his eyes up looking at the three girls. He weakly gets to his feet, grunting. He coughs and moans. He growls and walks past Penny.

"You win," he tells her angrily.

Lucy and her mother watch him leave the house and pull out of the driveway in his car. Penny stands back. Lucy walks her to the bathroom.

"He ... he just ... let me go," Penny says. "But ... I ... I almost killed him."

"He would've killed you," Lucy says.

"Are you going to be alright?" Lucy's mother asks.

"I-I think so."

"Alright, why don't you ... wash up? I'll ... we ... you can stay here as long as you like."

"O-okay."

Penny starts by washing her hands in the sink. She looks at herself in the mirror. Her face is covered in blood and bruises. Penny realizes

that Lucy and her mother are going to be wondering how she was able to fight her father like that. She had great strength, like her father.

“I ...” Lucy’s mother says to herself. “I can't believe the police let him go ...” she trails off.

Lucy and her mother allow Penny some privacy, allowing her to lock the bathroom shut. Penny readies her change of clothes, setting them on the sink, making sure the counter top is clean first. Penny stripes down and steps into the shower. Blood immediately begins to wash off her, turning the shower floor red.

Lucy and her mother clean up Lucy’s room, ridding it of the small pool of blood. Lucy gathers up her knocked down pictures, hanging them back on the wall.

"I'm ... sorry," Penny says, after she gets cleaned up and finishes her shower. "I ... created a mess."

"Don't apologize," Lucy's mother says. "You can't blame yourself for what happened. What happened is your father's fault. He is to blame for it all."

"But ... I ... I almost killed him. I-I am no better than him."

Lucy's mother smiles at Penny. "It'll be alright. He ... has it coming for him."

"I uh ..." Penny sighs. "Did Lucy tell you anything about me?"

"What about you do you mean? No, Lucy didn't say anything."

"I'm ... a ..." Penny determines how to say this. "I have powers."

Lucy's mother, Kim, nods, understanding. "You don't have to explain anything to me, Penny. I just want you to get a chance to relax. Come on," she points at the couch, "have a seat." She pauses. "But if you want to talk, go ahead."

Penny walks over to the couch and sits down next to Lucy. Lucy's mother turns on the TV. They are quiet; no one talks.

Penny starts to feel the buzzing in her face as her face starts healing. Lucy's noticed it and so has her mother. They both notice that in just one hour her face is almost completely healed, except for her scar that goes down her face, passing between her right eye and nose.

Lucy and her mother don't say anything; they afraid of what to say, not wanting Penny to feel worse.

“Kim,” Penny says to Lucy’s mother. “I uh ... want to thank you for ... letting me stay here for ... now.”

“You're welcome, and ... you can stay here for as long as you like; as long as you need to,” Kim replies. “I want you here.”

The front door opens and Lucy’s father steps in. He feels the anxiety in his presence. He looks up and immediately sees Penny. He looks at his wife, reading her expression. He nods slowly. He doesn’t understand why she’s here, but he understands that she's in trouble.

He sets his things down, taking his keys and wallet out of his pockets. He walks up to Kim and kisses her on the neck. He whispers in her ear. “Is everything alright?”

Kim sighs. “For now, Leland,” Kim sighs again.

“Okay. I'm just going to take a quick shower, get washed up and I’ll be right out.”

“Okay.”

Penny watches Leland escort himself to his bedroom. She looks back at Lucy.

“I wish I had nice parent like you, Luce,” Penny says.

Lucy smiles. “Yeah me too.” She doesn’t know what else to say to that.

Things start to settle down. Lucy’s father, Leland comes out to sit on the couch in the living room. He smiles and makes Penny’s feel comfortable. He and Kim just briefed each other about Penny’s situation, coming to an understanding that Penny will be staying here until things are better.

Despite all that is going on in Penny's head she starts to think about Adrian. She wonders if she'll be able to go to school tomorrow. Penny already knows that Kim will urge her to stay here and not go to school.

Penny fears that Adrian will think that she blew him off if she doesn't show up tomorrow.

Penny feels her skin buzzing. She knows that she should be covered in cuts and bruises. She reaches her hand up to her face to feel for the bruises; the wounds are healing fast; they are becoming fewer and smaller. At this rate, her wounds should be completely healed in ten minutes.

Penny knows that Lucy and her family must be confused. She hasn't told them much of anything at all. If they are noticing her wounds healing before their eyes, then it'll add to their confusion; Penny hasn't even told Lucy about her healing ability, although she has told her about her lightning and the fact that she's a Masonian; a fact that Penny just now found out about herself.

"So ..." Leland says, looking at the TV then at Penny. "Penny, what kind of TV do you like? Or would you like to watch a movie?"

Penny takes her eyes off the empty space in front of her to look at Leland. He looks so kind, desiring to make Penny feel good. Penny smiles at him, appreciating his wanting to help.

"I ... uh," Penny sighs, her voice shaky still. "I wish things weren't like this," she mumbles. "Leland, I ... I like a lot of things Lucy likes, so ... if maybe Lucy can recommend a movie for me?"

Penny looks at Lucy.

"Oh, sure. Yes, of course I can," Lucy says. She gets up to walk to the movie stand, which sits next to the TV. She starts to look through the movies. "Let's see here ..."

“What's one of your favorite movies that I haven't seen?” Penny asks.

“Hmm ... How about this?” Lucy pulls out a movie, showing Penny the cover; it has a picture young man and woman sitting together, laughing.

“Sure. It looks ...” Penny sighs. “It looks peaceful.”

Lucy looks at Penny, concerned. She really feels for Penny. “Okay,” Lucy snaps out of it. “I'll put it in.”

Lucy switches the TV to the DVD and inserts the disc into the player. She lets the previews play until it gets to the menu. Lucy presses play.

The movie starts out with opening credits, sliding across the video of which is the panning of a field. The panning stops when it reaches the main character's house in a rural area. Nice, soothing music plays in the background.

Penny cannot seem to focus on the movie at all. It plays through getting to about the middle when Penny takes a minute to come back to reality, but then again she just zones out. The movie finishes and the closing credits finishing sliding up the screen. The movie returns back to the main menu, but still Penny stares at the TV, though with her mind elsewhere.

“Did you enjoy the movie?” Kim asks Penny.

Penny continues to sit there, looking into space. She doesn't reply. In a way, it scares Kim. She looks at her husband and sighs.

“I hope she gets good sleep tonight,” Kim tells him.

“I hope so too,” Leland replies. “It's a shame what has happened ... and the police didn't do a thing about it.”

“Yeah,” Kim scoffs. “Somehow he got the police to believe him into thinking ... whatever it is. They just ... left.” Kim shakes her head. “He said that the police forgot what they were doing. So ... unprofessional.”

Lucy listens to her parents, wanting to explain the little she knows. She believes Penny knows more about her father; he has the ability to alter people’s memories. Penny has been a victim of it.

“Oh, Penny,” Lucy sighs, watching her just stare into space. “I wish things weren’t like this.”

Penny just continues to be in a haze.



It being Friday morning, Penny wakes up on the couch in the living room with a blanket over top of her. Lucy is sleeping in a chair with her blanket. Lucy’s parents are in their bedroom. The time is five in the morning.

Adrian comes to Penny’s mind. He promised to discuss plans with her concerning where to establish their date. She wants to be able to confirm the plans with Adrian, even though Lucy’s parents encouraged her to stay here last night.

Lucy’s parents said that it was up to her for Lucy to stay with or for her to go to school by herself. Penny insisted that she go to school. They asked for her to think it over again in the morning. Penny is still deciding to go to school; she wouldn’t know what to do here anyway.

Penny sits up on the couch, letting the blanket fall onto her lap. She yawns. She got a fairly good sleep surprisingly, but she is still just a tad tired. She just woke and is not fully awake yet.

Penny gets up to go to the bathroom. She looks in the mirror, searching for signs of injuries. She finds nothing. She has no scratches, cuts, or bruises. Penny gasps. Her father hit her in the nose repeatedly, but there is nothing to prove for it.

She is relieved, knowing that no one at school will ask about it if there are no traces of injuries on her in the first place. Although ... Lucy and her parents must've noticed. She had her injuries at first, but they were there to see them disappear.

Penny waits in the living room, sitting on the couch for an hour. Lucy finally wakes up. Her parents come out of their room a second later. They look to Penny for her to tell her what she's decided.

Penny smiles at them. "I'm going to school," Penny tells Lucy's parents. She looks at Penny, smiling.

Lucy shakes her head. "She's ... expecting someone at school," Lucy says.

"Ah," Kim says. "It makes sense now. It's a boy, right?"

Penny nods.

"He's asked you out, has he?"

"Yes," Penny replies. "He wants to tell me his plans for the weekend today."

"I see." Kim pauses. She says something to Leland just before he returns to his room to get dressed for work. "Well ... I'm going to have to tell the bus driver that you have my permission to get on the bus with Lucy without having a bus pass. I'm going to give you a note for coming home as well."

Penny nods. Kim nods as she returns to her room to get dressed to go outside to meet the bus driver. Lucy takes Penny into her room. Lucy changes her clothes and gives Penny the offer to wear some of her

clothes. Penny declines, since she brought a change of clothes ahead of time.

Penny puts on a pair of dark, purple skinny jeans with a deep koamaru [dark bluish-purple] blouse.

“Ooh,” Lucy says. “Looking sexy for Adrian.”

Penny chuckles. Lucy smiles, happy to cheer Penny up. She hates seeing her sad, especially since what's happened.

“Penny,” Lucy says. “You look beautiful.”

“Thanks, Luce,” Penny says.

“Are we ready, then?”

Penny nods. Lucy looks up at her alarm clock sitting on her desk.

“Five minutes,” Lucy says.

Kim explains to the bus driver that Penny will be staying at their house for a few days at least. She hands the bus driver the pass for Penny to be coming home at Lucy's.

They arrive at school and finish their breakfast quickly. They immediately go to their lockers to wait. They already have their stuff ready.

"I'm so happy for you, Penny," Lucy says. "You are so excited; you're nervous."

Penny just nods.

"Penny ... when you meet him, just act natural. He loves you the way you are, otherwise he ... I mean ... Just be yourself, you don't have to pretend to be someone else, he loves you the way you are."

"He loves me?"

"Yes, he wouldn't have asked you out otherwise, right?"

"Well ... yeah, I guess."

"Alright, now get out of here. Go to English class and meet him."

Penny smiles. "Okay."

Penny hugs Lucy and they depart. Penny goes to her English class and Lucy goes to Algebra II C.

Penny takes a seat at her desk. She is one of the first of the students to arrive in the classroom. Adrian isn't here yet. Penny waits for the warning bell to go off and more people arrive. Adrian still doesn't show. She looks at the opening of the classroom, watching everyone enter.

Penny realizes that Vanessa's seat is empty. She is not here today, but she could care less about her. Instead, Penny is concerned about Adrian. Why isn't he here yet?

The last bell goes off, but Adrian doesn't show. The teacher begins the lecture for the start of the day. Ten minutes pass, but Adrian doesn't show up to be tardy. Adrian doesn't show at all.

Penny tries but fails to focus very well at all. All she can think about is what happened to Adrian. Her father comes to mind. She begins to fear that her father has done something to Adrian as a way to persecute Penny. Penny frets about many possibilities; Adrian is sick; he's skipping; her father has harmed him, kidnapped him, or worse ... killed him.

Penny tries to push that thought aside, but it is difficult. Her father is more than capable of doing it. He could have killed Penny, but instead she almost killed him ... in front of Lucy and her mother. She sighs shakily. She had been so scared of her life.

Uncontrollably Penny touches her nose, feeling that it is fine; her father had punched it repetitively, breaking it for sure. Her nose has healed, though, showing no signs of it ever being harmed, thankfully. She dreads on the idea that her father could be harming Adrian in the same way.

Remarkably, Penny realizes that it has become quiet. She hasn't been focusing her attention on the teacher to realize that she was talking in the first place, but now she realizes that she's not talking at the moment. Penny looks up to see the teacher walking to her desk. All of the students are opening their notebooks or getting paper from the counter.

Penny looks back at the board; there is an assignment written on it. She groans to herself; now she has missed the lecture to help clarify the assignment a little. She opens her book to the page and realizes that it's just a reading assignment with a set of questions. She sighs; it's not

the worst of assignments. Penny gets out her notebook for preparation and begins reading.

Before she knows it the words are being read in her mind, but she is not making any sense of it. Her mind drifts off about Adrian and her father. The words on the page are meaninglessly being read in her mind.

Penny struggles to finish this assignment by the end of the class. She gets down to the last question and the bell rings. She quickly writes down what she hopes is the answer and turns it in.

Nervously, Penny walks to her locker to meet Lucy.

Lucy immediately can see the fear on her face. "Are you alright?" Lucy asks. She hopes that it's not about her father.

"Adrian didn't show up to class," Penny tells Lucy. "Luce, I'm afraid my father did something to him."

"Oh," Lucy scoffs and chuckles a little, throwing Penny off. "Penny, don't worry. He's here now, look."

Lucy points at Adrian at his locker. Penny looks and sighs; immediately a weight falls off her shoulders.

"Wow I was so scared I couldn't focus ..." she trails off. Without saying anything more to Lucy, Penny practically runs to meet Adrian.

Adrian notices Penny, turning his focus away from his backpack in his locker. "Penny, hi," he says.

Penny smiles, feeling relieved to see that he looks fine. "Hi," she says. "Where were you? Did you just get here? You weren't in my English class."

Adrian sighs and gives Penny a comforting smile. "Penny, I'm sorry I wasn't there. I overslept. Truth is ..." He pauses, causing Penny to feel

tense. "I have been thinking about my plans with you that I stayed up 'til three in the morning. I slept in."

Penny sighs. "You were ... thinking about me all night?"

"Yes; you're all that's on my mind."

"Me too." *Other than my father*, she adds to herself.

"Since I have been thinking about you, I've decided to let you choose the restaurant that we'll go to."

"You want me to decide?"

"Yes. I was thinking I'd pick you up at your house, that way we both have time to get ready. Then I will take you to the restaurant that you would like."

Penny smiles. "Sounds good, — oh! — but you'll have to pick me up at Lucy's; I'll be there."

"Okay. Give me your address and Lucy's for future reference."

Adrian pulls out a notebook and pencil, handing it to Penny. Penny writes down the address, hesitating to write hers. She wonders if she would ever return to her house; her father's house.

"By the way," Adrian says slowly. "You look beautiful today, as always."

Penny blushes. "Thanks, you too."

"Oh, please."

Penny hands Adrian back his notebook. He looks down to read the addresses. He nods.

"So, I will stop by Lucy's and pick you up."

Penny nods. "Okay." Penny sighs, pausing. "So ... tonight?"

Adrian smiles at Penny, nodding. "Yes," he says slowly. "Tonight. I will stop by Lucy's. Restaurant; your choice, okay?"

"Okay."

"Well, we better go to our classes. I will see you at Lucy's if not sooner."

"Alright, see ya later." Penny steps back trying to not grin too big and she turns to walk back to her locker.

Penny walks towards Lucy who has been pretending not to have been looking their direction. Penny walks towards Lucy with happiness and pride, but suddenly gets an image of her father abusing her flash in her head. She arrives at her locker and Lucy smiles at her.

"So, is it planned?" Lucy asks.

"Yes; he'll come pick me up this afternoon. My restaurant choice."

"Looks like you have to start thinking."

Thinking. Her recent thought was her father. She still fears that he'll come back to get her, or ... he'll harm Adrian. Horrible thoughts and images go through her mind. Penny wants to be excited about this date, but it is difficult to be under the recent occurrences.

"Tough decision, huh?"

"Huh, what?" Penny asks, snapping away from her atrocious thinking.

"About where to go; the restaurant?"

"Oh ... I was just ..." Penny trails off.

Lucy nods, understanding. She hates seeing her closet friend go through things like this. She feels that Penny doesn't deserve to be treated horribly by her father. It's sad.

“Hang in there, Penny. I want you to have a good date with Adrian, okay? Allow Adrian to ease your mind. Have fun, please.”

Penny smiles. “Thank you. I will try.”

Penny and Lucy arrive at the house. Kim welcomes them home, offering Penny something to snack on.

“I have potato chips, wheat crackers, fruit and pudding,” Kim says.

Penny smirks, standing before the counter. “No thank you, Kim,” Penny says. “I will be going out to eat with a boy from school.”

“Ah, I see.” Kim looks at Lucy, smiling. “That’s the boy you talked about this morning.”

Penny nods.

“Very well, then.”

“I have to think of the restaurant to go to. He’s allowed me to choose.”

“Oh, that’s very nice of him.” Kim looks like she’s going to say something more, but she decides against it.

“I think I’m going to get ready first.”

“You can try out some of my dresses,” Lucy says, taking Penny to her room excitedly.

Penny is shown Lucy’s closet. Penny thinks of her closet; it is nothing like Lucy’s. Penny doesn’t even have a quarter of the amount of dresses Lucy’s has.

Lucy starts pulling out her favorite dresses; long, some short, green, blue, purple, red.

Lucy looks at one of the purple ones. "I know how you like purple," she tells Penny. "I think you should choose this dress." Lucy hands Penny the purple dress.

Penny holds it in the air up to herself.

"What do you think?"

"I like it."

"Wear it."

Penny takes off her pants, putting the dress on to test it out. She looks at the mirror standing atop Lucy's dresser. She looks into it admiring herself.

"I *love* it."

Lucy smiles, grinning as wide as Penny does. "Great."

"I'm going to get washed up first."

"Okay."

Penny takes the dress off, putting her pants back on. She grabs a change of under apparel to take with her into the restroom for her shower.

The doorbell rings and Penny's heart skips a beat then races to catch up with itself. She looks at Lucy for comfort. Lucy smiles back at her, giving her a nod.

Penny walks to the door with the purple dress on, along with a pair of purple high heels, while wearing makeup. She grabs the door handle and turns. Kim sits on the couch in the living room, pretending to not pay attention. Lucy sits at the counter.

Penny opens the door, revealing herself to Adrian. A chill goes through her. Adrian looks so handsome, wearing a tuxedo.

“You look ... great,” Penny says.

“So do you,” Adrian replies. “You ready?”

“Yes.”

“Okay,” Adrian smiles. “Do we need to say bye to anyone?”

Penny turns around to face Lucy and Kim. She waves. “See you guys in a few.”

“Alright.”

Penny closes the door behind her, walking with Adrian to his car. He has a decent car; it is very clean on the inside and out.

Adrian opens the passenger door for her.

“Thanks,” Penny says, stepping inside the car, taking her seat.

The car smells of coconut. Adrian enters the car, taking his seat behind the wheel. He turns the ignition, starting the car. The radio turns on, playing from a cd of relaxing ambience music.

“So, where to?” Adrian asks.

Penny smiles. “Well, I was thinking Mexican. That’s my favorite.”

“Okay. Do you have a specific choice?”

“Not really.”

“That’s okay, because I know of a great Mexican restaurant; *Diego's Entrantes*.”

“Oh, yeah, I like that one.”

“*Diego's Entrantes* it is then.”

Adrian backs the car out of the driveway, heading it into town.

Penny decides to try to allow Adrian to ease her mind by being the first one to break the silence. “So, Adrian ...” she starts. “How long have you liked me?”

“Always; since I first lay my eyes on you. I just haven’t had the courage to meet you about it ‘til recently.”

Penny scoffs. “How is it that I of all people get asked out by you?”

“What do you mean? Do you feel lower than other girls?”

“Well, yes.”

“Then don’t. You are not any lower than anyone. Everyone at the school is the same in my eyes; everyone is equal.”

“What about you? Do you consider yourself above others?”

“No.”

Penny nods. “Hmm.”

“Penny,” Adrian says, taking a moment to look at her before redirecting his attention back to the road. “I have made a resolution with myself to treat everyone the way I would like them to treat me. I’ve determined myself to treat everyone with respect and it has helped me a lot ... in school and at home.”

“Hmm?” Penny asks, wondering how he means that.

“A few years back my father and I didn’t get along very well.” Penny’s father comes to her mind. “We would always argue. My siblings would argue with me as well. It’s not that we were not a strong family, but we could’ve been better. One day I decided to try to control myself better. I motivated myself to treat everyone with respect. It takes a lot of humility.

“Since then, things in life have been working out for me. Of course, at first, it took time. My father still would get mad at me, but after a few times he started to notice that I didn’t talk back and did as he wanted. He was confused at first and as time passed we got along better. The same went for my siblings; my younger brother and sister; we didn’t argue as much and we hardly ever now. If we do we laugh at it a second later.

“So when you are dazzled to be asked out by me, don’t be. I am just like any other person in the world. I am not superior.”

Penny smiles.

“Well, how’s your family?”

Penny looks up at Adrian, wishing he didn’t just ask that question. “Not that great,” she replies. “I’m an only child, with just a mother and father. But right now ...” Penny sighs. “We are going through some problems. I am staying at Lucy’s right now.”

“I see,” Adrian says, nodding. His expression on his face makes it seem that he’s not so surprised. “Penny, you know I care deeply about you? I do. At times I’ve noticed that you would have bruises or cuts on your arms and face. Tell me, please, does your father hurt you?”

Penny’s eyes start to water, but she holds back from crying. Her voice would break if she speaks, so she just nods to Adrian.

“Penny, please know that I will always be here for you. I hate to see you continue to get hurt, maybe ... I will come by more often to make sure you’re okay.”

“No,” Penny says quickly. “Not ... I mean, not at my house. I don’t want my father knowing that I have a boyfriend now.”

Adrian nods. “I would stop at Lucy’s if that’s alright.”

“Oh, yeah. Lucy’s house is fine.”

A few minutes pass and the two of them arrive at the restaurant. A waiter seats them offering them drinks.

Penny looks at Adrian, asking him if it's alright to get what she would like.

"Do you want me to just get water?" Penny asks Adrian.

"Penny, you can get whatever you like. If you like water, that's fine, but if you like soda that's fine too."

"Okay," Penny says. "I'd like a cola."

"And you sir?" the waiter asks Adrian.

"I'd like a cola as well," Adrian replies.

The waiter nods and writes that down in his notepad. He hands Adrian and Penny both menus.

"Are you two ready to order or do you need a few minutes?"

"We'll need a few minutes."

The waiter nods. "Okay, let me know when you're ready." He walks back to the counter to wait.

Penny looks down at her menu, wondering which to get. It seems that Adrian wants her to get whatever she wants, to not hold back. Penny is surprised; he must have enough money.

Penny looks up at Adrian but sees past him, casing her heart to skip a beat. Behind Adrian is her father, standing at the entrance of the restaurant. Adrian immediately notices Penny's pale face.

"Are you alright, Penny?" Adrian asks.

Penny throws the menu up to cover her face from her father. "My father is here."

“Is that a problem? We can leave if you want.”

“Is he looking? Does he know I'm here? He can't know. He'll do something.”

Adrian doesn't reply at first, having to turn his head around. “Umm ... he is looking this way, but I'm not sure if he's looking at us or not.”

“Oh, God. He knows I'm here.”

“Why don't we leave, then?”

“But he'll see us leave.”

“Here are your drinks,” the waiter says setting down two colas on the table.

“Actually,” Adrian tells the waiter. “I'm sorry but we are going to have to eat at another restaurant.”

“Is there a problem?”

“We can't afford this.”

“I see.” The waiter grabs the drinks and returns to the counter without saying anything more.

“I will distract him and you need to run outside, okay.”

Penny nods.

Adrian gets up, walking towards Penny's father. He is already looking at him, watching him walk towards him. Adrian pretends that he's not intending to meet him. Adrian pretends to be looking for the restrooms. He stops in front of Penny's father.

“Wait a second,” he says, looking puzzled. “Don't I know you from somewhere?” he asks her father, trying to throw him off guard. “I've seen you from somewhere; where was it?”

Penny gets up from the table, dropping the menu down. She walks with her head down, rushing past Adrian and her father.

“I'm sorry?” Penny's father says.

“I know I've seen you from somewhere.” Adrian catches a glimpse of Penny walk through the first set of doors. Penny's father starts to turn his head, but Adrian grabs his attention again. “Wait I know! Weren't you the guy that helped out at the field trip? You're Bernard's dad aren't you?”

Penny's father scoffs. “No, I'm not. Now if you'll excuse me I was looking for someone.”

“Oh, sorry. I guess I had you confused with someone else.”

Adrian walks past Penny's father, walking out the two sets of doors. Adrian runs outside, meeting Penny.

“Let's get out of here,” Penny says.

“Sure thing.”

Penny starts running towards Adrian's car. Things around seem to blur, looking strangely different to her. She arrives at Adrian's car, turning around to see that Adrian is still at the entrance of the restaurant.

Suddenly, Adrian is looking at her confusingly. “How'd you get there so fast?”

“I ran.”

“I know, but ... you ran so fast ... like ... Whirlwind fast.”

“What? *Whirlwind fast*?”

“Yes!” Adrian says, running to his car.

Adrian unlocks the car and the two of them jump into it; Penny slamming the door shut behind her. Penny's father suddenly runs out of the restaurant's front door.

"Go!" Penny yells at Adrian, panicked. "He's there!"

Adrian starts the car, immediately drawing Drew's attention. He recognizes Adrian's face right away, and Penny's in the passenger's seat. He runs towards them, but Adrian throws the car in drive, gunning it out of the parking lot.

"Where now?" Adrian asks.

"Away from here! Far away, please!"

"I'm sorry," Penny says.

Adrian has been driving for a half hour now, looping all around town, making sure to lose Drew. They haven't seen him since the parking lot, but Adrian wanted to make sure that they lost him.

"Don't apologize Penny. It's alright," Adrian says.

"I mean, I ruined our first date."

"We can start over, that's fine. But ... we can still make this a date. A date only means that we spend time together."

"But I don't want to remember it being like this."

Adrian pulls his car around the back of a huge store. "Penny I'm am here for you. I won't let your father hurt you anymore."

"But ... it's easier said than done. You don't understand it; my father could kill you. He's really ... strong ... like super strong."

"Hmm ... super strong as in ... the Avian's strength?"

Penny nods.

"What about you when you ran fast in the parking lot?"

"I don't know; it just happened. It's never happened before."

Adrian allows the silence to linger around for a bit, permitting time to think. Him letting the silence dawdle gives him a few moments to try to piece some things together, but it makes Penny feel anxious.

“We live in Ohio,” he says. “Most everyone who has powers live in New York, because of the ... virus or whatever.”

Penny nods. “But I'm not from New York.”

“And ... you also have electric, right?”

“Yes, how'd you know?”

“You don't remember shocking me in class?”

“Oh that ... but you calmed me down. Remember that?”

Adrian nods, smiling. He starts to calm down. “Yes, I remember. I placed my hand on your arm and somehow you just stopped.”

“But ... I thought you did something; you ... you suppressed my electricity.”

“No, I did nothing.”

“Oh.”

Adrian smiles at Penny, trying to give her some comfort. “I understand why you have seemed distressed lately ... because of your situation at home. I know that Lucy is supporting you and I want to help you as well. Do you accept my wanting to help?”

“Yes.”

“Have you ever thought of talking to a counselor?”

Penny sighs. “Not really.” She pauses. “But I'd rather not be talking about it.”

Adrian smiles. “That's alright.” Adrian pauses. “Do you want to make this date count?”

Penny tilts her head, wondering how he means.

Adrian moves in his seat, closer to Penny. He leans over the drive shaft, leaning into Penny. He takes her hand, gently setting it on Penny's cheek. He wipes away her wet mascara, cleaning it to look better. He puts her hair back, behind her ear. Without a second more of hesitation, Adrian quickly sets his lips against Penny's.

Penny suddenly feels relieved as if all of the world's weight is thrown off of her. She feels so calm now. She feels as if the whole world falls away from her, disappearing.

"Oww," Adrian says, suddenly pulling away.

Penny opens her eyes. Adrian has a hand on her lip, feeling them.

"You shocked me."

"Sorry," Penny says.

"No, it's alright." He chuckles. "You sent electricity through me. Now I can say that when you touch me electricity flows through me."

Penny scoffs.

Adrian leans forward again. They kiss, this time longer. At first Penny feels as if she has to control her new electricity, but then it seems as if a minute passes and she feels calm again, without feeling the need to control her electricity.

They finally pull away, but it's not because of Penny's electricity. They pulled away because it was the right time to. They look at each other, both smiling and sighing.

Penny feels so calm. She hasn't forgotten about her father, but at least now she doesn't feel worried.

Adrian puts on some music. They lean their heads against each other, just listening to the music, allowing time to fly by. After about ten songs have been played they begin to talk again.

They talk about whatever comes to mind. They begin to talk about the Avians and how Penny is like the metahumans in New York. Penny corrects Adrian, telling him the truth that she has recently learned herself; she is a Masonian of the same galaxy of the Avian. She explains everything to him. Adrian listens to it all, not feeling any different about Penny. To him, a Masonian, a Rextonian, a human; all the same, but Penny is more than that to him.

Adrian listens to Penny talk and explain her story, feeling relaxed. He knows that he chose the right girl to date, the girl he's had a crush on forever.

Another hour passes and silence begins to linger again, but this time they both feel relaxed, no longer worried. The radio continues to play songs.

"You know, Penny," Adrian says. "This is the best date I've ever had."

"Really? Even considering how it started?"

"Yes. You know why? Because I'm going out with the perfect girl. Don't tell Vanessa this, but she was boring and flirty. Not my type."

"What? You actually dated her? I thought you said that she only thought you liked her."

"Well, we did go on one date, because she insisted. I was nice to her and she flirted the only time. I never went out with her again, always giving her excuses. She continues to flirt with me and I can't help but be nice to her, but I don't like her."

"You don't have to be nice to her."

"Yes I do. I am nice to everyone."

"You don't have to be that nice. You know ... you can tell her to back off nicely."

“You won't take it nicely.”

“Well ...”

“Penny, I know that she used to bully you. I'm sorry about that, but ...”

“Don't worry about it, though. We don't need to be talking about her.”

“You're right.”

Adrian feels sympathy for Penny, trying but failing to hide it, though. He is trying to make Penny feel comfortable and enjoy this date. It has not been great so far, but it's been getting better.

Adrian tries sinking it in. Penny is an alien, but very much like a human. Looks like a human. Acts like one. Adrian tells himself that he should feel a little different about Penny now that he knows the truth, but he doesn't; he feels the same. He still loves Penny the way she is, but now she comes with added bonuses; super abilities, which is rare outside of New York. The thing is: she is neither a metahuman nor a parahuman; she is a Masonian, an alien from the same galaxy as Avian.

“Penny,” Adrian says. “You're a remarkable girl. You are amazing. I know you may not think so, but you have a difficult life, yet look at the way you've turned out so far. You've turned out just fine. More than fine; you are a nice, modest, respectful and beautiful girl. I like that all about you.”

“And you the same, Adrian,” Penny says. “You act like you are not superior and don't want to be entitled to that, but I have always seen you like that because ... you are the hottest boy in school.”

Adrian scoffs.

“It's true, but you are too modest yourself to admit that it's true.”

“I suppose.” He pauses. “But ... the *hottest* boy in school? Am I really? I wouldn’t know because I’m a boy.”

Penny smiles, chuckling. She starts to blush. “Yes, and I’m dating him.”

“Are you only dating me because I’m hot?”

“Are *you*?”

Adrian blushes, laughing. “No, it’s more than that. I love-like you the way you are. I like your attitude.”

“Same goes for you,” Penny says. Penny pauses, considering. “You know, Adrian ... you’ve really turned this date around for the better. Thank you.”

“And thank *you*.”

Once again, they lean close to each other to kiss.

Adrian takes Penny home; to Lucy's house. Penny begins to panic, worrying that her father will be there. Adrian arrives at the house and Penny begins to panic even more.

Adrian notices. "I'll walk you up."

Penny nods. They both get out of the car, walking to the front door. They arrive in a few second, greeted by Lucy who is smiling uncontrollably.

Lucy opens the door letting them both inside. Penny starts to calm down, knowing that her father can't possibly be here if Lucy is smiling like this.

They enter the living room and Penny complexly is relieved now. Adrian stops walking any further, stopping in the living room.

"So, I guess this is where we depart," Adrian says.

Penny smiles at him. "Thanks for the nice date. I really enjoyed."

"Thank you, Penny." He pauses. He embraces Penny in a hug, also giving her a quick kiss on the cheek. "I will see you at school, okay?"

Penny nods. "Okay."

"Bye."

Penny waves and Adrian walks outside through the door, waving bye to Penny, Lucy and Kim.

"So, how'd it go?" Lucy asks.

Kim stands by wanting to know as well.

Penny sighs. "All in all, it went well, but it could have been better."

"What?" Lucy scoffs. "He doesn't do good dates?"

"Yes, he does, it's just that ... my father showed up and we scrambled. We didn't end up even eating at a restaurant. But in the end ... Adrian and I talked and we had a good time together. Adrian helped calm me down and made the date worthwhile."

Lucy smiles, but is still concerned. "Do you care to elaborate?"

Penny sighs, "Okay."

Penny really doesn't want to relive the beginning of the date, but she does anyway. This is Lucy after all; her best friend. She is dying to know every detail and will not be satisfied until she knows it all. Penny decides that since she is staying here they deserve to know. She begins to explain the date. Both of them focus with all their ability, not interrupting.



Penny wakes up in the middle of the night from a nightmare. She has imagined her date turning out worse in her dream. She pants, while trying to push the thoughts out of her head.

Penny sits up on the couch. She hasn't got her own room yet, because Leland isn't sure that he wants Penny to stay here forever. They would have to request to take over guardianship of her from her parents. Most likely they wouldn't just do that for them. So until then ... or whatever happens ... Penny has the couch in the living room.

Penny tugs at her shirt to release it from sticking from her shirt due to sweat. She has been dreaming heavily, being nervous. Penny hopes that she will be able to overcome this feeling.

Penny gets up to drink some water. She sighs. Overall, she feels that she had a good date with Adrian, but something inside her is telling her that it went all wrong. Penny tries to push it aside, reminding herself that in the end it went well.

Her nightmare is a part of her trying to warn her of her father. She knows that sooner or later her father will come after her. He has tried to get her at the beginning of her date. He must want her back home. Penny worries about it all of the time.

Penny sips on her water, feeling nervous. Her nervousness gets her body to start buzzing with electricity. Penny sets the cup down, starting to pant. The last thing Penny needs is to burst out with electricity.

The tattoo on her arm catches her eyes. It is pulsing, glowing bright blue. Sparks jump between her fingers. Penny deeply inhales and exhales, trying to calm herself. Penny closes her fist only to reopen it revealing a ball of electricity.

Penny freezes, frightened that she will break something. She just holds the ball of electricity in her hand. She notices that the kitchen light above is starting to glow very dimly. Curious, she raises the hand with the electric ball towards the light, causing it to glow a tad bit brighter.

Penny scoffs quietly to herself. She is illuminating the light without flipping the switch. Surely if she were to actually throw the ball at the light it would illuminate to its full brightness, but Penny doesn't want to even have the light on at the moment.

She lowers her hand back down, closing her fist. She opens her hand back up to see that the ball of electricity is gone. She sighs. Somehow she had calmed herself, distinguishing the electric ball. No longer does she feel like she's buzzing with electricity.

Penny thinks about the lightning bolt. The bolt that killed her, yet somehow she lives. She doesn't fully understand it. She is killed by something, but she comes back, being given the ability of the cause of death. In this case, lightning. Penny shakes her head, still disbelieving it all, despite it actually happening to her.

Penny walks back to the living room, sitting back down on the couch. She realizes that she is not the least bit tired, being wide awake. The time is four 'o eight. She lies down on the couch, trying to fall back asleep.

So many thoughts are going through her head. All these things happening to her; her abilities, her father, Adrian dating her ... it has been a bit much for her to comprehend, it has been overwhelming.

Penny lies awake for a few more hours before falling back asleep, by then its seven in the morning and the parents of Lucy are getting around, waking her up with the noise they make. Penny tries to stay asleep.

By nine Penny wakes up. Lucy is in the living room as well as Kim. They are sitting beside her and across from her, both watching TV. Leland must've already left for work.

Kim realizes that Penny has awakened. Lucy realizes when Penny sits up, looking over at her. Penny smiles at her and Lucy smiles back.

"Morning, Penny," Kim says.

Penny smiles at Kim. "Good morning," she tells her.

"I have breakfast ready for you on the table; although ... you may have to reheat it, or maybe not."

"Okay, thanks."

Penny decides to just ignore her pain within herself to just get up to the table; ignoring her fatigue and other confusing emotions. Kim has a simple breakfast ready for her, consisting of pancakes and bacon.

Penny eats a plateful, satisfied for the time being. For an hour, she sits to watch TV with Kim and Lucy. Kim asks Penny if she has a favorite show, Penny tells her that anything is fine.

Silence begins to linger about for an hour, leaving the TV to create any noise in the whole house. Kim is folding clothes and Lucy just sits watching the TV. Within a few more minutes, Kim finishes the clothes and tells Lucy to take care of hers. Lucy grabs her clothes and goes to her room.

Kim and Penny are now alone in the living room. “Hey, Penny?” Kim says; Penny looks up. “My husband and I have been talking. We are trying to figure out what is best for you, but ... you know ... umm you can’t stay here forever.”

“I know, but where else would I go?” Penny asks.

“We ... we don’t want you to be in harm’s way but ... we don’t have parental rights over you. We can’t just keep you here. At some point you have to go back home.”

“What?” Penny scoffs. “I can’t. You’ve seen what my father doesn’t do to me. I can’t live in that house.”

“I know how you feel, but —”

“But what? If I go there, it will not get better. I can’t go back.”

“Penny ... I wish you could stay here, but ... you can’t.”

“I can’t, or you don’t want me to?” Penny jumps from the couch, frustrated. “You don’t understand my life! I can’t live with my father. He does so many things to hurt me. I ... just can’t!”

Penny's body feels like it's starting to buzz with electricity. She fears that she'll harm Kim, so she turns around to head outside. She runs towards the door with lightning speed, opening the door and arriving outside.

Penny doesn't realize at first that she ran with lightning speed. It takes a second until she does. She sees the look on Kim's face, seeing that she must've ran fast, *like Whirlwind*.

Since she still feels that electricity buzzing inside of her, Penny runs further away from the house. She runs towards some trees, running up a tree so fast she doesn't have to climb it, not falling due to being faster than the force of gravity. She sits down in between to branches.

She recollects herself, remembering why she ran out here; Kim told her that they don't want her living with them for much longer. The last thing Penny wants is to go back home.

Penny has been trying to live this weekend without the worrying about her father. So far it is all that she thinks about. Adrian helped calm her some, but the anxiety is still there.

The Kelvin Residence

Drew sits at the couch when the doorbell rings. He gets up to see who it is, doubting it to be Penny or the any of the family she is staying with. Instead it is his friend, Dalen Hawkins; the one with tiger abilities.

Drew opens the door to let him inside. "Hello, Dalen," Drew says. "Fancy meeting you here. What's up?"

"Nothing much," Dalen replies. "But I have been noticing that your daughter hasn't been staying here."

"Spying on me, huh?"

“Well ... I just noticed it first when she was out for a jog with that one girl. I have been watching her since.”

Drew nods, knowing she's been doing this. His face shows that he doesn't support her actions, lowering his eyebrows. “So, you've seen the boy she's been with?”

“Yes, I have.”

Drew scowls. “I hate him.”

Dalen nods. “Well ... I can help you with that. I can take care of him.”

“Just like old times, right?” Drew laughs. “Like on Mason?”

Dalen nods.

“Well, I guess. Just ... don't kill him. I want the kid to see him when he's all beat up and more useless than he already is.”

“Sure thing.”

“Okay, just ... keep him for as long as you like. Eventually I will take Penny back and be sure to show him to her. I want her to feel that everything is fine and dandy, but then I will rip it all away from her. She is going to be in for a surprise.”

Dalen smiles. “Oh!” Dalen exclaims, remembering something. “I'm not sure if you've been noticing, but your daughter has been developing her powers.”

“I know. I just hope that she doesn't get too powerful.”

“Don't worry, she couldn't possibly. Her body's not even developed a lot yet; she's still young, so her powers shouldn't develop that much faster.”

“But, she did get struck by lightning, according to that bolt tattoo of hers. So that can mean that her powers will develop faster.”

“Hopefully not, though, right?”

Drew nods, scowl at the thought of it. He would hate for his daughter to be powerful enough to defeat him. Drew tries telling himself that she is still young so her powers will not develop as fast. But he knows that in reality, since she has been raised in the Milky Way galaxy the radiation is stronger for her, thus her powers will develop faster than theirs would.

“Just ...” Drew starts. “Take the boy to your place and torture him there. When I feel up to it, I will bring Penny over.”

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Penny sits in the tree for two full hours, shifting around trying to find the best comfort until someone finds her. Lucy is the person to do it. They had no idea where to look, but finally Lucy found her.

“Penny?” Lucy asks, looking up at her in the tree. “I’m sorry for what happened.”

Penny doesn’t speak.

“I know what my mom told you. If it were my house, I would let you stay forever; you’re my best friend. I do not want you going back home. Your father is a monster, surely. He could kill you. I definitely don’t want you there. But my parents ...” Lucy sighs. “They just don’t feel comfortable with you being here. I’m sorry, but I just can’t reason with my parents. I want you to stay, but they don’t ... at least not forever. But they did say that they wouldn’t mind for you to stay for a few more days at the most.”

Penny sighs, hating the facts, hating her father for everything’s he done, and for every problem he’s caused.

“Penny, can you please come down?” Lucy asks in such a concerning voice.

Penny comes down as quickly as she can, watching Lucy look like she’s in a stand still. She runs around to behind Lucy. Lucy looks up the tree waiting for Penny to come down, but then realizes that Penny is no longer in the tree.

“Behind you,” Penny says.

Lucy jumps, spinning around to face Penny. "Whoa! You were ... that was fast!" she exclaims.

"A lot faster than that one jog we did, right?" Penny says. "I'm getting super speed from that lightning bolt."

Lucy nods, starting to smile. "Super speed? It seems faster than Whirlwind's."

"I'm sure it is; Whirlwind doesn't go the speed of light." She pauses. "I'm not even sure if I am yet." Penny pauses. "Well ... now what?"

"Just ... come on inside, please."

Penny sighs, following Lucy back to the house. She enters the house, seeing Kim sitting at the table with the mail. She lifts her head to see Penny and Lucy returning.

Kim smiles at Penny. "Has Lucy told you?" she asks.

Penny nods, showing that she feels uncomfortable.

"I'm sorry, Penny; but we can't keep you here forever."

"But it hasn't even been a few days yet," Penny says. "You've seen what my father did to me; he almost killed me."

Kim nods, but finds it hard to recall. She witnessed it, but here Penny is, healed of the injuries already.

"You put up a fight as well ..." Kim trails off.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Penny demands. "That I can stand my father, so I shouldn't be here?"

"Well ... no, not really. No, that's not what I mean."

"Then what do you mean?"

“You are ... you are pretty something Penny. You have powers, no doubt; just like those people in New York. Your father is the same. But ... my point is ... you seem capable of standing up to your father, so you can put a stop to it. You just have to stand up for yourself.”

“I thought you said that’s not what you meant when I asked. You’re still saying that I can stand my father.”

“No, there’s a difference. I mean you can stand *up* to your father, not stand *your* father.” Kim pauses for a while. “Wait, Penny. I’m sorry; it’s just ... overwhelming, okay? Maybe ... well, I will talk to Leland and maybe we can let you stay here for a while longer, okay?”

Penny nods. “Okay, thank you.”

Penny walks with Lucy to her room.



Monday morning arrives. Penny is allowed to stay for another week. The fire inside flares a little higher, with hope of seeing Adrian again. Right now Adrian is the one thing that has been giving her comfort. Lucy has been trying, but a best friend can only do so much.

Penny and Lucy get ready, and then board the bus. The whole bus ride is fairly silent. Most kids are practically sleeping. Penny doesn’t really speak to Lucy. Lucy just sits in silence, worried for Penny’s sake.

They arrive at school, finish their breakfast and reach their lockers. They each grab their stuff for their first hour; Penny’s English and Lucy’s Algebra II.

“Penny,” Lucy says, slow and meaningfully. “Don’t worry, please. You are going to do fine. Adrian will be there, so let him ease you.”

“Lucy ...” Penny trails off. “I'm sorry; I have ...”

“Penny, don't apologize, okay? Just ... have fun today, please. Have fun with Adrian.”

“Okay.” Penny slowly nods.

Lucy smiles and embraces Penny in a hug. “I will see you later.”

Lucy departs, heading towards the math pod. Penny stands at her locker for a second. She is about to leave, but is stopped by one of the cheerleaders. It is Vanessa's best friend.

She is scowling at Penny. “You put Vanessa in the hospital, do you know that?”

Penny suddenly grows angry. She scowls back at the girl in return. “I do now.”

“You think you're getting away with it? You're not! If you don't tell the principle that you are the one who hurt her, then we will make you regret it.”

“Really?” Penny pauses. “After all those years Vanessa has bullied me, not once did I tell or get her in trouble. Now I return the favor and you want me to take punishment for it? I don't think so. If you don't agree, you'll have to answer to this.”

Penny holds out her hand to show what she means. Never has she deliberately created electricity, but she succeeds in creating a crackling ball of electricity in her palm. She threatens to throw it in the girl's face.

Fear forms in her face and Penny smiles on the inside.

“I suggest that you back off,” Penny tells her. “Drop this or *you'll* regret it.”

With her stuff in her arm, Penny throws her shoulder into her as she walks past, heading to her first period. The girl falls to the floor, land-

ing onto her back and thrusting her elbow into the floor. The girl gasps in pain, her funny bone tingling. Penny closes her fist, letting the electricity ball distinguish in her palm.

Penny continues to her English class, being one of the last to arrive, but still on time. The first thing she does when she enters is notice that two people are missing; Vanessa and Adrian. A horrible thought of those two being together pops in her mind, but Penny shoves it out; Vanessa is in the hospital according to her best friend.

It scares her, though; the fact that Adrian is not here. She decides to wait. She sits down just as the last bell rings, but Adrian still doesn't show.

Penny waits for ten minutes to pass and again he doesn't show up. Last time he overslept. This time Penny feels that this is a different case scenario.

Dalen Hawkins' Residence

Dalen laughs at Adrian because of how pathetic he looks to him. Adrian is roped to a wooden chair. Dalen punches him in the jaw, adding another injury to his face.

Adrian looks like he has been going from one bar to the next, getting in a fight at each one. Dalen captured Adrian after he had been dropped off at school so his parents wouldn't notice him missing. He is obeying Drew's orders, not that they seem strict to Dalen; he doesn't mind doing this, since this is what he used to do before being banished to Earth from Mason.

Adrian bobs his head around, feeling weak. He spits blood at Dalen's foot.

Dalen looks down at it and only punches Adrian in the face again. He laughs at Adrian again, loving to be able to do this again, getting an unhealthy thrill out of this.

“You are worthless,” Dalen scoffs. “Pathetic!”

Adrian scoffs. “So I am?” He shakes his head. “This is the first I'm hearing of it.”

“Don't be smart with me; I can kill you and you are in no position to stop me.”

“You wouldn't anyway.”

“I would. I have killed before and I'm not afraid to do it again! I've abused people worse than I am you. I have killed hundreds of people.”

“I'm not sure if you should be bragging about that.” He pauses, but doesn't let Dalen say something else, quickly speaking again. “If you think that abusing and killing people makes you strong, then you're wrong. It makes you weak. A real man does not need to harm people to prove himself.”

Without a seconds' thought, Dalen thrusts his fist into Adrian's nose. It immediately starts bleeding; fresh blood rolls down his lip and chin, adding to the dried blood already there.

“See what I mean?” Adrian asks, trying to sound strong.

“Shut it!! I will kill you if you make me angry enough!”

“You won't kill me. If you were going to, you would've done it already.”

“Wrong! I never take people out of their misery by killing them. I will break you down until you have no energy left. Then I will let you heal and do it all over again. The second time you will not heal as fast when I let your body try to heal again, because I will be breaking down your

body's strength little by little. Then when you think there's a least bit of hope, I will kill you."

"Looking forward to it," Adrian jokes.

Dalen punches Adrian in the gut, knocking the breath out of him. "You are the first to be speaking to me like this and you will certainly be the last. I will break you, and I will kill you, whether Drew wants that or not."

Adrian coughs and spits blood from his mouth. "You are nothing like that of a man." Adrian pauses to catch his breath. "Men do not use physical strength to prove themselves; they use mental and moral strength. You are not that. You are not a man. You are a coward."

Ever more furious at Adrian's insulting words, Dalen thrusts his fists into Adrian's jaw with enough power to knock him out.

"Shut up!! God!"

Dalen walks over to the chair at a table to sit at. He sits there watching Adrian with his head down, being unconscious. Blood drips onto the floor and Adrian's lap from his nose. A smile begins to form on his face when he sees how much Adrian is beat up.

"I will break you," Dalen whispers to himself, directing it at Adrian, though.

High School

First class period finishing and Penny rushes to her locker. She waits until Lucy arrives. Lucy senses her agitation.

“What is it?” Lucy asks Penny, immediately after approaching her.

“Adrian didn’t show for class,” Penny says. “I’m worried my father took him.”

Lucy’s eyes widen. She knows that Penny could be right, but she doesn’t want to support the idea.

“Maybe he overslept again?”

“I don’t think so. Not this time.”

Penny looks across the hall, wanting to see Adrian standing at his locker, but he's not.

“He should show,” Lucy says. “He must've overslept.”

“But I know he didn’t. My father ... must've done ... something.” Her voice starts to crack.

“I’m sorry, Penny. I ... I wish he was here.”

“Me too.”

“Hopefully, he will show.”

The rest of the day goes on. Penny and Lucy go from class to class until it’s the end of the day. All the while Adrian doesn’t show. They head onto the bus, sitting next to each other.

“You ought to call him,” Lucy says.

“I've tried,” Penny replies. She pulls out her phone. “I've tried several times. He's not answering.”

Lucy sighs, unsure what to say. “Maybe you can try when we get home.”

Penny has felt shaky all day, feeling very nervous about what's happened with Adrian. She's tried calling all day and gets no response. She knows something awful must've happened. Penny's body starts buzzing with electricity, but Penny controls herself as to not exert any of it.

Penny pants, trying to contain herself, and making sure to absolutely not exert any electricity. Lucy notices this.

“Are you alright?” she asks Penny.

Penny nods. “I just ...” she trails off.

Sparks jump from Penny fingers, hitting Lucy necklace. Lucy quickly breathes through her teeth, trying not to make a sound. Penny clenches her fists, making them white, but it's not helping. The sparks begin to grow in size, jumping around from her fists.

Penny tries to control it, take deep and slow breathes. All Penny can think about is the situation Adrian must be in. However she imagines it, she doesn't calm herself.

Suddenly Penny shakes her head, feeling a chill go through her. She looks around, realizing that everything seems to be frozen in space. No one is moving. She looks out the window; everything is blurry, like a motion blur. Some leaves are floating above the sidewalk outside.

Penny is starting to calm down and slowly things regain their regular motion. Penny knows what happened; her body and mind were working at lightning speed so that everything else seemed slow. But it

was so slow that things seemed to be stopped completely. She realizes that she was functioning at the speed of light.

When everything seems to be running at their normal speeds and paces to Penny, she realizes that she feels calm now. Lucy looks at her, wondering if she's alright now.

Penny nods at Lucy. "Sorry for shocking you when I hit your necklace."

Lucy shrugs. "It was just a little shock." Lucy lets out a big sigh, so relieved that Penny didn't burst out with lightning.

Penny slouches down in her seat, thankful that no one is looking at her. Immediately Adrian comes back to her mind. She constantly fears that her father has done something to him.

Finally, they arrive home. The very second the two of them enter the house, Penny calls up Adrian. It rings six times, and then goes to voicemail; but Penny hangs it up. He hasn't been answering all of this time.

They enter the living room. The TV is on with the news. Kim stands, rolling up the cord on the vacuum sweeper; she just finished the living room carpet. Kim looks up at her daughter and Penny. She smiles to greet them home.

"So, how was school?" she asks, but then sees that both Lucy and Penny seem upset about something. "What is it?"

"Adrian didn't show up for school," Lucy says. "He should've been there."

"Are you sure that he —"

"He isn't answering his phone. Something happened to him."

"My father kidnapped him; I know it," Penny adds on.

“We don’t know that for sure,” Kim says. “Maybe he's sick and can't get to the phone. Maybe he is sick and his phone is dead. Maybe he lost his phone.”

“But that doesn’t explain why he didn’t come to school unless he was sick.”

“Have you called his home phone?”

“I don’t know it; I only have his cell.”

As if right on cue, Adrian’s name is spoken on the TV. All three of them snap their heads at the TV. His name appears as Adrian Douglas: Missing. The reporter begins to explain that his mother sent him off to school and that was the last she's seen of him. She explains that he wouldn’t answer his phone and she became worried.

It isn’t an official amber alert yet, since it’s only been nine hours that he's been missing; but his mother’s worry is enough to get it on the news this early.

Penny panics even more. “See?!” she exclaims, bursting out into tears. “He's *missing!* My father must've killed him.”

“*Don't* say that,” Kim says quickly. “We don’t know that. He must not be dead.”

“I should be dead, but ... my father ... I can heal quickly ... Adrian can't heal fast like I can.” Penny sobs. She looks back at the TV for another second. “*Oh, God!*” She goes all out into tears, not able to control herself.

After a few minutes, Penny is able to limit her tears some so she can at least see. Kim and Lucy look at her with concernment. Penny starts to pace back and forth.

“What are we going to do?”

“We should let the police take care of it,” Kim says.

“The police?” Penny exclaims. “Remember what happened last time when the police tried to go after my father. He erased their memories ... they had no idea what they were doing there. No police report was even filed, because they didn’t go back, obviously.”

Kim sighs. She wants to ease Penny in some way, but there cannot simply be one.

Penny calms down as much as possible within a couple hours. She and Lucy are in their room. Leland has arrived home, hearing the news by Kim.

Lucy knows that sometimes things are better left unsaid, and also that sometimes words do more harm than good. This is one of those times. Lucy is better off to just to have her presence with Penny.

Penny begins to think about how much strength it would take if she would try to confront her father, to get Adrian back. She tries telling herself that Adrian is still alive. She recalls back to mind what Kim was trying to say: *“You seem capable of standing up to your father, so you can put a stop to it. You just have to stand up for yourself.”*

Penny wonders if she really is. She knows that lately she has been developing her abilities, getting more powerful; but could she really beat a grown man? A man that has done this his whole life? The very reason he’s is on Earth is because he has been banished from Mason for the same thing he's doing now.

It makes Penny again wonder why Mason had banished him to another planet, just so he could cause the same hectic here, but with powers; even worse.

Penny tries to build up some courage within to confront her father. She doesn’t think that it would be tonight; she is still too shaken up about first discovering the truth that Adrian is indeed missing.

Dalen's Residence

Discovering he has a huge headache, Adrian wakes. Dalen hears him moaning and enters the room of torture. Adrian lifts his head at Dalen, who is smiling.

"Guess what?" Dalen asks Adrian, obviously excited for probably something stupid.

"It's your birthday?" Adrian asks, sarcastically.

"Nope. You're on TV. Your parents put out an amber alert for you, except it's not official yet, since it hasn't even been a day yet."

"Great." Adrian holds back from groaning as a result of his headache. He hopes Dalen hasn't given him brain damage. "You know," Adrian starts. "I've been thinking ..."

"Oh, you're still doing that, huh?"

Adrian ignores him. "You know how I've told you that you're not much of a man? Well ... your friend, Drew — Penny's father — is far worse; he's even weaker, lesser of a man. He abuses Penny, his own daughter. Very weak minded."

Dalen scowls at him. "What Drew does is none of my business."

"Really? Well ... what a real man would do is try to stop him."

"Hmm ... so what does that make you, then? Hmm?"

"I would be doing something about it, but I'm all tied up."

“Why don’t waste your thoughts, because you will not be getting out of here alive.”

Adrian scoffs. He surprises Dalen by suddenly laughing. He laughs for a good half minute. “It’s funny really! You don’t think I’m getting out of here. Penny will save me.”

“*Penny!?*” Dalen scoffs.

“Exactly! Penny will save me. You underestimate her. She is more than capable of taking on you and her father at the same time. You don’t believe it and neither would Drew, but it’s true. Penny is powerful, more than she even realizes. But she will come for me; she loves me enough.”

Dalen shakes his head, refusing to believe him. “You’re full of crap.”

“You’d like to think so, but I’m right about Penny. She will stop you; count on that.”

Dalen scoffs and suddenly lets out a growl, sounding just like a tiger. And approaches Adrian and whacks him in the face, clawing him across his cheeks. Blood immediately pours from the cuts and Adrian feels the tingling and stinging sensation.

Lowe’s Residence

A few days pass as Penny tries to muster up the bravery to confront her father. Each day she goes to school, she hopes to see Adrian there, being all fine; but it doesn’t happen.

Kids and teachers at school know about him. They have all seen the missing person report about him. There is an official amber alert out on him now.

Kim and Leland called the police, giving them a possible address of where Adrian could be; Penny's fathers' house. But they went there and nothing checked out.

Now Penny sits in the living room when the doorbell rings. Kim answers it, speaking to a woman; Penny recognizes that voice of the person at the door.

Penny spins around in her seat to see her mother, Joan. Her heart starts racing. Her mother is here for her; they want her back at home.

"You want to let me inside," Joan tells Kim in a soft voice, even though Kim seems hesitant.

Somehow Kim gives in, stepping aside. Joan walks inside. Penny gets up to confront her mother. Joan approaches Penny, scowling.

"You are coming home with me," Joan says simply.

Penny knows that she doesn't, but she also knows that she has to confront her father sooner or later; that time could be today. But somehow the tone of Joan's voice makes Penny want to go with her. Penny finds herself following Joan out the door without putting up a resistance.

Kim and Lucy watch in awe as Penny leaves with her. They gasp. Lucy looks to her mother, fearing the worst now.

Penny suddenly realizes that she is in the car, in the driveway of her old house, and finally entering the house. Once she enters, she feels in control again. She snaps out of it, realizing the reality of it; she is back at her father's house. She is standing in the living room.

Her father stands in the living room, looking into her eyes, smirking. "I knew you would come back. It's what you've always wanted, right?"

"No!" Penny scoffs.

“Penny, tell him that it’s true; you love it here,” Joan tells Penny.

Somehow Penny finds herself saying, “I love it here.” She pauses and realizes what she just said uncontrollably. “No I don’t.”

“Yes, you do,” Joan insists.

“Yes, I do.” Penny says. Suddenly she shakes her head. “How are you making me say that?!” she demands.

Both of her parents laugh at her.

“I have a power of persuasion,” Joan explains. “I can tell you to do anything and you’ll do it, whether you want to or not. But you do want to. You want to do what I tell you.”

“I do,” Penny suddenly says. “Wait!”

Drew and Joan laugh hysterically.

“Man! That’s great!” Drew exclaims. “Wow. That’s hilarious!”

“No its not!” Penny yells.

“Yes it is,” Joan says.

“You're right,” Penny says uncontrollably.

Her parents laugh even more, practically crying. Penny notices the TV. The news is on and the amber alert out on Adrian slides across the bottom of the screen.

Suddenly, Penny snaps. “What have you done with Adrian!” she yells at Drew. “Tell ME!!”

Drew stops laughing, surprised with Penny’s tone. She has never used that tone with him. His expression suddenly changes, showing great anger; his eyebrows narrow and his bottom lip curls out.

“Excuse me, young lady!?” Drew yells. “Don’t you dare use that tone with me!”

“Listen to your father,” Joan says.

“NOO!!” Penny yells, surprising herself that she is able to resist her persuasion for this time. She realizes that it must be her determination and willpower. “Give him to me, NOW!!”

Drew still scowls, angered. “You want to see him!?! Well, I don’t have him!”

“Yes, you do; you big fat liar!”

“I *don’t* have him!!! But I can take you to him!” He suddenly chuckles, realizing something. “Oh, I can’t wait to see the look on your face when you see him.”

Drew grabs Penny’s arm, surprisingly quickly. He starts pulling her outside, squeezing her arm so hard it hurts.

“Come on, Joan,” Drew says. “Let’s show this kid her pathetic boyfriend.”

Drew practically drags Penny into the car, throwing her inside.

“Do not run away from us,” Joan tells Penny.

“Okay,” Penny finds herself saying. Penny tries backing away from that, trying to take it back, but the effect is still on her. She finds that she can move, but cannot move away from them; only a certain distance away, but not too far.

Drew drives the car down the road one block, turns onto another road and stopping at the fifth house. Penny realizes that she's see this house many of times in passing. She had no idea that Adrian would be here.

Drew kills the engine. He grabs Penny by the arm again, and Penny lets him, even though she doesn't want to. Joan follows. Drew welcomes himself into the house.

Right at the moment they enter, they all hear the sound of punching, but it stops when the person hears the front door close. Dalen appears, stepping out of the room that the punching sounds came from.

Penny gasps. This is Dalen's house. Her father's friend. He has lived here all this time.

Dalen gestures for Drew to come on into the room. Drew gladly takes Penny in, throwing her to the floor. Joan follows.

Penny hits her knees hard on the sound. She groans, straining to look up. She gasps when she sees Adrian tied to a wooden chair. But that's not the worst of it; he is severely injured. Adrian looks at her, seeming strong, but clearly in a lot of pain.

"God ..." Penny mumbles. "Adrian."

Drew stands behind Penny and suddenly kicks her back, sending her over onto her front.

"No!!" Adrian suddenly yells. "Don't hurt her!!"

Drew scoffs and Dalen laughs.

"Here I thought you said Penny is powerful," Dalen tells Adrian. "Look at her; she's as pathetic as you!"

Adrian doesn't say anything more, but he shakes his head. He is angered, despite how much it hurts his face to show it. Penny looks up at Adrian as she gets kicked by her father several more times. She realizes what Dalen said; Adrian must've told him that she is powerful.

Obviously, it pains Adrian to see Penny being kicked on the floor. He begins to try to break free from the ropes tying him. Dalen socks him in the nose, hitting him hard enough that he sends the chair backwards.

Penny suddenly jumps into the air, kicking her foot up into Drew's crotch. He bends over forward and Penny shoves her knee into his gut.

"Get back on the floor," Joan tells Penny in her persuasive voice.

Penny doesn't listen. She grabs a hold of Drew and throws him into Joan, sending them both into the wall hard. Dalen comes after her from behind, milliseconds from hitting her in the face. Suddenly everything slows to Penny.

Quickly moving around, Penny dodges Dalen's fist and shoves her knee into his gut. Suddenly, very angered, her body starts buzzing with electricity. Her fists spark and for the first time she unleashes the power, not holding back a bit.

She punches Dalen in the jaw with all her might, sending him flying through the air. He hits the ceiling and lands clear across the room, shaking around on the floor. Penny zips down to the floor, quickly untying the ropes off of Adrian. She grabs a hold of him, taking him outside the house. He seems light now that her strength is in use.

"You okay?" Penny asks Adrian.

Adrian smiles at her, but is a bloody mess. "I believed in you Penny," he says. "I knew you would come to save me."

"Apparently Dalen didn't think so, huh?"

"Nope, but that doesn't matter." He pauses. "Come on, let's get out of here."

Penny is about to agree, but realizes that Adrian must have at least fifty separate injuries on his face. Penny's heart is already racing, filled with anger and sadness; but now, suddenly, it beats with extreme

speed, feeling very warm. Her whole body begins to spark. She backs from Adrian, not wanting to shock him.

Her body begins to feel warm. She feels as if her heart is spinning, not even beating. She feels very much alive.

“Are you alright?” Adrian asks.

Penny nods. “Yes, I just feel ... strong and ... angry.”

Adrian holds up his hands. “Penny, come on. Let’s get out of here. You don’t want to do anything you’ll regret.”

Penny’s body doesn’t calm. Electricity jumps from her body, shooting in every direction. Adrian backs up. She becomes so warm that the grass at her feet starts turning black, burning, though not engulfing in flames.

“It’s too late,” Penny says. “I can’t control this, so I’m going to take advantage of this.”

Penny turns around and enters the house.

“Penny, no.” Adrian says.

Penny runs inside, seeing Drew, Joan and Dalen all getting to their feet. She runs to Dalen, startling him. He immediately notices her electrifying.

Penny grabs him, shocking him. She head butts him, then throws him to the floor, stomping her foot atop his chest, knocking the wind out of him. He tries gasping for air. She lands down on top of him, pinning him to the ground. She begins punching him in the face, thinking of how he harmed Adrian.

Dalen shakes from the electricity and bruises form on his face as Penny punches him more and more. Penny begins screaming, starting to physically glow bright. The heat emitting from her begins to burn Dalen's shirt and fur on his arms. Suddenly his shirt engulf in flames. Penny gives him a few last punches, thrusting all of her energy into them.

Penny jumps off Dalen, turning to face her father. For once in her life, Drew looks at her with fear. Behind her, Dalen screams in pain, with his voice quivering as his shirt burns him and as the electricity still pulses through his body.

With lightning-quick speed, Penny attacks Drew head-on. She jumps on top of him, sending him to the floor, immediately beating him. She punches electrifying fists into his face. He tries lifting his head, but Penny just punches hard, slamming it into the floor.

Penny immediately stops when she realizes that Drew is not moving. She jumps off and her body finally starts to calm down. Her body dims, she cools down and gradually her body begins to slow down; her electricity calms and she can actually feel her heart beating instead of spinning.

Penny looks up at her mother, Joan and scowls at her. Joan looks at her, fearfully.

“What did you do?” Joan asks.

“I did what he would’ve done to Adrian and me sooner or later,” Penny says. “And ... I can't believe that you stick up for him. He is nothing but a fake and you support him. You're a disgrace. I'm ashamed to have you as a mother!”

Suddenly Drew gasps for air, blinking his eyes to regain his vision. He coughs and sits up, immediately seeing Penny.

Penny scowls at him, quickly kicking him in the nose as hard as she can. She knocks him out again and decides now to leave.

Quickly, Penny zips outside, meeting Adrian. He stands still, shaking a little. He sees Penny and smiles.

“Please ...” he begins to say, a little nervous and still in pain. “Please tell me you didn’t kill them.”

“Adrian,” Penny says. “I would never do such a thing; they’re still alive. All of them are.”

Adrian sighs. “Okay ... now let’s get out of here.”

Penny grabs a hold of Adrian and runs with lightning speed to Lucy’s house. She sets Adrian down and he almost falls over. He catches his balance, but then barfs into the grass.

“Whoa, Penny,” Adrian says. “That was too fast.”

“Sorry,” Penny says.

Penny helps Adrian inside the house, alarming Lucy and Kim. They take a second to draw in the frightening sight. They immediately run over to help Penny carrying Adrian in, although with her strength she doesn’t need help.

They take Adrian to the couch to let him sit. Penny quickly gets him a glass of water, making sure to not spill it. Adrian grabs it and drinks away.

“Thanks, Penny,” Adrian says after finishing the glass.

Lucy and Kim look at Adrian in awe. Adrian looks like he's been through hell and back.

Lucy looks at Penny. “How'd you ...” she begins.

“Penny stood up to her father and his friend who had captured me,” Adrian says slowly.

Kim looks up at Penny, nodding slowly, understanding. Lucy's jaw drops.

Penny is still breathing hard and her heart is still racing, but it is not beating steady as if it were spinning like it was.

Adrian sighs. “I uh ...” he trails off. He clears his throat. “I feel really tired ... like ... I feel like ...” He pauses, about ready to speak more, but he doesn't finish his sentence.

“Adrian?” Penny asks.

Adrian stops moving. His eyes are fixed on the emptiness of the ceiling.

“Adrian!?” Penny exclaims.

Adrian doesn't reply. Penny quickly puts her ear to Adrian's chest; his heart stopped beating.

“Oh God! His heart stopped!” Penny exclaims.

Promptly, Kim reacts by throwing her hands onto his chest, doing CPR. She does it fifteen times, but Adrian is still lying still.

“Oh God, no. Please no.” Penny starts crying.

Kim continues to try to do CPR on Adrian. Penny looks down at her hands. She closes her eyes and the tears empty from her eyes, rolling down her cheeks. She musters up energy inside her, creating a small ball of electricity in her palm.

Kim notices it.

“Stand back,” Penny says.

Kim pulls her hands back, just as Penny puts her hand over top Adrian’s chest. She inhales and exhales deeply. Then without a second’s more of hesitation she slams her palm down onto Adrian’s chest, thrusting the electrical impulse to his heart.

Suddenly, Adrian gasps for air and begin panting. He bobs his head, being a little dizzy. He throws his arms about, confused for a second, taking a look around.

Penny cries. “Oh, my God. Adrian, you're alright.” She reaches for him and hugs him.

“Penny ...” Adrian says after about ten seconds after recollecting himself.

“Yes?” She pulls away from him, looking into his eyes.

“I ... I love you,” he says after a long pause.

Penny cries some more. “Oh, Adrian, I love you too.” Penny begins to weep. “I love you, I love you ... You're back.”

Adrian chuckles softly. “Yeah, but ... I uh ... feel like ...” he chooses his words wisely, “crap.” He swallows.

“Adrian, I'm sorry for not being their sooner,” Penny says, trying not to let her crying affect her speech. “I could’ve prevented most of your injuries.”

“Penny,” Adrian holds up his hand, but then lets it fall down on his lap. “Don’t blame yourself ... none of this ... is on you. You had no ... doing in this.”

Suddenly Penny realizes what she has done. She beat the crap out of her father and Dalen. She almost killed them. But that’s just it ... she doesn’t feel that pain inside her. The pain of knowing her father’s out there; she doesn’t feel the fear.

Penny realizes that she is not afraid of Drew. She was able to defeat him easily, surely not needing to be afraid of him any longer.

Looking at Adrian, Penny just wants to rip her father apart; but Penny knows that it wouldn’t make Adrian better, besides she is not like her father; she defeated her father, beat him up, she doesn’t need to do it again.

“Alright,” Kim says. “We need to call Adrian’s parents.”

Penny nods.

“Do you have their number?” Kim asks Penny.

Penny shakes her head. “Just his.”

“I can dial it for you,” Adrian says weakly.

Kim proceeds to get the phone, returning and giving it to Adrian. He dials the number in and hands it back to Kim.

With the phone up to her ear, Kim waits for it to dial all the way through. It starts to ring, but only twice. Adrian’s mother answers quickly.

“Hello,” Kim says. “Is this Adrian’s mother?”

“Yes,” she replies.

“My name is Kim Lowe. My daughter’s friend has found your son; he's here at my house.”

"Oh God! Thank God! Please, do give me your address!"

Kim starts to give her the address.

"She already has it," Adrian says. "Tell her it's Lucy's house, where I went to pick up and drop off Penny."

"Oh, this is also known as Lucy's house," Kim tells Adrian's mother.

"Oh, I know that place. Adrian's girlfriend is there. Is she there with him?"

"Yes."

"I'll be right over."

"Okay, see you in a few."

Adrian's mother doesn't even say bye, since she is so eager to get Adrian back. She quickly hangs the phone, ready to arrive here.

Kim lets her arm fall to her side, keeping the phone in her hand. Penny, Kim and Lucy look at Adrian.

"Adrian," Penny says. "What is your mother going to do when she sees your face?"

Adrian sighs. "Don't worry about that. She will just be happy that I'm alive."

"You should go to the hospital," Kim says. "I should make sure your mother takes you there."

"We should be calling the police," Lucy says.

Penny realizes that Lucy is right.

"We should," Kim agrees.

“Are your father and his friend still there?” Adrian asks slowly.

Penny’s heart skips a beat. She would hate for them to have fled. Adrenaline sharpens her senses.

“I’ll be right back.”

Penny darts out the door with lightning speed. She runs to Dalen’s house, checking to see that her father, mother and Dalen are all still there. She returns to the Lowe’s house without a second going by.

“That’s was quick,” Lucy says.

Penny smiles briefly. “They are still there. Dalen is still lying on the ground, rolling in pain. My father is resting with his back against the wall and my mother is sitting with him.”

Kim dials nine-one-one. They answer. Kim gives them the address of Dalen’s house, repeating it after Penny. She explains that Adrian is safe here at her house, giving the address. She tells them that his parents are on their way as well.

Penny throws her hand out, urging Kim something. “Tell them not to let them manipulate them; they are very persuasive. And I don’t want my father erasing their memories.”

Kim nods, but considers how to say it without sounding strange or making it sound like she's trying to hide something.

“Just to give you a heads up,” Kim says. “I have the idea that they may try to persuade you in some way, don’t let them.”

“Rest assured, ma’am, we will not allow for that, but for your avowal we will be sure to be extra alert and wary; thank you.”

The police arrive first to the Lowe's house. They confirm to the station, radioing in that Adrian is alive, but he doesn't look well. An ambulance is already here as well; they immediately check Adrian out, looking for the worst injuries and his vital signs.

Kim tells the deputy on duty. "Adrian's parents *are* on their way, so can you keep Adrian here until then?" Kim asks. "I don't want them arriving and finding out that they have to drive even further to see him if they take him to the hospital."

He sighs. "We can hold him here for a short while longer, but he'll have to wait in the ambulance." He pauses. "He's in bad shape and needs to get to the hospital fast. She ... she has five minutes."

Kim looks to Adrian, wondering if that's enough time. Adrian is sitting up as the paramedics check him out. They already have him sitting on the cot, ready to be taken out to the ambulance. Adrian nods to Kim, trying to let her know that it's alright.

Kim sighs; she is really nervous, being caught up in the middle of all of this.

The deputy listens to his radio, looking puzzled. He tells the officers on the other end of the radio that he understands. He walks towards Penny.

"The man who has kidnapped Adrian is acquainted with your father, is that right?" he asks Penny.

Penny nods. "Yes."

“So ...” He looks between her and Adrian, considering something.
“Are you two together? Are you dating?”

“Yes.”

“Okay, so your father ...”

“My father and I do not get along well. He didn’t like the fact that I am dating someone, so he asked his friend to torture Adrian. Then he brought me to Adrian, trying to show me that I shouldn’t date people. I saw Adrian tied to a chair, all beat up.” Penny’s voice starts to break.

“Ah, I see. It’s starting to make sense now. But ... how did you save him?”

“Did you see my father and Dalen?”

“What do you mean?”

“I uh ... I mean ...” Penny pauses, trying to figure out how to say it.
“Were they ... uhh.” Penny sighs.

The deputy looks at Penny, curious. “They were getting to their feet when they arrived. The units on sight said that there were signs of a struggle. Your father and his friend seemed to be a little injured. Did you fight them?”

“Yes, I did. It was out of self-defense. When my father brought me there, he threw me to my knees, making me look up to see Adrian. He kicked me over and over. He wanted me to feel weak before he was going to have Adrian ... killed.”

“Your father would do that?”

“Yes,” Penny’s voice cracks. “Please believe me. My father has abused me, and ... well look at this for proof.” Penny points out the scar on her face. “That was from when my father sliced my face with a knife when I was younger.”

“Okay. Well ... we are going to need you to come with us so that we can straighten this all out. I would also ask that you two come with me too,” he tells Kim and Lucy.

“But, don’t you believe me?” Penny asks.

“Yes, for the most part. It’s just that we have to get the whole story and we can do that easier in the station, away from all the ... madness.”

Adrian’s family just pulls into the driveway, killing the engine. Adrian’s mother is the first to run towards the house. Cops immediately stop her.

“My sons in there!” she exclaims.

Kim looks out the window, seeing that she is being stopped. Adrian looks out, squinting.

Adrian nods at the deputy.

“Let her through,” the deputy tells the officers through his radio.

The rest of Adrian’s family gets out of the car, making their way into the house; a brother, sister and the father. They immediately run to embrace Adrian in a hug; each and every one of them. They all break out in tears; happy to see him, and sad to see the extent of his wounds.

“My God, Adrian,” his mother says. “You’re hurt bad.”

The paramedics pick up the cot, carrying Adrian.

“Yes, we will need to take him to the hospital now,” one of the paramedics say. “You can ride in the back with him on the way.”

Adrian’s father nods at his mother. “I’ll follow behind,” he tells his wife.

“Okay,” Adrian’s mother says.

Adrian and his family go to the hospital, whereas Lucy, Kim and Penny go to the police station. Leland is called from work, informed about the situation. As soon as possible, he arrives at the station.

Individually, Kim, Penny and Lucy tell the story how it happened. The cops tell them that their stories match except for one thing.

The deputy clears his throat. “You all pretty much said the same things, but only one of you told another detail. Kim told me that Adrian’s heart stopped, so she did CPR.”

Penny sighs softly, realizing that no one revealed anything about her powers.

“Lucy and Penny, neither of you mentioned that. Why didn’t you two think that that was necessary to say?”

“I uh,” Penny starts, “don’t know why I didn’t mention it. I guess I was just so overwhelmed.”

“Well, don’t sweat about it now,” the deputy says. “But, if something like this were to ever happen again — which we hope doesn’t — please be sure to include every detail.”

Penny and Lucy nod in unison.

“Well, if you three do not mind, please wait in the waiting room down the hall, last door on the right.”

They wait for what seems like three hours. Finally some officers come out to escort them. First the deputy takes a minute to explain what the situation has come to be.

“Things are still being sorted out,” the deputy begins to explain. “Everything you guys have told us checks out with the evidence so far.” He looks at Penny. “Drew and Dalen are doing very little to cooperate,

which is making them guilty by default. It is pretty much proven that they have done it all and are being charged.”

“Umm ...” Penny begins. “Have you spoken with my mother, Joan?”

“Yes, we have. She is a smooth talker.” He looks at Penny, narrowing his eyes, as if examining Penny’s face. “Do you know the truth about her?”

“The ... *truth*? What do you mean?”

“Well ... your mother seemed to have been able to make us bring her some doughnuts and coffee first thing. Next she was telling us to release her. We were about to do it too, but other officers stopped us.

“What I'm trying to say is: your mother is a metahuman. She has an ability to persuade people with just using her voice.” He pauses. “As for your father ... we believe he is as well. He's already broken two of our cuffs. We've had to drug him so he is too weak to break free again.

“Dalen, too, must be a metahuman. Both he and your father are dangerous. We are alerting the FBI about the two of them, because soon we will not be able to contain them. They will inform us of what to do.” The deputy pauses. “I'm sorry about all of this ... I'm sorry that they ...” he pauses, realizing something. “You already knew that they were metahumans, didn't you?”

Penny takes a moment to answer, hesitating. “Yes.”

“You should've told us. They have tried to escape, harming a few of our officers in the process. We had to Tase them and then drug them so we could contain and keep them under control. If you would've told us that they were metahumans, all of that could've been prevented.”

“I'm sorry. I ... didn't mean —”

“Don’t worry about it now. You guys are free to go. We will be contacting you later, though, in time.” He looks to the officers. “Men, escort these people outside, they are allowed to go home. Take them if needed.”

Leland takes them with his car, arriving home at last. Decisively everything is cleared up for them, leaving Drew, Joan and Dalen at the station. It's been a long day and some people need to get cleaned up.

Penny gets a shower and changes her clothes. She gets back into the living room, meeting up with the three. Lucy seems pretty concerned for Adrian, just as much as Penny is.

Kim and Leland look at Penny, seeming ready to tell her something.

"Penny," Leland begins to say, smiling reassuringly. "I want you to know that I shouldn't have considered making you return to your father's house. I want you to stay here as long as you like. You can stay here from here on out. Stay as long as Lucy stays. Stay here forever, for all I care." He pauses. "Your father is truly who you said he is; he's a monster. Besides, you have no home to return to. Your parents will probably be put in prison. We will request to take over your guardianship in time, but for now this is your home."

Penny grins. She runs into Leland, embracing him in a big hug. Leland hugs back and Penny squeezes harder.

"Thank you so much," Penny says to Leland.

"You're welcome," he croaks. "But, uh, you're ... hurting me."

Penny immediately retracts. "Sorry. I still don't know my own strength."

Leland smiles. "That's alright." He pauses to clear his throat and shift his back in such a way to try to make it feel better. "So ... do you want to visit Adrian at the hospital? I would imagine you would." Penny nods. "So the real question is: Is anyone not going to see him?"

Kim shrugs her shoulders, not saying whether she wants to stay or go.

"Well, then ... we might as well all go. Perhaps the doctors would tell us that we are not all allowed to see him anyway. But we must find out how he's doing."

The four of them walk out to Leland's car, hopping inside. Leland starts the car, heading towards the hospital.

On the way, Leland keeps looking into his rear view mirror to check up on Penny and Lucy sitting in the back. He seems fairly concerned for Penny's wellbeing. He knows that she must be rather shaken up. He is also thinking about all that's she's had to put up at home.

Leland sighs, wishing again that he never considering sending back to home. Now he's given her the same home he has; his house. We wish he stuck with this idea from the start.

Penny realizes Leland keeping an eye on her through the mirror. She hopes that he isn't thinking less of her. He says that he is allowing her to stay forever if she likes; that her father is a monster. Penny feels that the word monster is a perfect description for her father; but as for Dalen ... well he's just as bad, especially when he obeys her father to abuse her newly boyfriend.

Finally the silence is distorted out once they arrive at the hospital. They park the car in front of the visitors' entrance and walk inside. Leland leads everyone. He tells the secretary or desk clerk that they are here to see Adrian Douglas.

"What is your relationship with him?" she asks.

“We are merely friends, but Penny is his girlfriend,” Leland explains, gesturing his hand towards Penny.

“I see.” She nods. “Well, you may all go up to his room, but only one of you can visit him at a time. He’s in pretty rough shape and needs his space. His family will already be there, so it’s already packed enough. Okay?” she pauses, allowing time for them to nod. “He’s in room two-o-three.”

“Thank you very much.”

The four of them walk to the elevator; Leland presses the level-two button. They step out once it reaches the second floor (in two seconds), walking to two feet to arrive at the room.

Penny finds herself being the one to knock on the door.

Adrian’s father opens the door, looking at Adrian to ask her she is, even though he’s certain she is Penny; the girlfriend. Adrian nods, allowing Penny to enter.

Penny turns to face Lucy and her parents. She smiles. “I’ll be a few minutes.”

They nod. “Take your time,” Kim tells her.

Penny steps into the room, taking a seat besides Adrian where a stool is available.

“Hello,” Adrian’s father says. “You must be Penny.”

“Yes, I am.” Penny says.

She looks at Adrian. He smiles at her, but cannot hide the fact that he is still in pain. The doctors have washed him up, but there are still black, blue and yellow bruises on his face, along with cuts. Penny looks back to his father.

"I'm sorry that we never got a chance to properly meet," Penny says.

"That's no problem," he says. "Though it feels like we've already met. Adrian's told us so many good things about you."

"He *has*?" Penny says, squealing her voice high pitched a bit, surprised that she is talked about. She smiles at Adrian and softly pats his shoulder.

"My name is Darren," Adrian's father says.

The family goes around telling their names, seeming all proper.

"I'm Kari," Adrian's mother says, immediately giving Penny a warm and welcoming smile.

"Alton," Adrian's brother says, and then clears his throat.

"And I'm Robin," Adrian's sister says.

Penny smiles at them. "It's nice to meet all of you; nice to see what kind of family Adrian lives with." She pauses, unintentionally reminding herself of her father and mother.

They all go quiet for moment, as if feeling Penny's pain. Penny wonders if Adrian has explained that basis of her parents.

"So," Penny says, trying to break the awkward silence. "You guys are younger than Adrian." Penny smiles at Robin and Alton.

They nod. "Yes, I am fifteen," Alton says.

"I'm twelve," Robin explains.

"Well, I'm an only child."

They nod in a way that shows they already know. Penny chuckles.

"How much about me do you guys already know?" Penny asks.

Adrian manages a chuckle. “Penny, don’t worry too much, alright?” he says slowly enough. “I just told them ... well ... I had to tell them about your parents, because they’re the reason I’m here.”

“Adrian, I’m sorry. My parents are the most —”

“Penny,” Darren interrupts her. “Don’t worry about it. Adrian is not mad at you for something you had no control of.”

Adrian nods. “Penny; you and I are good with each other. What your parents do does not affect our relationship.”

Penny sighs. “Okay. I’m just ... I feel responsible somehow.”

“Well, there’s no reason to be,” Kari says. “Penny, you are a great person. I can see it with you here before us. You are very kind and modest. There’s no reason to take your father’s blame. But ... hey, don’t worry about it; he’s over and done, right?”

Penny shrugs. “I hope so,” she mumbles.

“Let’s not worry about that, though,” Adrian says. “Penny came here to see me; to see my messed up face.” He chuckles. “Am I still handsome enough for you?”

Penny scoffs. “Of course you are.” Penny softly strokes her hand on his face, being as gently as she possible could be. “Adrian, I wish you could be all well and healed. You know, as fast as I can.”

It takes a moment for Adrian’s family to realize what she said, but once they do they look at her strangely, wondering how she means.

“I haven’t told them about ... that,” Adrian says.

“Oh,” Penny says. “I wasn’t even thinking. Should I tell them?”

“It’s alright, Penny, you can tell them later.”

“Tell us what?” Alton asks.

“Like I said,” Adrian starts to explain. “We’ll explain some other time. Right now’s not a good time.”

Penny notices Adrian’s sister, Robin; she looks like she wants to ask Penny something. Since Penny is already looking at her, Robin decides to spit it out.

“Didn’t you save Adrian?” Robin asks Penny.

“Robin,” Kari says. “We don’t need to bring it up.”

“No, it’s quite alright,” Penny tells Kari. She looks at Robin, smiling. “Yes, I did save Adrian.”

“From ... your father and his friend?”

Penny nods. “I did,” Penny says, realizing that did so with such skill. She realizes now that she is capable of doing it over again; she is becoming powerful.

“How?” Robin asks.

Kari shakes her head, wishing Robin would not have pursued the question.

“Some things are best left unsaid,” Penny says.

Robin nods. “Well ... thank you for saving him, thanks for bringing him back to us.” Her voice breaks at the last second.

“Of course, you’re welcome.” Penny smiles, redirecting her eyes to Adrian.

Penny knows that she shouldn’t feel guilty for what her father has done to Adrian, though she does because she took so long to confront her father about it. It wasn’t until she was forced to return home by her mother’s voice.

She sighs, wishing she could help Adrian in some way to help him. He is in a lot of pain and is severely injured, showing great signs of it. With her powers, she wonders if it would be possible.

For herself, Penny is capable of healing at an accelerated rate without leaving scars. Penny cannot think of a way to instill that into someone else; it is a part of her that cannot be replicated. Penny also has electrokinesis, but has little experience with it to know how she could use it for the purpose of healing.

Adrian grabs Penny's hand. She unknowingly had her hand placed on the bed beside Adrian. He sighs, seeming to calm down, holding Penny's hand.

Adrian smiles at Penny. "That calms me," he tells her.

Penny narrows her eyes, tilting her head. "How? By holding your hand?"

He nods. "It makes me feel so much better. Don't pull away."

Penny wishes to stay longer, but the doctors inform her that Adrian needs his rest. They don't realize that Penny has calmed his nerves, but Penny doesn't speak up either; not wanting to reveal anything to them.

The rest of them are not able to visit with Adrian, so they all return back home. They remain quiet the ride over. Penny sighs, knowing that Adrian will be fine. In time, he will heal; he will get better.

Penny thinks of her father; she has the fear that he'll escape from prison, but ... she was able to immobilize him, by herself. What has she to fear now?

They arrive home, Leland kills the engine and they all make way to the house.

"So ..." Kim begins to ask Penny once they enter. "How did it go?"

Looking up at Kim, Penny gives a small smile and nod. "It went fine." Penny replies. "Probably as fine as it was going to be. I think Adrian will be alright."

"That's good." Kim smiles back at Penny, patting her on the shoulder. "Don't worry everything will be fine."

They just about get settled on the couches in the living room. Kim decides to start making a meal. They have been home no longer than a half hour and the doorbell rings.

Kim answers the door, revealing two men standing on the other side, both in suits. They smile at Kim, pulling out their badges with their IDs.

“Hello, Mrs. Lowe. FBI,” they tell her.

“Hi uh ... can I help you with something?” Kim asks nervously.

They try to give Kim a reassuring smile. From the living room, Penny is afraid to look over the couch too much to show her face, just in case she may be in trouble.

One agent chuckles. “We are here to inform you of the progress of the situation about Penny.”

“Oh?”

Penny hears this and calms down. She gets up, walking towards the door.

“Hello, Penny,” the first agent says. “I want to inform you that we have good news.”

Penny sighs, feeling relieved already. Her father is locked up for good; that must be what they are preparing to say. Penny would be crossing her fingers if she weren't afraid of what they would think if they noticed.

“Penny. We have your father and his accomplice locked up at our base, along with mother, since she has also helped in aiding them. I want to assure you that they have a *very* slim chance of escaping. They are locked in what you might consider power-proof prison cells, but we refer to them as VAS prisons.”

Penny nods slowly, waiting for them to continue, feeling even more relieved by the second.

“There are always agents on duty, watching the prison and agents nearby to assist if needed. So, rest assured, your father will not be harming you or anyone ever again.”

“Thank you,” Penny says. “But ...” she begins to wonder. “Why come here to tell me this? I mean ... couldn’t you have informed the police to have them tell me?”

“It is not any hassle for us to address this directly to you, so here we are.”

“But,” the other agent begins. “We are here for another reason as well. We are aware that you are powered like your parents are super-powered, that is. We know that the chances of being superpowered are very slim outside the state of New York. But we also know that you are not any *normal* metahuman. In fact ... you are not a metahuman at all. You're a Masonian.”

“How do you know this?” Penny asks, skeptical.

They smile. “Please, don’t feel unmasked; we keep this information confidential. But we have our resources and technology helping us to know these things. Additionally your parents matched our tests to reveal that they are not of this world.”

“You ran tests?”

“Yes, we now have an advanced system and are able to measure the sorts of things concerning this; thanks to one scientist of ours. Anyway ... your parents’ DNA matches that of one from The Experimental Galaxy in which Avian is from, him being a Rextonian. Though, you're DNA is slightly different from his, so that is how we came to find out that you're a Masonian, not a Rextonian.”

“Wow, you guys know a lot.”

They nod. “We would like to inform you that we are acquainted with Avian, providing him support for our appreciation of him saving New York. We came here to offer you the option to meet him if you’d like.”

“Meet ... the Avian?” Penny gasps. “I ... uh ... You would do that for me?”

They nod. “We would. We feel that since you both have similar origins, we could arrange a meet for you. You two could touch up on some things.”

“Well ... I uh ... I would love too.” Penny thinks about how great it would be to actually meet Avian. But then she thinks of Adrian. She still fears for his wellbeing. “Well ... I'm still trying to ...well ... I-I ...” Penny sighs, giving it some thought. “Can the offer stand for some other time?”

“Course. We can arrange a meet anytime you'd like, as long as it will fit Avian's schedule.”

“Okay thanks.”

“And one other thing.” The other agent pulls out a set of papers from his briefcase. “We have prepared guardianship papers for you Kim. We are aware that Penny is without a home and we would like to make things simpler for you if you and Leland choose to allow Penny to live here. So there are papers for you.”

The agent hands Kim the papers.

“Thanks,” Kim says. Kim looks over at Leland as he walks up.

Leland smiles at Kim, and then looks at Penny. He rests a hand on Penny's shoulder. Lucy walks up besides.

“Actually, if all possible, we can sign those papers right now,” Leland says. “We have already made the decision to take Penny's guardianship.”

“Very well,” an agent says. “May we step inside, then?”

“Of course,” Leland says, welcoming them.

The agents come inside, taking their seats at the table. Leland and Kim take their seats, looking over the papers. They are given pens by the agents who have come prepared. They sign where it is needed and return the papers to the agents.

“Is that all?” Leland asks.

“That’s all,” they tell him. “We will do the rest of the work for you. Nothing else is needed on your part. So, now Penny you are officially a part of this household.”

Penny smiles, looking at Lucy and sighs. She is finally free from her parents.

“Thank you,” Penny says to Kim, Leland and the FBI all at the same time.

They all smile at Penny, feeling for her. Penny is surprised that the FBI treat her with this much respect; she never imagined the sort of people to be like that.

The week flies on by into the next weekend. All the while Adrian doesn't go to school, staying home to recover. Penny has visited a couple times and decides to take this day as well to do so.

Penny gets herself ready, excited to meet Adrian. She is expecting Adrian to be a whole lot better today than he was when she last visited three days ago. She puts on nice, but decent clothes.

Kim takes Penny to Adrian's, dropping her off, figuring she will be there a while. Penny rings the doorbell and Kari comes to the door.

Kari smiles at Penny, though not seeming very comforting, as if it were a forced smile. "Hello," she says. "Please, come on in."

Penny steps inside. "May I —"

"Adrian is in his room," she says. "You may see him, yes."

"Okay, thanks."

Penny takes herself to meet Adrian in his room. He is sitting on his bed with his back against the wall. He looks up at Penny when she enters. He nods at the door for her to close it. He doesn't give a reassuring smile this time.

"Hey," Penny says, taking a seat in his computer chair. "How you feeling?"

Adrian shrugs, smiling now. "I'm doing better."

"That's good." Penny struggles each and every day to not blame herself.

Adrian sighs. "Penny ..." he begins. He doesn't seem to be too thrilled about what he's about to say. He looks up at Penny. "I'm-I've been thinking about some things." He sighs again. "I uh ... I don't know how else to put this, but ... Penny ... I ..." he pauses for a long time.

Penny sits, waiting for Adrian to continue. She hates to push it, to ask for him to continue, knowing that it doesn't sound good; whatever he's about to say.

"Penny ... I think we should break up."

Penny's heart sinks down deep in her chest. Blood drains from her face and she stops breathing. "What?" she barely manages to ask. "Why?"

"Penny, I like you, honestly I do. I think you are a good person. But ... the reason I want to break up with you is ... well, for right now I need some space, but also ..." he pauses. "You don't seem to have a good self-control of yourself."

Penny scrunches her eyebrows with puzzlement.

"When you had saved me from your father, you came out with anger. You started to glow with your ... electricity. I could see it in your eyes that you wanted revenge. I told you to not pursue it, to not do something you'd regret. You said that it was already too late."

Penny drops her shoulders, feeling glum. She hates where this is going.

"You went after them anyway. You didn't control yourself. But that's not the only thing. That one time Vanessa came after you, you threw her across the room. I shrugged that off at first, but you also could've controlled yourself then.

"And even now ... This whole week I have noticed at times whenever we would stop talking, you would be thinking about your father. You

would grow angry, hating him even more, but, Penny ... it's over and done. Your father is locked up ... you don't need to harvest all that angry and hatred; it'll eat you up.

"So ... I'm just saying, Penny, that ... I want a break ... for now. Okay?" he pauses, hating to see Penny feel so saddened. "Penny, you *are* indeed a good person at heart, but ... I just don't feel comfortable when you are controlling of yourself. That's something you could work on ... then maybe we could get back together."

"But," Penny stops him, forming tears in her eyes. "Why can't we try and work this out? Just give me ... a chance." She fails to hold back the tears, letting out a sob.

"I'm sorry, Penny. But, I think the best thing for us right now is to put our relationship at a pause. If I see that you are trying, then we could get back together."

Penny sobs, already making her cheeks completely wet.

"I'm sorry," Adrian says. He lifts himself off the wall, leaning towards Penny. He reaches out and wipes the tears from Penny's face. "Penny, I still love you, okay? I want you to know that, but ... right now, we need a break. Besides, we might be rushing into things."

Penny sobs, sniffing. She doesn't want this. She wants to respect Adrian's decision but she doesn't support it, so she doesn't nod or show any understanding; she just sits there sobbing.

"Well then ..." Penny says. "It this is how ... it's ... going to ... be," Penny starts to say, sobbing in between. "Then I ... better go."

She quickly gets up from the chair, runs to the door, opens it and runs out, before allowing Adrian a chance to say anything else. She is now completely distressed, but also mad that Adrian is doing this.

Penny rushes through the hallway, going past the kitchen and running out through the back door. She runs to the edge of the porch, falling down onto her bottom to sit and cry.

“Adrian,” she mutters, quivering her lips, while crying. “Why?”

She pulls out her phone to text Kim.

Kim drives back to pick up Penny, immediately noticing her distress. Penny explains what she can; the best she can without breaking her voice. Kim let's Penny go to her room; her new room, which was the guest room before.

Penny collapses on the bed. She manages to hear muttering in the kitchen over the sound of her sobbing; Kim is talking to Lucy. After they finish, Lucy walks into Penny's doorway. She sighs, walking away and wanting to give Penny some space.

Penny's back quickly gets warm, sending a pulse of nervousness through her. She quickly sits up.

Her emotions are flooding her, but now so are her new abilities. Electricity buzzes through her whole body and she starts to sweat. Tears of sweat are added to the tears of sadness on her face.

Penny begins to pant and runs outside to get some fresh air, running past everyone in the kitchen and living room. Disappointingly, there is not enough wind for Penny to cool down.

The sight of her hands grabs her attention; they are beginning to glow a bright white. They feel very warm, with the buzz of electricity. Penny throws her hands outward, away from the house.

Uncontrollably, electricity shoots out in a form of a ball, hitting the ground some hundred feet away. It sparks with its landing, but thankfully the grass doesn't.

She sighs now that her hands have calmed, returning to their original color. It comes to her realization that she is outside, standing on the

deck. She takes a look at her surrounding and decides to just take a moment to sit down here.

Penny spins her head. She hears a low-pitched sound coming her way. It sounds ... electronic — no — it's different than that, even. The low pitch hum grows louder; sounding like flying object. Penny jumps to her feet and just a second later the sound intensifies.

Penny looks all around, not seeing a thing in sight. But when Penny begins to think that she must be imagining it appears right in front of her, coming out of nowhere. It whips right in front of her, moving fast and doing all of its stopping in a split second. It hovers ten feet off the ground, looking right into Penny's eyes.

It appears and as every appearance of a ship, although it is very small; about the size of a car Even though it is a ship, it appears to know Penny is a being, looking right at her. It appears to have intelligence.

"Hello," the ship says, using a droned, tenor voice; using just one tone of voice.

Penny isn't sure what to say ... or think. "What is this?" Penny asks, not realizing that she just said that aloud.

"Penelope, I am Par-Ak TaShiro," it says in its only resonance or tone. "In your eyes I would be considered to be an extraterrestrial vessel or spaceship. I am here to protect you Penelope."

Uncontrollably, Penny's jaw drops. She forgets all about Adrian. "What?" she is clueless. "What-who are you?"

"I am Par-Ak TaShiro. I am named from the use of this planet's languages to correspond to your understanding."

"But I do not understand any ... I do understand your name."

"Par is short for Parmenio, which would be from the language of Spanish, meaning intelligent and studious. Ak is short for Akeem, which

would be from the language of Arabic, meaning intelligent. TaShiro is a variation of Toshiro, which would be from the language of Japanese, meaning talented and intelligent.”

“Okay ...” Penny trails off, not getting anything he said, since it was too fast for her to comprehend. “Do you have a ... nick name?”

The ship takes a moment to respond. “You may call me Par, Penelope.”

“Okay Par. You may call me Penny.”

“Okay, Penny.” The ship, Par, makes a funny noise, consisting of a beeping and a whirring noise. “Penny, I sense confusion. Perhaps you can take a moment for me to explain everything with clarity to you.”

“Yes, please do. But ...” Penny turns around to look at the house. She’s not sure if she wants the Lowe to know about this. “I don’t know if here’s a good place.”

“Very well. Of what location would be appropriate?”

“Uhh ...” Penny tries to think, not really knowing of a good place.

“Allow me to escort you to a silent location, also known as ‘*the woods.*’”

Par quickly lowers itself to Penny’s feet, extending a platform for her to stand on. It takes off with a great speed and surprisingly Penny doesn’t feel a whiplash or the sudden takeoff speed.

“I sense that you are questioning how you are able to remain still while I am flying at a great speed. Since you are now standing atop me, you are synced with my gravitational system, locking you in place; therefore you will not be sent off by centripetal force.”

Par takes Penny deep into *the woods*. She finds herself nowhere she has even been. She never even knew that the woods came this far out or deep. He allows for her to step down.

“Penny Arla Kelvin. I originate from the planet called Trex, located in the Trexus Zeta Galaxy, neighbored to the galaxy formerly named Experimental Galaxy, which is now named Rho Sterling Lota Galaxy. The Trexian government has been keeping tabs on you, feeling for your safety because of your having been raised by your iniquitous parents. They were acknowledged by your being distressed in the past few months, more so than earlier in your life.

“Immediately the Trexian government set out to create me, sending me here as soon as possible to come to be an aid for you. I am here to comfort and protect you, Penny. I am your guardian. You are my ward.”

“Okay ...” Penny says, wanting to take a moment to process this. “The Trexian government? They have been concerned for me?”

“Indeed. As I have mentioned previously, the Trexian government is concerned for your safety having been that you have been around your debauched parents. They would hate for you to grow up, following their path. I am here to train you and to encourage you to make your own path; a righteous and virtuous one.”

“Hmm okay. Umm ... again can you help me understand? About the Trexian government, how are they—”

The ship, Par, interrupts Penny, understanding what she is confused about.

“Planet Mason and Planet Rexton are in the galaxy now renamed Rho Sterling Lota Galaxy. They were created long ago by their rulers named Mason and Rexford. The two originate from planet Trex.” Thankfully, Par pauses for a second to allow Penny to comprehend this.

“Discovering they had powers,” Par continues, “they set out to create their own planets in the neighboring inhabited galaxy; which at the time was the Experimental Galaxy.

“You are from planet Mason. Your parents were born there and your mother became pregnant with you while on planet Mason. They were found to be immoral for having been abusive to children and animals, thus being banished to Earth, where you have been born and raised.”

All the while the ship speaks in its only tone, but occasionally throwing in higher pitches to try to add feeling, although doing this at awkward times.

Penny nods. Things are beginning to make sense. “Okay ...” Penny starts to say. “This is all ... very ... overwhelming. It’s ... surprising that you are even here.” Penny pauses, recalling to something Par had mentioned. “You said that the Trexians noticed that I have been ... distressed ... so why didn’t they send you sooner?”

“I wasn’t available at the moment in time. When they had received a distress signal for yourself, they then took the time to create me. Once they had completed the process I was then sent here to meet you, traveling at the fastest speed known to this universe.”

“Which is ...?”

“Simply put, it is FTL speed; faster-than-light speed.”

Penny takes a moment to contemplate about all that this means. A ship has been sent her for her protection. It brings a query to her mind.

“Will you always be around?” Penny asks.

“I will be around as long as necessary.”

“You said you were here to train me as well ...”

“I intend to train with the skills of combat to ensure your defensive capabilities to protect yourself. I will teach you all of the combat skills of this planet. I intend to teach it all to you, but I know time is precious. Therefore I will train you until your body is fit, and then I will transfer the remaining skills into your brain.”

“Transfer?”

“Yes. By transfer I mean actually inputting the information and knowledge of knowing and being able to utilize these skills.”

Penny creases her eyebrows in bewilderment, letting her mouth hang open. “You can seriously do that?”

“Yes, indeed I can.”

“Wow, that’s ... amazing.”

Penny shakes her head, disbelieving that all of this is taking place.

“Penny, I do understand that this is a lot to comprehend.”

Penny waits for him to continue that thought, but he does not.

“Perhaps, Penny, you would like to understand your origin a little better?” Par asks.

Penny nods. But then she wonders if Par can see her nod. Maybe if he had cameras in here ... Sure enough he proves that he sees Penny’s nod by replying next.

“Very well.” Par hovers down to Penny’s level and steps come down for Penny to walk up. A doorway opens, sliding upwards.

“Uh.” Penny says. “I don’t think I can fit inside ...”

“Rest assured Penny, it is bigger on the inside.”

“How could that be possible?”

Nevertheless, Penny starts to walk up the steps, already seeing that the area through the opening looks very huge. Penny walks inside, dropping her jaw in astonishment.

It looks like she just stepped through a portal, revealing a whole world before her.

“This is *impossible!*” Penny exclaims. “You look no bigger than a car on the outside ... but in here it’s like ... a mansion.”

“It will seem impossible by your standpoint and that of any resident on Earth. But, elsewhere, as in the Trexus Zeta Galaxy, we have the technology to create such things like this. You may refer this inter-dimensional space essentially as a pocket universe, where it seems that you have walked through a portal into another place.”

Inside this ship, everything seems very advanced. Everything looks sleek. The walls are black, glossy, shiny and seem to be some sort of metal-glass texture; possible consisting of an element not of Earth. The floor is comparable to that of marble, being a dark purple, almost black.

Penny walks past the foyer, heading deeper. She finds herself before a dining room and kitchen. This room is white, with glossy and shiny walls consisting of the same texture and material as the other walls. There is a long, rounded rectangle table in the middle. A counter is beyond it. The tops of both the counter and table are empty, except for their being a stranger plant atop the counter.

The plant looks to be comparable to a flower, but it obviously is not. It is a flower from Trex. It has a dark, sturdy, green stem that holds the large round base of the plant, which has its petals branching off it. Clearly the plant is alien; or in Penny's case it is native, but not to her sense of normality.

Beyond the counter there are drawers and doors built into the walls taking on the shape of what is considered to be cabinets on Earth. One of the cabinets has a very large door. Penny walks to it, opening the door.

She reveals to herself food. The coolness coming from inside escapes, touching her. It is like a refrigerator. The food even looks different. Obviously Trex does not have American food.

Penny goes onto the next room, finding what appears to be a lounge or living room. This room is black, appearing the same as the foyer is. There is a table in the center, similar to the one in the kitchen only being black instead of white and not as long. There is a similar but bigger plant of it.

There is a desk against the wall. Another desk is in the corner, seeming appropriate to have a television placed there, but there is not.

Instead there is what seems to be a glass on the wall above the desk; it seems to be a screen if it were turned on.

Penny directs her attention to an orb that is now lowering from the center of the room. She didn't notice it there before and then realizes that a hole in the ceiling is closing up; the orb had come from it.

The orb illuminates, setting off a humming noise for a few seconds. A second later it projects a hologram of what appears to be the universe.

"This is the universe."

Par voice speaks from every direction; seeming to have a little more feeling in his voice than the normal drone voice that she was starting to get used to, despite her only knowing Par for a few minutes.

The hologram being projected from the orb illuminates Earth, drawing Penny's attention.

"This is Earth. And this is where the Trexus Zeta Galaxy is located."

The hologram zooms out from presenting Earth, showing the Milky Way Galaxy as a whole with the surrounding galaxies near it, such as Ursa Minor, Draco, LMC, SMC, Sculptor and many others. The hologram then whirrs on past, a long ways, skipping over millions of other galaxies finally coming to the Trexus Zeta Galaxy.

"The Trexus Zeta Galaxy is some four million light-years from Earth. Inside it are three planets, Trex being the only one with sustainable life."

Planet Trex is illuminated in the hologram, rotating its star. The planet looks like Earth for the most part, though seeming to have more green and hardly any yellow or brown. There are also a lot of dark spots, maybe being mountains or just a different terrain not that of any similarity to Earth. Surely Trex seems to be a very healthy planet.

The hologram, then, zooms out, jumping to the galaxy next to it.

“This is the Rho Sterling Lota Galaxy, in which the planets Mason and Rexton are located.”

Within the hologram there are two planets being shown, but its focus in on Mason, glowing to grab Penny’s attention.

“This is where you originate from. Although you were born on Earth, you still have the signature of a Masonian.

“Even though being a Masonian, a signature of Trex is still in you. Since Mason has flourished his planet for over two-hundred years, he has put of a signature of his own into the planet’s core — thus affecting its residents — by using his own ability and energy within. Therefore your body has become to be Masonian, hence being unique from Trexian.

“Mason and Rexford’s parents have abilities because of having visited Earth long ago, so, then, their abilities were passed on to their children. Since both have grown up together and have been in the same environment, they both developed the same abilities, but also at the same time they have some of their own as well.

“They, then, set out to terraform the inhabited planets in the galaxy, and accordingly creating the planets Mason and Rexton.”

Par stops talking momentarily, seeming to want to allow time for Penny to comprehend the meaning of all of this.

“Penny. Perhaps now would be appropriate for a break. I can very well explain this all to you later at another time. Right now giving you all this knowledge will certainly be too overwhelming.”

Penny nods. “Thank you.” She sighs, certainly already overwhelmed. She walks to the couch and sits down just to recall all of this.

It all seems so strange. She has not expected to have any of this happen today. Maybe the fact that she is flooded with all of this new in-

formation she is in fact overwhelmed to even believe it. She feels as if her head is in a cloud, floating around. It is too much to bear.

Penny takes a moment to realize that she doesn't even really know where she's at or how she got here. All she knows is that she is in *the woods*.

Penny will have to take this time to allow all of this to sink in. She thinks it through; she is inside a ship. A ship made specifically for her; for her protection.

Penny yawns, realizing that she is very tired. Before she even knows it, she drifts off asleep.

Penny suddenly bolts awake. She looks around her, realizing she is still in the ship. She looks around for a time.

“Hello, Penny,” Par’s voice begins to say. “Did you have a good rest?”

Penny nods. “But, what time is it?”

“Four-twenty-three in the afternoon.”

That means she has been here for five hours. “Uhh ... I’m sure the Lowe’s are very worried about me. I just left with you without telling them where I went.”

“I apologize. I did not intend for you to trouble your family.”

“Don’t ... be sorry, Par.” Penny pauses, finding it weird to be telling something with an artificial intelligence to not apologize. “Well, I need to get home, then.”

“Very well ...” Par pauses for two seconds before continuing. “We have reached the Lowe’s residence, which I will now refer to as ‘home.’”

Penny raises her eyebrows. “We’re home already?”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Wow!” Penny exclaims.

She gets up from the couch to walk down the hallway to the front door in which she entered through.

“I will see you later Penny,” Par says. “Whenever you need me I will be around.”

“Okay,” Penny says. “See you later, Par.”

Par opens the door. Penny steps out, walking down the steps that lead down to the back porch at the house in which Par had gone to.

She opens the back door and turns around, but Par is already gone. She steps inside, immediately greeted by Kim.

“Penny,” Kim says alarmingly. She gives a pause to contain herself, holding back from shooting questions. She smiles. “Just went out for a breather, huh?”

Penny smiles, sighing softly. Thankfully Kim held back from asking anything requiring a deep explanation. “Yeah, I just needed some time alone. I feel much better now.”

“Okay, that’s good to hear.”

Penny nods and walks towards her room. She sees Lucy in the living room. “Hello, Luce,” she waves at her.

Lucy nods at her, seeing that Penny looks a lot better now. Lucy smiles. Penny walks towards her room. Lucy stands, leaning against the back of the couch. She looks at her mother and then back at Penny. Lucy decides to go on after Penny.

Penny goes into her room and takes a seat at her desk. She realizes that she is indeed feeling better. She is calmed. All she needed was something to take her mind off the present. Par couldn’t have come at a better time.

“Penny?” Lucy asks, standing at the doorway.

Penny looks up. “Oh. I didn’t realize you were there,” Penny says. “Come on in, Luce.”

Lucy comes in smiling. "I know that you must be broken hearted, but I just want you to know that I am here for you. I don't want you to drift away. I don't want you to lose yourself. I want ..."

"Lucy, I understand that you are concerned for me ... thanks."

Penny smiles back, seeming very controlling of herself; nothing like Lucy has seen several hours before.

"Luce, you are a great friend and you don't have to worry about me falling apart. I ... I will ... move on, in time."

Lucy tilts her head, scoffing softly. "That's ..." she pauses for a while. "Surprising. Most people wouldn't even say that, especially not on the first day of it happening."

Penny nods. "I can say it again. I ... will move on." She realizes that it was harder for her to say it a second time, but she still mustered up to say it.

Penny grasps it now that Par really had calmed her mind and emotions. She is surprised by how much, though. Truly, just several hours before she was so apart, but Par had put her back together. She begins to light up, though not literally this time, and she begins to smile.

"Whoa," Lucy says. "You are beaming with ... joy, is it? What's going ... Did you ..." Lucy trails off with not being sure of what to ask Penny and being confused with Penny's sudden change.

Penny looks up at Lucy, giving her a reassuring smile. "Lucy. When I was outside, I had ... gone off somewhere. I had met someone. He had really taken my mind off Adrian. He calmed me right down."

"You met someone? This soon?"

Penny laughs. "Oh, not like that. No, not at all. He's ... just a friend; we actually know each other very well."

“So ... you’ve met *him* before?”

“Well, not exactly, but he knows ... me. I am coming to know him.”

“Penny ...” Lucy sighs. “Can he be trusted?”

Penny sighs loudly, irritated with Lucy very suddenly. She doesn’t understand and Penny doesn’t want to tell her the truth. Here, Lucy doubts Penny’s right to choose friends.

Penny holds back from blowing steam with Lucy, because of the words of Adrian playing back in her head: *You don’t seem to have a good self-control of yourself.*

Penny decides that the sooner she starts to work on her self-control the better.

“Lucy, there is more to it that you can understand right now, but in time you will. For right now, I do understand your concern for the people I meet, but I would respectfully ask for you to not worry too much, please?”

Lucy nods. “I’m sorry.”

“You don’t need to apologize; you are just trying to be a good friend, and you are. Thank you, Lucy.”

Lucy isn’t sure what to do now, just standing awkwardly in place.



Penny is awoken the next morning by a voice. She bolts upright, looking at the time to reveal that its six o’ clock. *What?*

Penny. The voice says again. I realize that you are confused. Perhaps as to who's voice this is in your head. This is Par. I apologize for waking you up, but I thought you'd like to come over for further discussion. Right now may be a more appropriate than later whereas your friends would realize you're missing.

Okay. I normally get up this early during the week anyway.

Penny gets out of her bed immediately looking at herself in the mirror above her dresser.

"Yep, that's morning hair," she says softly.

She quickly gets dressed and quietly goes to the bathroom to get washed up. Once she's done she walks outside. She only waits for a second when Par comes into view, suddenly appearing from nowhere.

Penny runs up to the ship, climbing up the steps prepared for her. Once she gets inside, Par flies into the woods even though from the inside it is hard to tell they're moving.

"Welcome, Penny," Par says. "I have prepared a meal for you."

"Thank you," Penny says.

"After all, breakfast is the most important meal of the day."

Now that she's thinking about it, she realizes that she smells it. Penny walks into the dining room, immediately seeing a plate full with food prepared for her. Extra food is available for her on other dishes on the table.

Penny takes the seat. She expected scrambled eggs, bacon, and other sorts like that, but she sees food she's never seen before.

"What kind of food is this?"

"The food is generated from planet Trex itself. You have on your plate eiereglad, hamconlut and susbanga.

“Okay, those are ... strange names.”

“It will be different from that of your food, but according to the Trexian tongue it is delicious.”

“I’ll give it a shot.”

Penny grabs the fork, which is a little different but definitely still looks like a fork. She cuts of a piece of one of the three kinds of food and puts it into her mouth.

Penny’s face beams up and she suddenly feels awake. Her tongue is already watering, amazed with the new tastes in her mouth. Penny smiles and sighs while she chews.

“Wow, this is great!” She closes her eyes and chews. “I can’t describe the taste, but it’s amazing.”

Penny finishes all of the food up, not regretting eating any of it. She has never had better tasting food before in her life.

Penny leaves the dining room to go to the lounge. She notices the various forms of technology all around. There’s a large screen on the wall, as thin as paper. On the desk is an obvious computer, being only the size of three cubic inches. The screen for it is on the wall, again being as thin as paper. The orb that had shown the holograms yesterday still floats in the air.

“This is all very amazing,” Penny says. “You know; this technology.”

“Yes,” Par says. “Trex only develops the sort of technology that protects the environment. That is one of the many things that keep his planet very healthy. It is even healthier than planet Mason and most definitely healthier than Rexton as well since its plant life is dead.”

“I see.” Penny takes a seat on the sofa.

“Penny?” Par asks softly, fluctuating the pitch his voice, surprisingly.

“Yes?”

“I am not aware of how you feel towards your planet, but there is something that needs informed. For some time now, it has been known to Trexians that Rexford and Mason have been banishing corrupt people and villains to other galaxies. For example, Intex, your parents and Dalen. Instead of trying to solve the problems they send them elsewhere; in this case, here to Earth.”

Penny nods, realizing this to be true.

“You're right. I had wondered about that. Mason sent my parents here and Dalen. Why would they do that? Now, Earth has to take care of this horrible people.”

“Very true. Therefore an investigation is in effect to test Mason’s headship.” Par pauses for a brief moment. “Rexford’s planet is now lifeless after he had banished Intex to Earth and Rexford is now the co-ruler on Mason. His planet was wiped of its plant life from a virus called Drigor. Some believe that Trex is responsible for sending the virus there, but the clarification of that information is classified.”

“Then that must mean it is true; Trex killed Rexton, right?”

“I cannot say. It is not in my programming.”

“Oh, excuses,” Penny teases, although unsure if Par can comprehend humor.

“Ha, ha.” Par says, dryly.

Penny nods her head and smirks; apparently he does get humor.

“Mason and Rexford being corrupt has been a question to Trex for some time, but he has been able to prove it. That is why he allowed for

them to go about in creating their planets in the first place, some hundreds of years ago. Now recent occurrences have pushed the issue, forcing Trex to start an investigation.”

Penny nods. It would make sense if Rexford and Mason are actually evil, because they have sent evil people to earth. Intex was *banished* from Rexton to Earth. Intex is the cause of New York’s destruction. Rexford would be to blame, for he acted on banishing Intex.

“Very well ...” Par says, breaking the silence. “There is not really much more for me to tell you; you have the basis of your history.”

“That’s it?”

“Yes, for now. I want to respect your mind’s capability of grasping things. Perhaps now we can start the training.”

“I guess that’s fine. I’m here already, aren’t I?” Penny pauses. “Actually, I have another question; what about Avian?”

“Avian?”

“Oh, you must not know him by that name. He was sent here —”

“Avian. He is a Rextonian. For his father’s punishment of supposedly working for Intex while on Rexton, his son, Avian, was banished to Earth. That is also a part of the investigation.”

“Oh.”

“Well, then, let’s get started.”

The time is still before seven in the morning. Par leads Penny to another room. There is a chair in the middle of it, nothing else.

“Please, Penny, do take a seat,” Par tells her.

Penny walks over to the chair to sit. “But I thought we were training.”

“We are. The training will all be done through my computer system and it will play in your brain. It will all seem very real.”

“Hmm.”

Above her head, a hole opens in the ceiling and a head cap comes down. It sets comfortably onto Penny’s head.

“Now we will begin once you give me the cue.”

Penny smirks. “We can go now; I am already in the chair, ready for ya.”

“Very well. Let us begin.”

The head cap turns on and immediately the room falls away from her. Penny knows that it’s not really happening, but it surely does feel real.

The room literally looks to fall from her feet. Penny realizes that she is standing now, but is atop of just air alone. Below her land slowly ascends until finally reaching her feet. She is outside. Around her are the colors of green and blue, consisting of healthy grass and blue, clear skies.

Penny takes a step forward, starting to walk around. She drops her jaw in awe. Everything looks completely real. Penny doubts that this is really just something that Par is projecting into her mind, he seems so real.

All of Penny's senses work. She can smell the sweet grass in the morning. She can hear the buzzing of insects and bugs. There are tall, very healthy trees standing around with perfectly brown bark and green leaves.

A sound of fluttering grabs her attention from a tree her other direction. Penny spins around and sees a bird of a species she's never seen fly away from it. The bird is beautifully bright with colors.

"Penny," a man's voice says.

Penny spins around, but no one is there. She completely spins around in a circle. No one is around.

"Do let the sounds of nature cloud your perception. This is the beginning of your training."

"Par?" Penny asks. "It's you isn't it?"

"Yes. Focus on my voice, but not the sounds of nature."

The buzzing of insects grows louder. Birds begin to chirp, some even screech. Penny finds herself covering her ears, the sounds being so loud.

"Penny, find me."

Par's voice is barely audible. Within this dream, Penny can hardly make sense of what reality she just came from. Some part of her is telling her that she doesn't know what Par looks like because he is only a voice to her, just like he is right now.

"How can I find you if ... I've never ..."

“I assure you Penny, I am here. You just have to find me.”

Penny sighs, hating the loudness of everything. As if it couldn't get worse, suddenly people are running around screaming. They sound as if they are running from something. One person runs past Penny.

“Hey!” Penny yells for him to stop, reaching out to grab him. “What's going on?”

“There's partique!” the man screams, filling the atmosphere with fear.

Whatever a partique is, it sounds like something dangerous, likely an animal. Penny hears a roar. She spins around towards the sound. Her heart begins to race. She begins to hear it stomping on the ground as it runs this way. It is definitely some sort of animal; something big.

Barely audible at all over the sound of the partique coming this way, Penny hears par. “Remember, you need to listen to me, not to everything else,” he says.

“But ... where are you!” Penny asks with frustration.

The partique roars, suddenly very loudly. Penny whips towards the sound. It is ten feet from her, running at least thirty-five miles per hour.

The animal is a monster, a beast. The thing is huge! It looks similar to that of a bear, only bigger, built; not fat or flabby like a bear and definitely faster.

“Penny, over here.” Par says, still sounding from nowhere in specific.

A split second passes and the animal is about to run Penny over. Penny's heart skips a beat. Running off adrenaline, she jumps straight up, surprising herself to jump at least twenty feet upwards.

Penny lands to the ground and the partique screeches to a halt, spinning around to face Penny.

Penny stands frozen with fear.

“Penny. Find me.”

Penny begins to wonder what kind of training this is. Then she realizes that this is training. She tries to convince herself that it is not real. She shouldn't fear the partique. Still, Penny is filled with fear.

The partique growls and literally seems to narrow its eyes at Penny. It looks so evil, seeking death. After trying to calm herself down, Penny is filled with even more fear than before.

“Penny, find me.”

The partique roars and Penny slams her eyes shut. She hears the heavy breathing of the partique and the stomping of its feet. She expects it to charge at her, but it definitely sounds to be stomping its feet in place. Penny's sure if she were to turn her back or run it would charge, that is an animal's natural instinct.

It snorts and roars even louder than before. Penny holds her ground, keeping her eyes shut, fighting everything inside her not to turn and run.

“Penny, please do not take any more hesitation. If you find me you will be taking on the easy path in this training. But if you let the partique run after you, you will have no choice but to confront it, which will lead to the harder path.”

The partique suddenly sounds to be charging at Penny. She grunts as she jumps up towards where she believed Par's voice to come from. She snaps her eyes open, grabbing a hold of the nearest branch she comes through, ascending from the ground from where she jumped.

Down below, the partique stops where she just stood. Penny looks in the tree. A branch above her sits a man.

“Hello, Penny,” he says.

“Par.”

“Congratulations. You passed the first test.”

Penny scoffs, outwardly not understanding the point behind it. The partique loses interest and runs towards the direction that the people ran to a minute before.

“Now what?” Penny asks.

“We get down from this tree.”

Penny starts to climb down, but from above her Par just jumps. He lands, only bending his knees to lessen the impact. He stands straight up with the perfect posture. Penny takes a good look at him; he looks so strong, so proper, so ... hot. He looks to be just a few years older than her.

She finds it strange, because she knows that he is her ship. He is not really a man; he's just taking on that form in this dream.

Par's beauty reminds her of someone. The feeling comes to her, and then she feels the heartbreak. She can't make sense of it because of how much this dream is clouding her knowledge of reality. She tries to think who it is Par reminds her of, but fails.

Penny decides to jump the rest of the way down, bending her knees, but at the same time she uncontrollably bends her back; a natural thing most people would do.

Par smiles at Penny once she stands straight up, though not with the same posture as Par. “Next time, try to only bend your knees.”

Penny smiles and nods. "So ..." she begins to say. "This is supposed to be like Trex?"

"This is like Trex."

Penny finds Par's voice to sound so natural, just like that of a man's. It is very unlike Par's voice as a ship.

"Let's take a walk," Par says.

Par takes the lead, walking the opposite direction that the partique ran. Penny follows, looking all around as they go. They are surrounded by the nature of Trex; trees, unusual plants, and small, strange animals that run away.

"Be observant. Pay attention to your surroundings, but do not allow for certain things to distract you."

Just out of a bush jumps an animal that looks like a large wild cat. Soaring through the air, it just about lands on top of Penny, but she throws her fist out, deflecting it. The large cat is flung through the air until it slams into the trunk of a tree.

"Even my voice can be a distraction."

Penny looks at the large cat to see that it is too much in pain to get up. She looks back to Par. He keeps a determined, cool face, continuing to walk. Penny follows.

What Penny finds funny is that the large cat had jumped right past Par to attack her.

"What was that animal called?" Penny asks Par.

"That is a legris. It is from what can be considered the cat family on earth, but on Trex it is in the kokchta family."

"Cachata?"

“Kokchta. K-o-k-c-h-t-a.”

“Oh, the K is silent in the middle.”

“True.”

They continue walking and Penny constantly looks around, expecting another animal to pounce at her. She listens to the sounds around.

Par continues to take the lead, seeming to be walking with a goal in mind of reaching a specific destination. To Penny, though, she is not sure that they really are going to a certain place or if they are just walking with no reason.

“Where are we going?” Penny asks Par.

Par looks at Penny and still walks straight.

“In time we will be reaching a facility of some sort, but ... in the meantime, please do focus your senses on all around you. Training your sense is the uttermost importance of being combat-ready.”

They walk on for what seems to be a half hour. All the while Par keeps Penny on the edge, talking to her, but wanting her to not let his voice distract her from her surroundings.

“Once you master to focus your senses, the next thing to master would be to be discreet in doing so. People who wish to harm you may notice your trying to focus your senses, you must be able to make it seem inconspicuous to them.”

Penny nods. She tries right away. Now, instead of looking around her, she tries to just look at Par, while at the same time focusing on her surroundings and focusing her hearing.

They make their way towards a very large building, which looks to be a mansion. At the one and only entrance two guards stand their posts with spears at their sides.

“Penny, you will need to break in. These men cannot be persuaded; force must be acted upon them,” Par tells her. “For this test, your powers will not work. The very reason for that is to force you to have to train you combat.” Par pauses, looking Penny in the eyes. “You may start whenever you're ready.”

With that being said, Par disappears. Penny spins around, looking for Par, but he is nowhere to be seen. Penny looks towards the mansion and at the two guards. They looked to be trained themselves, standing with such great posture. They also thankfully do not look to be incredibly strong.

Penny exhales and walks towards the mansion, knowing she has nowhere else to go.

She reaches the entrance, deciding to test these men. She reaches to open the door, but the men hold her back with their spears.

“You may not enter,” they say in perfect unity, both in a broad, deep voice.

The fear suddenly comes to Penny, realizing that there is no other choice but to fight them. Par made it that way. She would not be able to seduce them.

Without a second's more of hesitation, Penny throws her foot into one guard's shin. He immediately grabs it hoping to relieve the pain. The other guard thrusts his sword at Penny. She jumps back but cannot avoid getting stabbed in her shoulder. The guard pulls the spear out.

Penny groans, but knows she can't stop. As quickly as she can she punches the guard in the jaw and kicks him in the groin. The guard falls to his knees, unable to bear the pain. The other guard recollects himself. Penny grabs the spear from the guard on his knees.

Taking the spear, Penny whacks the other guard across the face, slicing a cut in his cheek. Penny winces in pain from her shoulder being injured.

The guard is caught off guard and Penny thrusts the spear through his chest with all the force she has. The guard gasps, looking down at his chest. He looks back up at Penny only to fall to the ground a split second later.

Penny quickly turns around to face the other guard that is now getting to his feet. She quickly grabs the other spear that the guard now dead had dropped.

He charges at Penny and she whacks the spear. With his arm he deflects it and punches Penny in the nose. The force throws Penny's neck backwards, cracking it uncomfortably. Penny quickly brings her neck back, ignoring its pain.

The guard doesn't hesitate. He punches her in the jaw. "You killed my friend, you idiot!"

Penny's pain is telling her that this isn't a dream. It all begins to feel more real than ever.

Penny dodges the guard's next throw of the fist. She head-butts him and whacks his face with the spear. Penny, then, immediately shoves her knee into his gut and then plunges the spear into his chest.

Penny tells herself that this isn't real, trying to tell herself it's okay to kill these two guards. She turns to the doors and opens one, stepping inside.

It takes a second for Penny's eyes to adjust to the different lighting. She lets the door slam shut behind her.

"You killed them." Par says, suddenly appearing.

"Well, they're not real."

"True, but you must not act in that way. I want for you to treat this world as if it's real and your reality. I want for you to be ready to make the right decision going out into the real world."

Penny nods. "I understand."

"Okay, now follow me to the training room."

Par takes the lead, walking down a large hallway. They pass many doors.

"So ... since this is a dream, in a way, can I control anything?" Penny asks Par.

"Of course you can, but that also depends on how you mean to control it. You can only control what you do, but you cannot control the layout and structure of things."

“Hmm.”

They walk down a circular stairwell that leads to the lowest floor. Par takes Penny to the first room on the right. He opens the door and allows for Penny to step inside first.

Penny looks around the surroundings. She sees the standard combat training equipment you would expect to see in the room. There's a punching bag or speed bag, a pair of boxing gloves, heavy bag, protective head gear, jump ropes, a full weight training system, and a trampoline.

The floor is covered with rubber for impact protection.

“Are we going to be doing most of the training here?” Penny asks.

Par walks past Penny, preparing to show her to her first station to train with.

“Yes,” Par begins. “Most of your training will be done here and especially now as this is the beginning of your training. At times though you will be fighting people, and please do not kill them like you did the guards. You will also be going back outside for further training.”

Par pauses. “Let us begin, shall we.”

Penny nods.

Par walks Penny up to the speed bag or punching bag, handing her the boxing gloves. She puts them on.

“I want you to punch the bag repeatedly until I tell you to stop.”

Penny nods. She begins to punch it and is surprised by how fast it springs back into place. Penny punches it with her right fist about ten times.

“Punch the bag about thirty times before alternating fists.”

Penny does so. She continues this for about five minutes. Penny begins to feel tired, but doesn't stop. Still punching the bag she takes a look at Par, hoping he'll move her on. He doesn't. He just looks at her and the punching bag, keeping his cool face and posture.

For a few more minutes, Penny continues to punch the bag.

"How long do I ... have to do this?" Penny asks, panting a bit while she still punches it.

She alternates her fists.

"Just like I had mentioned previously, punch the bag repeatedly until I tell you to stop," Par says dryly.

Penny continues punching the speed bag. After several more minutes Penny realizes how tired she is. She strains to keep punching the bag. Determining herself, she tries to maintain the speed of her punches.

A part of Penny is telling her that in reality she wouldn't tire out, but she doesn't understand how. In here, however, she feels very tired.

Penny continues to push herself hard. She knows that the only way to get good at this is to not stop. Par had explained to her that he'll train her until her body is fit. She wonders how that can be if she's not physically doing this, but doing it all in her head.

"How is this training ... my body ... physically?" Penny asks between breaths.

"Well, Penny, your mind believes this to be one-hundred percent real so it is tensing all of the muscles that you are using, strengthening them and the rest of your body despite you not even physically using them. The brain is a powerful thing."

"That's curious."

Par has Penny punch the speed bag for what seems to be two hours. The first hour Penny pushed herself so hard, disbelieving that she was even able to. Every time she felt weak or needing a break, she determined herself to continue.

The next hour it seemed a little easier. Her body was getting used to being stressed and strengthened by the exercise.

Now Par has moved her over to punching the heavy bag. This brought the difficulty up a level.

“Seriously, Par?” Penny asks, panting. “This is tiring me out.”

“For this training to work, you must not stop.”

Penny exhales loudly. She starts hitting at the heavy bag. This, being hung up by a rope, dangles around freely, definitely being different than the speed bag that bounced back in place. Penny has to hit it harder than the speed bag for it to even move.

“Again, like before, continue until further noticed,” Par tells her.

Panting hard, Penny continues to punch the heavy bag, which surely is heavy, especially after two hours at hitting the speed bag.

Penny’s arms feel like jelly, but she continues punching nonetheless. Moments before, Penny’s arms burned; they are no longer burning, or even feeling anything at all for that matter.

Penny breaths harder and harder. She finally slows down her punches. She gets so slow until she can't even keep her arms up. She falls down to her knees, panting hard.

“You have done well, Penny. I just want to commend you for your determination. I want to inform you that you were merely minutes away from reaching my time I had set for you to punch the heavy bag. Considering that this is your first day, you have done exceptionally well.”

Penny nods, panting hard still.

“Walk it off. It is not well for your body to stay in place.”

Penny gets up to begin walking. She walks around the perimeter of the large room. While have been walking for five minutes Penny asks, “So, what’s next?”

“We are going to take an hour long break. Your body can only be pushed so far and we do not want to wear you out.” Par pauses. “We can go outside to enjoy the day.”

“Okay,” Penny replies.

She has been curious to see more of what Trex looks like, even though it’s not really Trex, but it surely will look exactly like Trex in every way since Par’s knowledge of Trex was made by Trex the ruler himself.

Par leads Penny out the same way they came in. At the front door, the two guards are gone. There is no sign that they were even there and there is no sign of blood being spilt on the ground from Penny stabbing them. The guards and every trace of them have been removed from this ... dream.

“What do you call this dream?” Penny asks Par. “I mean the ... structure of it all.”

“The structure of this vision is called a map.”

Penny nods, understanding.

A bird screeches as it flies by overhead. Penny quickly looks up to see it. She drops her jaw in awe. The bird is relatively big and is brightly colorful.

“Is that a male bird?” Penny asks Par.

“No it is a female.”

“Oh. Are the females the prettier ones on planet Trex instead of vice versa?”

“Not necessarily. Each gender is equally colored and beautiful. I understand that Earth is different; males tend to be the beautiful ones, as for animals I mean.”

Penny laughs, catching Par correct himself; he did say a broad statement and could have referred to male humans being more beautiful, but he corrected himself.

Penny calms down and continues walking with Par, enjoying the beautiful sights of the mapped Trex. Everything looks so healthy. Lots of green. The trees everywhere have healthy brown bark, having no green moss anywhere to be seen.

“Par, I am enjoying this day so far ... for the most part. I especially love to see Trex’s outdoors.”

“I’m glad you appreciate it.”

“Par, can you give me the assurance that we’ll be seeing this beauty regularly?”

“Sure. You have my word; any time we need to take breaks, we can do so by taking strolls out here.”

“Good.”

“Just remember, the purpose that you are here for is to train. So ... at all times, be training yourself. Train your senses and keep your eyes and ears open for any predators.”

“Aye.”

As they walk, Penny finds herself not only taking a good look at the beauties of Trex but also Par. She is amazed at how handsome he portrays himself to be.

Again, Penny gets the sudden pain in her chest. She realizes it's her heart hurting, though not a physical pain, but an emotional pain. She is confused as to why she is feeling what seems like heartbreak.

Something tells her that something from reality is bothering her, but she can't make sense of it since this dream is clouding her knowledge of the real world.

Almost as soon as the pain started, it went away. Penny calms down and decides now to enjoy the beauties of Trex instead of Par. Penny's arms' muscles begin to twitch, feeling them flop at her side.

Penny sighs; she has worked hard. She can't believe that she could; she didn't even think she had it in herself.

Happening without warning the sound of something rumbling fills into the atmosphere. Penny darts her head upwards. A ship flies by overhead, leaving as soon as it came.

Par didn't even look up.

“Wow,” Penny says. “That ship was big. But ... I didn't hear it until it was almost on top of us.”

They continue walking. Par looks at Penny, expressionless. “Yes. Trexian technology is very eco-friendly like I have told you before. Loudness of an engine is impossible with our technology. Instead you mostly hear the disruption of the airwaves it makes.”

“Well ...” Penny pauses to think. “I have been wondering something. How do you power your technology? How can you ... well ... you obviously don’t use gasoline.”

“You are correct. Gasoline is only available on planet Earth. Thankfully, we use Trepnolium, which is the most sustainable, longevity element and energy source we have found. It originates from a planet called Trepnon, which is from the Lreptonic Galaxy. The galaxy is five light-years away from the Trexus Zeta Galaxy.”

“Interesting.”

Penny considers what Earth would be like if they had Trepnolium. It would’ve saved from pollution, that’s for sure.

As if on cue, Penny reminds herself to also open her senses. Par is making conversation, but she can only assume that he is still trying to test her.

As they continue walking, Penny focuses her hearing around her. She wants Par to think she is fully focused on him, so she keeps her eyes fixed on him, although periodically looking past him for anything.

Penny hears something and immediately focuses on it. Par suspects she is hearing something, because Penny cannot help but take her eyes off him to look at the ground.

A twig snaps at Penny’s eight o’ clock. Wishing she has super hearing, Penny determines to distinguish what is there. Penny gets her arms ready, or at least tries to. She looks down at them, they don’t budge.

She hears it, a grunt. Something is there. She's not sure how big it is, but it’s there; she knows it. If only her arms weren’t tired. She narrows her eyes; Par must’ve planned for this. She suspects that he wants her to use her feet. Alternately, Penny wonders if Par is trying to train her anxiousness or anticipation.

Penny exhales to calm herself. She looks up at Par, smiling. Par smiles back. The smile gives her some tranquility, but Penny knows not to let him distract her.

She continues to focus on the sounds, but hears nothing of the sort. She dares a look to her left. Nothing.

She looks back to Par, but he is gone. Penny spins herself around, looking in every direction. Penny is left to assume what she was hearing captured Par, but she finds it just hard to believe how whatever it was could have done it without Penny noticing.

Penny's heart begins to race. She listens for Par and for the thing that took him. She hears nothing. She inhales deeply through her nose and can't help but cough from the smell. It is ferocious.

That is it! The smell is strong enough for Penny to determine where it is coming from. She looks to her three o' clock and sees a man in the distance with Par unconscious over his shoulder. Penny immediately starts running that direction.

Penny finds herself failing to run with lightning speed. She knows she has the ability, but Par must've disabled her ability to, as it has seemed throughout this whole dream so far.

With her adrenaline kicking in, Penny throws her arms up to run faster. She ignores the achiness in her arms, determined to save Par.

It takes her several minutes to catch up, weaving around some trees. The man knows that Penny is running after him. Penny approaches and the man throws Par through the air. He lands some twenty feet away, unconscious.

Penny approaches the man. He smirks at Penny.

"I'm taking this man with me," the man says, referring to Par.

"I'm afraid you are mistaken," Penny says. "You will not be leaving with him."

Penny dashes at the man, immediately ready to fight. She reminds herself not to kill him. The man easily blocks Penny's first few punches. Penny is quick, but this man is quicker.

The man socks Penny in the jaw and the force almost sends Penny off her feet. Her ears ring. Her jaw feels numb simultaneously. This man is obviously strong.

The man shows no hesitation to fight Penny, taking and giving punches. He easily makes contact with her nose, then her cheek, and then her mouth.

Penny backs up and spits out blood onto the ground. Par groans, starting to wake. The man narrows his eyes and Penny does the same.

"You giving up?" he asks.

"Far from it."

He runs at her first, getting his fist ready. This time, Penny prepares herself, keeping her fists in front of her face. He punches, but Penny dodges it. He throws another, but Penny deflects it and punches him in the nose; the first punch that made contact.

He is temporarily dumbfounded, but Penny doesn't let time go by. She hits him again, and does not stop. He blocks any further attempts. They go at it, back and forth, both deflecting and dodging their hits.

Penny's father comes to mind. Suddenly, anger overwhelms her. She growls at him and moves faster. She throws faster punches, over-

powering the man's agility. She makes contact with his mouth. After he blocks a few, she wallops him in the nose again, hearing a crack.

He groans loudly from the pain. Penny knees him in the gut and she punches her fist upwards into his jaw. He falls to the ground knocked out; not dead, though.

"Penny," Par says, getting to his feet without bending his back, just his knees. "Determination is essential for great combat, but anger is not." He pauses. "I sense that you imagined your father when you fought. Is that correct?"

"Yes," Penny replies.

She looks down at the man. His chest is moving, so is he alive, just not conscious.

"You do not need to feel anger towards your father. I understand if you do, but you must push that anger aside. If you do not, it will eat you up. Anger does more harm than good, especially when making quick judgment calls. Please ... do not feel overly angry.

"Rest assured your father is locked up on Earth by a trustworthy prison in which negates his abilities. There is no need for you to worry of him escaping, for it will be very unlikely to happen. You have your right to anger at him, but in this line of work, you cannot be."

Penny nods, but the latter of Par's statement throws her off. "Wait. *This line of work*? What do you mean?"

Par stammers. "I'm sorry, for I do not have the ability to tell you that."

"Now wait a minute ... why are you training me? You said it was so I could protect myself, but ... it's more than that, isn't it?"

"I'm afraid I cannot clarify." Par is thrown off guard, very much not like himself.

Penny narrows her eyes. "So ... Trex wants me to be like Avian, right?"

"I—"

"You can't deny it, Par. It is obvious." The man on the ground grunts, but he does not get up. Penny looks at him, but returns to focus to Par.

"I am sorry if this bothers you, but we should continue this training."

Penny sighs. "This doesn't upset me. I ... uh ..."

Penny thinks about Avian for a moment. He is a superhero. He protects New York. Intex had taken over New York and Avian freed it, killing Intex. Par is trying to teach Penny not to kill. It definitely is a dangerous job; the Avians put their lives on the line.

"Par ... the thought of being like Avian is scary. Being a superhero gives me the chills. Possibly before I thought it would be cool. But, now I am considering this ... it is very dangerous and I am not sure that I can go through with it."

"I understand your fear, Penny, but I am designed to train you for your own protection and it is not meaningless if you decide to not pursue life as a superhero. There will be threats out there for sure if people discover your abilities. You must be able to defend yourself. But you also must be able to control yourself. That is why I must train you."

"Okay."

"I advise that we continue this training for your own protection. You can give the heroism idea some time to consider. You will be able to take as much time as you need to consider it."

Penny looks down at the man moaning on the ground.

“We should turn that man into the authorities.”

Par smiles. “That is the very thing a superhero would do and it is the right thing to do.” He pauses. “Take your time to consider, but know this: you have it in you. You are capable of becoming a protector of Earth. You have the spirit within. All you need is this training.”

Part 2: Cultivation

The unconscious man on the ground disappears after Par and Penny leave the scene. They continue walking in the woods inside the dream world of the devised Trex.

Par looks straight ahead, not seeming to be looking at anything in particular, not seeming to be thinking about anything in specific; just walking.

Penny watches him, while trying to equip her senses. Even though Par said that this was a time to take a break, she is still training. Penny figures it out now that any time spent here she is training.

As they walk, Penny unexpectedly feels weak and she quickly stops. She rests her hands on her chest, feeling her breathing.

Par, for once, actually seems worried. He, too, stops immediately and addresses Penny.

“Penny?” Par asks with added feeling in his voice. “Are you alright?”

Penny shrugs, feeling weak and lightheaded. “I don’t know,” she replies.

She begins to feel very tired. Her eyes start drifting.

“Please, Penny, do not faint on me,” Par tells. “Stay with me.”

Penny tries to shake herself awake, shaking her head, but slowly.

“This is what I was afraid of,” Par mutters to himself.

Penny turns her head towards Par. "Afraid of what?" she asks, now with a little strength.

Par sighs. "I've been pushing you hard, but it is not because of that that you feel weak. In this dream, time seems to go as normal, but in reality it is going faster. Say, Penny? What time do you think it is now?"

Penny gasps, realizing it. "It must be around two or three o' clock. Wait, Par! My family must be worried sick!" She pauses. "We gotta get outta of here."

Par smiles, holding up his hands to reassure Penny. "Calm down, please. As I said, in this dream time is faster than reality. It may feel like it is two or three o' clock, but in reality it is only ten."

"What?" Penny scoffs.

"Yes, it is true. Do you understand? It means that in reality your brain is working two and a quarter times as fast than you are in here in order to keep at the same pace. Therefore, you are not pushing your body *too* hard, but it's your brain; it is working faster than it is used to. We may need to terminate this vision to ensure your brain's health."

Everything goes black. Things start to seem unreal. Images are flashing in her head, her mind trying to continue the dream itself, but then it feels fake unlike the actual visions themselves.

"Penny," Par's voice says, now sounding like the voice from the ship, not that of Par being a human, or humanoid.

Penny grunts, "Hmm?"

Slowly Penny opens her eyes and feels icky. She realizes that she is wet, drenched in sweat. Par is now lifting the head cap off her head, raising it back into the ceiling, by means of controlling the ship (himself), that is, not by his humanoid form. That form is gone now, stuck inside the dream.

Penny looks around, feeling weak, but very alive at the same time. She feels on alert. Her heart is racing and her senses amplified. Though she feels a headache coming on.

“Penny, are you alright?”

Continuing to look around, Penny wobbles her arms and looks down to see them flopping at her side as she still sits in the chair. She realizes that her arms feel worse in reality than in the dream.

She tries to lift an arm, but the muscles just twitch.

“Your arms should feel fine at least in a couple of hours,” Par says. “You have the ability to regenerate; your arms’ muscles will regenerate, though they will be stronger because of today’s training.”

There is a long pause.

Penny sits, trying to recollect herself. She feels worn out. It genuinely does feel as if she actually did what she did in the vision.

“Par,” Penny says. “If been thinking about what you told me. About Trex ... why does he want me to protect this Earth? Why me?”

Par is not around as his humanoid figure like in the dreams, so she can't read his expressions; not that he was expressive to begin with.

“Trex believes that the Earth is in grave danger. As of now, there is no one powerful enough to save it. Not one man alone can save Earth. Trex knows about Avian and he is very pleased with what he's become. But he will not be able to save the Earth alone.”

“Save it from what?” Penny interrupts.

“There is something coming. I'm afraid I can't give you a choice to not pursue this course. This Earth will need all the help it can receive. You must meet Avian. You must help him protect this Earth.”

Penny sighs. “What is coming?”

“Trex fears that the thing responsible for destroying Planet Rexton will come for Earth next. There's still speculation, but it is believed that there are people, aliens to this world, that want to take over control of Earth. They will use the virus named Drigor to wipe out Earth. I am deciding to tell you all this right now, because I feel that you do not understand the depth of the very reason you are being trained.

“You believe that I am training you to protect this world as I have said, but you do not understand the very seriousness of it. This Earth has its own problems among itself and with the people within; this training would not be required if it were for just that. Instead, something far worse is coming. A war is coming.

“Penny, you must help Avian save this planet. It does not deserve what is in store for what these people intend.”

“A war?” Penny exclaims. “That’s what this is about? Did Trex really know that I was distressed, or was that staged so that you could train me?”

“You must know that Trex *is* concerned for your well-being, so, yes, he did send me because of your being distressed. Trex has been creating me for years. When he heard of your distress signal, he willed himself to work faster until I was finished created. Now here I am, at your presence; training you.”

Penny shakes her head. “I can't believe this. The virus that wiped out Rexton will be coming to Earth.”

“It is true, and it is believed to happen in the next three years.”

Penny sighs, disbelieving the sudden information.

“Why wasn’t I told this before? Why didn’t you tell me this when you told me you wanted to train me?”

“I wanted to earn your trust.”

“Well now ... I’m not so sure I trust you ... Well, I do trust you, but not fully. I can't trust that you'll tell me the whole truth.”

“Penny to account for your understanding, certain things will need time to be explained for; I do not want to overwhelm you with information.”

There is silence once again. Penny takes a moment to consume this all.

“For now, Penny, please, I ask of you, continue this course of training. Right now you may not believe that you can help in the protection of Earth, but you are fully capable. All I need to do is train you.”

Penny sighs, deciding on what to do. “Okay,” she says finally. “I guess ... I will bear with this for now.” She pauses. “If I don't do this ... I will not be able to live with myself. I believe ...” she sighs. “I cannot allow for this planet to end, not like Rexton and not like Mason, in a figurative way meaning how Mason is ruling it. I must do this training, then.”

“With that being said, go; inform your family the truth: you must be trained to protect the Earth and you will be spending time away.”

“I will do that.”

“Good. Afterwards, I must let you know, there will not be much of anything else done; we will do nothing, but train.”

“I understand, Par.”

Penny heads back home, half expecting everyone there to panic. She walks through the door to find that Lucy is sitting on the couch in the living room, reading a book. Kim is washing the dishes they used to eat off of for breakfast.

As casually as she can, Penny walks in, taking her shoes off at the door. Kim looks at her and smiles.

“Just getting some fresh air?” Kim asks.

Penny nods. “Yeah,” she exhales.

Lucy looks up from her book to look at Penny. She narrows her eyes unconsciously and then returns to her book. Penny catches a glimpse of her looking her way.

Penny walks towards to the living room to greet Lucy, but finds it hard to move her arms as they just flop at her side. She decides that it’s best not to approach Lucy because of how much of a workout she just did; she is putting off a stench to proof it. So she keeps her distance, standing behind the couch that Lucy sits at.

“Watcha reading?” Penny asks Lucy.

“It’s just a little lit reading,” Lucy replies after seeming to finish a paragraph because of how long it takes for her to respond.

Penny looks at the book. “*Light reading?* That book looks pretty big; like maybe five-hundred pages.”

Lucy looks at Penny and smiles. “I need a good book every once in a while.” Suddenly, Lucy curls her nose. “Wow, you must’ve gone out for a jog, huh?”

Penny reddens. “Yeah ... I’m going to wash up.” She laughs softly and walks down the hall towards her room.

Even just as she walks into her room, Penny feels her arms’ muscles buzzing and warming up as they try to regenerate the torn muscles tissue. Her ability to regenerate at an accelerated rate still impresses her.

Penny looks for the clothes she wants to change into to take to the bathroom, struggle just to grab them. With a lot more effort than normally required, she grabs the change of clothes desired and takes them to the bathroom to prepare for when she finishes her shower.



Penny walks out to the living room after having washed up, being in fresh clothes. She finds that Lucy is still sitting at the couch, reading her book. Kim finishes up the dishes, walking into the living room to turn on the TV to watch the news. Penny takes a seat at the couch.

Lucy smirks. “Smells a whole lot better now,” she says, not lifting her eyes from the book.

Penny chuckles. “Shut up,” she says.

Lucy laughs and then continues reading. Penny feels Kim’s eyes fall upon her. Penny dares a look at Kim to reveal a worried look across Kim’s face. Once Kim realizes that Penny notices the look she wipes it off her face and turns her attention back to the TV.

Penny sighs softly so that only she can hear. She wonders how long it will take for her to inform the truth to her new family. Should they know that she is starting to train?

Penny realizes that she is able to move her arms freely now. She lifts one up to scratch her head, just to test the strength of her arm. She sighs, knowing that they are restored with their full strength.

You are capable of becoming a protector of Earth. Par's voice suddenly plays in her head.

She wonders. Can she really help in protecting Earth? She thinks about Avian; he was able to free New York, ridding it of Intex's control, all in about a week from awakening from a coma. It is impressive. Penny shakes her head to herself, disbelieving that she'll ever become that powerful. She wonders what he must've been like before becoming a superhero. Was he always powerful? Or did he have to train like Penny did? She can only wonder ... that is until she meets up with him; then they could learn each other's background.

The idea suddenly feels farfetched; actually meeting Avian? She wonders. If and when she would meet the Avian, how would he ... view her or treat her? Would he accept her? All of these thoughts are racing through Penny's mind. Avian is a well-respected person. An icon, practically, although he surely would not consider himself to be. Penny couldn't picture herself being welcomed by Avian. She doesn't know why, though. The Avian has a team; surely he would take another member, wouldn't he?

Penny sighs, this time loud enough to grab Kim's attention. Kim looks worried again for Penny's sake and well-being.

"Penny?" Kim asks softly.

Penny looks up at Kim, smiling. "Yes?" she asks in reply.

“Are you doing alright?” Kim asks. “Something seems to be troubling you.”

Lucy looks up from her book. Penny looks between the two of them. She looks up at the TV, seeing that there is a shooting being reported on the news.

Penny nods. “Yes,” she says. “There is a lot on my mind.” She looks at Lucy, and then back to Kim. “I know you guys must think that I'm saddened about Adrian breaking up with me ... and I am, but that's not what is troubling me.” She pauses, looking to Lucy. “Remember yesterday when I told you that I met someone.” Lucy nods. “Well, this *someone* is ... not an actual person.”

Lucy raises an eyebrow and Kim tilts her head. Penny smiles at the, realizing how strange she sounds.

“Where do I begin?” she asks herself. “The ... *person* that I met it actually a spaceship. It is from a planet called Trex. Its ... nearby the planet I'm from, although not in the same galaxy.”

“A ship?” Lucy exclaims, clearly puzzled. “It just ... decided to meet you?”

Penny nods. “Well, the ruler of Trex, Trex himself, had sent it her to help me.” Penny begins to explain the whole story to them. She explains Trex's motives, which are then put into Par's motives. She explains that she is needed in order to assist Avian in ensuring Earth's protection.

Once she's done explaining it all, Penny looks at their expressions. Kim looks shocked, but Lucy seems to accept it, not looking very surprised.

“I guess,” Lucy starts up. “That you and Avian are from the same galaxy, right? Just different planets. So, it makes sense for you two to be working together to save Earth.” Lucy suddenly seems worried. “Drigor, huh?” Penny nods. “You will definitely need to train, then.”

“Penny,” Kim says. “Lucy’s right. I know that you are young, but ... Avian is young too. He stopped Intex, but your ship, Par, says that he will not have the power to stop this Drigor. Penny ...” she sighs. “Surely you will need to do this. You will need to train. Don’t feel that you are forsaking us, please; just go and train whenever necessary. You have our approval.”

Lucy nods, agreeing with her mother.

Penny nods, feeling relieved that they are willing for her to do this. Well, she considers, they are not her actual mother and sister, only through a recent adoption. They love her, sure, but they must not be that close yet, right? Penny wonders this, about how they can be so willing to let her train for something so dangerous. It must be the fact that they do not want to die. Drigor is a dangerous threat to the safety of Earth and he is supposed to be here in a year or so.

“Thank you,” Penny finally tells them. “I didn't want to do this at first, but I came to a realization, surely as you guys just did. The Earth cannot be destroyed. I will not let it. I must train, and then meet Avian so that we can save the world ... no matter how cheesy that sounds.”

“It doesn’t sound cheesy at all,” Lucy says. “Not in this world that we now live in. Intex has corrupted this world, even though only physically damaging New York. Drigor can do much worse, so you must do this.”

Penny nods. She is nervous. She has never expected to do something like this. She never thought to be a superhero in the future. She is only now discovering her abilities. She wonders if Avian felt this same way at one point in time.

One Year Later

Penny sits on the couch in the living room of the Lowe's house. It is morning and the news is on; so far, nothing good.

Penny sighs, feeling refreshed after yesterday's training session. She is not training like she did first. She does not enter into dreams anymore; that was only for the first few months. Now she is out, actually saving people, much like a superhero.

There are two months left of school; her last year of school. She is a senior. School will start this morning in a few minutes. Lucy is already at school. Kim is in her room and Leland is at work already.

Par has taught her so much. He first trained her like he did the first day; using punching bags, heavy bags, and then doing crunches, agility tests, obstacle courses, tests on opening her senses, being made aware of her surroundings, her personality and of course her powers.

Time has gone by fast. Penny can hardly believe that it has been a year already, but, although, it isn't until now that it sinks in. She is two months away from graduation. It will be then that she'll meet Avian.

After several months of training, Par did as he explained he would do. He *downloaded* — supplemented as Par put it — data into her brain; the combat skills of many types. Now Penny has no choice but to employ these skills.

Par has also supplemented the Trexian language into her brain, as well as Masonian and Rextonian, which are only dialects of the Trexian language.

One year ago Penny doubted her ability to save the world, now she feels that with Avian's help they have a better chance.

Penny looks at the time and smiles. It's time to get to school.

Penny gets up from the couch, runs to her bedroom, grabs her backpack and runs out the door. She runs down many different roads until she reaches the school in less than two seconds.

Penny opens the front door and casually walks in, heading towards her first class period immediately.

Coincidentally, Adrian is walking just ahead of her. Penny thinks back to the first week that school had started back up from summer break. Just before summer break, Adrian had broken off their relationship. At the beginning of this year, Adrian explained to Penny how he's noticed she has changed. She is more controlled of herself, more respectful and kind. Par has done much with training her personality for the better.

Several weeks after that, Adrian had even asked if he and Penny could go out again. Penny felt guilty for wanting to and for denying the request at the same time. She felt that the training was far greater of importance than Adrian. The Earth's well-being is far greater than Adrian's. Penny is hoping that if they survive what's to come, she will return to Adrian.

Penny continues walking, entering the class room just as the last bell goes off. She is not tardy, though she makes it close.

Each day Penny finds it harder and harder to concentrate on school, though she can be good at multitasking if she tries. The day of meeting Avian draws nearer; she forgets that graduation is sooner than that. If she were just a normal human being, she would be looking forward to her graduation. She would then even be thinking about which college to attend to. But she has other pursuits now.

Penny's teachers sighs, noticing her lose focus again. Due to Penny's training, she is aware of her surroundings despite how unfocused she may be. Penny immediately notices her teacher's distress and throws her attention to her book. The whole class is working on an assignment. Penny knows what it is, but only now just starts. The teacher makes a little smirk to himself, shakes his head, and then sits at his desk.

Penny begins on the assignment, writing furiously. She knows this topic well; it being her English class. She feels a set of eyes on her and without lifting her own she can determine who's they are that are upon her. Not her teachers. It's Vanessa. Penny and Vanessa seem to have made amends with each other about a couple of months ago; they really don't speak to each other, though.

Penny lifts her head up from her book and notepad to glare right back at Vanessa, throwing her off guard. Penny's smiles at her; Vanessa nods and returns her attention back to her book. In turn, Penny returns her concentration to her work.

Because of Penny's training, she has very well improved on her abilities; especially so with her electrokinesis. As Penny begins working on the task at hand, she can actually feel the electricity buzzing in her brain as it quickens her thought process. She has to control herself as to not actually write as fast as her brain can process.

By now, Penny already has the whole assignment figured out. Now it's just a matter of getting it onto the paper. Simultaneously, Penny thinks of the ability that she had developed a few months back. It had begun as the ability to levitate. Gradually it resulted in full flight. Penny smiles at the thought of how great it feels to take to the air. She now has the perfect understanding of how it feels. She can relate to the Avians as a whole. All of them have wings, even their lupus-human (wolf-human) team member, Tyke, though his wings are electronic, created by Avian's matter materializing ability.

Lately Penny has been known to allow her mind to wander. Knowing this, Penny's teacher looks up from her desk to set his eyes upon Penny. He finds that Penny is looking up at a corner of the ceiling, day-dreaming, though she is writing words upon her notebook. Puzzled, the teacher creases his eyebrows.

The teacher rises up from his desk, walking casually around the room. He purposely, though gradually, makes his way towards Penny. Penny knows this, though pretends she does not. The teacher walks past Penny to take a glance back over his shoulder and over Penny's. He is shocked to see that Penny is actually completing her assignment and doing it accurately.

What even shocks the teacher more is that Penny is the farthest ahead in the assignment. Walking around the whole room, the teacher has seen the progress and work that all the students have done; Penny has surpassed them all, but she is not even looking down at her paper. Penny's continues writing; her hand moving from line to line.

The teacher finds himself actually shifting his body around to obviously be gawking at Penny's paper, still, though, looking over her shoulder. Other students began to notice, looking up at him for a few seconds before they return to their work.

Penny finally smiles, not being able to suppress it. Both her and her teacher know that she is just a few sentences from finishing the as-

signment. Still not looking at the paper, Penny finishes the last few sentences, putting her pencil down on the desk.

The teacher drops his jaw. Penny tears the three papers from her notebook, handing them over her shoulder. "There is my completed assignment, Mr. Clifton," Penny says.

The teacher, Mr. Clifton, grabs the paper slowly, realizing that Penny knew that he stood behind her.

"Unbelievable," he mutters to himself.

Students look up, seeing the paper in Mr. Clifton's hands. It is Penny's paper. Some of them are shocked to see that she's already done. Others scoff, disbelieving that she actually completed it; thinking she put no thought nor effort into it.

Mr. Clifton walks around to Penny's front, looking at her then at the paper. "How?" he asks, still amazed.

Penny smiles. "I just read the article and answered the questions in the book; that's all." Penny replies.

He shakes his head with disbelief, though he continues reading the paper, walking his way back to his desk to grade it.

Penny continues her thoughts on what's to come. Meeting the Avians. Becoming a superhero. Stopping Drigor. She shudders, knowing that it will be the most difficult thing she will ever do; she will try to help Avian with stopping Drigor. She must succeed.

Penny ponders of the obvious for becoming a superhero, what the public will first wonder: what is her name? Her superhero name. Par has never mentioned that to her, because it would be irrelevant to him. Par's only goal is for Penny to succeed in being capable of helping Avian with stopping Drigor, not to invent a superhero name. Or would that be superhero name?

Penny knows for her most powerful ability to be her electrokinesis. Perhaps a name could be invented based of that.



Penny returns home by the end of the school day, taking to the air to fly there. She rests her eyes, allowing for herself to enjoy the feel of the wind brushing against her. She lets her arms spread out to become one with the wind. It takes a second for Penny to realize that she has arrived home.

Penny lands in her backyard, sure of the fact that no one noticed her landing. Thankfully, they live in a rural area. There are just a few houses next to them, all with their blinds closed. Must be depressing to not allow for sunlight to come in.

Penny welcomes herself in, collapses onto the couch once she enters the living room. Kim is found to be reading a book of her own, sitting at the chair she tends to use most. The TV is found to be on, though not very loud, displaying a news station. Penny diverts her attention to the news, waiting for something that may require her assistance.

As part of her training and now her life, Penny has been using the news to follow up on going out to save people. Mostly, she can only provide her help if the reports are live. The news so far talks of the weather, being nice lately, and horrid crimes that have occurred recently. It pains Penny to hear of it, but she can only do so much. She knows that the world is full of corrupt people, disregarding the laws. The people of the world need guidance. Each and every day, Penny learns more and more how essential it is for her to give Avian her assistance with protecting the world.

Penny realizes that Avian has done a lot this year to fix up New York. Obviously things are not going to be the same in New York, but Avian is trying. He has used his materializing ability on numerous occasions, healing the city. What used to be a very large city of New York City is now a calm, peaceful city with rare occasions of crime. It is amazing what all the Avians have done for it in a year's time.

The rest of the world needs what New York is acquiring. The state of New York is not fully healed yet, but it is in the works. Still, the surrounding states, as well as the rest of The States and the rest of the world need their support; the Avians and Penny.

Penny attention is ripped away from her own thoughts, being grabbed by the current report on the news. A reporter goes on about a man known for kidnapping teenage girls. She continues to explain how a few have already been returned to their parents, though unharmed. They all have returned undamaged; they had grown attached to the kidnapper. In a way, they were damaged. The reporter continues explaining that the girls were saying that the man had giving them much luxury, giving them whatever they had asked for.

Penny scoffs, disgusted with it. The kidnapper is bribes the girls. The reports sums up to explain that the man is said to be twenty-nine years of age, is rich and his residence is unknown. The girls who have returned home confess that they know the location of his home, but will not tell. Police are said to be very frustrated.

Penny sees this as a new mission for her; she must find and stop this guy. The reporter stands in a mall, where the kidnapper is said to be mostly found. Since learning this, the Police and mall security have stepped up. Penny decides that is where she must go.

Penny arrives at the mall after cleaning up. She wears the most beautiful dress she has, accompanied with makeup upon her face. She hopes to attract attention of the kidnapper's.

As Penny walks from clothing store to clothing store in the mall, she notices how a few security guards following her, always being with twenty feet of her. Penny knows that the kidnapper must not be stupid, for he will not go for a girl with guards close by. The guards still are cautious, being near Penny because of knowing that the kidnapper could very well choose her.

Penny enters another clothing store, one that sells a lot of undergarment attire. The guards stop at the entrance, though they do not leave the area. Penny walks around the whole store, pretending to be looking around, but in reality is looking outside the store, though the windows and the entrance of the store. She keeps her eyes peeled for any men matching the description of the kidnapper.

Currently the kidnapper has no physical description, for the kidnapped girls have refused to explain what he looks like, all being gullible to him. Penny assumes that this can only mean that he dressing in a way that does not attract too much attention. But then again, maybe it does, but not in the way that makes it look like he is a kidnapper.

Penny's eyes catch sight of a man wearing a full tuxedo as he heads directly towards her. He is stopped by the guards that stand at the entrance of the store. He looks to be about thirty years old. But Penny suspects something fishy. Penny has been trained in some many different aspects by her wonderful trainer, Par. She has a great eye for these sorts of things.

The guards are questioning the man. Even though he fits the description of the kidnapper, Penny knows that he must not be; it would be too easy for he is arousing too much attention. He must be a distraction. Sure enough a different man catches her eye. He has been leaning against the wall outside the store.

The man is wearing a uniform that looks to be like one from one of the other clothing store within this mall. Penny scoffs to herself; it's the least suspicious disguise. This must be the man; he does seem to be older, though more like twenty-five not twenty-nine. This man walks right past the two guards and the man with the tuxedo, heading right towards her, though as casually as possible.

Penny continues to pretend to look at clothing while the man does the same, slowing reaching her. Sure enough, he approaches her. Penny decides that she'll use a flirtatious attitude.

"Hello," the man says. "I love you dress; it's so elegant."

"Thank you," Penny says, throwing a playful smile across her face.

"Oh, you're welcome. Umm. Perhaps if you don't notice my shirt, but I'm from the clothing store across the hallway. We are having a very great deal on dresses. If you are interested. I'm on break right now."

"Oh, so that's why you're hopping over here, huh? Trying to peak a look at these prices are ya?"

"You could say that. Do you mind if I show you the way to the dresses?"

"But I thought you said you were on break," Penny says, playing hard-to-get.

He chuckles, allowing a little bit of his low pitched voice to fluctuate. "Right you are, but I am always trying to find ways to make sales. Sorry, force of habit."

Penny notices that the guards let the man with the tuxedo go; he walks the opposite direction. The guards immediately look her way. Although not meaning to seem obviously, the man before me seems to try to avoid me.

“Well,” he says. “I guess if you are no interested I will let you go.”

He takes a few steps away and continues looking at some items. Penny is fairly certain that this is the man she is looking for; the kidnapper. The guards ridiculously gawk at her and at the man. They seem to be the realization that the man is leaving Penny alone and therefore cannot be the kidnapper.

Penny decides to walk towards the man, though pretending to look at other clothing. “You know,” Penny whispers to him, not making eye contact. He listens. “I like the sound of these dresses you speak of, can you show me ‘em?”

“Sure,” he says, looking past her to the guards; busted by Penny. Now Penny is certain that this is the man, because he doubts his undetection by the guards, looking their way.

The man walks past her, heading towards the store across the hall. It isn't until he walks past the guards that Penny decides to follow. The man realizes this, starting to suspect something. Penny allows for a smile to form, permitting the man to calm down.

The two of them walk into the store, though ten feet apart. The guards slowly following. The guards stop at the entrance. Penny follows the man towards the back, around a shelf. Penny realizes that it is out of the sight of the guards, or anyone for that matter. She also realizes that there is a very light crowd here, and he is the only worker here. Penny remembers the fact that this man is rich, so he could very well own this store.

The man leads Penny to the dresses. “Here we are,” he says, smiling.

Penny sees that the price tags on the dresses are thirty dollars at the most. She purposely drops her jaw, forming a frolicsome smile. The man continues to smile.

“Wow, these are amazing,” Penny says. “Cheap and beautiful.”

“Aren’t they?” he says.

Penny tries to sell it by stoking the dress. They genuinely to feel nice and soft. Penny feels guilty for wanting one.

“Do you like that one?” Penny nod. “How badly do you want it?”

“Oh ...” Penny shrug, “It’s gorgeous; all of them are ...”

“Well, you can have them.”

I scoff, not acting this time. This man has strange tactics.

“Are you pulling my leg?” Penny asks, letting her flirtatious smile stay upon my face.

He slowly places his hand on Penny arm. Penny pretends she doesn’t notice.

“I’m being serious,” he says.

The room suddenly changes. Penny realizes that there was a sound of buzzing going through the air, because now the sound stops. The sound of people talking all around diminishes. All of Penny’s surrounding completely change. Looking around, it is revealed to Penny that she is no longer at the mall, but in a very large house.

Penny is genuinely surprised. “What happened?” she asks.

The man’s arm is still on hers. He smiles back at her. “Please, don’t be alarmed, but ... this is my house.”

Penny’s eyes light up. “How ... how’d we get here?”

He tries to make a reassuring face. "I have an ability called tele-
portation. I teleported both of us here." He says. "Now, don't panic,
please." He takes his hands off her. "What I said was true. Those dresses
are yours, along with anything else you want."

"Wait a second," Penny says, preparing to state the obvious now.
"You're the kidnapper!"

The man allows for his smile to fade a little. He sighs, looking dis-
appointed with himself. "Yes, that is me. I'm sorry if I seem ... I don't
know ..." he waves his head back and forth, "headstrong? But I'm ... just
like any other man. It's just that ... I'm lonely." He pauses.

Penny doesn't smile; having no reason to now. Penny decides to
let him continue on.

"I need someone to love."

"So ... you just grab the *prettiest* girls you can find?!" Penny scoffs.
"What love is that?"

He shrinks down, seeming to want to look like a sensitive man.
"I'm sorry, but I'm hoping we can at least try to get to know each other.
I'm-I'm not really a bad man. Please, understand."

"You want for us to get to know each other? Look. You just kid-
napped me."

"I understand how it looks."

Penny scoffs, shaking her head. Either this guy really is lonely, or
he's just sick.

"Please know that you can have whatever you want ..." he trails
off

"I want to leave."

"... Except to leave," he finishes.

“Do you expect me to actually fall in love with you?”

“Well ... I expect time to tell.”

Penny allows for a large smile to form on her face, throwing the man off guard. He tilts his head, a little confused as to why it's there.

“Do you know who I am?” Penny asks him.

He shrugs.

“To you, I'm just like any pretty girl you can find at the mall. But to the public I'm a rising superhero.” Penny pauses, trying to read his blank expression. “Have you heard of the girl in the hoodie?”

His eyes beam up, obviously knowing who she is; the girl before her.

“It's me. I'm the girl. I'm the wrong girl to try to kidnap. You do realize that I let you kidnap me, right?”

He curls his bottom lip, angry, but he doesn't raise a hand to strike her.

“I can't believe this,” he says. “This can't be happening. All I ever wanted is to be loved.”

Penny scoffs. “Save the bologna. All you want is the other thing!”

With lightning speed, Penny throws her palm out, sending a bolt of electricity into his chest. With the force it should knock him out, but instead he just stands there as if nothing happened. Penny is dumbfounded.

“Teleportation is not my only ability,” he replies, dryly.

Penny decides to throw a punch into his nose, expecting it to bleed. It does. The man only winces. His nose bleeds, but after a second it stops, as if healing. He wipes the blood onto the back of his hand.

“We can still work this out,” he says. “It can be like two me-tahumans together.” He forms a smile.

“What?!” Penny scoffs, smiling because of the ridiculousness of it. “Are you still trying to manipulate me?!”

Penny throws another punch at him, but surprising he deflects it with quick reflexes. Penny raises an eyebrow. *Who is this guy?* She thinks to herself.

Penny shakes her head at him, disgusted. She begins to put her profound electrokinesis to use. She does so by controlling his nerves. He suddenly grabs his arm as he begins to feel pain.

“This is ... impossible!” he exclaims. “I should not feel pain! I am immortal!” He stares at his arm, wondering why it is hurting.

Penny then causes for the nerves on his forehead to pulse with pain. She would’ve tried to make his brain hurt, but it is impossible, since the brain doesn’t actually feel, having no nerves. He falls to his knees, then onto his back, rolling in pain all over. He struggles to get up. But Penny uses her ability to the full. She negates the nerves to not have any feeling throughout his whole spine. He stops moving. He no longer feels pain, but he can't move.

“What have you done to me!” he demands, his demeanor changing completely.

“I have rendered you paralyzed,” Penny replies, laughing at him. “You will not be manipulating any more girls. Now, where are the girls you have kidnapped currently?” Penny demands.

He doesn’t answer. “Go to —”

Penny interjects, “Your refusal to cooperate will result in causing this effect to be permanent!” Penny threatens.

It seems that in order to teleport he needs to be able to feel his body, but he obviously cannot; seeming that he is trying to teleport as he squints his eyes hard.

Penny concentrates, finding the part of his brain she needs. Then, with just a little jolt, she renders him unconscious. Penny immediately races across the whole house, it being very huge. She finds the two girls, both in separate rooms in which that are furthest from each other.

The girls are shocked, suddenly finding that they are in a different room as Penny takes them both to the room she just was in. They are surprised to find the man unconscious on the floor. They both look nervous.

“Are you two alright?” Penny asks them.

The girls still look nervous, but they are calmed, seeing that the man is unconscious.

“You did this?” one girl asks Penny.

Penny nods.

“Thank you,” the other girl says.

It seems that these girls were not manipulated yet to want to protect the man, happy to see him lying on the floor.

“Do not worry; this man will be turned in to the police.”

The police arrive at the house having VAS handy. Penny forgets what VAS stands for, but she knows that it suppresses abilities. The government, or the FBI, has made VAS devices available to all police departments in all the states. Penny wears her hood up, informing the police that she would like her identity anonymous even to them. They are unsure if they should comply.

“Ma’am,” an officer says. “I believe that it is our right for us to know who saved these girls. We can protect you from your identity from being known to the public.”

Penny keeps her head down with her hood up, concealing her face. “The only reason I am still here is so that I know that you will bring the girls to safety and that you will negate this man’s abilities with the VAS,” Penny says. “I have the ability to flee with full certainty that you will not be able to stop me.”

“Rest assured,” another officer begins, “the man is already equipped with the VAS.”

Penny dares a look up to see the kidnapper in her peripheral vision; he is in a police cruiser, having the VAS handcuffs on his wrists.

“Very well,” Penny says. “Then I do not need to be here any longer.”

“Ma’am, I'm afraid it’s not that simple. We need for you to come in.”

“Let me ask you guys something. You know the Avians, right? They are superheroes; they are known for taking care of New York. Well,

I'm like them, though I am only beginning. The Avians do not get stopped by the police and are not asked to come in. Why are you asking me?"

Some of the police smile, some growing impatient. "The Avians are rightfully allowed to do what they do, for they are giving permission from the FBI. You, on the other hand, are not. Therefore we have to bring you in, sorry."

Penny sighs. "I completely support the justice system and the police departments, so I will not fight you. If you feel that I *must* go in, then I will. But, I am trying to tell you that it will not be necessary."

"We are telling you that it is."

"Well, I will need the assurance that my identity will be kept secret."

"It will."

"From everyone, even you police."

The officer Penny speaks to sighs. "I can't give you my word on that."

"Alright, how about this?" Penny sighs. "You contact the FBI, let them know that you are holding a Masonian and have them take care of this; they already are acquainted with me. But until then, I will ask of you to keep my identity safe from all of you."

One officer scoffs. The sheriff decides to step forward, apparently listening in on the whole conversation. "We can do that. But, understand this: if we contact the FBI and they either don't know you or don't help you, don't expect us to conceal your identity from even us."

"Sounds like a plan." The officers start to take Penny to one of the police vehicles. They cuff her in VAS handcuffs. "I want to commend you officer," Penny says. "You are doing your jobs well."

The officers look at her, puzzled. They find her to be strange, though polite and respectful.

“Thank you,” one officer says.



Penny is first brought into a holding room. If the FBI does not help her, she will be brought into an interrogation room where her identity will be exposed.

Penny waits for a long time but she doesn't grow impatient. The wait does not bother her. The door opens. Penny looks up just enough to see who it is. She doesn't recognize him.

“Hello,” the man says. He is smiling. “I'm the police commissioner. I came down here once I got word about you. I understand that you refuse to let us find out your identity and that you want us to contact the FBI. We have done so and they surely do seem to know your, for they have actually sent two agents to come over. I want to personally inform you that they'll be here in an hour.” He pauses. “Until then, can I offer you anything? Coffee, doughnuts, restroom?”

“Thank you for being kind, commissioner,” Penny tells him. “A coffee with creamer will suffice.”

“Sure. I will be right back with that.”

“Thank you.”

“You're welcome.”

A few minutes later he returns with the coffee, setting it on the table, while avoiding making eye contact. Once he leaves Penny takes a sip of the coffee.

Penny can see that there are cameras in every corner of the room so she avoids looking up.

Two hours seem to take forever. Penny sits with her head down. Bored out of her mind, she rests her face onto her hands, with her elbows on her knees. She realizes that she is tired and begins to fall asleep, though not a deep sleep. She sleeps while her face stays in her hands.



Penny is awoken by a knock on the door. Penny looks up, though not enough to be detected by the cameras. She may be sleepy yet, but she is aware of the need to not reveal her face, she is not foolish.

The door opens a second later, revealing a man with a full suit to stand before her. He nods to her, closing the door behind him. He walks up to the table to sit down. He must be FBI, although he is by himself. The commissioner said that two would arrive.

Penny finds herself studying the man's face, trying to find something wrong with it. She can't help but be suspicious because of him being by himself.

"Hello," he says. "Nice to finally meet you."

Penny narrows her eyes, still not allowing her face to be lifted. "I thought there would be two of you," she says.

"Oh," he chuckles. "There are. My partner is with the police security; he's telling them to disable the cameras in here." He pauses. "We'll

know when they are disabled; they pan down to the floor.” He looks up to them.

Right now they are on, pointing at the both of them. A green lit is illuminated on them. A few seconds pass and they cameras’ heads pan down, though fast as if they would fall to the floor, but they don’t. The green light turns off. Penny looks around the whole room to see that they are all disabled. A second later the door opens and the second agent comes in. He takes a seat.

“Hello,” the other agent says. Penny nods to him.

“Is it safe to lower my hood now?” Penny asks.

“It is,” the first agent replies. Penny reads his face for any hint of him lying, but every muscle in his face suggests he is telling the truth.

Penny reaches up and pulls her hood down. They don’t look surprised to see who she is or how young she is. They already know her.

“It is nice to meet you personally, Penny,” the second agent says.

“You know me by name.”

He nods. “Yes.”

“We are with DOS,” the first agent begins. “It is branched off of the FBI. It’s called Division of Supers. Our aim is to eliminate crimes throughout the states as best as we can. We call ourselves supers, because only very trained people are hired and as well as metahumans. All of our agents continue to train after being hired.” He pauses and Penny thinks about her training with Par. “We have known about your whereabouts since the FBI first contacted you when they took Dalen and your parents into custody.”

Penny nods. “Are you guys going to be the ones to introduce meet to the Avians?”

“Well ... that was the FBI’s goal. But we are our own division and we would like for you to work in Michigan, once you graduate of course.”

Penny shakes her head. “No. I'm sorry, but not right now, not even after I graduate.”

“I'm sorry if I seem intruding, but ... why?”

“I must meet the Avians ...”

He smiles. “I know that you must think the Avians are very special so you want to meet them, but—”

“That’s not it,” Penny interjects. “There is someone coming, something coming, to Earth. Something very deadly. It is called Drigor.”

“We’re listening.” They lean forward, letting their professional posture fall away.

“I'm sure you guys are aware of Avian’s home planet being ridded of its plant life. Drigor is to blame for that. He, it, whatever, is heading to Earth. It is unsure of when he will arrive, but it is speculated that he’ll arrive in the next year or two. Neither I nor the Avians will be able to stop him alone, which is why I must meet the Avians. I must warn them and help them with stopping him.”

“Where did you get this intel?”

“From the Trexus Zeta Galaxy's ruler, Trex himself. He had designed a ship for me, sending it to me. The ship has trained me in this past year, almost immediately after my parents and Dalen were locked up. The ship, named Par-Ak TaShiro, Par for short, has informed me about Drigor.”

“Is he ... as ... um.” He coughs to clear his throat. “Is he more dangerous than Intex?”

“He is said to be far worse than Intex.” Penny pauses, allowing for that to sink in. “Intex took over New York ... well Drigor could very well take over all of Earth.”

It becomes silent for a while. Both of the DOS agents ponder over this. They both seem to be speculating things in their head. Not once do they question Penny, for they believe she wouldn't make this up. It is truthful. Maybe they are trained to read a person's face as well, to see if they are telling the truth.

“Thank you for informing us about this,” the first agent says. “We will need to immediately alert our director of this. The FBI will need to be informed as well as the United States government. This ... is very serious, if he is as dangerous as you say.”

“He is, without a doubt.”

He inhales deeply through his nose. “We may have to pull some of our agents into this mission to stop Drigor. If he's this dangerous, the Avians and yourself will need our help.”

“Do what you have to do.”

“Umm ... how far away is your graduation?”

“Just a couple months.”

He breathes in through his teeth. “We will discuss this with our director, but ... we may just give you your diploma. We *can't* allow for this to linger on. We must act immediately for preparation. We will arrange for you to be transferred to New York.”

Penny nods, realizing that this is all true. They need to act fact. The realization suddenly strikes her. She knew the truth herself, but she thought maybe she could wait 'til after graduation, but these agents feel that they must act now.

“Discuss this with your adoptive family. They must know that you are to leave soon.”

“They’ll understand,” Penny says. “They already know that I was going to leave, just not about it being this soon.”

“Well, we will have to contact our director first to see if we can move up your graduation.”

“Thank you again for informing us this,” the other agent says with the same tension. They are both on high alert, taking this information very seriously. “We will inform the police that you are free to go.”

“We will keep in touch.”

The police allow for Penny to leave. She keeps her hood down in their presence. Penny darts out of the department with lightning speed. She takes flight back home, feeling calm once the wind brushing past her. The DOS agents immediately head back to their headquarters.

The mission to head New York suddenly becomes real to Penny. It is going to happen sooner than she originally expected.

She arrives home, seeing they all are here; Leland, Kim and Lucy. Lucy is washing dishes. It seems that they just finished eating. Lucy smiles at her. Leland and Kim look up to see her arrival.

“So,” Leland says. He is sitting in the chair in the living room. “Did you save some people today?”

Penny nods. She tells them about how she stopped the kidnapper and how the day escalated.

“Oh, so that’s why you were gone for so long.”

“But,” Kim says. “They want you to leave now?”

Kim looks worried, while Lucy looks sad. Leland looks calm and collected.

“Well, soon. Maybe not right *now*, but soon.”

Kim nods, though still worried. Leland notices this. “Kim, hon, we knew this day would come; it’s just arrived sooner than we expected.”

Penny realizes that they have all drawn closer together. They all feel like family together. Penny has become part of the family. In this past year, all have grown stronger together. Kim treats Penny like her own

daughter. They are Penny's parents, just adoptive ones. Penny feels the sadness in the air; it strikes her hard.

Lucy starts to cry immediately after her mom does. Penny, being a girl no matter how tough, cries too. Kim starts to weep, though Lucy and Penny only let tears flow. Leland smiles, though with a sad face. He doesn't break into tears, but his eyes turn glassy.

Penny chuckles for a second. "I didn't realize it would be this hard," she says shakily.

"Me neither," Lucy says.

"Penny, dear," Kim says. "We love you so much."

"I love you all too," Penny says.

Kim embraces Penny in a hug and she hugs back. Lucy joins in. Leland feels awkward to just stand there, so he joins in. They slowly pull apart from each other, one by one. Kim is the last one to break away.

"Dear," Kim says, trying to get her words out. "You be careful, alright?" Penny nods. "I want you to come back to us unharmed."

"I will," Penny says. Though she's not sure if and when she would come back. DOS wants for her to heal Michigan after they take care of Drigor. It all seems like it would take at least five years' time. Even, then, she isn't sure if she would return home, but she tells Kim otherwise.

They end night with accompanying themselves in the living room. They think back to some times they've had together. The TV is on, playing a favorite movie of theirs. The night ends before they know it. They all fall asleep in the living room.

The next morning Penny is the first to wake. She finds that she is on the couch in the living room, not in her bed. She remembers that they have all fallen asleep in the living room. She looks up at the rest of her family. Leland is sleeping in the chair. Kim and Lucy are on the same long

couch as her. She looks up at the clock to see that its six o'clock. Penny tries to go back to sleep, but she is on full alert. She gives up.

Penny sits for a while. Leland wakes up next. He immediately notices that Penny is awake. He looks at the time, getting up. He smiles at Penny before he walks to his room to shower in order to get ready for work. Leland's moving around causing Kim to wake. Lucy just moans, still sleeping.

"You're up," Kim says, almost seeming surprised, but understanding why she would be. Normally Penny will be up earliest at seven, on non-school days. Penny nods to Kim.

"Yeah," Penny replies.

Kim gets up from the couch. "I'll make us some breakfast." She walks into the kitchen to get a start.

Penny sighs as she sits up to ponder over what's to come. She expects to hear from the FBI, or the DOS, the branch of the FBI. She wonders about what they said as Lucy starts to wake. She opens her eyes for a second only to close them again and drift back to sleep. The two agents from DOS explained that they could quite possible assemble a team of themselves to assist with stopping Drigor.

Not knowing how powerful the DOS are, Penny wonders how much of a help they can be. This Drigor is supposed to be very possible. Penny wonders how she and the Avians could do. Perhaps the DOS really could be a help. Only time will tell.

"Lucy," Kim says. "It's a school day! Get up."

Lucy moans. She opens her eyes, sitting up. She looks up at Penny, seeing that she is already up. She already knows that Penny isn't going to go to school today. Penny smiles to her, though Lucy doesn't smile back since she is not a morning person. Lucy gets up, walking to her room, but stops, remembering yesterday's events. She looks at Penny.

“Don’t worry, Luce,” Penny says to her. “I’m not leaving yet.”

Lucy nods and continues walking to her room. Penny has a feeling, though, that the DOS will act fast. Perhaps while Lucy is at school. Penny comes to a realization. She had said this yesterday as well. She may be gone for a long time. She may never return back home. If they succeed in stopping Drigor, the DOS want for her to head to Michigan. A person comes to her mind: Adrian.

Penny always told herself that she would return to be with Adrian. She knew that if he loved her so much, he would wait. But now she fears she may never return. A pain hits her in the chest. She will be leaving everyone she loves behind. She will be leaving her home, her true home, not the one her biological parents raised her in. She will be headed right towards a darkness in which she may not survive. Penny tells herself that they will win this upcoming war, but there is a huge chance that they may not.

Leland heads off to work. Lucy heads off to school, catching the bus. Kim and Penny eat breakfast at home. Penny doesn't go to school, knowing that the DOS will get her diploma. The agents sounded sure of themselves. A couple of hours pass before anything happens.

Kim has the TV on, giving some background noise to fill in the silence. Penny is afraid to say anything, just as Kim is. They fear they speaking will result in too much emotion; surely they would then start crying. If all of this started to happen when Penny was still living at her parents' house, she would surely just up and leave without any hesitation. But now she has an adoptive family whom she has drawn close to. Leaving them behind will be very difficult. The wait to leave is hurting her just as much.

The doorbell rings. Penny gets up just before Kim. Penny sees that Kim is folding her arms, nervous. Penny gets the door, opening it. She finds that the first agent from yesterday stands before her, along with a new face.

"Hello," the first agents says. "I apologize for I haven't properly introduced myself yesterday. I'm Brent Peirce."

The other man is in a full suit just as well, though it looks like he wears a bullet proof vest underneath. Penny realizes that the first agent, Brent, must be wearing one as well. But also, the other man seems to be carrying an assortment of weapons on him; one his belt and strapped on his back where he could reach over his shoulders to grab.

"I'm the Director of DOS. My name is Clement McKinley." He reaches out his hand to Penny. She shakes it.

“Nice to meet you,” Penny says. She is nervous; almost sure of what's to come. They smile at her, sensing her anxiousness. “Would you like to come in?”

They nod. “Sure, if you don’t mind,” Clement says.

Penny steps away from the door so they can welcome themselves in. They shake hands with Kim, greeting her and introducing themselves to her, despite the fact that she already heard them speak to Penny. They are led to the table, where the four of them seat themselves.

“Penny,” Director McKinley begins. “We are here to inform you that a decision is made. I have been brought up to speed about Drigor. As a whole, the DOS, led by myself, feel that we must act immediately. We would like to arrange for you to meet the Avians in New York. We have yet to contact them, wanting to do it in person with you along.” Penny nods. “Drigor is a great threat, giving us no choice but to act fast. We have arranged to make it possible for you to receive your diploma within the day or two.” He sighs, smiling reassuringly. “We would like to tell you that this is a choice for you, but it is not. I hate to put this on you, but we need all the help we can get.”

Penny nods. “I understand. After all I am the one that informed you about Drigor. I know that he is dangerous and needs to be stopped. My ship, Par, was sent to me specifically for training me in preparation of defeating Drigor. So, I will help you.”

“Good.” The Director nods. “We will need to have you to continue to train with us, as well as the Avians. We feel that this training will begin by next week.”

“So, you want me to leave to New York immediately?”

“As soon as possible, yes.” He pauses. “At least in the next day or two.”

Penny looks to Kim. The whole family is already prepared for this, but nonetheless Kim starts to cry anyway, though she doesn't weep; just the tears flow.

"I assume you have already discussed this with your family?" Agent Peirce asks.

Penny nods. "Yes, that all understand what needs to be done."

"Okay."

"I understand that it will be difficult for you, Mrs. Lowe," Clement says. Kim nods, afraid to speak in fear that she will break down. "We were hoping for you to come with us today, or at least by tonight. Although we are willing to wait a day. It is all up to you."

Penny smiles weakly, looking to Kim. Wiping away tears from her cheeks, Kim just shrugs.

"I hate goodbyes," Penny says. "But ... all of last night we had ..."
Penny stops herself, so she doesn't begin to cry. She sighs, taking in a big breath, controlling herself, blinking away tears. "We have already ..."

"We can wait a day, it is fine."

Penny shakes her head. "I think I should leave tonight. As much as I want to stay longer, I know that it will do me no good; it will only prolonging the agony. I will leave tonight, that way I can say a proper good-bye to my family as a whole."

"That is fine." Clement pauses to clear his throat. "Well ... we will return tonight, then."

Penny nods. "Do you have a place to stay at for during the day?"

They nod. "We're fine. Thanks."

Penny and her family know what lies ahead; they are prepared for this. But Adrian isn't. Penny sighs, thinking about him. She pulls out her phone to text him. *Can we meet?* Penny waits several minutes before getting a reply.

Sure. My house?

Penny texts back. *Sounds fine, see u in a bit.* Penny closes her phone and gets herself ready. She finds herself being nervous; she hasn't really even spoken to Adrian since the beginning of the year, and she had told him that she wanted to hold off. It's been a whole year of "holding off".

With a burst of her lightning speed, Penny arrives at the doorstep of the Douglas' dwelling. She reaches out to ring the doorbell. Kari, Adrian's mother, comes to the door.

"Penny!" Kari exclaims. "It's been a while. How are you?"

Penny smiles to try to hide her being anxious. "I am fine. Thanks. May I see Adrian?"

"Sure, come on in." She steps aside from the doorway so Penny can allow herself in; she closes the door. "He's in his room. Go ahead."

Penny smiles and nods. She walks to his bedroom, knocking on his door that is half way open. Adrian looks up from his tablet in his lab. He is sitting on his bed. He is surprised to see Penny. He drops his tablet on his bed, jumping up onto the floor. "Penny."

Penny smiles, but Adrian can sense her distress.

"What's wrong?"

“Adrian. I know I haven’t told you much, or quite anything, about what's going on.”

“It’s alright Penny. I understand that you need some space.”

Penny scoffs softly, shaking her head. “No, it’s not that.” Penny raises her hand towards the door. With a burst of electricity, the door closes as if a gust of wind came through the room. Adrian is amazed with the development of her abilities. “There's something I need to tell.”

Penny takes a seat in Adrian’s computer chair, sighing. Adrian sits down on the edge of his bed.

“In the beginning of the year I told you that I needed some space. You originally thought we should separate because of my lack of self-control.” Adrian tries to interject, but Penny continues. “But you saw that I have changed for the better. You wanted for us to get back together. And so did I, but ... I can't.”

Adrian narrows his eyes. “Why not?”

“Adrian. You know about me. You know what I am. You know I am not from this world.”

“That doesn’t change the fact about how much I love you, Penny. In fact, I love the fact that you're an alien. It’s—”

“But that’s not my point, *babe*.” The word feels strange on her tongue. “The truth is Adrian that I have been preparing for something very dangerous. The reason I had to *pause* our relationship was because of I was training. And I still am. There is something horribly dangerous headed to Earth.” Adrian’s eyes beam up, being totally attentive. “An organization called the Division Of Supers, DOS for short, have hired me to prepare for stopping this ... thing. It’s called Drigor; it actually is supposed to be a man, a He. But, um ... I will be arranged to meet with the Avians. Together we will train and prepare ourselves. Once Drigor arrives, he will try our upmost to stop him.”

Penny pauses, feeling that there is not much left to say. “So ... you guys ... um, think that you will—can—stop him.”

“We will try.”

“So ... when you defeat him, you’ll come back?”

“That’s the thing Adrian. I came here to tell you that I may never actually return. The DOS will not want me to stop with Drigor. They want me to help with the crimes throughout the rest of The States, then with the rest of the world. So ... I’m not sure I will ever come back.”

“Oh.” Adrian sounds defeated. His shoulders drop slowly and his back arches. He looks glum. Sadness overtakes his face. He holds back his tears, though his eyes become shiny. “Then ... I ... You. What are you trying to say? That ... we can't be together?”

The sadness in the room is contagious as Penny’s face portrays it. She slowly nods to Adrian.

Adrian shakes his head. “No. I-You must contact me after you are done with this Drigor; I will go with you to save the rest of The States.”

“I don’t think it’s that simple.”

“But it has to be!” Adrian exclaims suddenly. “I love you, Penny! I don’t want to be away from you. I want to love you forever. I want to be with you forever. Out of all of the girls I have dated, I never met someone as kind-hearted as you. Sure you make mistakes, but that only show the human side of you. But ... I love that about you. You-you can't just leave.”

“Adrian,” Penny says, but stops herself. Her voice starts to break and tears run down her cheeks. Adrian looks back at her, not being able to stop the tears from running down his own cheeks. “I ... Adrian. The world is in desperate need of saving. People left and right are being killed. People don’t trust each other. It is hard for people to work together. It is damaged. It needs a cure. The cure is us; me and the Avians.”

Adrian sighs, wiping away the tears off cheeks and onto his sleeve. He scratches his head and more tears flow. He speaks again, but his voice does not falter. "I love you, Penny. I always will. I can wait for you, but ... I don't want to spend my life waiting. You will stop Drigor, but then you will immediately meet with me, despite what those guys want. You will come back to me, please. Please, Penny, please come back to me."

Penny's jaw starts to quiver and her throat tightens. She is not able to speak anything more. "I love you," she croaks. She jumps from the chair, landing in Adrian's lap, weeping away.

Adrian squeezes her, holding her skin tight against his chest. Penny weeps into his shoulder, as he strokes her hair.

The door quickly opens to reveal Kari on the other side of the opening. Penny doesn't even look up, but it takes Adrian a second to.

"Is everything alright?" Kari asks.

"Please, mom," Adrian says, finally with his voice breaking. "A minute."

"Of course," she says. She looks at the two of them sympathetically before closing the door shut.

Penny lifts her head from Adrian's shoulder, which is now soaked with her tears, looking up at Adrian. She quickly kisses him dead on the lips. He intensely kisses back.

When they finally pull apart, Penny nods to him, though still inches from his face. "You're right, Adrian. I can't leave you. I will miss you too much. Once we stop Drigor, I will come back. I promise." That is, if they do defeat Drigor, Penny thinks to herself.

“Are you ready?” The Director asks Penny. She nods. “Alright, then.”

They take Penny into their black sedan, which then leads to a private airstrip. From there they proceed into a small private jet.

“It will not be long now,” they tell Penny.

She nods, smiling. Her heart begins to race in her chest. She thinks of Adrian and of her family. She thinks about the rest of the world. And she thinks about Drigor. It’s now or never. Drigor is very dangerous. If they don’t stop him, the world will end as they know it.

She suddenly feels lightheaded as something dark swells up in her; an unfamiliar dark feeling. A feeling of despair and worthlessness. She has no idea where it comes from, but it makes her think that they will utterly fail. Feeling as glum as she is, she believes that the world will indeed end; Drigor will succeed and they will fail. She feels that all hope is abruptly ripped away.

“What's the point?” she mutters so that only herself can hear.

The dark feeling inside begins to overwhelm her. Butterflies seem to fill her stomach. Her heart races, beating a million miles per minute. Penny can't believe that this feeling is her own, it feels so ... alien.

Penny gasps, realizing that Drigor must already be here, consuming her.

To Be Continued ...

Mark Wills isn't **alone** ...

Penny is no ordinary metahuman, she is very much like Mark, though she doesn't know it at first. She is **connected** to Mark more than you may even imagine.



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