# Child's Play

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## Child's Play

by MondayGirl

### Summary

Not another de-aging fic!

A nusto 'scientist' with a 'de-aging ray' causes trouble for the x men when a certain thief gets hit.

### Notes

All recognisable characters and places belong to the appropriate parties and not me obvs

set in the magical non canon compliant time/universe where my favourite x men all live in the mansion together. This has definitely been done before but eh I’ll add to the other de-ageing fics out there.

All feedback and constructive criticism is appreciated.
Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

Also posted on fanfic.net
Not another de-aging fic! A nusto ‘scientist’ with a ‘de-aging ray’ causes trouble for the x men when a certain thief gets hit.

The battle was done and the X Men were the clear victors. No one had been seriously injured and no civilians had come to any harm. There was just one problem. The villain they had been fighting was a magic user/inventor and seemed to have a bizarre sense of humour. He had claimed to have invented a ‘de-aging’ ray. Apparently it regressed anyone to whatever age he had the beam set to. The person affected would supposedly have no memories after that age and would be exactly as they were. As the mad man had spouted this diatribe Logan had snuck up behind him and managed to claw him before the cowardly villain had teleported away. Unfortunately when the man had been clawed by the deadly Wolverine he had shot off his weapon causing the aforementioned problem.

The ray had hit the X man Gambit and now where the once adult thief had stood there was a small auburn haired child huddled in the too large adult sized clothes the prized trench coat crumpled on the floor. The boy clutched the over sized shirt to himself as he looked around at his team with his distinctive eyes wide and confused.

The gathered X Men looked at each other and you didn’t need to be a telepath to hear the collective ‘oh shit’ that they were all thinking. It was a moment before any one said anything; the stunned silence was broken by Jean. The redhead approached the boy carefully hoping that the man they had fought had been wrong when he had said those affected wouldn’t remember their adult life. “Remy? Are you ok?” he flinched away from her eyes narrowing suspiciously. “How you know mah name? Where am I?” the telepath sighed internally. Perfect, just what they needed.

Logan considered himself a man of the world. He had seen and experienced a great many things, granted he couldn’t always remember them but none the less he knew a thing or two about a thing or two. However, never had he ever seen anything like this. One moment the Cajun had been stood there his usual cocky self laughing along with the rest of them at the very idea of a de-aging ray. Sure they knew some magic users could do such things but some random nut that knew a few spells and could work a wrench? He didn’t think so. Now his drinking buddy was a scrawny little kid who they had had to wrestle into the jet to get back to the mansion. The scrappy boy had spit and sworn until jean had gently prompted his mind into falling asleep. At this very moment he was down in the med lab being looked over by Hank. After changing out of his X Man uniform he made his way to kitchen to grab a beer and find out what was being done about the Remy situation. When he entered the others were talking. Scott leaned against the counter sipping from a mug. Warren and Betsy were seated next to each other at the table across from Bobby. Cyclops was speaking, “I really hope there’s something we can do to reverse soon. I mean Remy’s bad enough usually I can only imagine what a terror he was as a child. Once he gets over the initial shock and fear I bet he’ll be worse than Bobby.”

The iceman gave an indignant squawk at that, “hey! No one’s worse than me, I mean, that is I am the reigning prank king and no shrunken Cajun is gonna steal my crown.”

Logan smacked the back of iceman’s head as he made for the fridge, “shut it popsicle, this is serious.
We don't know what side effects that beam could have”

Hank McCoy surveyed the young boy before him, physically he was ok apart from being slightly underweight and a rather impressive black eye which Hank assumed his Cajun friend had gained in the battle. He only gave the child a cursory exam leaving the too large clothes on his small frame. He did not want the boy waking up to a seeming stranger undressing him, the fact that he was blue and furry would be bad enough. Children generally either loved his appearance or were terrified by it. The doctor turned to the worried looking Storm and Jean. “Well, he seems unharmed physically but when he wakes he will no doubt be extremely stressed. He’s a young child who one moment was most likely at home then the next in the midst of a fight between the X Men and a lunatic. Perhaps we should see if we can get his father to come here, it may put Remy at ease some.” The women nodded in agreement anyone who had heard Gambit speak of his father knew that he loved him deeply although he was adopted it didn’t seem to be issue. Ororo spoke up, “how old would you say he is Hank?” the blue scientist pondered this as he watched the stirring Remy, “hmm, I’d say possibly eight or nine years old.” He managed to say before the young thief’s eyes flew open and he leapt up off the bed.
“Oh my!” exclaimed Hank as Remy back away from them baring his teeth in an animal like fashion. Ororo stepped forward her hands outstretched in a placating manner.

“Be calm Remy. No one here shall harm you, we will contact your father immediately” The young Remy cut her off with a snorted laughed which was as different from his usual smooth chuckle as caviar from frog spawn.

He looked up from under his dirty bangs and muttered “Dat’s not funny, I not got a père and you obviously know dat since you de ones who stolt me.” His accent was thicker than the adult Remy’s but that was not what confused his team mates.

Jean moved to stand by Storm, “Now, Remy we-“the boy again interrupted backing up further putting him in the corner of the med lab.

“Non! Keep away from me witch! You made me sleep befo so I couldn’t escape. I don’ like you, I don’ like any o’ you take me back! Please I won’t tell no one...” he trailed off seeming to give up, he sat in the corner where he stood and pulled skinny legs up to his chest.

The three adult X Men were at a loss they shared a worried glance. ~Hank, Ororo I think it’s best if I go upstairs I’m just making him more upset, I’ll see about getting him some clothes~. She silently left the room leaving the others to deal with the boy.

Though he wouldn’t want to admit it, Remy was scared. He had been trying to settle down in his sleeping place in the alley behind the shop with the flowers in the window. He had not made enough that day to sleep at Fagin’s squat with the other pick pockets so instead he had gone there to sleep with his face still aching from Fagin’s hit. The next thing he knew he was opening his eyes to find himself stood amongst a group of strangers in weird clothes that he had never even seen at Mardi gras. He had tried to fight as they took him onto the plane but they had all been stronger than him and then the witch had sent him to sleep. Remy sat in the corner of the strange room where he had woken up watching as the red haired witch left. He was now left alone with the pretty dark women with the white hair and the...man? Who looked like the stuffed animals he had seen in the window of the toy shop. It was all of this which scared Remy but what irked him most was that, they knew his name. Hardly anyone called him by name preferring to label him le Diable Blanc or simply Diable and of course the usual trash, street rat and the ever popular ‘freak’ that people usually shouted at him as they chased him away from the normal people. But these people knew what he called himself; they knew the name he had apparently always had. When he was younger he had noticed that the other boys in Fagin’s ‘care’ had proper names not just cruel slurs used instead of a name. So, he had asked Fagin and in return he had received a clout to the back of the head and a grumbled “Remy, I t’ink”. The big blue one came closer and crouched down in front of him. Remy hugged his knees tighter as the beast spoke.

“Remy, my young friend I’m afraid there has been some misunderstanding. We do not wish to hurt you. I am Henry McCoy and being a doctor I have taken an oath to only help people not harm them
so I hope we can be friends until we are able to send you home.” He held out a paw to the young boy who to Hanks surprise took it tentatively and shook. Hank smiled doing his best not to show his fangs to the child, he had so far taken his strange appearance well but the doctor thought that perhaps for a superstitious young boy, fangs may be pushing it. “Good. Now the lovely lady behind me is Ororo Monroe and the lady who was here before was Jean Grey, who I must point out is not a witch. Jean is a telepath and a mutant like myself, Ororo and the other inhabitants of this house.” The boy scrunched up his face obviously not understanding the meaning of the word but Hank decided that now was not the best time for a lecture on the finer points of genomes and the X gene.

After a few more minutes of coaxing the two managed to get Remy to agree to taking a shower in the med lab bathroom. When it had first been mentioned a scared look had crossed his face until Storm had gently clarified that he was expected to see to his bathing alone and that clothes would be provided. With one last suspicious look Remy had closed the door behind him firmly and the doctor and weather witch heard the distinctive click of the lock.

Remy was not a stupid child, he may be illiterate but he was street smart and he was pretty sure he had figured out what had happened. Fagin had done it again. He had threatened to do so but Remy had never really believed he would, not after last time. However when Remy came back to the squat practically empty handed the old man had obviously decided to make money out of his charge with the devil eyes another way. So once again Remy had been rented out, so to speak to a group of strangers for their entertainment and Fagin’s profit. Now Remy had been sent to clean himself up he pondered his situation. Sure he knew he wouldn’t enjoy whatever they wanted him to do but so far they seemed nice- apart from the witch- he decided that he would behave and thought to himself that as long as he didn’t make anyone angry they would continue to be nice and then they would be happy with him and would pay Fagin a lot of money. Then hopefully Remy would get to sleep inside and be fed rather than being banished to the streets hungry. He would do as he was told. He would be good. Well, he would try. When he was finished he put on the large robe they had given him it smelt of cigarette smoke and spice and made him think of the city he called home. He stuck his head out of the bathroom and found the blue man alone. He swallowed mentally preparing himself for what was to come. “Uh, monsieur I’m ready.”

The man looked up from the heavy text he had been reading and smiled. “Ah, good good.” He stood up and made for the door leading out of the room surprising Remy. “Are you hungry? I think dinner must be ready by now. I know it is not usually ‘done’ to attend a meal in ones dressing gown but I think we can forgive you this once. Jean has seen to getting you something more appropriate to wear but you can change after we’ve eaten.” Remy came forward and placed his hand in the man’s offered paw, he thought to himself ah I must be the after dinner entertainment then. He contained a shudder and thought instead of the promise of food.

“Oui monsieur, merci, t’ank you I am hungry.” He said softly trying to be respectful feeling foolish now for his earlier behaviour. What was the use of fighting back? They were all bigger and stronger than him and he didn’t even know where he was so it wasn’t like he could run if he did escape.
Jean left the med lab and made her way upstairs, she had to admit that she was somewhat offended at being called a witch. That was a new one even for her. In the kitchen she found most of the others gathered. She kissed Scott on the cheek and stole his coffee as she told her teammates what the child Remy had said. Bobby piped up, “But I thought he had a dad? I’m sure he’s mentioned him before and his aunt?”

At the table Logan nodded, “Yeah he’s got his pop but he’s adopted. I don’t know how old he was when Jean Luc took him in though.”

Scott answered him, “He was ten.” The others looked at him; it was no secret that their fearless leader and the resident master thief did not always get on. Scott raised an eyebrow, “What? We’ve got stuff in common we talk about it sometimes, we’re both orphans, we both spent time on the streets. He must’ve been regressed to before Jean Luc found him.”

Jean nodded, “Yes, Hank said he looked to be about eight. I didn’t know that, Remy being homeless that is, no wonder he was so confused when we said we’d call his father.” The red head sighed and leaned against her fiancé for a moment before setting down her mug and informing the group that she was going into town to find their now pint sized team mate some clothes. Bobby jumped up to accompany her and they were shortly followed by Warren and his ever present credit card.

Since the mansions best resident cook was currently too short to even reach the cupboards and the professor really didn’t need another bout of food poisoning due to his being too polite not to eat anything any of his X Men had taken the trouble to cook for them all. However often he found himself wishing they really wouldn’t bother. Charles Xavier made the executive decision to order out for pizza. After the rather large order had been placed the famed mutant rolled himself to where his students were currently gathered, he met Storm on her way into the kitchen and the two made their way there in companionable silence. The regal goddess informed them that Remy was washing up and that Hank would bring him up for dinner. Almost half an hour later Jean, Bobby and Warren returned with several sets of clothes. The trio had met the delivery boy on their way in and so with them they brought the aroma of melted cheese and meat and baked dough.

Betsy had just finished laying the table with Bobby when beast joined them in the dining room. “Ah! Hello my friends. Does my nose deceive me or are we to be enjoying the fine Italian cuisine tonight?” Bobby quirked an eyebrow, “Uh if any of that meant we having pizza then the answer is yes. Where’s the little guy?” Beast only nodded and stepped aside a little simultaneously pulling the small auburn haired boy from behind him.

“Remy, this is Bobby you must forgive him; mentally he is younger than yourself. And this purple haired beauty is Miss Elisabeth Braddock.” He touched the boy on the shoulder and gave him an encouraging smile, silently asking him to greet these new people.

Remy stepped forward a little and said in a small voice, “Bonjour, Miss Elisabeth, bonjour monsieur Bobby.” Bobby laughed at this having never been called sir in his life by someone who wasn’t being
sarcastic and having never seen the Cajun be so quiet and timid.

Betsy’s lips quirked a little but she bent down to Remy’s height and shook his small hand telepathically telling Beast ~my, my how polite he is. I think I prefer him like this, do you think we could keep him?~ laughing lightly the furry doctor replied in the same manner.

~I think perhaps our dear Rogue would take issue with coming home from her mission to find her boyfriend a child~.

Betsy smiled and said aloud “We’ll see doctor, come along Remy you may sit by me, if you stay with the good doctor you may find your pizza quickly becomes seasoned with blue fur and Bobby’s eating habits are rarely seen outside of only the worst roadside rib houses.” Remy gave a small hesitant smile and took the English telepath’s proffered manicured hand. She led him to the table and they were soon joined by the remaining X Men carrying various pizzas on plates. Plates because the professor and Warren refused to eat out of a card board box.

The blonde haired Angel laughed as he set down the plate he was carrying within reach of Betsy and Remy. He arranged his wings comfortably behind himself as he sat on her other side and gave a mock glare. “Hey, you stepping out on me Bets?” Remy shrank back and stared at the millionaire with a look of what could only be described as awe or fear. Warren laughed to show the child he was joking and turned his attention back to the food which was still being laid out. It was true he and Gambit did not get on but he took no pleasure in scaring a child even if that child did grow up to become that cocky thieving Cajun dick. He turned his head back to the boy as his girlfriend introduced him. He gave what he thought had been a friendly smile but the boy just gave him that same look.

Remy was introduced to everyone at the table and he tried to remember all the names, he might be required to use them later on and he didn’t want to risk angering anyone by forgetting their them. The bald man in the wheelchair- Monsieur Xavier he reminded himself- had smiled kindly at him but he knew that looks could be deceiving. That same nice man who would offer to buy you a meal and give you a bed for the night would no sooner hesitate to take what he wants from you than the guy who would knock you over the head and drag you into an alley would. The guy with the sideburns and plaid shirt scared him, he looked like the type to get angry easily if Remy did something wrong. The man with the glasses hadn’t said much but he seemed ok enough to Remy apart from the fact that he seemed very cosy with the witch, who incidentally had taken a seat opposite Remy and kept smiling at him. Trying to lure him into a false sense of security he surmised. Witches were sneaky like that.

The food smelled good, the boy had never had fresh hot pizza before, he had found it discarded in the trash sometimes but that hadn’t looked or smelt anything like this pizza. Just thinking about it made his stomach rumble but Remy knew better than to just take some before he was given any. This might be some kind of trick, tempt him with the food then take it away when he reached for it and lock him away until they were ready for their ‘entertainment’. He was relieved however when Ororo who sat on his right side asked him what kind of pizza he would like and answered his shrug by filling his plate with several slices of different topped pizzas. He gave her a small smile and thanked her quietly. He nibbled on a piece as he watched those around him. He was so hungry he would have wolfed it all down at once but he remembered when he had gone without food for a while before and then ate too much too quickly and made himself sick, Fagin had not been happy. As he watched he couldn’t help but keep sneaking glances at the angel who Miss Betsy had introduced as her boyfriend. He couldn’t believe it, a real angel just like the priest who had caught him stealing the communion wafers had told him about. What the hell was an angel doing with the kind of people who bought little boys off of backstreet pickpocket masters for their pleasure and entertainment? Perhaps the angel had been sent to save him, Remy thought about that. No, it was
more likely that the angel had come to punish him. Maybe if he explained to the messenger of God that all the things he had done had not been his idea, that he was forced to steal and do...other bad things he would not be punished. God was supposed to forgive wasn’t he? He stole another glance at the angel who was talking with the younger blonde guy called Bobby and decided that if he had a chance he would catch the angel alone and beg to be forgiven and maybe if he was lucky the angel would agree and save him. He found himself wishing he had the beads the kindly priest who had not even flinched at his devil eyes had given him to prove his faith but he supposed an angel would know these things anyway.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Please excuse the messed up timeline, I forget when people were married and together or not together and when exactly the various summers children popped up from the past and the future and wherever.

After dinner the X Men- barring Hank who had returned to his lab to research ways to return Remy to his adult state- retired to the rec room. Remy waited until the adults had all taken their seats until choosing a place for himself, he was wary of offending anyone by taking their seat. Logan, the man with the sideburns had taken over the large armchair in the corner of the room chomping on an unlit cigar. The witch and the man with the glasses snuggled on the love seat by the window they kept whispering to each other every now and again. Xavier had parked his wheelchair in front of the fireplace near to the television which was playing some soap opera seemingly much to the annoyance of the men and Miss Betsy but apparently the witch liked it so Xavier left it on. Remy had quickly deduced that he was the man in charge. This left the only seat for Remy on the large sofa next to Bobby the younger man who had chattered endlessly at dinner, Miss Betsy and the angel were sat on his other side curled into each other. He seemed nice but Remy felt it was still best to ask before sitting down. He approached the man cautiously like one would a potentially violent animal. Iceman watched his approach with a smile attempting to curve his mouth. Remy stopped when he was in front of the young man, “Monsieur Bobby may I sit here, sil vous plait?”

Bobby blinked, “Uh, yeah sure buddy. Sit wherever you want you don’t have to ask.” The small boy nodded and gave a murmured “Merci” before scrambling to sit next to him still wrapped in the adult Remy’s dressing gown. He watched as Remy ensconced himself in the corner of the sofa surrounded by the large pillows there. He reached over to ruffled the boys hair now clean and almost fluffy looking, he stopped himself though as Remy flinched away and turned his wide onyx eyes on him accusing. Iceman looked around; none of the others had seen the action and Remy’s reaction. He moved slightly closer to the boy not wanting to scare him more. He didn’t question him; it was obvious the young thief had expected a blow. Instead, he lowered his head to talk to him, “Hey, man it’s ok. I won’t hurt you, I’d never hit a kid. Anyone else tries to and you come tell me ok?” He would have tried to tell the boy that no one here would do such a thing but he thought that it would be a pointless exercise; he wouldn’t trust them until he had reason to.

Remy nodded to show his understanding and gave the older man a shaky smile, “D’accord merci”. Bobby lifted his hand slowly this time so as not to startle the child, he was pleased when this time the boy didn’t flinch but let him ruffle his hair softly as the older guys had done to him so often when he had first joined the team as a kid. He removed his hand after a moment and returned his attention to the TV giving the skittish boy his space.

The warmth of the room and his full belly had lulled Remy into sleep soon after most of the team had departed for their own beds leaving only Jean, Scott, the professor and the sleeping Remy. Xavier said his good nights to the couple as they assured him they would take care of their young charge. Jean wanted to try and make it up to Remy after scaring him earlier. Also, if she was completely honest with herself she wanted him to like her and not think her a witch. She watched as Scott picked up the young boy, he stirred and made a scared sound but quietened as Scott murmured reassurances to him cradling his small head to his chest. She smiled to herself as she followed them
up to Remy’s room thinking that maybe one day she would actually be able to watch Scott behave
this way with their own children. The clothes she had bought earlier were folded neatly on the chair
next to the bed. Scott set Remy down gently on the bed and manoeuvred him into a sitting position
as he rubbed tiredly at his eyes with a small fist.

As he became more coherent he shot Jean a suspicious look. “Stop that, she’s not going to harm you.
Before she just needed to calm you down so stop giving her the stink eye mister.” Scott said
suddenly and firmly using his field commander tone that made a shiver run up her spine every time
she heard it.

Remy looked scared for a moment then hung his head seemingly contrite, “Je suis désole monsieur
Summers, I’m sorry” he mumbled his voice sounding tiny to her. She picked out the pyjamas from
the pile of clothes and joined her fiancé standing in front of the child.

Scott crouched down to Remy’s height and made him look up so he could see his eyes. “Ok, it’s fine
but just give her a break please? I know she can be a bit pushy and nosey but she did go out and get
you some things to wear.” Remy looked over to her at that, his shining red and black eyes going to
the clothes in her hands. She gave him what she hoped was a winning smile and knelt next to Scott.

“I wasn’t too sure of your size but these should fit ok.” The telepath held out the blue and yellow
pyjamas to the boy and when he made no move to take them she placed them on his lap. He touched
them hesitantly almost stroking the fabric.

He looked up at her his eyes wide and wet threatening tears, “pour moi?” she nodded wanting
nothing more than to scoop the little boy up and hold him close. The sooner they got him back to
normal the better or she could see herself taking him back to the boat house with her and Scott and
claiming him for her own although she suspected that she might have to fight Betsy for him. “Merci,
t’ank you Madame. No one ever...gave me anyt’ing like dis befoe. I never had real pyjamas. I...I’m
sorry I called you a witch.” The admission and the apology were both said in such a small voice she
almost had to strain to hear it. Before she even thought about it she leant forward and pulled him into
a gentle hug. He tensed at first then relaxed into it as he seemed to understand she wasn’t doing
anything to hurt him. She pulled away after wiping a stray tear away while no one could see.

“That’s ok sweetie. I forgive you and I promise I won’t do anything to your mind without your
permission ever again. Now got get changed its time for bed.” Scott had stepped away while they
had their moment and she rose to stand by him. “Oh no, sweetheart.” She began as she noticed
Remy beginning to disrobe by the bed. “You can change in the bathroom. Please forgive any mess
our friend usually sleeps in here and I’m forbidden to come in and tidy up.”

Scott laughed as she ushered little Remy into the adjoining bathroom. “Jean, honey he doesn’t let
you come in to ‘tidy up’ because he knows you just like to snoop. I swear you telepaths are so nosy.
No sense of privacy.” She smacked him slightly on the chest rolling her eyes as she passed him to
turn down the bedcovers happy to see that Remy had at least recently changed his sheets. When
Remy re-entered the room Scott helped him climb into the big bed while Jean made her way back to
the chair where she had stashed a little something that she hoped might make the young Remy feel a
little more comfortable until they could re-age him. She held it behind her back as she approached
her sunglasses clad boyfriend and the small child huddled beneath Remy’s many covers.

She sat on the edge of the large bed and brought the small stuffed alligator out from behind her back.
Remy’s forehead creased in confusion. She laughed lightly, “It’s silly I know but I thought you
might like it.” He still looked confused so she clarified. “Uhm, it’s for you Remy. He’s an alligator,
he doesn’t have a name but I’m sure you can think of one.” He took it off her gently cradling it like
one might a small animal; he smiled up at her the first proper smile she had seen him give since he
had been turned into a child. He seemed lost for words for a minute or so as he examined the toy in his hands feeling every inch of it.

“Merci, merci beaucoup. I... I always wanted one o dese, I look at dem in de store window but de owner he chases me away. He says his customers don’t want no street rat fogging up de glass while dey tryin’ ta shop. He says I scare dem. De normal children” He hugged the stuffed toy to his skinny chest. Jean didn’t know what to say to that so she just brushed his hair back from his face and told him to sleep well and just shout if he needed something, someone would come. She held Scott’s hand as they made their way across the grounds to the boathouse which they claimed as their ‘love nest’ as Warren and Bobby had dubbed it. She couldn’t get the image of Remy’s shocked but grateful face out of her mind and it made her wonder what kind of twisted childhood he must have had to make such simple gestures of kindness seem so foreign to him.

Remy led awake in the soft bed warm and fuller than he could ever remember being. He hugged the alligator to him again and let the soft fur brush his cheek. He still couldn’t believe they hadn’t done anything yet. When Summers had taken him upstairs he was sure that was it but no, and then when he had been told to change but again no. Perhaps he thought he had not been bought as some kind of party favour, maybe he was just there for one person and that was why the others had been so nice. They felt guilty. He guessed that if they had purchased him for only one person’s use it would be for Xavier, he was definitely in charge and he was stuck in that chair. Remy decided that he didn’t really care anymore better to be used by one old guy who couldn’t walk but lived in a house with nice people who fed him and gave him presents than to be used by everyone here or by the foul people Fagin usually found or even worse by someone who could see him in the street and seize the opportunity their sick brains saw in a little boy alone on the street. He liked his new toy, he liked this big warm bed- even if someone else usually slept in it- and he liked the pizza they had given him. So, he would be good like he had promised himself earlier. And perhaps, he thought to himself through the fog of sleep now claiming his mind, maybe the witch-Miss Jean- wasn’t so bad after all. Witches didn’t give pyjamas and toys to boys who had actually called them witches.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Warren Worthington the third couldn’t sleep, every time he closed his eyes he saw the laughing faces of those who took his wings he could swear he could feel them being taken. He was beginning to give Betsy a headache so she had ordered him to go and get a drink or anything to help him sleep quietly and stop bothering her. In the kitchen he fished out Logan’s ‘secret’ stash of scotch and poured a large measure. He’d catch hell for it when Logan realised but he found he really didn’t care all that much what the hairy little man thought, if it’s in the kitchen and it isn’t labelled it’s up for grabs. Downing the amber liquid in one he put the glass in the sink and made his way upstairs.

He paused a few doors down from his own room; Warren could hear a quiet whimpering kind of noise coming from somewhere. He walked a little further down the hallway and discovered its source. Remy’s room. Great, he thought to himself. Why me? He considered going and waking up Bets but no she’d be worse at comforting a child than him. She was bad enough when he had his nightmares. He realised that as bad as it was he was the only option Remy had at the moment. Jean and Scott were in the love nest, Hank was in the lab still and the others were asleep. The man known as Angel took a deep breath before entering the darkened room. He saw the young boy writhing among the twisted covers, face scrunched up as if in pain, tear tracks stained his face and small sobs escaped his lips.

Warren approached the bed cautiously not wanting to startle the boy, he was unsure of what to do. “Uh... Remy, Remy uh wake up.” He cleared his throat and came closer touching the boy’s thin shoulder lightly feeling the shudders running through him. “Shh, it’s just a nightmare, its ok wake up...uhm it’s me Warren.” The boy awoke with a start scooting away from him as fast as kicked cat and looked at him with half lidded frightened eyes. “It’s ok like I said it’s just me...Warren, we erm met earlier?” his wings fluttered out unconsciously as they did at times causing the boy to take in a sharp breath. He stood there unsure of what to do, “are you ok? Do you erm want a hug or something?” he ran a hand through his blonde hair as the boy still just mutely stared at him tears still leaking out of his burning eyes. “I’ll just go and get someone else...” as he moved to go he heard movement behind him.

A small voice said; “wait! Monsieur Ange, I...I got to explain before you pass j...judgement.”

The older man was confused, “Judgement? What for? Your just a little boy.” The child lowered his head and clenched his little fists.

“You know what fo’. You an ange, ain’t you? You s’posed to know dese t’ings. What I done... I never wanted to! I know it’s wrong stealing and de...de other t’ings. I’m sorry and I t’ought dat you could tell God dat coz he listens to de angels...” he trailed off raising his big tear filled eyes to look up at Warren. The X Man was at a loss, he had a pretty good idea what these other ‘t’ings’ were he was not so sheltered that he didn’t know about the predators that went after little children.

“No Remy. I’m not here to judge you, I’m...I’m not a real Angel. I’m just a mutant; my wings are a part of that. But, I can tell you that if I was an angel I would not punish you for things you had no control over. You’re a child how could you stop those stronger than you? You did what you had to do to survive, and that’s nothing to be ashamed of.”

The boy looked sceptical; “You not an angel?” Warren shook his head. “Oh. You look like one like in de pictures.”
The winged man chuckled, “Yeah, so I’ve been told.” He came closer to Remy. “Are you ok? You were having a nightmare, that’s why I came in.” The child nodded and wiped his sleeve over his wet face and runny nose. He got back in the bed and Warren followed lifting the covers to help him get in. “Do you want to tell me what it was about? It helps sometimes...” The young boy shook his head. “Was it about the things you were worried I’d be mad about?” although he said nothing the look the child gave him answered in the affirmative.

He stood there for a moment but then Remy spoke up rolling onto his side, “if you t’ink dat stuff is bad den why you here? Why you friends with people who buy me for...y’know, dat.” Warren felt equal parts shocked and disgusted. He was quick to defend his team.

He sat next to Remy on the bed, “That’s not why your here Remy, there was an...Accident and that brought you here. Please, believe me no one here wants anything like that from you.” He knew the reasoning was vague but it seemed to satisfy the boy.

“Oh.” Was all the child said but the swift colouring of Remy’s face spoke of his embarrassment, Warren was glad at least that he seemed to have believed him.

“Do you want me to go Remy? I could leave the lamp on so it’s not dark.” Remy shrugged, “Do... you want me to stay until you fall asleep?” the boy shrugged again but he had a hopeful gleam in his eye that told Warren not to go anywhere. He climbed into the other side of the bed and made sure to keep a good distance between himself and Remy. As the light breaths evened out into sleep Warren thought how strange it was that the boy led next to him was just yesterday morning the same man he had glared at over his cereal as the Cajun fool had concocted some southern abomination for his own morning repast.

Logan pulled the door that had been left ajar closed as he went back to his own room after being woken by the noise a lump in his chest at the thought of his buddy Remy, Gumbo, swamp rat as a small child defenceless and alone sold out by the very people who were supposed to be responsible for him. He hoped that he had the strength to be able to look his friend in the eye when he next saw him as an adult knowing what he now did. If anything he thought maybe this whole experience would open Worthington’s eyes and get him to grow up and give the Cajun a break.

Chapter End Notes

All recognisable characters etc belong to Marvel
Remy awoke in the big bed alone. The angel—no, Warren he reminded himself—was gone. He felt more at ease now after last night and the older man’s reassurances. But what really soothed his mind was that the man whom he had thought an angel had shared a bed with him for the majority of the night and not done a thing to him. Remy sat up and pushed the heavy covers back revealing his new and first toy. He held the stuffed alligator to his chest and rubbed his cheek against the soft fuzz on its head. The boy wondered what he was supposed to do now, should he leave the room and go downstairs? Or would he get in trouble wandering around the big house alone? He would likely get lost in the unfamiliar surroundings. He decided to take his chances however, Bobby had assured him no one would hit him and Warren had assuaged his fears on the other thing so surely the worst they would do is shout and he could cope with that. There was always someone shouting at him. Still unnamed alligator in hand the boy stuck his head out of the door and peered around the hall. No one in sight he padded out and started in search of the source of the smell making his stomach rumble softly.

Again the team minus Beast, Xavier and Bobby were assembled in the kitchen. Scott stood at the stove frying bacon and eggs, just about the only thing he could cook without reducing who ever ate it to a puking shivering mess. Logan sat at the head of the table reading a newspaper muttering to himself every now and again. Warren was quiet; leaning against the counter sipping on tea which Scott was sure must have gone cold long ago. The millionaire’s girlfriend sat a couple of chairs down from Wolverine daintily spooning bits of grapefruit into her perfectly lipstick painted mouth. Storm sat opposite the model talking quietly with Jean beside her. Apart from the hushed tones of the two women, the sizzling of the bacon and crinkling of the paper the room was quiet. They were all still trying to process what Warren had told them. Sure, they had all had their suspicions after some of Remy’s behaviour the night before but it was still hard to take in. Scott had known that Remy’s younger life had not been easy but he had never imagined anything like that. He knew that the gang that Remy had been with was controlled by the Thieves Guild and from what little he knew of them he had always thought they had a strong moral code, despite their occupations. Surely the Guild had not known what the master of the ‘Children’s Guild’ had been doing with his charges to make money? His thoughts were cut off by the sound of the kitchen door opening slowly. A small auburn head popped through the crack. When Scott smiled at the boy and waved him over Remy seemed to breathe a sigh of relief before pushing the door open further and trotting over to Scott’s side. The boy was still in his pyjamas and he clutched the toy Jean had given him in one small hand. Scott looked down at him, “Hey buddy, I’m just cooking up some breakfast. Why don’t you go and wait at the table and I’ll bring it over, eggs and bacon okay?”

Remy nodded enthusiastically and did as he was told sliding in next to Betsy and across from Jean. Warren joined them at the table taking the seat next to Remy and on Logan’s left. He patted the boys head lightly and received a grin in response. The change in the boy from last night was obvious; he seemed more confident in his actions. The boy turned to the women and purred a polite good morning in his mangled French/English which on the small boy seemed so endearing whereas on his older self it just made Warren want to punch him in face. After the three female X Men had finished suitably cooing over Remy and his rumpled pyjamas and bed hair Scott set down a plate in front of the little boy and took his own seat across from Warren informing the others that there was more in the pan.

Scott watched pleasantly surprised as his shrunken team mate tucked into his food with much more gusto than he had last night. Storm returned to the table after getting her own breakfast, she passed Remy a small bottle containing the hot sauce the adult Remy usually drowned almost any food he hadn’t cooked in. The boy looked at her, “what’s dat Miss Ororo?” He picked up the bottle and
smelt the contents pulling a face as he did so.

Storm smiled “It is hot sauce Remy I thought perhaps you would like some on your food, it makes it spicy. My brother is from New Orleans also and he likes almost all his food hot and spicy.”

Remy put the bottle down and shook his head causing his bangs to sway “Non t’anks, I don’ like spicy t’ings dey make my eyes water and my tongue hurt. Fagin gives us gumbo if we good, but dat’s really spicy and I don’ like it but I eat it anyway.” He looked round wide eyed, “I don’ have to use it do I?”

Storm looked appalled and told him no, he didn’t have to do anything he didn’t want. Scott tried to lighten the mood again, “So, Remy you really don’t like spicy things at all? What about cigarettes?” Remy scrunched up his little nose and answered around a piece of bacon in his mouth egg dripping down his chin.

“Non. And I don’ like dem either dey make me cough when de older boys and Fagin smoke sometimes.” Scott heard Logan chuckle behind his paper and saw Warren try to smother a smile. Remy put his alligator on the table propped up against the unwanted hot sauce.

“So sweetie have you named him yet?” asked Jean nibbling on a piece on toast. The boy shrugged and moved to wipe his chin with his sleeve. Betsy caught him before it made contact pulling his arm away by his sleeve and handing him a napkin. He smiled cheekily at her before taking on a face which indicated that he was deep in thought.

“Erm... I t’ink I call him...Rogue. coz he be an outlaw living in de swamps doin’ whatever he wants, he don’ listen to no one...’cept me dat is.” Around the young boy the table descended into laughter, he looked around at the laughing adults. “What? Don’ you like de name? Is it stupid?” he hung his head a little obviously under the impression that they were laughing at him.

Scott took pity on him, “No buddy it’s a great name perfect for an alligator, we’re not laughing at you.” The boy nodded at him finishing his breakfast and draining the glass of orange juice in front of him. Scott secretly hoped to himself that the real Rogue arrived home before they had re-aged Remy. He couldn’t wait to see her face when little Remy proudly introduced his new friend with the same name as her. He cleared the table and sent Remy off with Jean to get changed. The field leader soon found himself alone with Logan who was drying the dishes as he washed.

The older man laughed quietly, “If only he could go to the bar like this I think I’d agree with Betsy and say can we keep him this way.” Scott groaned, “Don’t you start too, I swear her and Jean have been down in the lab trying to sabotage Hank’s research.”
After much persuading Jean had convinced Remy that yes he did need to shower today as well as yesterday – “no sweetie it isn’t pointless”- and that also yes the clothes were for him. As she watched the little boy survey his reflection in the large mirror, she couldn’t help but let her mind wander to the revelations this whole situation had brought about. The telepath wanted to comfort Remy but quite frankly she didn’t know how. She couldn’t just bring up his trauma and expect him to fall into her arms, cry and then be fine. Her stomach clenched as she thought of the adult Remy. When all this was over would he remember all he had said? Part of her hoped he didn’t, she couldn’t bear the thought of him feeling shame due to his past. Jean knew the Cajun man was sometimes prone to bouts of melancholia and she was afraid that if he did find out that almost all of his team mates now knew about his troubled past -which he as an adult had obviously not wanted them to know- would possibly push him to do... she didn’t know what, but she feared it would probably involve copious amounts of alcohol, swearing, smoking, brooding on the roof and a few fist fights followed by the usual screaming match with Rogue until he would finally storm off for a few weeks until he returned covered in bruises and stinking of liquor and cheap cigarettes. She was pulled out of her worrying thoughts by the current child Remy.

“Miss Jean?” she stood behind him trying to comb his hair into some sense of order with her slender finger.

“Hmm?” The boy tilted his head back to look at her.

“Does everyone hear ‘ave somet’ing wrong wit’ dem?” She frowned down at him before turning him gently to face her.

“Remy. Listen to me; nothing is ‘wrong’ with anyone here. Nothing. We’re mutants, we are different yes but that doesn’t mean we’re any worse than anyone else. Our differences are what makes us well, us. Do you understand sweetie?” The young boy nodded then pursed his lips and shrugged.

“Fagin says dat my eyes are weird, dat dey de sign of de devil. And, and people call me names coz of dem. I don’ t’ink dey dey make me anyt’ing good. At least you can do somet’ing and de oders mostly look normal and monsieur Henri is real smart. I’s jus’ a freak.” Jean took a moment before replying to ensure her voice didn’t shake too much.

“Remy, when your older I’m sure you’ll be able to do something too and for the record I love your eyes. They’re beautiful and you’re not the only one with different eyes when Ororo uses her power her eyes go white. As white as her hair. And what about Scott those glasses he wears are the only thing stopping beams from his eyes shooting holes in things. But none of that makes them weird, it makes them special. Just like you.”

The boy seemed to consider this, “You really t’ink I’ll ‘ave a power when I’m grown up?” She noted his avoidance of the original subject but decided to leave it for now she knew that he would learn to accept his eyes to some degree.

“I am absolutely certain you will sweetie. A really cool one too, like oh I don’t know making things ‘go boom’. ” The boys widening eyes and grin made his opinion on the matter obvious.

“What can Ororo do? When her eyes go white?” Jean chuckled at his open curiosity spurred on by the idea of powers.

“Ororo? Well she can control the weather, bring out lightening and rain or make it sunny. Her mutant
name is Storm…” Remy didn’t see the glint in Jean’s eye as she continued, “But she prefers to be called ‘Stormy’ she pretends she doesn’t but really she loves it.” She almost felt guilty at the young boys trusting nod, the telepath was sure that if she peeked into his mind at that moment she would see that piece of information being filed away somewhere for later. She crossed to the door and held out her hand, “Should we go explore outside?”

Warren sat at his big desk in his big office in his big tower owned by his very big company, he was bored. He was incredibly bored, he had signed numerous papers, attended three meetings and it still wasn’t five o’clock. Technically he was the boss so he could leave at any time he wanted, he could tell his p.a. he was off to the golf course to seal some deals and schmooze then hightail it back to Westchester but he had already used that excuse twice this week. He couldn’t deal with anymore withering looks from the board right now, so instead he continued to sign the papers being shoved under his nose and counted away the hours until he could go home. He found it rather frightening that when he thought of going home his brain conjured images of him hanging out with Remy the child. It seemed he was harbouring secret fantasies of being a big brother- he saw Betsy’s raised eyebrow- or maybe he conceded, a really cool uncle. He hoped those feelings died down, Warren seriously doubted that once Remy was back to normal he would appreciate him trying to kick a soccer ball around with him or give him piggybacks. He laughed out loud at the absurd thought causing his rather stern receptionist to glare at him through the glass wall separating him from her desk.

“So it should work, Remy will be restored to his adult state. I am not entirely certain whether he will remember his time as a child but we’ll have to cross that bridge when we come to it.”

The professor nodded at Hank over his steepled fingers, “Good. I see, and when will Doctor Strange be able to do the necessary ceremony?” Hank cleared his throat and shifted in the almost too small chair in front of Charles’s desk.

“At the moment he is abroad but he should be able to come by in a week or so. Until then we shall just have to do our best to entertain our young friend and keep him out of trouble.” Xavier chuckled as they both turned to see said young boy race past the window chasing Bobby with what looked to be a rather large worm while Jean stood off to the side laughing hysterically.

“Easier said than done.” The older replied wryly as the X Man Iceman tripped over his own feet and was jumped on by the giggling child dangling the worm over the prone man’s face.

Remy was having the best time of his life. Sure he wasn’t completely sure where he was and why and when he asked the adults either changed the subject or gave some vague cagey response or in Betsy’s case simply ignored his question, got up and walked away from him without saying a word. But, he was happy, he was having fun that didn’t involve running away from someone after being caught trying to pick their pocket. No one here was mean to him even Logan who seemed grumpy and scary had given him a cookie earlier with a wink and a whispered “Don’t tell red or four eyes.” So Remy decided he wouldn’t question his presence here lest it hasten his departure from the big warm food filled house. Remy dangled the worm lower over Bobby’s face before the older man threw him off into a pile of snow. He was especially glad for the new coat Miss Jean had given him; he hoped they would let him keep it when he had to leave. Of course New Orleans was a lot warmer than this place but it would still be nice. He watched Bobby perform a few tricks with the ice and he even promised to let him slide down an ice slide when the others weren’t watching. Controlling and creating ice was Bobby’s power which was really neat, but Remy much preferred the idea of blowing things up. They were forced to stop their play when Ororo- Stormy he reminded himself-called them into the house for hot chocolate. He raced Bobby to the door leaving Jean to follow behind at a more sedate pace. Monsieur Scott met them in the hall and helped Remy off with his coat and brushed the snow out of his hair, smiling down at him fondly. The adults talked over the hot
chocolate in the living room, Remy was content just to listen and enjoy his drink and the crackling fire as he was huddled in between Scott and Jean on the love seat.

Rogue sighed as she sat in the hard plastic chair. Her flight had been delayed again, she hadn’t even left Scotland yet and she was bone tired all she wanted was to get back home to the mansion and curl up in bed. Possibly with a certain Cajun thief by her side, not close enough to touch of course but close enough to feel his heat. Was that too much to ask, she thought to herself as she glanced at the departures board once again. A small child pointed at her and loudly asked its mother “why does that lady have funny hair” causing the other travellers to turn and look at her too. She really, really hated children.
I’m not entirely sure how the plumbing system of the mansion would work so just go with it guys.

Scott smiled as Remy looked up at him with a chocolate moustache. “So you can’t never take dem off?” He questioned, the team leader’s eyes intrigued him. Scott thought it was perhaps because he believed they could possibly be similar to his own if he did not have to wear the glasses.

“No never. But its ok I’ve gotten used to having to wear them now and I have special goggles for when I sleep.” He nodded seemingly fascinated his curious expression at once both reminding Scott of his adult counterpart and showing him the difference between the child and the man. The little boy wiped his mouth with the back of his hand earning a frown and tutting sound from Jean. Scott winked at Remy and copied his actions ending it with a loud belch and a cheeky smile in his soon to be wife’s direction. She rolled her eyes and continued cleaning up. Next to him Remy laughed a high childish giggle which Scott noted to himself that he must remind Remy of when he returned to adulthood. The field leader got up hefting the child onto his broad shoulders and headed into the entrance hall. “So kiddo, you want to go back outside and play? Or do you want to hang out inside?” they were joined by Bobby who grinned devilishly.

“Hey fearless, Jean wants your help in the kitchen I can entertain the squirt for a bit.” Scott hated to think what Bobby entertaining a child could entail but he acquiesced anyway passing Remy onto Bobby’s shoulders.

Remy clung onto Bobby as they ran up the stairs or rather Bobby ran while Remy sat on his shoulders. The older man seemed to be highly excited which served only to rub off on the young boy. “What are we gonna do monsieur Bobby? Where we going?” the only turned and smiled at him carrying on until they reached a room a few doors down from where Remy had slept last night. Bobby sat him down once they were inside the room. He turned mock serious as he crouched to Remy’s level.

“Now Remy what we are about to do is to be kept in the strictest confidence. The scary, hairy guy who lives here will try and say he knows it was us but if you deny it no one will want to believe him.” Remy nodded excited to be included in Bobby’s plan this place was getting better all the time making him more fearful about when he would be asked to leave. Bobby continued in relaying his planning now giggling as much as the little boy. They proceeded into the adjoining bathroom and Remy kept lookout while Bobby froze the pipes of the mighty Wolverine’s bathroom. Once their mischief was done the pair ran off giggling stopping only to collect Remy’s new hat, coat and mittens before disappearing into the snow covered mansion grounds to play.

“Scott you’re really not helping just hovering around me while I’m trying to wash up, why’d you follow me in here any way I thought you were going to hang out with Remy.” Jean said as she tried to get the chocolate stains out of the mugs. Scott frowned as he leaned against the counter next to her.

“Bobby said you wanted me. Huh he must have made a mistake. I’ll go find them I might be able to trick Bobby into doing some training while were out there if I tell him it’s a game. We haven’t had a
proper training session since Remy got hit.” Jean shook her head at her boyfriend but before she could respond there was a loud shout from upstairs and Logan came crashing down the stairs roaring expletives. He wore only a towel as he ran into the kitchen.

“Where is he? I’ll kill him!”

The engaged pair both tried to hide their smirks as Scott asked, “What’s up Logan? I thought you were having a shower after your danger room session?” The only response from the feral man was a snarl and his feet slapping on the wood floor as he ran toward the door leading to the grounds. Jean laughed at the sight as she watched his towel flap in the wind as he ran. She turned back to Scott who looked close to hysterics although not a sound escaped his lips. He leaned in for a kiss and she returned it while pulling off the washing up gloves with a snap. She decided to make the most of the temporary quiet as she and Scott made their way up to his old bedroom in the manor. Getting to the boathouse would take way too long.

The plane finally left the runway as Rogue relaxed into her seat. She had been away from home for much too long and everything that involved returning there seemed to take an eternity. From queuing to check in and waiting for the plane to boarding it and waiting for take off. The child behind her began kicking her chair just as she had been dosing off. She wondered if its mother would mind if she just gave it a little touch, just enough to make it a bit sleepy. A baby started crying and she rammed her head phones into her ear to drown it out thinking to herself that she was almost glad she couldn’t touch anyone as it meant she wouldn’t have to deal with any little brats of her own. Although of course her children would know how to behave properly and wouldn’t be half as noisy or messy as some of the terrors she had seen in her airport nightmare.

Bobby and Remy giggled as they watched Logan follow the false trail they had left from their spot in the tree. The kid was pretty fun Bobby mused to himself sure as an adult Remy could be pretty fun but kid Remy was even more willing to help him with his pranks and was already asking what they were going to do next. “Next huh? Well we could sneak into storms loft and steal her plants and put them in someone else’s room. Or we could hide Scott’s glasses while he sleeps.” Remy stopped laughing at that suggestion and shook his little head. “Non. Monsieur Scott is in charge, I don’t wanna make him angry he been nice to me and he might make me leave early if’n I’m bad.” Bobby didn’t know what to say to that, so he just nodded and put his arm around the child. He pointed to where they could see Logan prowling the rose garden near the main house the small towel making him appear a lot less menacing than the fearsome X Man would have liked to believe. The sound of Remy’s laugh made Bobby sigh in relief he had no idea how to deal with the questions the little boy had about why he was there or for how long so he found it best to just try and distract him from it.

Just then Logan heard them and looked straight at them before breaking into a run for the tree. “Oh shit!” Bobby created an ice slide down from the tree hoping to expedite their escape. Well, at least he was keeping his promise to the young boy he thought to himself as he pushed him down the frozen escape route.

As they ran bobby was certain he could hear the cries of “I’ll kill you popsicle” carried on the wind. As he saw the joy on Remy’s cold reddened face though he found he couldn’t care less.
Chapter 9

Bobby sulked as he polished Logan’s precious bike, he had been informed that he was expected to have the blackbird sparkling by dinner time as well or Scott would let Logan carry out the threats he had been shouting since finding his water iced. He was not happy, his chores meant he could not play with Remy for the rest of the day and he had been expressly forbidden from including the boy in his pranks as Scott thought – meaning Jean and the professor thought- that he was corrupting the young Remy. Like it mattered anyway thought the iceman he wasn’t really a child or he wouldn’t be soon anyway. Bobby continued to pout as he was passed by Warren who had just got in from work. The older mutant slapped him on the back of the head in greeting as he walked by.

Warren wondered what his friend had done to warrant cleaning wolverine’s bike but he’d find out about that later. He first sought out Betsy who he found in their room, purple hair wrapped up in towel smothering a face mask over her already perfect skin. This he was not surprised by he was however surprised by the small boy who held her mirror up for her as she sat on the stool of her dressing table. “Bets what are you doing to the boy? He isn’t your ladies maid. Remy, step away from the beauty products.” The boy looked confused and looked to Betsy for orders. She motioned for him to continue in his mirror holding duty. “Remy is perfectly happy where he is Warren my dear, He is being a good boy and helping me, which is more than I can say for you when you merely laughed when Robert managed to break it while the two of you were playing tag, was it?” Warren scowled as she laughed and told Remy to hold the mirror a little higher. He sat down on the bed and waited for them to finish. When Betsy had finally dismissed her little helper, Warren led the boy downstairs where they raided the snack cupboard. He was amused to see Remy was still clutching the stuffed alligator, Rogue. He questioned the child on what he had done today and found out the reason for Bobby’s punishment. “So Logan was angry then?” the boy nodded eyes still shining from his laughter in telling the tale. “He didn’t scare you did he? He scares me when he’s angry that little hairy face all scrunched up and those big claws.” Remy shook his head making his hair fall in his eyes “Non he said it wasn’t me he was mad at jus’ monsieur Bobby. I believed him and ev’one else said dat too dat he de bad one fo’ taking me wit’ him but,” he leaned in and lowered his voice conspiratorially “I ‘ad fun keepin’ watch an’ hiding in de tree.”

Warren laughed, “I bet you did Bobby pulls the best pranks. Well, when you’re not the receiving end of them anyway.” He winked as he bit into another cookie sliding the packet over to Remy indicating that the boy could have some as he had yet to help himself. He was pleased when Remy understood and took a couple shoving them into his mouth one after the other. They snacked for a little while longer before narrowly escaping Scott and Jean who came looking for Remy to make a snowman. Warren joined in after an invite from Remy and a dose of his puppy eyes.

Bobby was given the task of picking up a certain Mississippi mutant from the airport he concluded that this was part of his punishment as the young woman’s return had seemingly been forgotten about with the Remy situation happening until she had called the mansion apparently half mad and irately screaming at the professor about brats and delays and other nonsensical ranting. So bobby had been deployed to pick her up, calm her down and prepare her for seeing her boy friend as an eight year old who might actually be seven but they weren’t quite sure because no one had thought to ask yet.

Remy waved to Bobby as he drove past himself, Scott, Jean, Warren and their snowman. They stuck a carrot on the snowman’s face to be the nose and Scott took off his hat and placed it on its head to finish their master piece. He was pulled out of admiring their work when something cold and wet hit the back of his neck. He turned around to find Monsieur Scott looking suspiciously innocent. Well, thought the small boy two can play at that game. Jean hadn’t been looking when it had happened she
was at the door to mansion stamping snow off her boots. Remy let out an impressive wail and ran
towards her. She looked up concern written on her face. He hoped monsieur Scott wouldn’t be too
angry but so far he had seemed pretty good humoured and he had started it. “Oh sweetie what’s
wrong?” the red head asked as Remy ran into her out stretched arms. He let out a pathetic sounding
sob which had guilted many people who had caught him picking pockets into not turning him over to
the cops. “M...Monsieur Scott t’rew a snowball at m...me and, and it got my new coat wet and my
neck wet. He didn’t even warn me! I ain’t never seen snow afore and its cold on my skin is my coat
ruined? I’m sorry miss Jean!” he babbled crocodile tears springing from his eyes as she scooped him
up further picking him up with surprising ease. “Scott! How could you, he’s just a little boy!” as she
stormed into the house with Remy still in her arms the little boy made sure Scott could see as he
nuzzled into her ample chest and gave him a sly smile over her shoulder. He giggled silently at his
slack jawed expression.

The little shit! Was all Scott could think as he watched Jean and the boy retreat into the house.
Warren was no help either, he just laughed hysterically as he clapped his old friend on the back. “I
think we both better watch out I thought Remy was bad enough as an adult but he seems to have the
girls even more around his little finger as a kid.” Scott nodded in agreement as he followed the
mischievous boy and his fiancé into the mansion. He found them in the kitchen. Remy’s tears had
disappeared now as he sipped his hot chocolate while sat at the table next to Logan. The clawed man
grinned as he spoke up, “Hey slim I didn’t think you were the type to pick on little kids. That is not
good.” Remy nodded his shaggy head as he clutched the toy he had retrieved from Logan’s protection
to his chest. Scott ignored them both as he turned to Jean who scowled at him from the far side of the
kitchen. “Jean I didn’t m--“she cut him off mentally.

~I know Scott don’t worry just let him have his
fun but, I am surprised at you throwing snowballs at a defenceless child~ her smile showed him she
was joking and he went to her for a chaste kiss and hug. He looked over at Remy who had a strange
look on his face, Scott realized after a moment that it was fear not strong fear but fear nonetheless the
boy probably thought he would be in trouble. He sat next to him and stole his cocoa with a wink to
show him he held no grudge and the small smile he received made relief wash over him. He himself
had once been that scared child and the thought that he could inspire the same feeling in a kid made a
knot clench in his stomach.

Bobby pulled up to the airport to find a harassed looking rogue sitting on her suitcase outside the
arrivals exit. He waved as she practically ran to the car throwing her case on the back seat. “Finally
sugah what did y’all do push the car here? Ah swear to God it if ah don’t get a shower soon ah am
goin’ to murder someone.” Bobby made the appropriate sympathetic noises as she told him all about
her travel woes. As they neared Westchester however Bobby thought he better prepare her for how
she would find her miniaturised boyfriend. “So uhm, Rogue. There’s something I’ve got to tell
you...there’s been an accident with Remy.” At her widened eyes he quickly went on. “He’s ok he’s
just a bit...erm...altered” her eyebrows went up, “Altered? What in the heck does that mean?” Bobby
shrugged and laughed nervously, Rogue scared him when she was angry. “He’s just a little heh
changed but its temporary so he’ll be back to normal soon. I think its best you just see for yourself
but its ok he’s been pretty fun actually.” Rogue looked at him sceptically but remained silent for the
rest of the drive worrying about her boy.

Rogue stepped into the mansion as Bobby struggled with her case a few steps behind. As she came
further into the hall Scott stepped out of the kitchen to greet her. He was soon followed by the others.
Remy was nowhere in sight. “Hey guys thanks for the reception but where’s Remy? Bobby said
there was...” she trailed off as a small head peered around Warren’s back. A small auburn head with
red and black eyes, “Oh mah lord.” The small head retreated to behind Warren with a little squeak.

She was beautiful. Her hair was dark in the back with white bangs and her green eyes sparkled. He
clutched the back of Warren’s shirt as he stuck his head out from behind him to get a better look
when he heard her say his name. He still held Rogue in one hand dangling at his side. She looked at
him and he ducked back behind the angel tightening his grip on the man’s expensive shirt. He felt his face burn as he gazed on her. Remy thought that perhaps he was in love. She was much prettier than any of the women Fagin brought back to the squat or than any of the girls that worked the street.

Charles had to laugh internally at Remy’s bashful behaviour, he barely managed to contain a chuckle as he caught Remy’s projected thoughts, and Jean’s slight smile told him she had heard the same puppy love filled thoughts. It seemed that Remy’s taste in women did not change with age. Charles hoped that while he was in his form the couple would refrain from their usual arguments he had no desire to be paying out for more repairs to the walls of their respective bedrooms which often suffered from punches when one of the pair was feeling particularly volatile. As he saw Remy’s red face though the older gentleman did not think that would be a problem this week.
Rogue was perplexed to say the least. She had expected to return home and be greeted by her handsome decidedly adult boyfriend but was instead confronted with this miniaturised version of said boyfriend. As she surveyed the child - what she could see of him - as he hid behind Warren. Warren, how the hell had that happened? Rogue could see the similarities between him and his adult self although her Remy had never behaved in such a bashful and admittedly sweet manner.

As Scott carefully watched rogue’s face for any signs of an impending attack or general freak out, he sidled over and pulled Remy from his hiding place behind the man whom he usually couldn’t exchange a single civil word with. He cleared his throat as he put an arm around the nervous child. “So, uh Rogue this is Remy he’ll be staying with us for a while. Remy, this is Rogue she lives here too.” At his side the boy stepped away slightly and looked up at him accusingly. “Dat’s while you all laughed! S’not funny! S’mean, you just making fun o’ me and she gon’ hate me now.”

Rogue watched the little outburst in confusion. She asked her somewhat shamefaced team mates at large, “laughed at what? what’s going on?” at first she thought no one would answer but then Jean spoke up. “Well, you see Rogue I wanted to make Remy here feel more at home so I got him that little stuffed alligator. And erm, well I told him to name it whatever he wanted...and we didn’t help him he came up with it all on his own! And we might have not told him about you at this point.” Rogue raised an eyebrow and the red head continued. “Well, long story short the alligator is named Rogue.” The young woman felt her own face flush almost as hot as Remy’s. The little boy was looking at his feet the toy clutched to his chest as he spoke quietly. “M’sorry Miss Rogue, if’n I’d known...I can change his name if you want? I don’ wanna upset you or for you to be mad at me...” Rogue felt a pang of guilt for making the child – even if he wasn’t usually a child but a cocky Cajun upstart – upset so she went over to him and crouched to his height using her very best indoor voice. “Hey sugah, it ain’t your fault that these doofusses got a bad sense of humour. How about you tell me why you picked the name Rogue.” The boy perked up a bit and looked at her properly instead of at his sneakered feet. “I picked it coz my alligator don’ listen to no one, he got his own rules. He free and ain’t no one who can scare him or hurt him. He is a rogue so I call him Rogue.” He seemed to remember who he was talking to and coloured up again looking away from her. She noticed the way he seemed to flick his hair so it fell into his eyes and partially obscured them. “Well sugah that seems like a bit of solid reasoning to me in fact it sounds pretty close to the reason ah chose it for mah name too. So, I think your alligator can keep his name we’ll just settle on great minds think alike.” The beaming smile he gave her almost made her forget how much she hated kids but then she supposed she could let this one off since as an adult they were supposed to be dating, even if most of the time she wanted to punch him through the wall.

Remy had been ushered off to the den with Warren, Betsy, Bobby, Logan and Jean while Rogue had been brought into the professor’s study to be briefed on the situation. Scott explained what had happened to actually turn the man into the boy then Hank explained how he was going to be restored to his proper form. “So, he won’t be back to normal ‘till the weekend?”

“At least. If doctor Strange does not get delayed” Hank confirmed. She pursed her lips and pinched the bridge of her nose as if willing this to go away. Hank spoke again, “And we have decided that while Remy is a child we should keep the truth from him. For the moment we have just been telling him he is staying with us for a while and he seems to except it, I fear that it would be too much for him to take in to learn he is in fact an adult mutant freedom fighter/ recovering world class thief reverted to his child form.” That Rogue could agree with she supposed, it would be a rather difficult conversation to have with a small child.
Meanwhile in the den Bobby was teasing Remy mercilessly. “Y’know kid she has a boyfriend already and he’s from New Orleans too so you can’t even woo her away with the accent. But don’t worry you wouldn’t want to touch her anyway, not unless you want her to know all your secrets which from one man to another is never a good idea when there’s a woman involved.” Logan let the icicle ramble on for a bit even though Remy was still turning an even more startling crimson colour than before. The kid needed to know he couldn’t touch Rogue and if Bobby could warn him off doing so without scaring the crap out of him then a little teasing was a small price to pay. Remy nodded solemnly in agreement with Bobby so Logan decided now was a good time to interfere before Bobby got carried away in his ribbing and they ended up with tears. “Hey half pint! You wanna help me pick something out to order for dinner? What’s your favourite?” The little boy shrugged, “you like Chinese food? Ever had it?” Remy nodded.

“Oui I like dat, I had it befo’ not sure what it was but it was ok dey t’row away de leftovers at de restaurant and if you get dere at de right time you can get de good bit from de dumpster befo’ anyone else can.” Logan decided not to comment on the child’s dumpster diving not wanting to make him feel uncomfortable he also hoped the kid hadn’t clocked Warren and Betsy’s disgusted expressions. “Well ok then Chinese it is. We can just order a bunch of stuff and you can try it all.” The kid seemed to like the sound of that if his grin was of any indication. Logan let him trail after him to the kitchen where they kept the menus and got him to punch in the numbers on the old phone. The wolverine smiled down at the child as he placed their order marvelling at how much he had changed just from last from a timid little kid to well, a slightly less timid kid but one who was willing to let people come near him and play tricks on slim. He couldn’t wait to rib the adult Remy about some of his actions while a kid again. Although there were some things which he would not bring up. Like what he heard last night and the fear that he smelt on him all yesterday and at times even today. Unlike Chuck, Logan thought it best for Remy to handle his issues his own way instead of being forced into some kind of therapy which was what he had heard Jean and the professor whispering about as he passed the office.
It was now Remy’s third night in the mansion and still no one had said anything about him having to leave or repay them in any way for their generosity. The boy was happy, so he tried not to think about the time when they would ask him to leave. He pushed those thoughts away and concentrated on the present. He was warm, he wasn’t hungry and he had a big comfy bed to sleep in. Dwelling on the future wasn’t going to help him so he just had to enjoy these things while he had them.

Remy explored the ground floor of the mansion alone as for a change it seemed he had been left to his own devices. The professor and Scott were ensconced in the former’s office doing something boring. Warren was still at work although it was almost half six in the evening. The child assumed his furry blue friend was downstairs in the area that Remy was not allowed into and Bobby, Betsy, Jean, Rogue (the woman) and Logan were nowhere to be found. So, the little boy was left to wander alone. No one had said he couldn’t but, he made sure to be quiet just in case. He suspected that there must have been some mix up in the schedule of who was supposed to watch him. He may have been young but he certainly wasn’t stupid. He did not fail to notice that since his arrival there was always someone with him, asking him if he wanted a snack or to play. Remy definitely was not at all used to this kind of attention so while he didn’t dislike it, it was nice to have a chance to be by himself for a little time.

He stuck his head through one door and found a room filled with books, a library. He recognised it as one because he sometimes snuck into the one at home and slept on the beanbag chairs in the children’s section until the librarian or a concerned parent found him and he had to run before they caught him and gave him to the police. Which is what Fagin said they would do. He decided to forgo exploring that room, what good were a bunch of books to him? It wasn’t like he could read them. The next room along was the den which he had already seen, as he had the kitchen, the professor’s study and the dining room. There was one more door that looked promising, it seemed studier than the other doors and had a lock on it but, when Remy tried the handle it opened easily. He thought that perhaps this door would just be another leading outside but instead it opened on to a large dark room. It was almost as cold in here as it was outside in the snow. He felt around by the door for a light switch and slapped it on after several moments of jumping up to try and reach it. The room was illuminated and revealed to be a garage. There were about five cars which didn’t really hold much interest for the boy. What did catch his eye however were three motorcycles lined up near the big mechanical door to outside. He ran over to them and first just studied them without touching. Remy liked motor bikes, they went real fast and the guys on them always looked so cool. Remy wanted to look cool. The one nearest to him was a shiny bright red, he couldn’t resist his hand seemed to reach out of its own volition to stroke down the body of the magnificent beast. As he took a step forward to get a better look he, unfortunately stepped on the untied shoelaces of his sneaker and fell face first onto the machine causing it to wobble then fall almost on top of the boy. Remy managed to scamper out of the way quickly enough to avoid trapping any body parts under the bike but the cuff of his slightly too long jeans got caught under it. He tried to pull it out but the bike was too heavy. He was trapped, and he was in big trouble. The scratch could be seen just peeking out from under the body of the bike where it had met the hard concrete. The boy let out a pathetic sounding whimper as he realised what he had done and struggled to free himself.

It was like the boy had just vanished Logan mused to himself as he stalked from the kitchen to the library following the boy’s scent. He wasn’t hidden among the stacks of books or under a table. He wasn’t in the den, he wasn’t in his room and his coat was still on the stand by the door so he assumed he wasn’t outside. He caught a whiff of fear as he wandered down the deserted hall; it was coming from the garage. Had the kid gone in there exploring and locked himself in, in the dark or something? Logan chuckled and shook his head to himself as he opened the door. The lights were on
so that hadn’t happened he followed the sniffling sound of a child crying to the very back of the garage by the bikes. He found Remy red faced and puffing in between sobs, desperately trying to free his pant leg from under a fallen bike. Summers’ bike, he clocked the scratch and guessed the reason for the scent of fear radiating off of the child. The boy was so distressed he hadn’t even realised Logan’s presence yet until the older man cleared his throat. “Well, well. What mess have you gotten yourself into this time gumbo?” the kid snapped his head around making a small squeaking noise as he saw the bearded man stood above him, large arms crossed with a scowl on his face. Logan could practically hear the cogs whirling in the boys head as he scrambled to come up with an excuse. He took pity on the kid and reminded himself that he couldn’t screw with the child Remy’s mind like he could with the adult version. The kid wouldn’t realise he was joking, or that the scowl was just his neutral expression. “Come on kid, up you get.” He said as he pulled the bike up into standing position. The boy did as he was told clambering to his feet and almost standing to attention in front of the wolverine. The kid obviously thought he was in trouble, and if he had been his adult self he probably would have been, as scratching one eye’s bike probably would have been done on purpose. But, one look at the terrified kids face and Logan could tell it had been an accident. He looked the boy over, “you hurt?” a timid shake of the head the boy’s eyes fixed in the floor.

“M’sorry monsieur Logan. Was an accident I swear, was just looking and I tripped. Didn’t mean too.” The scared child mumbled and Logan cringed inwardly as the boy tensed as he stepped forward as if expecting a blow, which, he probably was. The X Man sighed.

“Hey, kid its ok. I’m not mad. It’s just Scott’s bike anyway and it’s only a little scratch we can buff it out.” The boy looked up wide eyed, the tears had stopped but the tracks could still be seen running down his face.

“It’s monsieur Summers’ bike?” the little corners of the boys mouth tugged down, “he gon’ send me away now, ain’t he? After he give’ me a hidin’. ’” Logan shook his head and placed a hand gently on the small boy’s shoulder and crouching down.

“Nope that ain’t gonna happen kid, you don’t get rid of us that easily. Slim won’t care, I can fix the bike and he’ll just give you a stern talking to about being careful and that’s more for your safety than anything. Imagine if the bike had landed on your foot or leg?” The boy nodded using his sleeve to wipe at his face. Sensing he still wasn’t entirely reassured he added, “And you can help me with the scratch, and we’ll tell ’im you did so he won’t be as annoyed, right?” Remy brightened a little and nodded again.

“Oui, merci monsieur Logan.” The older man ruffled the boy’s shaggy hair and went to get the tools to work on the scratch marring Cyclops’ baby.

Remy hung his head as Logan explained what had happened in the garage to Scott. The team leader, as promised, wasn’t angry but he did indeed give Remy a rather long lecture about safety which was only slightly undermined by Bobby standing behind him pulling faces and rolling his eyes. The lecture was finished with an invitation for Remy to join Jean and Scott for dinner at the boathouse. Remy readily accepted the offer happy that Scott wasn’t going to throw him out or beat him. He liked Scott and he didn’t want his image of him to be ruined by a hard hand swishing through the air to connect with his face or a boot in his butt as he is kicked out the door. The glasses clad man smiled down at him, “well, we might as well head over there now then kiddo. Jean will be taking the lasagne out of the oven. And don’t worry it was pre made.” He joked before tweaking his nose and sauntering off towards the coat rack and getting Remy’s down for him, holding it open for the boy to slide into.

Remy rubbed his now sore nose as he waved to the others who watched him and Scott from the window as they made their way across the snow covered grass to the small house where the couple lived. Inside the house was warm and cozy, Jean called a greeting from the kitchen and after
shedding their coats they joined her. Remy was happy to help set the table and sat next to Scott as Jean dished up the food. She patted his head as she sat down on his other side at the small round table. “So, sweetie what have you been up to today?” The boy proceeded to tell her of his morning adventures with Bobby and Hank outside, then his afternoon of helping Betsy rearrange her room. He clammed up a little as he got to his evening exploits but Scott prompted him to tell her and they both assured him it was okay and that he had been a good boy to help Logan fix the scratch. Remy smiled shyly at the praise unused to it. They had ice cream for dessert which the boy loved. As Scott cleaned up Remy followed Jean into the living room, they were going to watch a movie she told him and he was allowed to pick. After much deliberation Remy decided that he liked the look of the lion king and the three settled down to watch it. Jean laughed as she saw Remy bopping along to the lively songs and let him cuddle into her in the sad part, trying not to cry herself as Simba watched his father fall to his death.

As the credits rolled Scott looked over to the sleeping woman and child curled up together on the end of the couch and smiled into his cocoa. The man used his stealth skills to lift the shaggy haired child into his arms and carry him up to the guest room. He deposited him into the single bed fully clothed and pulled the thick quilt over him glad that the child had already discarded his own shoes when entering the house. He couldn’t resist leaning forward to plant a soft kiss on his teammate’s forehead and stroke back the long bangs covering his eyes. As he turned, he found Jean standing in the doorway giving him a look. “Hush you.” He whispered as he shouldered past her and down the hall into their bedroom. She followed and kept silent until they were both in bed. She turned to him.

“Scott, you big softie. I’m so telling him when he’s grown up.” He silenced her with a kiss then replied.

“Yeah, well you started it getting him that damn alligator.” Said alligator was currently tucked next to its owner in the small bed next door. She snickered, “shut up, red.” He muttered as he snuggled into her embrace.
It took a moment for Remy to remember where he was. He must’ve fallen asleep at Scott and Jean’s house. Surveying the room he had woken up in he decided he liked it better than the one he slept in, in the big house. Although he was grateful for the room and the bed was soft and warm it was also big and dark and when he woke up in the night the shadows cast by the many objects in the room looked too much like creeping spectres. This room however was light and cosy, small but not claustrophobically so. Rogue was still clutched in his arms the little boy was pleased to notice. He could hear faint noises coming from downstairs and the smell of bacon wafted up to greet him. He decided he should probably go and bid good morning to his hosts, and if they gave him some of what they were cooking who was he to complain? Rubbing sleep out of his eyes with small fists he made his way to the kitchen.

Jean hummed as she set the kitchen table for three, watching her fiancé push the sizzling bacon round the pan. There was a pattering of bare feet behind her and she turned to smile at a sleepy looking Remy who stood in the doorway in yesterday’s clothes clutching Rogue the alligator in one small hand. She beckoned him over and he trotted to her side happily, “hey sweetie, you sleep ok?” He nodded into her side as she put her arm around him and patted his messy bed hair. The little boy looked up at her and opened his mouth as if to say something then seemed to change his mind as he snapped his jaw shut. She quirked an eyebrow at him. He blushed and smiled sheepishly.

“Was jus’ gonna say thanks for letting me stay the night, I uh I like the room you put me in.” Jean was slightly puzzled at the strange remark.

“Don’t you like your room at the mansion sweetie?” Remy shrugged as he sat at the table, he didn’t want to admit to being scared in there at night. He knew how ridiculous it sounded; he slept in alleys and doorways regularly but was frightened by a few shadows in a big room.

“It’s real nice, but it’s filled with someone’s things and I don’t t’ink he would like it iffn he came back an’ I was sleeping in his room...” He trailed off hoping Jean would see what he was hinting at. He thought Scott and Jean liked him, and maybe if he started sleeping in their small house they would get used to him more and his chances of being thrown back out would lessen, or at least be put off for a while longer. He watched Jean’s eyes soften and saw her look to Scott who shrugged and went back to plating up the food. She cleared her throat.

“Well, I’m sure he wouldn’t mind.” She saw the dip in his shoulders and disappointment on his face and knew what he wanted. “But, if you feel uncomfortable there, we’d be happy to have you stay here.” The smile Remy gave her made her forget for a moment that he wasn’t actually a child whom they could keep. She shook the thoughts from her head, Remy wasn’t a puppy and he needed to be reverted back to his adult form. That didn’t mean however that she couldn’t enjoy it while he was still adorable. She sat next to him as Scott brought over the plates. He ruffled Remy’s hair as he set his breakfast down in front of him.

“We’ll go get your stuff after this buddy and move you in. And then I thought later we could take a trip into the city, see some museums or an art gallery.” Remy looked up from his food at that.

“How’d you know I like museums?” Scott drank his coffee and grinned at Jean who knew perfectly well how he knew what Remy liked.

“Oh it was just a hunch; you’re a pretty smart little guy. You go to museums often?” Remy looked back to his food and speared a sausage with his fork.
“Non. I try to sneak in sometimes, iffn there’s a school going in, but I get caught and t’rown out usually. Don’ bother no more.” His tone said clearly that this conversation was over so Scott just nodded sombrely and told Remy that no one would throw him out this time and that if they tried he would blast them. Jean balked at that and smacked his arm; Remy laughed which had been his intention.

While collecting Remy’s clothes, Scott’s plans for the day were altered when the professor informed the team that they were needed in the city. Some mad scientist’s beasts were attacking midtown again. And since Xavier was trying to build the reputation of the X Men as good guys they were going to help the fight and clean up. Although their presence was never requested there were those in the media and super hero community who were quick to point out their absence from disasters not related to mutants. Usually the same people who, when they did come to help, insisted that they were not needed and should stick to mutant affairs only.

With the others gone the mansion was suddenly very quiet to young Remy. He had been left alone with the professor which unnerved him somewhat. He had spent little time in the older man’s company and wasn’t quite sure what to make of him. Sticking his head through the open doorway of the library Remy found the man in question, reading an old looking book. He looked awfully calm for a man whose entire household had just up and left on a moment’s notice and although Remy didn’t know exactly where they had gone he was sure it must be something pretty important for Scott to cancel their plans, the man had been so excited about their planned trip and had seemed truly sad when he knelt in front of the young boy to tell him they couldn’t go today, that ‘something’ had come up. The wheelchair bound man looked up from his book when Remy touched the door and made it squeak. He didn’t seem angry at the interruption so the boy entered the room and approached him.

Charles smiled at the wary boy as he shuffled towards him. “Hello, Remy.” The now almost shy boy replied quietly.

“Bonjour.” Charles beckoned him closer and patted him lightly on the shoulder, it was obvious the boy knew something was up but, he didn’t wish to pry and have him thinking more about the team’s whereabouts. He instead showed him the book he was reading.

“Remy, have you ever heard of a man called Long John Silver?” At the boys shake of the head and questioning look the professor’s smile widened. “Well, then take a seat and let me read you a story.”

Scott was glad to be home. The battle hadn’t been particularly strenuous – not when you had faced magneto or Sabretooth anyway – but the guilt of cancelling on Remy had weighed on him throughout, the boy probably thought they had run out on him and were never coming back. At his age Scott would have thought the same. The cloud hanging over him hadn’t been helped by having to go through the pleasantries with the other super hero types who had decided to help clear out the strange giant hamster like creatures of midtown. Sure Captain America had shaken his hand and said “good job son.” – Which, actually really grated because, really? He may have been frozen in the ice for however long and technically be about ninety but in reality he had live only a couple more years on this earth than Scott- Iron man had been an asshole, which didn’t really bother Scott all that much because, hey, at least he was an asshole to everybody, not just mutants. Of course the FF had made an appearance too and Bobby had disappeared with the Human Torch and Spidey to God knows where and now he thought about it were they supposed to have waited to give him a ride back to the mansion? Never mind Scott thought to himself as he changed into civilian clothes before heading upstairs his mind focusing on how he was going to make up for deserting poor Remy to a boring day with the professor. He loved the man like a father but, even Scott had to admit he could be pretty dry at times and surely to a little kid it was even worse. He probably had him helping to file their tax return or something. So, yes Scott had expected to return to find a bored Remy who wanted nothing
to do with him. He did not expect to return to find a sheet with a skull and crossbones drawn on it hanging from the banister. And he certainly didn’t expect to find his mentor barking orders to raise the sail - while sporting a rakish drawn on goatee and cardboard captain’s hat – to their de-aged comrade, who bore a similar drawn on beard along with what he assumed to be a scar drawn on in the same substance.

Rogue couldn’t stifle the laugh that came up as Remy raced down the stairs in reply to ‘Captain Xavier’s’ orders shouting a gleeful “aye aye mon capitain!” She especially liked the touch of one of Betsy’s scarves tied around the small boy’s head; she made a note to herself to see if the older Remy also liked to play dress up. Remy stopped in his game for a moment as the team came into his view then bounded toward them with cardboard sword held aloft. “Avast yea scurvy dogs! Capitain, I t’ink we t’row dese stowaways in de brig, non?”
Chapter 13

Remy held onto Scott’s hand tightly, as he had been instructed as they crossed the busy street to the museum. He had heard of New York before of course but he had never imagined it to be so big. The boy had always thought that no where could rival New Orleans for its hustle and bustle but this place was even busier. His fingers twitched at the possibilities. His thoughts were interrupted as Jean came up on his other side and took his hand. She smiled down at him as they entered the large building. Remy was surprised when neither Scott nor Jean said anything to deny it when the lady at the door commented on how ‘adorable’ Scott and his son’s matching glasses were. They had both just smiled and nodded politely, he heard Logan chuckle behind him but he didn’t correct the smiling lady either. Remy was perplexed to say the least, the couple had been nice to him sure but, he was certain that no one would want to be mistaken for his parents. His own parents had abandoned him after all.

When they were further into the building Remy looked up at the man and woman flanking him, thinking they mustn’t have understood the woman and said. “Dat lady t’ought you were my mama and papa.” Scott just looked back at him and smiled.

“I know.” Said the glasses clad man as he led them towards the dinosaur section. As they went Logan called that he was heading to the new Japanese exhibit.

Jean couldn’t resist taking out her camera when Remy ran to look at one of the glass cases but he had to strain to see it until Scott came and offered his shoulders. She was building quite a good collection to show the adult Remy what with his pirate antics and his growing willingness to fall asleep curled up on the sofa with Scott, and Warren...and Bobby and one memorable time on Betsy, complete with drool on her cashmere sweater. She turned her attention back to the boys and snapped the picture. After the dinosaur exhibit they joined Logan and Remy was fascinated by the samurai artefacts and the stories Logan told him about the warriors. Then they stopped for lunch in the museum restaurant. After assuring the boy he could have anything he wanted except the coffee he asked for they had a pleasant meal. No one noticed the shaggy man who peered at them through the window facing the street.

Victor smiled to himself as he watched the four mutants eat. The boss was going to reward him for this, he had no idea how the kid had ended up, well, a kid but there he was short and scrawny and arguing that he was perfectly capable of going to the bathroom alone. If Victor needed any more proof other than the kids looks and scent to see that it was in fact Gambit he got it when the kid finally won the argument and left the table to ostensibly go to the bathroom when in fact he seemed to take a turn about the room robbing almost every person there blind as he did so. Yes Sabretooth was definitely going to be rewarded for this discovery.

When they arrived back at the mansion that evening Remy was tired but pleasantly so. He happily chattered to the table at large when asked about his day. He talked at length to Warren about the stories Logan had told him and how Scott had helped him to see into the exhibit cases. As dinner began to wind down the adults started to talk amongst themselves and Remy was quiet for a while.

“So, anyone up for a game after?” asked Logan as he took a sip of his coffee. There were a few murmurs of ascent from around the table and it was quickly decided that after dinner Logan, Bobby, Warren, Scott and Rogue would be playing a little poker. No one mentioned the fact that it wouldn’t be quite the same without their usual sixth player.

The game was just about to begin when a stuffed alligator was slapped down unceremoniously on the table just missing Scott’s beer. “Deal me in.” The team leader raised an eyebrow at his diminutive friend as he took the seat in between himself and Rogue. The boy winked at her as he gave her one of the cans of soda he had been carrying. “Mademoiselle”. Across from him Bobby who was
shuffling the cards snorted and included Remy in the hand.

Scott laughed internally at the boy’s obvious infatuation with Rogue who was his sometime girlfriend when he was an adult. “So what are we going to play for gentlemen? Lady?” He looked to Bobby who cleared his throat.

“How about twinkies and lollipops boss? We’ve still got that big bag left over form Halloween.” Scott was about to agree to the Iceman’s idea when he was interrupted by a small but triumphant sounding voice.

“Dat’s all very well monsieur Bobby but, I prefer de high stakes, non?” Warren almost choked on his beer when Remy pulled out a big wad of cash from his back pocket. He instinctively checked his own wallet to see if the little thief had got his sticky fingers into it but no, it was still full.

Logan kept his voice steady as he spoke not trusting Scott to keep his countenance when he saw the red creeping up his leader’s neck. “Where’d you get all that kid?” Remy didn’t seem to see that there might be a problem concerning how he had obtained his small fortune.

“At de restaurant. People don’ pay attention and leave dere bags open or behind de chairs or dey pay an’ leave straight away. Easy peasy Remy sneak up and...” He made a snatching movement with his hand. Logan wasn’t quite sure what to say to that. If this had been a normal child caught stealing he would reprimand them and tell them not to do it again, but, Remy was not a normal child they already knew that he grew up to be a thief and it seemed strange to tell the child not to do something that he knew was a part of who he was as a man. Scott it seemed had no such compunction.

“Remy! Stealing is wrong, I understand you had to before but you’re here now. Haven’t we given you everything you needed? What made you think you would need any money?” He gave the child no chance to answer before he snatched the money from his small hand and flung it on the table. “I think it’s time we go back to the boat house. Good night everyone.” Remy was speechless and looked up at him with wide onyx eyes. “Come on Remy, Jean you coming?” the red head nodded and took the boy by the hand to follow Scott. All three were silent as they put their coats on and Remy once again found himself walking flanked by Scott and Jean but this time there were no wide smiles or excited talking.

They had been back at the house for ten minutes and for nine of those minutes Scott had been ranting. Jean stood back and let him finish not wanting to undermine him. He stopped and stalked about the room breathing heavily. Jean chanced a look at the small boy who was the recipient of the older man’s anger and frustration. Fat tears ran down his face to pool on the neck of his t-shirt. “Oh sweetie,” Jean cooed as she came to sit next to him and put her arm around his shaking shoulders. “Scott.” Her fiancé stopped pacing and turned to look at her and the boy. She saw him blink behind the glasses then he sighed and rubbed his bridge of his nose. “I just kept thinking what else could have happened if I hadn’t been paying enough
attention to know that you were stealing. Someone could have kidnapped you or hurt you.” Remy pulled away from his embrace to look up at him obviously confused.

“So, you not kickin’ me out?” both adults were quick to disabuse him of this notion. He looked between them and instead of smiling like they had hoped he just began to cry again, harder. Scott could only assume this was due to his confusion. He pulled the boy towards him again in a hug and Jean put her arms around the booth of them from behind Remy.

Soon Remy cried himself out and fell asleep; Scott dressed him in his pyjamas and tucked him in bed before joining Jean in sitting on their own bed. Jean sighed as he rested his head on her shoulder, “Two more days sweetie.” She murmured as she ran her fingers over his short hair.

“I don’t think I’m ready for children, can’t believe I got so mad.” She shushed him and reassured him it was fine, he had apologised and explained to Remy why he was mad.

“I think you’ll do just fine Slim.”
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

Not too sure on this chapter, I found it hard to decide how Remy would get nabbed. Hope it’s not too bad though anyway please read and enjoy! As always constructive criticism and feedback is welcome.

“You are certain it was him?” Victor nodded at Sinister’s turned back before realising his mistake and grunting in the affirmative. “And Summers?”

“He’s the same as always as far as I could see.” Replied the mutant shrugging. Sinister was silent for a time before turning on his heel and looking Victor in the eye.

“Bring me the boy. It is unfortunate that Summers is not in the same condition but, once I ascertain how Lebeau was regressed to a child perhaps I could replicate it.” He waved his hand in dismissal and Victor wasted no time in leaving the unnerving man’s presence to go and round up the rest of the marauders.

***

Warren stumbled out of the room he shared with Betsy, leaving her to cocoon herself in the covers without worrying about leaving him cold, not that she did worry about that but, a man could pretend. Blurrily he made his way downstairs heading for the kitchen where he planned on drinking about a gallon of coffee to ready himself for a day full of meetings and paper work. He was stopped at the doorway though by the sight of a certain miniaturised thief. The boy was seated at the table with Rogue the alligator sat on the table facing him. It was apparent that the two were in the middle of a rather intense looking staring match. He cleared his throat before entering and received a small yelp of surprise in response. As he waited for the coffee to brew he leaned against the counter facing the child. “So, what are you doing up here at this time?” Remy shrugged and proceeded to make Rogue dance along the back of the chair next to him. Surely Scott hadn’t made the child move back into the mansion with only a couple of days before he could be restored to adult form. He asked Remy if Scott had told him he couldn’t sleep at the boat house anymore but the boy just shook his head.

“Why are you here then sport?” Remy didn’t look at him for a moment but then he answered in a small voice.

“He said he not gonna t’row me out but, I don’t wanna get in dere way so I come here dis morning so dey don’ have to make me breakfast or put up with me. Maybe if I don’t bother dem too much y’all let me stay longer.” The boy shrugged as if he thought nothing of admitting that he felt himself to be mere nuisance. Warren poured himself a generous cup of coffee and sat next to his small friend.

“Remy you’re not bothering anyone, we all love having you here. All of us. I know Scott was mad but I bet he was madder at himself than at you.” Remy glanced at him and shrugged his thin shoulders again.

“He, he did say dat.” He admitted in a barely audible whisper. Warren ruffled the boy’s hair.

“There you go! See? What are you getting worked up over then? I’ll tell you what, Scott and Jean won’t be up yet so why don’t you head back to their house and we’ll pretend this never happened.
How’s that sound to you champ?” Remy looked at him as if to ask if he really thought they wouldn’t mind him being there, Warren nodded at the boy and laughed in surprise as he threw his arms around his neck. Remy pulled away quickly though and mumbled a quiet thanks before leaving by the kitchen back door.

He sat quietly in the living room of the boathouse waiting for its occupants to rise. He would have turned on the TV like Jean had said he could if he awoke before them but he couldn’t remember how it worked. Fagin had a TV but he certainly wasn’t allowed to touch it. There was a creak on the stairs and he kneeled up on the couch to look over the back of it. A rumpled looking Jean came down the stairs, she spotted him and came straight up to him smiling. She kissed him on the head and asked what he wanted for breakfast. He was soon supplied with toast and cereal and Remy found himself wondering what he had been worrying about. Scott came into the room and patted his back as he passed on his way to great jean and steal some of the bacon she was frying out of the pan. Remy felt his earlier tension begin to well up again as Scott took his seat at the table but the man merely smiled and winked at him before snatching a piece of his toast.

After breakfast Scott told Remy that he and Jean had to go up to the main house to talk with the other adults about some business and that he would be terribly bored if he came so he should play outside for a while. Jean bundled him in his coat, hat and scarf making sure his mittens were securely fastened to his coat before challenging him to make a snowman version of Logan, and she said she would bring out a carrot for his cigar.

Remy was collecting more snow for Logan’s head when rogue dropped out of his pocket. When he straightened after bending to pick him up he saw there was someone watching him from outside the gates. It was a large man with a shaggy blonde mane of hair. When he called out to him his accent sounded familiar. “Hey kid, you’re Remy right?” he nodded cautiously and the man smiled. “Oh, that’s great kid; Logan’s told me all about ya. He’s my brother y’know, he mentioned me?” Remy shook his head but now he looked at the man he could see a definite resemblance between him and Logan apart from height and colouring that is. He came a little closer to the man as he continued to talk. “Oh, well ain’t that nice. But, that’s kid brothers for you I guess. Remy can you do me a favour and open the gate? I forgot my key and I’m late for meeting the runt.” Remy laughed at that, the man seemed ok and if he was close enough to joke about him he must be his brother, why would he lie? He must be part of the adult conversation that the others were having and Logan would be annoyed if he was late. The shaggy man nodded and smiled again as Remy came closer and opened the gate.

The last thing the boy remembered was opening the gate, being pulled through it, his scarf being pulled away and sharp scratch on his neck before everything went black.
His head hurt and his mouth felt dry, like it had been stuffed with cotton wool. Remy opened his eyes but the bright light above him forced them to close again. There was low laugh from somewhere in the room, the boy made his eyes slit open again and blinked a few times before taking in his surroundings. The room was similar to the one he had woken up in at the mansion but it was somehow colder, more sterile. To the side of the room, the man who had introduced himself as Logan’s brother leaned against the wall. This time the man said nothing he merely looked at Remy and left the room. Remy felt sick, how could he have been so stupid. Living with Scott, Jean and the others had obviously made him soft the child thought to himself, if he couldn’t even tell when he was being lied to.

He wasn’t alone for long. The man who wasn’t Logan’s brother came back in following another man. The new man dismissed the other whom he addressed as Sabretooth. The new man approached the table the small boy was lying on. “Ah you are awake.” He said not looking at Remy but leafing through some papers on a desk nearby. The man wore a dark suit and had black hair and pale skin. He looked, Remy thought, how he would imagine a vampire to look. When the man finally did turn to look at him Remy’s demand to know where he was died on his tongue. The man had red eyes, devil’s eyes. Just like him. His own onyx and red eyes met the man’s.

Sinister knew he had the boy when he locked eyes with him. He had been contemplating what to tell to make him the most compliant. But, as the boy looked at him with a wary hopefulness he knew exactly what to say, he was thankful he had chosen to wear his more human form for this first meeting with his ex employee. He stretched his lips into that foreign expression of a smile and sat on the edge of the table near the child but not crowding him. It was imperative to his plan that the child felt a sense of trust between them. The boy spoke tentatively, “who. Uh who are you monsieur? Why did dat other man bring me here? I want to go home- uh I mean back to monsieur Summers.” Sinister laughed lightly at the child.

“My dear boy, that place is not your home. And neither is the gutter of the city in which you come from. Those people with whom you have been living are not your family. I am sorry for the subterfuge I had to use to obtain you but, those people are very bad Remy. Very bad indeed. No doubt they have preyed upon your yearning for kindness and security and tricked you into believing they truly care for you. But, they do not they simply wish to use you in their own nefarious endeavours. I however, have brought you here for your own good, I in no way benefit from your presence in fact it is quite an inconvenience to me but, you are my responsibility and no matter how great a burden you are, I care for you and wish you to be happy.” He used this speech to lay the groundwork of Remy’s new life. He needed the boy to feel he had nowhere else to go and needed sinister but that he was a great inconvenience to the man. Meaning that he would have to do exactly as he was told to, obedience was crucial to Sinister’s plan. His perfect experiment and soldier.

This man was scary Remy decided, the way he smiled looked painful but his words – Remy being a burden anyway – seemed to ring true. He wasn’t so sure about what he saying about the others though, they had all been so nice. But, the man’s eyes, they were like his. “Why should I believe you? Who are you anyway?”

Sinister laughed standing with a flourish ready for his big reveal. “Why? Because Remy, my dear child. I am your father.”
The guilt burned deep in the pit of Scott’s stomach. They had found the half finished snow-Logan and rogue discarded by the gate. As he re-watched the security tape showing Sabretooth spiriting Remy away he knew it was all his fault. He had told Remy to play outside, and Sabretooth was one of Sinister’s minions. And they all knew who sinister just loved to mess with. He rewound the tape again looking for something, anything to indicate where Sabretooth may have taken the boy while Jean and the professor tried to locate them using cerebro.

Logan stared into the dark scanning the grounds for anything left behind, any scent or trampled piece of ground that could give them some clue as to where the bastard had taken Remy. He had to find something. After all, it was his fault. Sabretooth was his bad guy and he just loved to fuck with him. He knew him and the kid where friends he must have found out what had happened to Remy somehow and taken his chance. Why hadn’t he smelt him?

Warren surveyed the skyline. No sight of Remy or Sabretooth. He flew a little farther then decided to give up and return to the mansion. Hopefully the professor would have located him with cerebro by now. God, this was all his fault he should have let the others handle the meeting and gone outside with Remy. The kid had wanted him to help build a snowman.

The team was gathered around the conference table as the professor explained what he had been able to see with cerebro. Remy was currently somewhere in New Mexico. They couldn’t seem to get an exact location which pointed to Sinister being the one holding the boy. He was always tricky to find. When Charles had finished Scott stood up to lay out the plan. Search and rescue. They would go in the blackbird and look for the obligatory, glaringly out of place suspicious compound or ‘research facility’. Once there they would do whatever needed to get there team mate back. The guilt was strong for every member of the team, Remy was vulnerable at the moment and they had all forgotten that he was no ordinary child. Of course someone would be after him; it just so happened that Sinister got there first.

Remy sat quietly on the table as Nathanial tapped away at his computer – Bobby had shown him how to play games on one at the mansion – the boy held the piece of cotton wool tightly to his arm where the man had taken almost all of his blood it seemed. He felt a little dizzy and sick but he said nothing. He didn’t want to make the man angry. His father, he had said he was Remy’s father. Remy didn’t know what to think, he had no idea who his father was but, this man had red eyes just like his. Maybe he was telling the truth, and maybe he’s just some creep who happens to have devil eyes, whispered a voice in the back of his head. His stomach grumbled causing the man to look up from his work, an annoyed expression on his face. He pressed a button on the wall and went back to typing intently without a word to Remy. The boy turned his attention to his sneakered feet not daring to say anything. There was a quiet whoosh sound as the sliding door to the sterile room opened and the shaggy man who wasn’t Logan’s brother came in. “boss?” the man queried.

Victor shot a glance at the kid, he looked scared and pale. He clocked the tiny hand pressing the cotton wool to his arm and guessed the reason for his pallid colour. Sinister spoke, “take my son to get something to eat then show him to his room.” So he was sticking to his ‘Remy I am your father routine’ then. For a man who was supposed to have no emotions he sure did have a flair for the dramatic. He nodded at his boss before lightly clapping the shrunken Cajun on the shoulder. “C’mon kid.” He watched as Remy tore his gaze away from Sinister, probably the ‘my son’ comment he knew the kid’s background. He prodded the boy ahead of him as the sliding door closed behind them. He took Remy to the base’s kitchen and sat him on the counter. Searching the mostly
bare cupboards he found some instant mac and cheese. Remy didn’t look particularly impressed with his offering but he ate it without complaint, too used to being hungry to pass up a seemingly free plate food.

After he ate not Logan’s brother took him to another room, it was small and as sterile looking as the lab had been. White walls, white tiled floor and a small bed, at least it has a bathroom attached thought Remy as he knew he would probably end up locked in here for who knew how long. He went and sat on the bed pointedly not looking at the man. It was his fault he was here, and he hadn’t even picked up rogue for him when he dropped him. The man sighed and Remy could see him run a ragged nailed hand through his hair out of the corner of his eye. He stared harder at the wall and not Logan’s brother left.

Shit. He felt...guilty? Victor never felt guilty, he just didn’t. But this kid got to him, he had worked with him, he had actually kind of liked him, sometimes. They had played cards in their downtime before...well, before the incident in the sewer. Strange he hadn’t felt particularly bad about that although he had almost killed the kid. Maybe he was getting soft in his old age but, his angry and betrayed little face tugged at his heart strings a little. He shook off the alien feelings; he was Sabretooth he didn’t feel guilt or empathy and he didn’t care. He was just following orders. It was nothing personal.

This is personal, Charles thought to himself as he watched his students around the aircraft each doing their bit to find their stolen team mate. Sinister had gone after almost all of his children at one point especially Scott. But, now to go after Remy- whom he had never shown much interest in before-while he was so vulnerable. It was such an obvious move of spite on Mr. Sinister’s part, just another move to try and hurt them. He had probably somehow found out how close the child Remy and Scott had become and had stolen the child in a bid to try and hurt Scott or more likely to lure the oldest summers child to him. Poor Remy was just a pawn in the mad man’s continuing obsession with Scott.

Rogue was ready to fight to get Remy back he may not be quite his usual adult self but he was still her Remy. Her handsome, caring, clever, sexy, imaginative Remy. She didn’t usually find herself feeling grateful that her power involved her being able to drain a person with a touch. She had a feeling she’d be wearing claws and perhaps a shaggy beard for a few days after their rescue operation. And she was planning on bashing Sinister’s face in she didn’t care if he was Scott’s villain she was getting first dibs on beating the monsters down.
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

I apologise in advance for the lack of action and actual fighting but I’m not too good at that kind of stuff so…this is it.

He had tried not to cry, he really had. But, this room was getting colder by the minute and the lights had gone off what felt like ages ago. Remy had shouted out, he had begged for them to be turned back on. No one answered and he was scared. It was silent and cold and dark and no matter how much he liked to pretend, he was just a little boy, the past few days had made him remember that. He got up from the hard bed and went over to the door and knocked hesitantly at first, then louder. He called out, “monsieur please, I be good just put de light back on sil vous plait! Please! I don’ like de dark. I be good please!” still there was no answer. The boy gave up and went back to the cot; he wrapped the thin blanket around himself and tried to pretend he was safe in Scott and Jean’s spare room.

Victor felt an unfamiliar clenching sensation in the pit of his stomach as he listened to the child’s cries the sound much too reminiscent of another little boy’s cries many years before. He looked over to the boss from his place by the door. “Uh Doc? Maybe we should just put the lights down there back on? At least for a little while, might shut the brat up for a bit.” At first he thought the other man was going to simply ignore him but after minute the doctor looked up with a long suffering sigh. “Children cannot be lead to believe that every time they scream and make a fuss they will get their own way. No son of mine will throw tantrums and be rewarded.” Victor hoped the man didn’t see how far his eyebrows had hiked up his brow. Sinister was crazier than he thought if he was actually starting to believe his own bullshit about being the Cajun’s father.

Thirty six hours. Sinister had had Remy for over a day now, the thought of what the monster could have done in that time made the leader shudder. He didn’t feel quite so fearless at this moment. Scott studied the ground below as he piloted the jet and finally found what they had all been searching for. A large low building grey and inconspicuous- well as inconspicuous as any obviously out of place shady research facility can be in the middle of a desert- he turned to his co pilot, Logan. “I see it.” the man muttered gruffly before getting up and heading to the back of the plane to inform the others that they may have found Sinister’s base.

They would attack quietly, landing some way away from the base and walking there so as not to attract and unwanted attention. Once inside they would have to remain quiet and work quickly to find Remy and Sinister before the good doctor could spirit himself and the boy away. Warren listened carefully to the plan of attack before opening the hatch and jumping out to scout ahead before giving the all clear for landing.

It was hot as hell as the team made their way to the entrance Warren had spotted and for the first time Rogue envied Storm’s uniform it certainly would make the heat more bearable. Although she imagined that it might chafe terribly in some more private areas. Ahead of her Logan used his claws to cut through the chains wound around the door handles. As one they followed, each knew their task and was ready to perform. Logan would use his nose to search out Sabretooth and keep him busy while Jean searched for Remy using her telepathy. The others would play back up and look...
out, they would try to subdue Sinister in he tried to fight them but they would not engage him directly if they could help it. they didn’t want to risk a big fight while Remy was with them.

Charles cursed his broken legs as he watched his children walk away from the jet, if he had gone with them he would only slow them down and they had no need for him, Jean could use her powers to find Remy’s mental signature once inside. He would serve everyone better by staying put.

Scott followed Jean as she made her way towards the wavering mental signature with the slight static buzz that could only be Remy. They were venturing deeper into the building, Scott almost lost count of the floor level as he silently followed his fiancé. Finally she stopped outside a door situated in a long darkened corridor. They could hear sounds of fighting above; the odd snarl of outrage told them Logan had found his quarry. Jean spoke, “Remy is definitely in there but he’s too agitated for me to get through to him telepathically,” she paused pressing her ear to the door. She called loudly but gently through the door hoping the little boy would here her. “Remy? Sweetie, its Jean. Can you hear me? Scott’s here too, we’ve come to take you home.” There was silence and for a heart stopping second Jean thought she had been mistaken that Sinister had somehow tricked her into feeling Remy. A muffled reply put here somewhat at ease.

“Jean? Scott! Don’ leave me!” the couple shared a look before Jean stepped back and Scott took her place.
He tried to keep his voice steady as he ordered Remy to stand back. Preparing to blast the door open, he checked the boy was standing clear and blew the door practically off its hinges. Remy ran out of the room immediately crushing himself to Scott’s legs. “You came! He said you wouldn’t, dat you didn’t care but you did! You came to save me.”

Jean joined in the impromptu group hug kneeling to Remy’s height. “Of course we came. We love you.”

Remy hiccuped and choked back a sob as he clung tighter to his rescuers. “he said, he said dat you din’t love me dat you din’t wan’ me. And dat, dat...he was..” Scott shushed him putting a gloved hand to the back of his head stroking lightly before picking the boy up.

“Remy, anything that man said to you was a lie. He’s a bad, bad man and he lies about everything to twist things to suit him.” Remy nodded into his shoulder hoping that he was right, if that man was his father how could he possibly turn out good, he would go bad just like everyone always said. He pushed the thought from his mind as he did all the things that scared him. Right now, in the present he was fine, he wasn’t in pain – apart from his sore arm – and Jean and Scott had come for him. They loved him. He let Scott pick him up. The red eyed man was a liar.

They didn’t wait for the others as they made their way back to the jet as per the plan. They would follow when they had completed their tasks. Scott buckled Remy into the seat next to the professor letting the older man know what had happened. Just as he was finishing his debrief, footsteps could be heard coming up to the jet. He turned and was relieved to find Logan, coated in various layers of blood and flesh tissue but unharmed apart from a steadily re-growing ear. He gave Scott a sombre nod before heading straight for the child. “hey, kid...”

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Although he had not been gone long Remy was exhausted from all the ‘excitement’ and had been hustled off to bed by Jean almost as soon as they got back, after Hank had given him a thorough going over that is. She had just left him and he sighed glad to be back at this place that he was fast beginning to think of as home. Remy snuggled under the thick covers clutching rogue to him.

Warren had presented the elated boy with it on his return to the jet.
He had been thwarted and of course he was not happy but, he still had the blood samples he had taken. Which were to say the least very interesting, the possibilities of what he could do with them made him feel almost as if he was excited. He had also managed to slip away before he had to waste his time with any of the x men trying to engage him in combat. He would no doubt be able to regain his misplaced asset. Remy would not escape him for long. He fleetingly thought he should perhaps try and find out how the boy had been regressed to childhood. Such a weapon would be most helpful with his research.
Charles wheeled forward and smiled at their guest, "Welcome Doctor Strange, lovely to see you again. Please come in to my office, tea? Coffee? Horribly over sugared drink that some of my students are addicted to?"

Remy sat on the chair outside Professor Xavier's office. He wasn't in trouble. No, Jean had assured him of that before depositing him on the chair and entering the office with the other adults. He was almost certainly sure that they were talking about him, he just hoped that wasn't a bad thing. The boy was pulled from his thoughts when the door opened and he was asked to come in. He complied, trailing rogue behind him. The girl Rogue was the one who had beckoned him in and he gave her a bright grin before he realised it and ran over to bury his red face in Scott's side. There was a slight chuckle from the vicinity of the professors desk and a cultured voice said, "Ah yes, I see what you mean. I can most certainly help." Remy turned toward the voice and was greeted with the sight of a grown man in a cape. He had of coarse seen such things before, but, usually he gave those kinds of men a wide berth.

Nobody had really explained to Remy exactly why he had to lie on the dining room table nor was an explanation given as to why Jean was visibly upset. Scott had just patted him on the shoulder and told him to lie still and it would all be find. Warren had given him a quick hug before quickly turning away to brush a hand over his face and retreat to Betsy's side. Even Logan seemed gruffer than usual. The man in the cape said it was a game, like hide and seek, Remy had to lie on the table close his eyes and count to one hundred. He thought this was rather strange himself but, if Scott, Jean and the others thought it was ok it must be ok to do as this man said. He closed his eyes and began to count, he could hear the strange man saying something almost musically kind of like the voodoo chants he had heard at home. His head began to hurt a little but he didn't stop counting, it was almost like he couldn't stop, the pain got worse but still he couldn't stop, when he got to fifty the pain began to spread. Suddenly there was a sound of glass breaking, and the chanting was abruptly cut off and a thud sounded to the boy's left where the man had been standing. The pain stopped for a second and Remy gave a sigh of relief but before he could reopen his eyes it came back. His head felt as if it was vibrating, his eyes as if they were on fire. Ant seemed to crawling in his ears. Then, blackness.

Scott rushed to the window after the rock had smashed through it. He could see no one on the grounds, who ever had thrown it must have had good aim and a hell of a pitching arm. He scanned past the gates, squinting he thought he saw a flutter of a ragged coats fleeing from the closest line of fence. Before he could say anything Logan was out of the window, sniffing and snarling, he had a scent and there was usually really only one person who brought out this reaction in him. Sabretooth. He made to follow but Logan's growl made it clear he wasn't welcome. He turned instead to see how Dr Strange was faring after the rock to the head had made him fall. Jean and Bobby were helping him up but the man seemed fine apart from a small gash on his forehead. He went to Remy still lying on the table with Warren trying to wake him. The blonde mutant looked up, "He was still counting then he made this kind of mewling noise then went limp, he won't wake up." Betsy tried to enter his mind but was met with a stone wall, even Jean couldn't break through, the professor almost succeeded but the headache it caused forced him to stop when his nose began to bleed. Dr Strange was deposited in a chair as the mutants crowded around their unconscious boy, Warren reached out to stroke his hair as Jean picked up the boys limp hand.

A finger twitched, then the boys eyes flew open. "Oh, Remy! Thank God." Jean practically cried as she wrapped the boy up in her arms. She was surprised however when the little boy pushed her off.
"What da fuck? Chere please give a man room ta breathe, will ya? I get knocked out by dat wizard guy or something? Merde I need a drink, my head's killing me. Who da fuck is dat back there with their hand on my head. Ange? Homme step away eh?" Warren pulled his hand away as if he had been burned. Jean creased her brows in confusion. "Remy?" The boy mirrored her confused expression.

"Oui chere dats my name. You ok? y' look a little pale there."

Scott moved so he was in the boy's line of sight, "Remy, how old are you?" The boy laughed now as if this was some joke they were all playing on him.

"'Bout twenty three/twenty four give or take a coupla' years you know I ain't exactly sure Summers. What with all de questions? I been out fo' a while?" Remy look around at his team mates and seeing their expressions lost his smile, becoming slightly worried now he went to reach into his coat pocket for his cigarettes. He wasn't wearing his coat, looking down at his body he realised why. "Someone want to tell me why I look like I should be in fucking power pack?"

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