Clothes Maketh The Man

by Beckymonster

Summary

Late night chess, laundry and falling in love.

Notes

My heartfelt thanks to Afrocurl for beta'ing duties above and beyond the call of kink-hitting:)

The pretty hotel receptionist's regret was obvious in her voice. "I'm sorry Dr. Xavier, we cannot get through to Virginia 555 306 at this time."

Charles nodded, raising a hand to his temple as he fought the desire to try another way. His way. "That's all right, would you mind trying again in an hour or so?" he asked politely.

"Yes sir, I will." she replied. "Have a good evening now."

"Thank you," Charles replied to the sound of the dial tone.

He returned the phone receiver to it's cradle before reaching up to loosen his tie; his reasons for phoning were all above board. Charles just wanted to hear Raven's voice, share with her the successes of the day and yes, okay, make sure that she was well. He was allowed to worry, it was what big brothers did.
Charles was rolling his tie up when he heard a knock on the door to his hotel room.

"Come in," he yelled knowing full well who it was. The door was locked but that would be no barrier to his visitor. Sure enough, the metal tumblers in the lock turned and the door opened.

Erik Lehnsherr stood in the doorway, a bottle of good scotch and two tumbler glasses in his hands.

"If I remember correctly, you said something about a game of chess?"

Charles grinned, waving for him to come into his room. "Indeed I did," he said, moving towards his case to pull out the travel chess set he had stowed away.

If he was honest with himself, Charles hadn't expected to see Erik show up at his door at all. A handsome man like that, who had turned the heads of quite a few of the ladies they had met today, he could have spent the rest of the evening far more pleasurably than playing chess with Charles.

Secretly Charles felt guilty about how he had beaten those lovely ladies to secure Erik's attentions for the evening. He wasn't sure what that said about him.

Chess set in hand, he turned back toward Erik, standing in the middle of the room, glancing around for a place to sit; of which there were none. While Charles thanked the CIA for bankrolling their recruitment drive, they could learn a thing or two about not cutting corners where accommodation was concerned.

Still, while it might not be up to his usual standards, the room was clean and it was comfortable. Just a bit small.

"We'll use the bed to set up on," Charles commented as he placed the set down. He glanced up, "If you don't mind?"

Erik shook his head, "No, this is fine." he stepped towards the dresser. "Do you want ice?"

Charles shook his head and tried not to stare a moment longer than was polite at Erik. It wasn't easy.

Especially with Erik, having shucked his jacket, tie and shirt leaving his suit pants and white undershirt, both of which looked like they were cut to fit him just so. Not that Charles was complaining. Not at all, the way those pants highlighted some of Erik's best features would keep in Charles' jerk-off collection for a good couple of weeks.

Obviously, Charles would die of embarrassment before he ever breathed a word of his 'feelings' for Erik to the other man. Better for all that way. He was not going to jeopardize what could be a life-defining friendship, one on a par with what he had with Raven, over the fact that he was a firm '2' teetering towards '3' on Mr Kinsey's scale and Erik was more likely a stone cold '0'.

What the eyes do not see and so on.

Still, in an effort to make Erik feel more comfortable as he mixed the drinks, Charles shucked his shirt. Cursing (again) the base laundry for their unprofessional attitudes that left him with a undershirt that would have looked far better on a man three times his proportions. Truly, it dwarfed him, making him look like a child dressing up in his father's clothes. It was most annoying.

Although it was a bother, it was a minor one and as the only real frustration of the day, Charles was willing to overlook it.
He had possibly one of the best days of his life; what with being able to ‘play tourist’ with Erik around New York, (gently) tug on the chains of their CIA handlers. An excellent dinner in charming company (again, Erik) as well as a most enjoyable night at a rather lovely gentlemen's club where they were able to succeed in recruiting another mutant to their side.

All in all a very good day. With a game of chess (or two) against a worthy opponent to round it out.

It was a feat of engineering and luck that three objects (Charles, Erik and the chessboard) were all able to fit onto the bed with some comfort. Erik passed him a scotch and the game began.

“We have a meeting with our CIA guard dogs in the morning, don’t we?”

“Yes, we do,” Charles noted as he made his opening gambit, moving a pawn forward. “And even though we successfully recruited Angel tonight, they are not going to easily forget the how and the where-”

“Or the fact that they were not invited,” Erik mused, making his first move.

“Quite,” Charles remarked as he curled up on the rather comfortable bed and dedicated his considerable energies to meeting Erik’s challenge.

The match, while not up to their ‘usual’ standard, was exactly what Charles needed after the day; something to allow him to unwind and let his mind tire itself out as much as his body was so he could rest easily in a strange bed. Whether Charles jerked off to the image of his new best friend before turning over to sleep dreamlessly, was no one's business but his.

The game was progressing well when Charles broke the silence in the room:

“I’m surprised that you’re spending the night with me, playing chess, when you could be enjoying the company of a beautiful woman,” he announced as he claimed one of Erik’s pawns.

That earned Charles a look that could have dried a martini, had there been one around.

“Perhaps that is not what I wanted tonight,” Erik noted calmly as he moved one of his knights. “I’m in a strange city, perhaps I wanted the comfort of the familiar.”

While Charles had promised not to ‘read’ Erik, he had become accustomed enough to the other man’s body language enough to know when he wasn’t being completely truthful. Just like now.

“My friend,” Charles began, sounding tarter than he intended, “There were quite a few young ladies tonight who were very close to throwing themselves at you, you know.”

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“Were they now?” Erik asked, an amused glint in his eye as he gestured to Charles to make his move. “I didn’t really notice.”

“Indeed they were!” Charles noted with a laugh as he perused the board before him. “Their thoughts were verging on pornographic,” he glanced up at Erik. “No, actually, they were pornographic!” he stated in the interests of correctness. He hoped that Erik wouldn’t catch onto the fact that he actually looked and ask him what his reactions were to such thoughts. Voyeurism was one thing, base envy was entirely another.

"And what about that lovely lady who bumped into us on the ferry to Liberty Island this morning?” Erik asked innocently, moving one of his knights. "She seemed very taken with you,”

"As much as you were taken with Lady Liberty herself,” Charles replied, "unless I translated
"Ist sie nicht großartig," Erik repeated in the same wondering, awestruck tone he had used earlier that day. "It's a magnificent statue and not just because of all the metal that makes up her composition." he waved a bishop in Charles' general direction. "And I would thank you not to change the subject."

"Erik!" Charles exclaimed, chuckling, "She was a married woman and as lovely as she was; not to mention regardless of the fact that her husband would be perfectly amenable so long as he could watch. No thank you." Charles considered himself 'open-minded' but if he was going to 'perform' in such a fashion then let it be for people he cared about.

Erik's expression was unreadable, so Charles tapped his temple for emphasis, hoping that would bring the matter to a close. It didn't.

"I mean, yes, I might have said yes to the waitress at the restaurant where we had dinner; she was gorgeous and certainly up for it," Charles continued, staring down at the chessboard. If what he picked up was anything to go by, all he'd have to do was talk dirty in his very proper accent and he was in. "But somehow events got in the way." Charles continued snidely.

Erik met his gaze squarely on, looking utterly nonplussed. "She was after your wallet, Charles," he replied, Charles forebore to reply, he could detect and deal with gold diggers quite well, thanks for asking.

The match continued in silence but the subject was far from dead. Especially as Charles had one of his 'eureka' moments as he captured one of Erik's few remaining pawns.

"If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were jealous," Charles joked lightly.

Erik's reaction told a completely different story. He pushed himself off the bed and strode towards the window, his body language a melange of guilt, relief and fear; all the while his back turned towards Charles.

For a moment Charles wondered if he had fallen down the proverbial rabbit hole because how else could this turn for the Dali-esque surreal be explained? Erik was acting in the most peculiar way, as if he was... well, he was jealous.

Charles reacted in the only way he could. He started to laugh. Loudly and slightly hysterically.

When he had finally contained his laughter, Charles pushed himself up off the bed to walk over to the window and his friend. He didn't dare hope that he had read Erik's body language correctly and he certainly wouldn't break his promise. This could be too important for that.

At the window, Erik stood staring out at the twinkling lights of the New York skyline, resolutely ignoring the man who was now standing next to him.

Not quite knowing what to say, Charles stared out at the view as well, waiting for inspiration to take hold. When it didn't, he decided to take a more 'direct' route. After all, he was a scientist and what better way of proving his hypothesis, that Erik felt the same way about him as he did about Erik, than by conducting an experiment?

Charles wasn't going to let the small fact that he had only ever experimented on fruit flies up to this point get in his way. Nor did he want to think about the fact that fruit flies were unlikely to break his nose (and his heart) if he was wrong. Faint heart never won fair metallokinetic and all that.

With gentle hands, Charles reached out to Erik, grasping the warm flesh of his arm, turned him
sideways to face him before stepping into Erik's personal space. With the same gentleness, he leant up to cup Erik's chin before leaning in to brush his lips against Erik's.

If all Charles could have was the gentle press of dry lips against his, he would be content with that.

His heart was jumping as if to the newest dance craze as he made to step back, to give Erik some room when Charles felt a hand, Erik's hand, come to rest on the back of his neck.

"Charles, please don't be a tease," Erik whispered as he tightened his hand a fraction before releasing it and repeating the action, tightening and releasing. If Charles didn't know any better, Erik was massaging his neck. The needy moan that escaped Charles' mouth would have been embarrassing had Charles cared; he didn't, so it wasn't.

"Never." he stated, examining Erik's countenance, hoping for a clue as to the other man's mind. "I've wanted to do that since the moment I fished you out of the cold waters of Miami harbour." he replied honestly.

Seemingly, Erik was on the same page as Charles when it came to actions speaking louder than words because the next thing Charles knew, Erik was kissing him. One kiss became two, three four. Sweet, delicious, drugging kisses as Erik wrapped his arms around Charles and Charles reciprocated with alacrity.

How long they would have stood there kissing so passionately Charles could not tell, as that was the moment that the phone decided to cheerily ring out, making both of them break away.

"Um, that will be Raven on the phone from Virginia," Charles explained wryly, hoping against hope that Erik would understand.

Erik stepped back with a nod, a small smile playing around his kiss swollen lips. "I'm not going anywhere Charles," he murmured as he took Charles' hand to lead him back to the bed where their unfinished chess match had been abandoned.

"Really?" Charles asked, feeling foolishly happy in that moment. He glanced towards the phone, "I'll go get that then!" he stated as he quickly walked to the bed, throwing himself onto it with such force that the chessboard fell to the floor with a considerable clatter in time with him picking up the phone.

"Oh dear, hello Raven!" Charles exclaimed as he watched Erik shake his head fondly as he moved towards the bed to pick up the discarded board and pieces.

"What are you up to Charles Xavier?" Raven asked, suspicion pouring down the line. "You haven't done anything dumb like seduce some floozie who fell for your dumbass lines, did you?"

"Nothing of the sort, my dear!" he noted, not caring if she read the truth into his words. Although that was no way to talk about Erik.

"Then what have you been doing?" she asked, sounding slightly less suspicious. "I hope Erik has been keeping you out of mischief."

Charles tried not to look at Erik as he regaled Raven with their exploits of the day. The CIA were picking up the tab on this one, so Charles felt that he could talk for as long as he wished. It was only fair after all. It didn't take a telepath to know how delighted Raven was with the news that their first new recruit was another woman; it pleased him to know that Raven would have (hopefully) a girlfriend as well as her brother and Erik around.
Their conversation moved onto other subjects when Raven suddenly exclaimed "Oh! I forgot to mention, you'd better tell Erik this one too," she explained, "The base laundry did a number on yours and his undershirts. From what Hank was able to find out -" Charles manfully stomped on his overprotective anger towards Hank - the boy was hopelessly besotted with Raven - but he still needed to learn that appearances weren't everything before Charles could be truly happy that they would work out. "They got them muddled up, so you're wearing Erik's and he's wearing yours!" she said before dissolving into a fit of giggles.

For a moment Charles stared at the receiver and then at Erik, who having overheard, was just as surprised as he was.

"It explains quite a bit," Erik noted wryly as he wrapped his hands in the hem of the shirt, preparing to peel it off. Charles reached out to stop him.

"Raven, I have to go, I'll speak to you tomorrow!" Charles stated quickly. "I love you, bye!" he finished putting the phone down. She'd be cranky at him, but he'd make it up to her by apologising profusely and buying her a new scarf from Saks before they left town tomorrow to mollify her.

He reached out again towards Erik, curling his hands into the warm cotton of the shirt. "Let me help you with that." he said mischievously tugging it up over Erik's head and letting it fall to the floor. With a shark-like grin, Erik returned the favour, before pulling Charles into a passionate kiss.

* * *

Later, much later, when the sweat they have worked up had cooled, unlike their ardour, Erik leant over the side of the bed to pick up a shirt.

Charles couldn't blame him, even in the city, it's cool at night and the last thing they need is for either of them to catch a cold. It was only when Erik righted himself on the bed, the t-shirt gathered up in his hands that Charles recognised the provenance of it.

He reached out to touch Erik on the arm. It stayed Erik's movements, he turned to face Charles, who was still lying indolently on the bed, looking like he had just had the time of his life.

Which would have been no lie, as he just had.

"That's my shirt, isn't it?" he asked quietly, trailing his fingers slowly up and down the skin of Erik's arm.

Erik looked down at the shirt in his hands. "Yes, it is," he noted quietly, his eyes warm with affection for Charles. "I was going to get it laundered and give it back to you-"

Charles pushed himself up to sit next to Erik. He proffered his hand to the other man. "Can I take it now please?" he asked, proud of the fact that his voice did not quaver. Charles wasn't too sure about the sanity of what he was asking for and sure as hell wanted to get it done before his nerve failed.

Erik gave him a rather puzzled look but placed the item in Charles hand all the same. As Charles went to draw it to him, he found himself drawn to Erik instead and a gentle kiss on the lips.

Charles was not going to complain about that bait and switcheroo. Not in the slightest. He slid his arms into the shirt before pulling it over his head. As he did so, he caught a breath of Erik's scent, his cologne, his hair creme and the clean scent of the man. He closed his eyes basking
in it for a moment.

When he opened them, he could see that Erik was looking at him rather... strangely.

"What?" he asked, sounding a little more brusque than he had hoped for. Especially after the rather enjoyable few hours they had just shared. "Smell is a very powerful memory stimulant," he explained, staring at Erik, daring him to challenge him on it.

What Erik did instead, was to pick up his shirt, the one that Charles had been wearing and shrug it on. It surprised Charles how such an innocent action could make him blush so much.

"If I am not mistaken, it's used as a method of marking as well," Erik rumbled, his voice coloured by a variety of sensations and thoughts that Charles felt he could, possibly, begin to entertain. Want, need, permission, acceptance.

He reached out to Erik, curling his hand around the other man's neck, pulling him closer. "It is indeed. Do you object?" he asked, his voice wavering with the fear of being refused. That Erik had accepted his clumsy advances and had reciprocated them was treasure unlooked for and treasured because of it.

That what they had shared in the last few hours could become something more... permanent wasn't something that Charles had considered.

Still, he was not one to look a gift horse in the proverbial.

"No, not at all." Erik murmured as he leant forward to kiss Charles again.

* * *

Raven nimbly ran up the steps to the auditorium where the Senate hearings on the so-called 'Kelly Act' were being held. Not a bad feat for someone wearing three inch heels and a pencil-skirt suit.

This, like all the other acts dedicated to dealing with the so-called 'mutant' issue would end up on the great scrap heap of democracy. Even so, it was an opportunity for her to leave Westchester for a few days and to see her tax dollars at work, so it wasn't all bad.

The whole turning the heads of the grey-haired politicians because she looked like a swimsuit model thing was just an added bonus. Or at least that's what she told Hank and Az. what they didn't know and all that.

Charles and Erik were standing in the main corridor, outside the auditorium with Jean, Scott and Alex. It was Jean's turn to speak this time - she needed the practice if nothing else.

"Raven, so glad you could make it," Erik greeted, taking her hand and pulling her close to plant a kiss on her cheek; before letting her brother do the same. As the de-facto leaders of the Mutant movement, they were expected to be here, to ensure that the voice of mutants was heard and their rights protected as peacefully as they had been for the last fifty years.

The years had been (mostly) kind to them. Erik mellowing from ginger shark to silver fox and as for Charles, apart from the alopecia attack twenty years ago, he was still as beautiful as he’d ever been. She loved them and they loved each other and her.

"Miss watching another politician's career go down in flames?" she asked, lipstick red lips curving into a smile. "Of course not, how many is this now?"

"Kelly is the fourth, my dear," Charles noted as he stood back from her, his hand reaching out to
take Erik's into his. She smiled widely at the gesture, even after all the years they couldn't keep their hands off each other. And long may they remain so, she thought proudly.

It was as the usher announced that the session was about to begin, that she noticed it.

"Erik?" she asked as they filed in to take seats in the public galleries. "What are you doing wearing one of Charles' dress shirts?" She noted the grins the two men shared. "Or don't I want to know?" she asked, half afraid of the answer.

"Why ask question to which you already know the answers?" Charles noted with a laugh as they took their seats and the hearing began.

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