

The Women of the X-Men in:

GEROPHOBIA

PART 2

By ChronoEclipse

“There’s no place to sit around here! When is the city going to provide enough benches for old women like us!” Magik grumbled having suddenly been turned into a cantankerous old woman

Her weak wrinkled arms were too frail to keep holding her cane above her head and she set it down with a grumble.

“After my second hip surgery the doctor says that I can’t be standing for more than 10 minutes at a time! And today I can barely hold my cane on account of my arthritis.” X-23 wheezed.

“Oh my arthritis is flaring up again as well. I think there’s going to be weather. You know when I was a girl the weather would just change at the drop of a hat – it would be sunny and then cloudy and then sunny again and then...” Storm began to ramble.

“What was that sugah? You talkin’ about somebody wearin’ leather? Who’d try to pull that off at our age?” Rogue asked, looking excited to hear the answer and get some hot gossip.

“WEATHER! WEATHER you old country ham!” Magik shouted in a shaky voice.

“Heather? Ah don’t know any Heather’s... my grandbabies are named Faye, Anna May, Pauline...” Rogue began listing.

“WEATHER!” X-23 and Magik both shouted and then broke into separate wheezy coughing fits.

“Oh let me get mah hearin’ aid up...” Rogue replied and reached up to fuss with the device in her ear.

A loud piercing feedback sound came from Rogue’s ear causing some of the less hearing impaired among them to cringe in discomfort. Jean smiled sweetly at her elderly southern friend and began to dote on her.

“Let me get that for you dearie. These doo-dads can be a pain for women our age. There you go, is that better Roberta?” Jean asked as she adjusted the volume on Rogue’s hearing aid.

“Mah names Rogue.” The power-absorbing mutant replied.

“Oh? Why did I think your name was Roberta... anyhoo, I suppose I should remember that since we’ve been friends for... oh I don’t know how long.” Jean rattled.

“Kitty, how long have we known each other?” Storm asked equally fuzzy on the subject.

The only response from Shadowcat however was some light snores as the shrunken old woman had nodded off while leaning on her cane.

“Kitty? Magik, would you wake Kitty up?” Jean asked.

Magik tapped her friend’s shoulder with her gnarled hand, stirring Shadowcat awake.

“Eh? What?” Kitty asked in surprise as she awoke suddenly.

“You fell asleep again!” Magik chided her.

Kitty nodded, looking a bit confused.

“Oh... what are you all doing here? Is it my birthday?” She asked with a look of senile serenity on her wrinkled face.

“No we’re... what were we doing again?” X-23 asked as her dentures slipped out of her mouth.

The old female wolverine struggled to lean over, gripping her cane to grab her false teeth.

“Are we waiting for my grandkids to pick us up? My grandson Chester just got a new Jeep!” Rogue mumbled.

“I don’t care as long as we can sit down!” Magik grunted.

“You know... back in my day people didn’t always need a reason to be standing around... sometimes folks would just gather for no reason and that was good enough.” Storm interjected.

“No no dearie... I’m pretty sure there was a reason that we were all here. Oh maybe that nice young lady knows... excuse me? Do you know what my friends and I were doing here again?” Jean asked, hobbling up to Gera.

The young evil mutant had been watching the aged x-men babble and gripe in elderly confusion for the past few minutes and was thoroughly amused at how the formerly formidable heroes had withered into pathetic doddering old biddies.

“Yes! You adorable old ladies are here to serve me! I am your new queen now! Gera the Queen of the Elderly!” Gera declared with an evil laugh.

The decrepit x-men all looked at one another, blinking in confusion.

“No, that doesn’t seem right.” Storm said matter-of-factly.

“Yeah, I don’t think that’s it...” Jean agreed but gave Gera an appreciative smile for trying to be helpful.

The other woman mumbled in agreement with Storm and Jean.

“You’re in my bubble and so you should be following my commands. Bow to me.” Gera said, sounding a little surprised and annoyed.

The old women looked at one another again and shook their heads. X-23 who still hadn’t straightened up from bending over to pick up her fallen dentures was the only one who looked to be bowing.

“I’m not bowing! I just threw out my back bending over to pick up my choppers!” The aged mutant clarified.

Rogue shuffled over and helped her friend straighten back up with a series of cracks and pops as old bones and joints realigned.

“Huh.” Gera huffed in disbelief.

She tapped her finger on her smooth chin and then attempted to command them again. She waved her hands in the air and name tags appeared on the x-women’s saggy chests showing their real and code names as well as their powersets.

“Okay let’s try this. Magik, you and Rogue here go fetch me a new throne to replace the one you ladies broke. Laura and Kitty can take over doing my manicure while Storm keeps things a cool 65 degrees and sunny and Jean you scan the town to see if there’s anyone left under the age of 70.” Gera ordered them, wondering if they needed their names and specific directions in order to obey her.

The old women wet their lips and turned around to talk to one another completely ignoring the orders that they had received.

“It’s about time for Bingo dears. I can pick up the minds of a couple old gals heading down to the bingo hall.” Jean informed them.

“Bingo sounds mighty nice!” Rogue agreed.

“Bingo!” Kitty shouted as if they were already playing.

“As long as there are comfortable chairs there!” Magik grunted.

“I have to use the bathroom!” X-23 announced.

“I also need to find a bathroom.” Storm added.

Gera was stunned as she watched the ladies shuffle away from her. She was a bit disappointed that they didn’t follow her commands, she had hoped to use their incredible powers for various fun and entertaining things. But the thought of this group of superheroes being reduced to a bunch of senile hapless old coots who just wanted to go play bingo was just so hilarious! She let them go and decided to worry about enthralling them to her whims later.

“You there! Mayor! And you two old goats. You’re my new throne now.” She snapped.

Three old men nodded and quickly hobbled over to crouch down and form a place for the young woman to sit with their wizened bodies.

Meanwhile the X-Grannies were slowly shuffling their way down into town, getting lost and confused at several points along the way.

“Oh did you say something to me dearie?” Jean asked Magik as they plodded along.

Magik scowled crankily at the faded redhead.

“No! Quit asking me that, you old ninny! It’s probably the damn teenagers slackin’ around telepathically in your head the way they always hang around on my lawn!” The old Russian woman snapped in grumpy voice.

Magik had been constantly complaining about teenagers for the past several minutes as if they were the true scourges of the world, despite there being no one under the age of 60 in sight and also despite the fact that she herself had been a teenager not one hour ago.

“How much farther? I can’t do all of this walking. My bunions are flaring up – I need to go in for a second surgery later this month... if you ladies want to come back to my house later I can show you some x-rays from my last visit to the doctor...” X-23 mumbled.

“Somebody wake up Kitty, she’s fallen asleep again.” Storm quavered.

Rogue tapped on Kitty’s shoulder stirring her awake.

“Wha? Who are all of you? I was with a nice young man and he kissed me right on the lips...” Shadowcat mumbled as she looked around blearily.

“Heh! The only *young* man that kisses you these days is probably your great-grandson!” Magik cackled.

“Speakin’ of grandkids! It’s too bad my granddaughter ain’t here or she could take us all over to the bingo parlor in her mini-van!” Rogue informed them.

Jean heard another voice in her head from a nearby citizen mumbling about needing to remember to buy prune juice.

“Did you say something to me dearie?” Jean asked.

“No!” Several of her elderly companions grumbled back.

After several minutes of circling the block in confusion the group finally made there was to the ‘Bingo Hall’. It had actually been the local high school but since there was no one around young enough to attend school anymore it had been repurposed into something more age appropriate for the venerable townsfolk.

And it proved to be one of the most active spots around, with a solid third of the town gathered in the school's auditorium. Dozens of elderly men and women were seated at tables napping or trying to follow along with their cards as one of the former student teachers at the school – now a frail shriveled old woman with shaky hands and big coke bottle glasses, read the balls as two of her old former students slowly turned the ball spinner.

“B15...” The aged woman rattled into a microphone.

“Oh fun! Ah haven’t done something like this in a dog’s age! Ah’ll go get us gals some bingo cards!” Rogue said clapping happily as she waddled down to where the blank cards were stacked.

The rest of the ladies all gathered at an empty cafeteria table. Grunting and groaning as they eased their rickety bodies onto the bench seats.

“This seats too cold!” Magik immediately grumbled.

“It’s too hard! Did anyone bring my hemorrhoid donut?” X-23 asked, looking around.

“Oh I must have eaten the last one dearie. I’m sorry...” Jean replied politely, thinking that Laura was talking about pastry donuts.

“G34...” The old woman at the front called out.

Rogue came hobbling back happily with a stack of cards in her wrinkly hands and a visor inexplicably on her white and gray haired head.

“Here we go! One for you! One for you! One for you! One for you! One for you and three for me!” She said passing out the bingo cards.

“Did I win?” Kitty asked with a serene smile on her wrinkly face.

“We haven’t started playing yet! Don’t think you can just cheat and declare yourself the winner and we’ll all go along with it. Teens today all think they can just get participation prizes for showing up! Well there’s no participation prizes here!” Magik snarled, farting involuntarily at the end of her rant.

“...Actually there are participation prizes. We all get a pair of orthopedic socks for playin’ today!” Rogue corrected her surly old friend.

“Oh I could use those... I can’t wear socks anymore... I have poor circulation and anything with a tight band just completely cuts off my blood flow.” X-23 said as she attempted to lift her pale veiny leg up onto the bench to illustrate what she was talking about.

“I07...” The woman at the front called.

“Oo that’s one for me! This is more fun than a monkey in a paint parade!... I play this at home with mah great-grandbabies! I like tuh give ‘em a big smooch on their precious little heads every time they get a bingo but sometimes I end up accidentally absorbin’ their powers and I suddenly know all about the show Paw Patrol!” Rogue rambled as she marked the spots on her cards.

“The print on these cards is too small! I can’t read the damn letters or numbers!” Magik griped as she held her card closely up to her aged eyes.

“You are all being too loud! I can not hear the magistrate declaring the proper information codes!” Storm bellowed in frustration.

“O19...” The old woman at the front rattled in a sleepy voice.

Kitty had nodded off again and was snoring loudly. Rogue moved to wake her again but the shriveled elderly woman began to phase, phasing through the table and shuffling off half-asleep.

“Off to the little girls room...” She mumbled groggily as she floated off like a ghost.

The other old women all looked at one another with a bit of concern except for Rogue who was too engrossed in filling out her bingo card.

“I better go check on the poor dear... could use a trip to the bathroom myself! I haven’t gone in three days because of my awful constipation...” Jean overshared with a chuckle.

The puffy old telepath slowly creaked back up to her feet and grabbed her cane as she hobbled off after Kitty.

“I have terrible constipation myself! It’s like my insides are all fused metal! I have to take stool softeners every morning!” X-23 grumbled.

“N30...” The old woman at the front announced.

Magik swatted at Rogue’s hand as she attempted to mark her card.

“You can’t mark a spot when the number hasn’t even been called yet!” Magik snapped at the old southern woman.

“They just called that number sweetie, ya’ll just don’t have yah hearin’ aid up loud enough to hear it!” Rogue replied patiently with a sweet older voice.

Magik snorted and folded her wrinkled arms across her saggy chest.

“Hmph, I’m not going to participate in this game if everyone is going to cheat! And the damn teenagers must have stolen my bingo card when I wasn’t looking and swapped it for a new one because this one is mostly blank!” The elderly teleporter stated bitterly.

“I must have silence to continue! I am waiting on the magistrate to call upon the power of B18!” Storm declared with elderly gravitas, she lifted her shaky old hands up to call upon a thunder cloud but all she could manage at her age was making a bit of fog around their table.

“Now I really can’t read this...” X-23 mumbled holding her card up to her nose.

In the hallway Jean had managed to find the sleepwalking Kitty and hobbled a bit faster to catch up to her. Kitty turned the corner to glide into the bathroom and Jean did the same, thinking that the door was open since Kitty just passed into it. However the elderly phaser had been non-corporeal when she had entered the bathroom so she had easily phased through the door but the solid skin and bones Jean Gray had no such luck and smacked into comically.

Her glasses fell off of her face but luckily they were attached to a beaded chain around her neck and just fell down onto her saggy chest. Jean composed herself and fluffed her tinted red hair before opening the door and shuffling inside.

“Kitty dear? Do you need assistance?” Jean asked sweetly.

Kitty mumbled something incoherent as Jean clomped over to the bathroom stall. She found Kitty sitting there singing nursery rhymes to herself. Jean entered the stall with her and helped her friend get her pants off. Under Kitty’s x-men uniform she had a pair of lacy panties on that she had gotten dressed into when she was a young woman that morning. Now they contained the wrinkly ass of an old woman.

“Oh Kitty dear... you’re much too old for underwear like that! Who are we trying to impress? Women our age really should be wearing adult diapers for the extra assurance!” Jean said as she doted on her elderly friend.

Once Kitty was all set Jean helped her get dressed again and washed both of their hands, also taking a moment to fix Kitty’s messy white hair that was currently making her look like a crazy cat lady.

“There, now you’re all cleaned up. It’s time to get back to... oh what were doing again? For the life of me I can’t remember... were we saving a town from a villain? Oh that doesn’t sound right... at our age? Can you imagine!? Ah well, let’s get out of here and maybe someone can tell us what it is we’re supposed to be doing.” Jean rattled absentmindedly.

She linked arms with her sleepy companion and they shuffled together out of the bathroom.

Back in the bingo hall Magik and X-23 were arguing about whether it was too hot or too cold in the room.

“It’s too cold! Some teenagers must have stolen my sweater!” Magik snapped.

“You’re only cold because you’re dressed like a hussy! It’s not good for my hyper tension. Can somebody call my doctor?” X-23 moaned.

Her dentures slipped out of her mouth and fell onto her bingo card.

“Hey! That’s cheating, you can’t mark all of those spaces!” Magik shouted.

“I think the magistrate has fallen asleep. Back in my day they would have a young person in charge of such events. That way they had the energy to call out all of the numbers clearly and concisely. This reminds me of a time over forty years ago...” Storm began to ramble, getting a bit bored.

Rogue looked across at her three cards.

“Ah’m a bit in the weeds here with all of mine. I’m just missing one number about 8 different ways...” Rogue said scratching her gray head.

Jean and Kitty shuffled back and sat down. Jean looked over to see a bit of drool on Storm’s wrinkled cheek.

“Oh you’ve got a bit of gunk dearie, let me get that for you...” Jean said as she pulled out a napkin she had stuffed into her purse and wiped at her friends jowly face.

One of the old men who was operating the ball basket accidentally fell against it causing a loud clang. The woman calling out the numbers jumped awake, startled by the crashing sound.

“I11...” She quavered into the microphone.

Kitty Pryde woke up suddenly and looked down at her bingo card.

“BINGO!” She chirped happily.

The other x-women all looked over at her. Rogue examined her card.

“Well bust my buttons ya’ll, she actually won!” Rogue chuckled.

Magik groaned and tossed her card up in the air, mumbling about cheating. Jean and Storm clapped supportively and X-23 shuffled around asking other old folks for their jackets since she was now too cold.

“Ya’ll ready to play again? I’m fixin’ for a rematch!” Rogue said cracking her swollen old knuckles.

After a few more games the x-grannies slowly got up and headed back outside to get some fresh air. They were feeling a bit peckish and interested in finding comfier seats.

“What were we doing here again? Is this where we live?” Jean asked.

The other women paused to answer, stroking their jiggly chins and scratching their gray heads. None of them could quite remember.

TO BE CONTINUED...