



CHAPTER 1 THE MUTANT AT THE WHITE HOUSE

The White House, Washington, DC. President McKenna was working at his desk. All around the building, guards were looking for anything unusual.

A strange man in a hat and dark glasses walked up to one guard.

‘Excuse me, are you lost?’ asked the guard.

The man didn’t answer. Suddenly the man jumped up over the guard and started to run really fast. Everything happened very quickly. Guards took out their guns, people shouted into radios: ‘We have a problem. Move President McKenna!’

A guard fired his gun, but – BAMF! – the strange man disappeared in a cloud of dark blue smoke. BAMF! He appeared again, closer to the guard, and hit him. His hat and glasses were off now. The man was dark blue – a mutant*!

Doors and walls couldn’t stop this mutant. BAMF! BAMF! BAMF! He continued to disappear and appear again in a different place. Then he hit another guard and disappeared again. He was very fast and he was jumping everywhere. Nobody could hit him.

* A mutant is someone with special powers.



President McKenna was behind a wall of guards, all with their guns out and ready. It was no good. BAMF! BAMF! More guards fell and then the mutant had McKenna against his desk. He took out a knife, held it high, and then ...

One of McKenna’s men fired his gun and hit the mutant in the arm. BAMF! The mutant dropped the knife and disappeared again. This time he didn’t come back.

President McKenna looked at the knife next to him in the desk. It had a sign on it with just three words: FREE MUTANTS NOW!



There were mountains all around the cold waters of Lake Alkali in Canada. There were trees and snow for miles around, but no people, nobody except Logan.

He was here because he wanted to discover his past. What happened to him here years ago? Who put metal

in his body and metal claws in his hands? He remembered nothing. Charles Xavier – Professor X – sent him here. Maybe here he could find some answers.

There were buildings, but they were all empty. His past was still as empty as the land around him.



Storm was one of Professor X's mutant team called the X-Men. She was also a teacher at his school for young mutants. Today, the students were at a museum and Storm was telling the younger children about humans from the past.

Jean Grey was also one of the X-Men and a teacher at the school. She was at the museum, too. But today there was a problem. Suddenly she could hear everything people were thinking. That was part of Jean's power – to read the minds of others. But her power wasn't usually this strong, and it was impossible to stop.

'Jean, are you OK?' asked her boyfriend, Cyclops. He was also one of the X-Men.

'I ... I'm fine,' she answered.

But Cyclops knew her very well. 'You've been different these last few weeks,' he said.

'You know I can read people's minds,' answered Jean with a frightened look. 'But now I can hear *everything*.'

'And that's not all, is it?' Cyclops asked.

It was true. Jean's other power – to move things with her mind – was also much stronger now.

'My dreams are getting worse,' she said. 'I think something terrible is going to happen ...'

Cyclops held her in his arms. 'Nothing is going to happen to you. I will not let it.'



Three teenagers from the school – Rogue, Bobby and John – sat in the museum café. John was playing with a lighter in his hand – *on, off, on, off*.

Two human teenagers stood next to him. 'It's an easy question,' said one of the teenagers. 'Can I have a light?'

'Why are you being so stupid?' asked the other teenager.

John just smiled. 'Because I can.'

'Can I have a light?'

The teenager's voice was angry now. *On, off, on, off*. 'Sorry, I can't help you,' laughed John.

'Stop this, John,' said Bobby. He didn't want any trouble.

'I'm just having some fun,' said John, but then one of the human teenagers pulled the lighter from his hand. He gave John an unfriendly smile. It was a big mistake. John, also called Pyro, was a mutant with power over fire. Suddenly the teenager's arm was on fire. He fell back and cried out. John just laughed.

Bobby was on his feet. He used *his* power – over ice – and the fire went out.

The human teenager gave them a frightened look. First fire, then ice. What was happening? All around them people were looking.

Then suddenly everybody stopped, everything was



quiet. Nobody in the museum moved, except the mutants.

John looked around in surprise. 'Did *you* do this?' he asked Bobby.

'No,' said a deep voice. 'I did.'

It was Charles Xavier – Professor X. He had power over other people's minds and he was using this now on all the humans in the museum. He was looking at John. 'If you want to use your power outside again, *don't*,' he said angrily.

The only other sound came from a TV at the back of the café. The mutants turned to it. There was a news story. It was about the mutant at the White House.

'It's time to leave,' said Cyclops.

'You're right,' answered Xavier.

A moment later, the humans in the museum were moving and talking again.



The X-Men were back at the school in Westchester. They were discussing the mutant at the White House.

'I think this is Magneto's work,' said Cyclops.

'I don't agree,' said Jean.

Professor X wasn't sure. But they all knew one thing – this was a big problem for every mutant. Now humans were going to hate mutants even more. Mutants were going to be in even more danger. They *had* to find the mutant from the White House.

'I have tried to find him with Cerebro,' said Xavier. The machine, Cerebro, helped Xavier to find people and to read their minds. 'But he's moving all the time. I'm going to try again. And then, Jean and Storm, you will go and get him.'



A scientist called William Stryker was in President McKenna's office.

'What is it, William?' asked McKenna.

'I want to do some special work on the mutant problem.'

Another man came into the room.

'This is Senator Robert Kelly,' said McKenna. 'He's worked on the mutant question for a long time.'

Stryker looked at Kelly. 'But haven't your ideas about mutants changed?' asked the scientist.

Kelly smiled. 'Yes, I understand them a lot better now, I think.'

Stryker began to explain his plan. He put down a photo of a building – Professor X's school. 'Mutants are training here,' he said, 'not far from the city of New York.'

'Where did you get this information?' asked McKenna.

'From a mutant we have in prison,' said Stryker. 'He's called Eric Lensherr.'

Kelly looked up. 'Ah, you have Magneto?'

'Yes,' said Stryker. 'We built his special prison. Magneto can't use his power there.'

McKenna looked at the photo. 'OK, William,' he said. 'You can send in some soldiers and look around. But be careful. I don't want any dead children on the TV news.'



Outside the office, Kelly spoke to Stryker. 'I would like to see Magneto,' he said.

'That won't be possible,' Stryker answered.

'Do you really want to start a fight between humans and mutants?' asked Kelly.

'It has always been a fight,' said Stryker, 'and *we* are going to win.'

As Stryker left, Kelly's eyes turned yellow. This wasn't really Senator Kelly – he was dead. This was a mutant called Mystique. She had the power to look like anybody. And now she had information about her friend, Magneto ...

