

The Women of the X-Men in:

GEROPHOBIA

PART 1

By ChronoEclipse

Cerebro had picked up a mutant signature that had grown exponentially stronger over the past 48 hours and so the X-Men decided to dispatch a team to go and check it out.

Storm, Jean Grey, Rogue, Shadowcat, Magik and X-23 were sent to the small town of Elder Bluffs to meet the new and potentially powerful mutant. But as the six women stepped through Magik's portal onto the main street running through the center of the town they were greeted by a very odd sight.

“What's with all of the olds?” Kitty asked gesturing at the couple dozen people shuffling around the street.

There were elderly shopkeepers tending the entrances to their shops with trembling hands; a pair of elderly police officers snoozing in their cop car; a trio of wrinkle old women with long gray hair chatting with one another as they hobbled down the street dressed in clothing much too young for women that age to wear. No matter where the x-men looked there wasn't a person under 65 anywhere in sight.

“This is... very strange. Are we in some kind of retirement community?” Jean Grey asked.

“We're a ways north a' Florida sugah!” Rogue joked.

“The intel I looked up on this community stated that the median age of its residents was 32.” Storm explained.

“Well... maybe all of the young people took a vacation because everyone here looks old enough to be our grandparents.” Magik said with a smirk.

A geriatric bicyclist peddled by slowly and nearly crashed into them. Rogue flew up and grabbed the old man off of the bike, setting him back down safely on the ground.

“Hey darling, how about your trade in that fancy new bike for a good sturdy walker or somethin’, you’re liable to break a hip on that thing!” The southern gal said to the old man.

He nodded appreciatively and wheezed as he shuffled off.

“Something is very wrong here.” Jean Grey whispered.

The redheaded x-man attempted to scan the minds of the people around them; she focus in on the trio of elderly women gossiping together. For a brief moment she had flashes of the same three women but much younger - teenage girls hanging out and joking around together, but these were recent memories!

“My god!” She gasped.

“What is it Jean?” Shadowcat asked putting a hand on her friends back to steady her as Jean appeared light headed.

“They’re not old at all! Or... they shouldn’t be! These people were all young and vibrant recently.” Jean told the team.

“Think it’s our mutant?” Magik asked cracking her knuckles.

“We must find whoever has done this. But we should act with caution. If the young mutant's powers have just manifested and rapidly aged all of her family and friends then she must be very frightened. Let us see what we can do to help them without rushing head first into battle.” Storm warned.

“Yeah not to mention we don’t want to end up a gaggle of old wrinkly biddies.” Shadowcat added with a smirk.

“This way.” X-23 said pointing down toward the center of town.

“What did you find X-23?” Jean Grey asked.

“I’m picking up a scent.” The brunette young mutant said matter-of-factly.

“Heck, we all are. This whole town stinks like my grand-mammy’s nursin’ home!” Rogue said waving a hand in front of her nose.

“Yes, every where I turn I’m getting a whiff of ‘old person smell’ but down here in addition to that i’m also picking up some floral scents and... tanning oil.” Laura replied.

The group looked at one another in confusion and then decided to head down and check it out.

In the center of town was a large park. A centennial fountain adorned the middle of the park surrounded by benches, cook-out areas, a playground and plenty of grassy spots for picnics.

As the x-ladies made their way through the park the sights only became stranger. Elderly couples were kissing and fooling around with one another on benches; old folks dressed in childrens clothing were struggling to play on the jungle gyms and there was even a very old woman holding a slightly less old but still elderly woman in her arms who was dressed in nothing but a diaper.

“There! What’s that up there?” Magik asked pointing to the top of a grassy knoll in front of them.

They looked up to see a young woman laying out in a sarong and bikini top on a gold lounge being attended to by a half dozen elderly people. An old lady was feeding her grapes while another was struggling to fan her with a large paddle; another pair of grannies were giving her a pedicure while two bald old men were massaging her body and slathering tanning oils onto her young smooth skin.

“Looks like she’s handling turning the entire town into old fogies just fine...” X-23 observed as she popped her claws.

Jean touched her fingers to her temples and closed her eyes.

“I can’t scan her mind! She’s too powerful - and the aged victims... they are trying to resist and terrified about how old they have become but they are completely under her thrall!” The crimson haired mutant informed the rest of the team.

Magik pulled out her sword while Rogue stretched her arms and rolled her shoulders getting ready for a fight. Storm flew up to confront the evil mutant flanked by the rest of the X-women. A storm cloud suddenly appeared, concentrated overhead darkening what had been a bright sunny day.

“You shall released these people and rejuvenate them back to their rightful ages at once!” The white-haired weather manipulator demanded with all of the gravitas of a goddess.

The young woman in the lounge looked up at the powerful women that were gathered in front of her looking to battle. She grinned and tilted her sunglasses down her nose, seemingly unintimidated by Storms show of fury and power.

“Hi there! You’re new here. What are your names? I’m Gera.” The attractive young woman said sitting up to greet them.

“What have you done to all of these people?” Kitty Pryde asked watching a few of the elderly towns folk crumple to the ground from exhaustion.

A bald wrinkled old man with a long white beard shuffled over struggling to hold a platter with a beverage on it. Gera took the glass off the tray before it completely spilled and took a sip.

“Careful Billy, you might have been voted best bartender of but you can’t seem to manage serving a drink without spilling half of it before it gets to me.” She said, dismissing the old man.

She turned back to the young heroes and smirked.

“Anyway, what have I done to all of these people... it’s a fascinating story. You see, it turns out that I’m a mutant... as I assume all of you are. I make these bubbles... Small at first but they grow bigger over time.” Gera began to explain as she stepped down off of her lounge throne as she did so, elderly minions extended withered hands to act as foot steps for her as she stepped down to the ground.

The x-men all looked at one another, surprised at how cool and confident this young mutant seemed... it was a bit unsettling.

“You see, I used to work as an intern in the mayor's office right here in town and you wouldn’t believe that crap I had to deal with – so much paperwork! But as I quietly did my job and went about my life my little bubble grew and grew. Soon it engulfed the whole of town hall and that’s when I realized that I can control anyone inside of my bubble – I could issue commands or alter their clothing and accessories – make them gain weight or give them big noses or adjust their physical ages!” Gera explained with a cackle.

“So... your mutant power is like a real life character creator interface? You can basically turn any place into your very own life-sized version of the Sims? That’s so cool!” Magik blurted out.

Jean and Kitty looked over at Magik.

“What? I play a lot of video games. It seems like an awesome mutant power to have.” The blonde teleporter said with a shrug.

“It would be if she wasn’t using it to torture and enthrall her neighbors!” X-23 growled.

Gera smirked at them.

“Yes well, tomato tomahto.” The woman said dismissively.

“But wait just a Mississippi minute sugah, if your mutant powers do all that video game stuff ya’ll just said – how come this whole town looks like the cast a’ Golden Girls!” Rogue asked in confusion.

“Aww because old people are just soooo cute! I mean, c’mon! Look at Lana here, she shared a desk with me at the office – isn’t she so adorable as a little old lady!?” Gera said grabbing the tattooed granny that had been fanning her and giving her a big hug.

The x-men all blanched at the sentiment, finding the prospect of rapidly aging a young woman particularly disturbing.

“Okay enough of this. Gera, it’s time to release these people and put them back to normal.” Kitty said in a serious voice.

“We just want to help you and the rest of your town.” Jean added in a calm caring tone.

“And what if I don’t want your help?” Gera asked, raising an eyebrow and grinning.

“Then we’ll find that bubble of yours and burst it for you.” X-23 said threateningly, brandishing her claws for emphasis.

The X-Men assumed battle positions but Gera just laughed.

“Oh you guys are fun!... ‘find my reality bubble’ – precious!” She chuckled shaking her head.

The young waved her hands in the air in a few deliberate motions as if she were conducting an invisible symphony or swiping at the one of the futuristic computers from Minority Report. The dark clouds disappeared making it warm and sunny again, X-23’s claws retracted back into her hands and the X-men that were flying promptly landed back down on the ground.

“You ladies were inside my bubble the moment you entered town.” Gera said in a cheerful voice.

The six heroes looked at one another with a bit of alarm and suddenly noticed signs of aging on each other’s faces and bodies:

Rogue was now sporting a double chin and some flab around her waist; Jean's eyes had crows feet creeping out of the corners of them; Kitty's forehead was creased with worry lines and Storm's cheeks were starting to droop into jowls. Magik's large breasts were sloping down her chest and even Laura with her healing factor was gaining gray hairs among her brown locks.

The matronly women all gawked at their aging teammates and themselves for a moment before turning their attention back to Geras.

"X-Men! We must- *ahem* we must stop her!" Storm proclaimed, clearing her throat at the sound of how much older and rougher her voice was.

The aging women all charged in but found that their frumpy older bodies weren't as nimble or flexible as they had been a moment ago. Kitty's back ached the moment she moved and X-23 immediately felt winded. Jean Grey could feel her hip click as she waddled forward.

Rogue attempted to fly up into the air but didn't make it very far due to her now heavier, flabbier middle-aged form. She maneuvered to punch down onto Gera to knock her out, but a quick flick of Gera's hand in the air brought a group of elderly servants in front of the villain holding up her golden lounge to block the attack.

The furniture burst into a dozen broken pieces and the elderly townsfolk fell to the ground, Rogue rubbed her hand and tumbled back onto her much wider ass but Gera stood completely unscathed.

"Oh now look what you've done. I'm going to find a new throne! Do you have any idea how hard it was to find something regal-looking to lounge on in a small town like this?" Gera said, sounding mildly annoyed.

"How about you sit on this and spin!" Magik grunted as she brandished her sword and charged at the reality manipulator.

But her legs weren't as fast as they had been when she was in her prime and she ended up doing an embarrassing waddle-jog toward Gera. Sweat was dripping from her body as Magik experienced her first hotflash.

Gera watched as the matronly fading blonde tried to attack her while struggling through menopause and gave an amused chuckle.

“Okay, well, this has been fun. But I think it’s time for you ladies to retire. I have to get back to my mani/pedi.” She drawled, glancing boredly at her cuticles.

She flourished her hand across her body and twirled her finger around as if she was painting the air. The X-ladies froze and looked at each other nervously as they began to rapidly age further.

Storm gained some more weight as her curves began to dramatically sag down her body like warm bread dough, her cheeks followed suit giving her face noticeable jowls. Her long white hair thinned and began stringy as it fell down her hunched back. A shawl appeared around her stooped shoulders and a pair of grandmotherly bifocals popped up on her nose, attached to a beaded chain.

The brown parts of Rogue’s hair turned a steely gray remaining still two-toned with her shock of white in the front. Wrinkles cross crossed one her face and her eyes became sunken. A hearing aid popped up into her hairy ear. The muscles of her once toned arms and legs disappeared replaced with cellulite which hung sadly from her appendages. Her form-fitting body suit bunched and highlighted the transformation of her hourglass figure into more of a rotting pear shape.

X-23’s legs bowed as her knobby swollen knees knocked together, suddenly losing most of the strength in her formerly athletic legs. Fortunately a metal cane appeared in her hand to keep her from falling over. Her breast sunk down in her costume, resting on her wrinkly gut and her back stooped forward. Her hair turned a grayish white and her once pretty face turned dour as deep frown lines etched their way across it. Her pruned lip sucked inward for a moment as her teeth disappeared, only to be replaced a moment later by a new pair of dentures.

Magik’s sword morphed into a wooden cane which she was still holding above her head, except now instead of a warrior she looked like a cranky old woman

trying to tell some local teenagers to get the hell off of her lawn. Her body shrunk from being statuesque to looking much more frail and her visible cleavage shriveled into wrinkled sacks. Her blonde haired thinned and became white as her boots were replaced by a pair of fuzzy slippers.

Behind her Kitty had also shrunken a bit as folds of loose wrinkly skin hung from her slender frame. Big thick glasses appeared over her tired old eyes and a clunky hearing aid wrapped around her ear. She leaned on the cane that appeared in her hand as her hair became a long gray braid.

Jean attempted to telepathically communicate with her teammates in the moment that they all surged into senior citizenship. But their minds were a chaotic mess of fear, confusion and growing senility. It was clear that the line between knowing that they are supposed to be young and believing themselves to be old was getting blurred and the x-men's thoughts were shifting from how to defeat Geras to complains about the aches and pains of old age; how tired, hot or cold they were; or when their grandkids were going to visit.

She tried to nudge them back to believing that they were young super heroes but her own thoughts were becoming scattered and it was harder to focus on what she was trying to do as the wrinkles deepened on her face and her body hunched forward.

Jean actually felt relieved as thick hornrimmed glasses appeared on her face as her eyesight had been getting incredibly blurry and when a hearing aid popped up in her ear she telepathically responded to Gera with a 'Thank you dearie.'

She had forgotten what she was trying to do completely and just glanced down at her shriveled old body, the flat saggy breasts hanging down her chest and her puffy pancake belly. She chuckled and shook her head wistfully remembering how she used to turn guys head in this outfit when everything about her body had been tight and perky.

The elderly telepath fluffed her thin white hair that just had a tint of her former red in it and looked at her similarly aged companions. The six X-Grannies were all standing in front of Gera looking very tired and disoriented.

TO BE CONTINUED...