

"...My Heart Belongs To Someone Else"
by Bavand

(Takes place during the Recovery scene where it's a fact that people in a coma can be aware of their surroundings. This is especially true for someone with heightened senses... Rated same as the movie.)



Had to, darlin. I couldn't let you die. I promised I would take care of you...

It didn't seem that long before Logan's darkness was sprinkled with scents, sounds and sensations: itchy bandages, tons of tubes plastered all over his body, people in and out, the annoying automatic BP cuff going off every 10 minutes, the sharp smell of antiseptic solutions, blips from monitors and those cool, compassionate hands he has come to love. One minute he was hanging on to Marie for her dear life until the soul searing pain took him away, and then the next minute those hands were cautiously cutting away his uniform with surgical scissors.

As careful as she was, it still pulled enough to make the wounds bleed again, but it was worth it to get that stiff, sweaty leather off. Odd... other than the healing factor fever, he felt pretty good. No horrendous headache, no scorching skin, no aching muscles and no nightmares, just a nicely numb floating in and out of awareness. This was different than the usual recovery process, but then he had never poured his whole life force into someone else either. He could feel everything happening to him, but somehow he was detached from all the pain and it felt good. Real good... except for all the bandages with all that tape. Didn't she know his skin needed to breathe in order to heal? Just let me burn off the wounds instead of covering me all up with all that damn tape and I'll be fine.

The little noises of shock and dismay at the extent of his injuries was a bit unsettling- not for himself- he just didn't like to hear her so distressed. Don't worry, Jean, I'll be fine. So tell me, what do you really think of me after all we've been through now? Hopefully it was more than just a piece of ravaged flesh needing your medical care. So much had happened so fast that there hadn't been any time to sort out any feelings and find out. He only knows it was getting harder and harder to suppress the longing and desire. What was that saying, head over heels in love? Yeah, really... the flirting had been fun. She never rejected it- but she never exactly responded to it either- and it was driving him nuts. "Oh and Logan, stay away from my girl"... but what are you gonna do, bub, if she doesn't want to stay away...?

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"Welcome back. I knew you'd find your way."

"Well I had you to guide me. How did we do...?"

Jean and the Professor- it sounds like he was coming around and that was good to hear. Soon after, those marvelous hands were soothing the skin around the wounds with a cold gel that smelled like aloe. But something wasn't right with her scent. She was generating... fear. My God, it was coming off of her in waves. Why? Don't be afraid, Jean, I'll be fine, really. I just wish every inch of me wasn't covered with all

these damn tubes and tape. I really hate tubes and tape...

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"Just cut the all that medical crap, bub, and tell it to me straight- is he going to be all-raht ?!" Marie? That soft southern drawl had a snarl to it he had never heard before. "Damn it, why didn't he let go before it was too late! It's all mah fault!" Bam! A fist comes down hard on the counter.

"No, that's not true, and getting upset isn't going to help anything."

"Storm's right. He knew what he was doing-"

"No he didn't! Y'll don't understand!"

"Rogue, listen, it's not-"

"Shut up, damn it and listen! Y'll don't understand! Ah told him in his truck, Ah said, 'don't touch me, people get hurt when they touch me', and Ah told him what happened to that boy back home when we were on that train. Ah said he was in a coma for 3 weeks- 3 weeks, Jean! And that was just from a kiss! Logan didn't let go at all! Don't y'll get it? He hung on too long and Ah'm afraid he won't ever recover and it's mah fault! Ah told him, don't ever touch me! Why did he touch me!? Why!!"

Had to, darlin. I couldn't let you die. I promised I would take care of you...

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"How is he?" Ah yes, I wondered when you'd show up...

"There's no change. He's still in a coma and I don't see any evidence of the healing factor at work. I don't know, Scott, I just don't know what to think."

"But he still has a fever, right? Doesn't that mean his immune system is doing something? He'll pull through, he's too stubborn to give up on... life." Long pause while Scott moves around the bed to her side. You look tired." There's a rustling of heavy cotton- probably her lab coat- followed by a small sigh of relief. Sounds like "Cyclops" is massaging her shoulders. "Why don't you go get some rest and I'll stay with him. I promise I will call you if there's any change."

Tired sigh, "I could use a bite to eat."

"And get some rest- I'll come join you later. Storm can stay with him."

"Ummm, thanks, but I don't want to be gone too long." Logan hears her hesitation. See? Maybe she doesn't want to be with you, "Cyclops". "He's not out of the woods yet and without a thorough understanding of his physiology- I just can't take any chances."

"Sure, okay. You're one of the most dedicated doctors I know- and that's one of many things I love most about you." Final pat on the shoulders and a smooch, it sounded more like a peck on the cheek than a real kiss.

Jean moves out of his awareness, leaving him with "Cyclops". *"Come on, tough guy, squeeze my hand and let everyone know you're okay. Just pop those claws out and show me what you can do."*

Nothing. I'm trying, bub, I'm trying. I can feel your hand, but why can't I crush the hell out of it like I want to?

"Cyclops" puts his hand down and pats it reassuringly. *"Well, maybe you're just not ready yet. You were*

pretty beaten up. It looked like everything you were ever hit with was ripped open again. It's probably going to take some time for you to recover."

Long pause. *"I don't know if you can hear me, but I have to admit I was glad you were on our team. When it came right down to it, you pulled together with us and what you did for Rogue took real guts. I may not always agree with your methods and your attitude sucks, but I know we can count on you. And I know you think you're such a tough guy loner, but I hope you realize you can count on us. We'll always be here for you..."*

I'll be damned. He never expected any sort of sentiment from pretty boy. Well... Scott- nope, sorry, you'll always be "Cyclops" to me. You need to loosen up some, trust the abilities of the people you're leading, but, yeah, you turned out to be an okay leader. And hey, no hard feelings, but I think you do have something to worry about with Jean...

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Swish, swish- leather pants coming up to the monitors on his left.

"Hmmm, well I'm no doctor, but I know this one shows you still have a fever. It looks like you're burning up. Wouldn't it make more sense to try to cool you off?" He hears a slight crackle of electricity from fingers flexing near his shoulder. Suddenly, the air around him drops several degrees as a light breeze blows across his body. *"Let's see if this makes a difference..."*

Ahhhhh, finally somebody gets it! Thank you, Storm... Logan fades into a cool oblivion until the temperature around him comes back up.

"Did it help?"

"No, there's still no change."

Sad sigh, "I kept it up for over an hour."

"It was a good try, Ororo. I'm sure he would have appreciated it if he knew." Oh, lady, I do. I owe you one.

"Yeah, but it didn't work and I hate being ineffective."

"I know... and I hate not knowing what's going on with him. I can't help feeling that if I knew more, I could do more- or at least know he was all right and going to recover."

"So all we can do wait and hope his body is doing what it's suppose to be doing."

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Jean enters and goes to the far counter with the sink. Water runs into something metal like a bowl. Items are taken out of drawers and placed on a plastic tray with a light tap. She comes to him with measured steps- water is sloshing in a basin on the tray- it's too shallow sounding for a bowl. And there's no click of heels, she's wearing rubber-sole flats. He hears the hiss of one those stands coming up out of the floor and then the tray is placed on top of it.

She moves around to the head of the exam bed behind him. An herbal mist is sprayed all over his hair- not a flowery herbal- but a nice masculine herbal. It starts to foam and firm fingers dig in to lightly scrub his scalp... oh darlin, this is fabulous. She lifts his head slightly and massages the nape of his neck as well... fantastic. As the foam dries, she runs a comb through his hair to clean it. She tries to make a part or style it to the side but the thick, unruly waves refuse to go in a different direction.

"Hmmm, I never noticed before..." Two fingers touch the tip of his chin and then lightly trace the outline of his head until they end at the peaks of the wave on each side. Yeah, I know, I resemble the animal... don't

know which came first, the name or the hair?

He hears rustling of fabric- rolling up her sleeves?- and the snap of a plastic bottle opening. A strong citrus smell greets his nose as a cool gel is studiously smoothed on his face around the lacerations. A wet cloth follows to gingerly wipe it away, leaving his skin feeling clean and moisturized. She didn't forget his ears, the washcloth goes in and around each one.

You're good, lady. Can I come back to your shop? The washcloth is wrung out over the basin, then folded and set aside. This pampering is really nice, Jean, but do you want to tell me what this is really all about? I mean, do all your patients get this kind of star treatment or am I so irresistible? Or... is this just a necessity, as in becoming too unsanitary for the lab? Everyone else probably had a nice hot shower when they got back, but I was hauled in on a stretcher. So which is it, Jean? Are you being purely professional or is this purely personal for you?

Her touch is compassionate, but precise and almost impartial... and yet the very idea of grooming him seemed so personal and intimate. Damn, I'm getting too caught up in second guessing her every move and what it could possibly mean. I really shouldn't even care- I'm not sticking around. The world is safe from Magneto now, so you don't need me anymore, and what I want are some answers. But... what if she's trying to tell me something by doing all this?

Next, a minty mouthwash smell hovers over his mouth. She cups a hand around his jaw, resting her thumb on his chin, and opens his mouth enough to systematically rub a paste across his teeth. Front and back, top and bottom. When she's done, the fingers on his jaw slide up and across his lips. They feel dry, even to him. Her fingers leave and then come back with some sort of odorless goo, probably petroleum jelly, which is spread across them as a nice finishing touch. He couldn't help but smile in appreciation, even if his body didn't show it. Instead of cottonmouth, he now had a minty fresh mouth and moist lips... to keep them kissable? For whatever reason she had, she was taking very good care of him.

He hears the wash cloth wrung out in the bowl and the citrus smell fills the air again. The wonderful wet cloth comes down on his throat, washes his neck and stops at the collarbone. The rest of his chest was covered in gauze and itchy tape. Jean wasn't one to talk out loud, but he could just picture her debating about how to proceed, her brows furrowing in concentration as those beautiful eyes gaze upon him.

Very gently, he feels the elbow of the better arm bending without any hands- oh, right her handy little telekinesis thing angles his arm out away from his body. The cloth resumes its course across his shoulder and down into his armpit. While it was nice to have such a thorough job for hygiene, some how it seemed kind of personal and intimate. Is this your way of flirting with me? Couldn't wait to get your hands all over me? She pats the area dry with the towel. He hears a small jar opening and her fingers come right back with a gel that smells like Old Spice... kind of old-fashioned. I would have thought you were more of a Musk kinda gal.

When she is done, she slowly eases his arm back to his side. Her fingers can't resist his forearm, lightly probing the space between the ulna and radial bones where the claws reside. You can't feel 'em, Jean. They're completely integrated into my anatomy whether I like it or not. Her other hand comes down on his arm with the wash cloth, working her way to his hand. She presses her fingers in the space between the knuckles where the blades come out, but there's nothing there either. You'd never know they were there until I pop 'em out. And you just can't get enough of examining me, huh?

Jean interlaces her fingers with his and squeezes. She holds his hand hoping for a response. I thought we already established I'm not coming around till I'm ready. Not that I don't mind holding hands, but I can hear how you're holding your breath... and then there's that disappointed sigh again. Sorry, Jean, you can't rush the healing process. I wish I could, darlin. I wish I could just bolt up and surprise the hell out of you again and grab you and hold you in my arms...

Finally, she releases his hand and fusses with stuff on the tray. He hears the unmistakable sound of surgical tape being snipped off in strips. Damn! She diligently replaces all the bandages and gauze covering his torso. She picks up the tray. With a hushed hiss, the stand by his head goes down into the floor and another one pops up by his feet. The sterile sheet is lifted into the air, exposing the rest of his

body. He hears and feels a slight flutter as it flies away, followed by the pop of the laundry bin opening. Oh yesss, much better, much cooler. Don't bother, Jean, with another one- too late. A cabinet opens- whoosh- her hand catches fabric and places it on the stand. Damn...

More savory citrus smell, Jean washes what she can of his legs and feet. Logan finds it difficult to stay awake and drifts off again wondering what to make of all her attention. Is this really standard care for all your patients? Not that you probably have to play doctor around here a lot. Maybe that's it, maybe I'm still just a novelty to you, something new and different to study. Nah, I know there's an attraction there, darlin, and I know you feel it too. I guess the question is what are we going to do about it...?

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He hears the hum of the Professor's wheelchair and Jean is here. Did he hear right? Was that a sob? *"I'm afraid we're losing him, Professor. It's been well over 48 hours and I don't see any healing taking place- I mean, at least the wounds don't bleed anymore when I change the dressing, but-"*

"But that could mean he's mending from the inside out."

"Or his body is shutting down and the machines are keeping him alive. I've tried, but I can't reach him. I've tried so hard, but it's like- it's like he's gone already." No, no, Jean, I'm still here.

"Not necessarily. You are aware, aren't you, how difficult it can be to reach patients in a coma?"

Logan hears the quick breath of hope and pictures the glow lighting her face. *"No, I didn't. I haven't had the opportunity to study that specifically."*

"Fascinating really, how the mind works and there's so much we don't know- mutant or otherwise. In the case of patients in a coma, it's a matter of a different level of consciousness. You can't "look" for him where you normally would because I believe they "go" to a different place in their mind."

"Can you try?"

"Yes, of course. Can you lower the bed, please?" The wheelchair moves around the exam bed to a position behind his head as the Professor had done with Senator Kelly. Logan feels the bed going down until the warmth of the Professor's hands hover near him.

The silence becomes unsettling. Maybe I'm not okay... When Jean tried it that first day after showing him to his room, he felt something- like a whispering presence intruding- then becoming a part of his mind. But now... I don't feel the Professor at all. My God, what if I'm not gonna wake up after all?

"It's faint, very deeply hidden, but he is still with us." Logan relaxes as Jean lets out a deep sigh of relief. *"Why don't you go take a break, you've been here for hours. I'll stay with him now."* The Professor's tone was unmistakably a command, not a suggestion.

"All right, thank you. I'll be back soon. If you need me- if anything-"

"You will hear from me the instant anything happens. Now go and get some rest." She starts to move away. *"And do take your time, spend some time with Scott. He's concerned you're not taking care of yourself."*

"Hardly," Jean responds with a snort. *"He's "concerned" that I am spending too much time taking care of Logan and it's ridiculous! We've already discussed this- Logan's physiology is completely unknown to me and I have no idea what to expect. The worst could happen in an instant and I have to be here- be prepared. He knows I love him, he has nothing to be jealous about."*

Logan can't help but smile. What was that saying, the lady protests too much...? *"I see... I wasn't aware that jealousy was the issue."*

"I'm trying to save a life here for God's sakes!" She takes a deep, calming breath. "I'm sorry, Charles, I didn't mean to snap. It just bothers me that Scott doesn't trust me after all this time." Tired sigh, "okay, I guess I am a little tired and on edge. I'll be back later."

Long pause while the Professor wheels around to the side of the bed. "But there's never been any competition before to challenge that trust," he whispers once she is out of earshot. And Logan can't help but wonder if Jean really had been just making time with the only adult mutant around.

Positive conversational tone, "Well, Logan, I'm happy to report I do have some information that might be helpful to you. Actually, it's a location and once you're up and about, I'll show you in the Map Room..."

Thanks, Professor, but I'm not so sure I want to leave just yet...

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Something was wrong- different. It started as a tiny wave in the back of his mind, and then it grew, forcing him out of this place until the petrifying pain claimed his body back. Every muscle in his body ached- including some he hadn't felt in a long time- but the exhaustion was oppressive enough to make waking up a slow process.

Logan heard a whisper of surprise and joy as very familiar fingers feathered his face, turning it this way and that under the lights. Jean started peeling away the bandages on his chest and caressed the perfectly healthy skin. She removed the last bandage near his abdomen where her light touch made the muscle over his appendix quiver. Instinctively, he grabbed up her hand to stop it. "Hmmmnn, that tickles."

He lightly squeezed her hand to confirm he had control of his body again. She squeezed back and he couldn't wait to hold her and kiss her, and tell her how much he loved her. His eyes fluttered open and he looked up into the face of... a friend?

"Hey, how do you feel?"

"Fantastic," he answered weakly, but this wasn't the reception he had anticipated.

She gave his hand another affectionate squeeze. "That was a very brave thing you did."

"Did it work?"

"She's fine. She took on a few of your more charming personality traits for a while, but we lived through it." So little spitfire had been Marie. He started to laugh, but it ended up coming out in a cough that hurt. Everything was starting to really hurt now, including his heart.

"I think she's a bit taken with you," she said, smiling sweetly over such a cute idea.

Logan didn't think it was cute at all and couldn't stand it anymore, he had to know... "Yeah, well, tell her my heart belongs to someone else..."

Her smiled slipped into... what? Sorrow? Regret? Misunderstanding? Damn it! He still didn't know and his head started banging from the tension until a whisper flashed in his mind, "Yes, you awakened a desire in me that Scott will never be able to satisfy, but we both know that's not enough to build a life on." Out loud, she sighed, "You know... you and I"

"How's the Professor?" He cut her off, abruptly changing the subject. Why make her say it and add salt to the wound by having to admit she was right. He couldn't guarantee how long it would last. I'm not ready to make a permanent commitment just yet, and you obviously don't want to enjoy the here and now without worrying about a future together, so I guess that's it, dear lady...

"He's good," she answered, amazed at how gracefully he let them off the hook. Genuine fondness filled her face in a dazzling smile. Ah yes, the consolation prize: but we can still be friends.

" Good," he said as an oblique answer to both things. He really thought he could handle it, but a wall came down around his heart just the same. Maybe later when it doesn't feel so raw- I just wanna get outta here now.

She started to pull her hand away, but he couldn't let go just yet. He brought her fingers to his lips for a kiss. He hated good-byes, but it didn't hurt to show some gratitude. *Thank you for taking care of me, Jean. I'll never forget your exquisite, personal touch...*

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[No gauze, BP cuffs or counter tops were harmed during the production of this story.

Please let me know if you want to post this on your own website. You can even request the Special Edition Writer's extended version which includes commentary from the author, character interviews, deleted paragraphs and more!

The world of Logan and the X-Men is the property of Marvel Comics and 20th Century Fox. The joy of patient care was for medicinal purposes only and not for profit. First posted on fanfiction.net, jk2000.]

Logan has left the infirmary...