

The X-Men's Jubilee in:

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

By Chrono Eclipse

It was a quiet sunny Saturday afternoon and the X-Man known as Jubilee planned spending it where any typical American 16-year-old would: The mall!

She pulled up her ultra-short jean shorts over her long slender legs and pulled a pink tank top down over her perky modest chest, wanting to show off her flat toned belly now that her abs were starting to become more defined from all of her workouts in the Danger Room.

She put on ankle socks and slipped her feet into her favorite blue boots, clipped her X-Men belt around her thin waist and tossed on her signature canary yellow trench coat.

The teen then clipped her hoop earring to her ears and slipped on her bright pink shades before popping some bubble gum between her pouty lips and heading out to the garage where Logan was going to give her a ride on the back of his motorcycle.

A few minutes later she hopped off of the Kawasaki Ninja and waved her hairy chauffeur goodbye.

“Thanks Wolverine! Ya sure you don’t want to stick around and do some shopping with me and my pals?” The Chinese-American girl asked.

The surly Canadian just scowled and grunted before peeling off down the parking lot. Jubilee shrugged and giggled as she turned around and pranced happily into the mall.

As she entered she noticed an older woman standing behind a table with some literature and clipboards trying to get gray haired mall goers to sign whatever it was that she was petitioning for.

“We need to act now to stop the governor from gutting our retirement and medicaid benefits!” The woman was shouting at an over-50 couple strolling by.

Jubilee skipped over to check it out.

“Ooo what is this all about? Are you giving out free samples of anything? Do you have those little squishy stress balls with the name of your bank or whatever on them? I love those! Or fidget spinners!” The teen asked excitedly.

The older woman rolled her eyes and sighed at the flamboyantly dressed girl in front of her.

“No. I’m not here representing a bank. I’m here on behalf of AARP to make citizens aware of the state proposition 5 that will severely reduce funding for senior benefits to-” The woman began to explain.

Jubilee’s eyes glazed a bit and she turned away from the woman mid sentence.

“Don’t care, you’re a square.” She said dismissively with a giggle as she ran off to go find something more interesting to spend her time on.

Early afternoon was typically the changing of the guard at the mall - when all of the wrinkled old seniors that had been shuffling around all morning since its 5am opening boarded vans and buses to head back to their nursing homes, and the teens who had been sleeping till noon crawled out of bed and headed down to hang out until their curfews.

And today was no different. Local teens were skateboarding down the promenade or gathering around the juice bar or leaning up against the walls trying to hide their vape pens. There were teens dry-humping against the mall map; teens stuffing their young faces with chili fries; teens wasting the woman at the make-up counters' time; teens daring one another to hop the rail of the escalator or slide down it.

“Ahhh my people!” Jubilee proclaimed with glee, holding her arms out to take it all in.

She spotted a group of her friends from her old high school.

“OMG! Hey guys!” She squealed happily as she ran over to them.

“Hey! It’s Jubilee!” One of the teens, a brown haired girl with a knit cap, said waving at the young mutant.

“What up Jubilation?” A tall latino boy asked as he gave her an elbow tap.

Jubilee smiled coyly at him.

“Oh you know, just the yoush – saving the world, fighting injustice, looking hella cute while doing it...” She replied with a smirk.

“We thought we wouldn’t see you around here anymore since you went off to that private school for ‘gifted kids’ or whatever.” An athletic redhead in pink yoga pants teased with a giggle.

“You know me! You can’t keep a mall-baby away from her mall!” Jubilee replied with a grin.

“We missed you!” The brunette declared jumping out of her seat to hug the young mutant.

“Aww, I missed you too Molly.” Jubilee said squeezing the girl back.

“Yeah we missed marveling at your keen fashion sense...” The redhead added with a laugh.

Jubilee smirked at the girl.

“Oh shut it Lara, you’re just jealous!” The young x-men retorted.

Lara shrugged and laughed.

“Ha whatever!” She giggled holding up a W with her thumbs and index fingers.

“That is a sick-ass jacket though. You gotta tell ya boy where you got it.” The latino boy chimed in.

“Sorry Vic, these digs are one-of-a-kind.” Jubilee replied proudly.

She looked around for a moment noticing something.

“I see Nina and Karri making out on the bench but where’s Chez?” Jubilee asked her group of friends.

She gestured over to the other side of the corridor island they were all hanging out at where a thin blonde girl in a rainbow tank top was making out with a raven haired goth girl. The two were intensely going at each other, sucking on one another’s pouty lips and twirling their tongues together as they tried to subtly grope one another’s perky breasts.

Vic turned around and watched the girls making out for a moment and turned back to Jubilee with a big grin on his face and then shrugged.

“Chez is around somewhere. He said he needed to get some new wheels for his deck or something. We’re all just killing time before the ladies in the food court start passing out the free samples...” He explained.

“Oh also Dazzler’s supposed to be performing a free concert here this afternoon!” Molly said laughing and clapping.

Jubilee tilted her head in surprise.

“Dazzler - like the old pop singer from back in the day?” She asked, surprised.

The teens laughed and nodded.

“Yeah it’s totally gonna be a Disco Inferno up in this place!” Vic said with a grin.

“God, how embarrassing. She was like a BFD back when our parents were in high school and now she’s like performing at the mall...” Lara drawled with a smirk.

Jubilee was about to respond when she heard a commotion behind them.

“Get out of here you young hussies!” A shrill voice hollered.

Jubilee and her friends turned around to see Karri and Nina getting accosted by an elderly woman in a housecoat, gripping a walker.

“Lady, chill. We weren’t doing anything.” Nina said defensively.

“I saw exactly what you kids were doing! And it was shameful! Right out in public! Now what you do in your own home is one thing but nobody wants to see teens going at it right out in the open! This bench is for sitting... and napping! Not for canoodling.” The old woman snapped, wedging her walker inbetween the two girls.

“Hey!” Karri shouted as the old woman’s metal walking aid bumped her calves.

“Lady-” Vic jumped in trying to defend his friends.

“Don’t you ‘lady’ me, young man! I’ll box your ears!” The elderly lady warned tapping Vic’s bicep with a gnarled finger.

“Ew don’t touch me you old bag. You stink like my grandma!” Vic shouted back at her.

“Yeah granny, don’t you think it’s time to call your grandkids or whatever to take you back to the nursing home for your sponge bath...” Lara added with a snicker.

“You hoodlums have no respect for the elderly! You know, you’ll all be old someday too if you’re lucky!” The old woman rattled.

“Ha yeah at like the turn of the next century...” Molly said thinking that would be a better come-back than it actually was.

Jubilee stepped in between her friends and the cranky old woman.

“Okay let’s all just chill. We can totally work this out... Ma’am, if you want to sit on the bench, go right ahead. Guys, let’s just like head over to the food court.” The teen mutant suggested trying to keep the peace.

The old woman just scowled at her.

“Don’t you tell me what to do you young whippersnapper! That’s the problem with you kids today! Always think you know what’s best. You spend all your time with you ridiculous clothes and tapping on your phones! Well you should all be ashamed of yourselves! You’re all a bunch of no-good sex-crazed slackers!” The elderly woman shouted.

Some of the teens were about to say something back but Jubilee just rolled her eyes at the old lady and guided her friends away from the bench.

“Come on guys, let’s just go.” She suggested.

As the group was walking through the mall a young in a baggy coat zipped by them on a skateboard.

“Yo Chaz!” Jubilee said as the guy skated by.

They turned to see an overweight mustachioed security guard running as hard as he could in pursuit of the skateboarder.

“Hey! Kid! Stop! *Huff* *Huff* You can’t skateboard in here!” The security guard yelled, out of breath.

The teens laughed as the portly mall cop stopped to catch his breath.

“Woah, what’s with all the olds. Is there a sale going on at the Dress Barn or something?” Lara asked.

The girl gestured over to a group of mostly middle-aged people gathered in front of a stage in the center of the mall.

“Oh wow, they must all be waiting for that Dazzler show.” Nina said in awe of how many soccer moms were gathered there.

“This is so exciting! I haven’t heard Dazzler live since her world tour back in 1996!” One 40-something woman in the crowd says to another.

“I hope she signs my CD!” Her matronly friend responds with excitement gripping the plastic case in her veiny hands.

“What’s a CD?” Molly asked scrunched her young face at the middle-aged women.

“This is going to be like soooo cringe.” Karri said giggling and covering her eyes.

“Can’t be any more cringe than Dazzler the Movie...” Jubilee laughed.

“Dazzler the Movie?” Vic asked.

Jubilee nodded with a grin on her face that said ‘oh you can’t even *imagine...*’

“Yeah so like, it’s this movie that Dazzler did back in the day - before she went through that messy divorce and like went off to space. My... uh, teachers at the school made me watch it one time. The Professor has a huge lazer disc collection back at the mansion... It’s so bad. Like I think Bo Derek was supposed to star in it and then Allison Blaire insisted that she was going to play herself and it’s just so hilariously lame and sexist and sets back mutants by like 60 years... anyway, I think that was kind of like the beginning of the end of her career.” Jubilee explained.

“Oh my god, do you guys remember like when we were kids and she had that meltdown and shaved her head and then the guy on youtube was all like

‘LEAVE DAZZLER ALONE!!!’” Nina recalled to raucous laughter from the rest of the teens.

As Jubilee giggled and shook her head at the washed-up pop star she spotted the fat security guard from earlier struggling to chase after another person.

“Stop! Thief!” The mall cop wheezed.

He halted his pursuit to call in backup on the shoplifter with his walkie talkie but before he finished his sentence Jubilee had sprung into action.

The teen hero ducked away from her friend and ran over to the elevators. She leapt up in a swinging jump that Beast had taught her and made sure that she didn’t snag her coat like Gambit had warned. Doing a handy flip with the aid of wet floor sign, she landed cleanly on her feet in the path of where the shoplifter was running.

She put her hands on her hips and smirked at the thief who was signalling for her to get out of his way. When she wouldn’t budge he instead decided to charge at her and attempt to knock her over in order to get to the exit before more security showed up.

Jubilee raised up her hand and wiggled her fingers setting off a series of multicolored sparklers that temporarily blinded that assailant. He dropped some of his stolen goods and covered his eyes with his arm as he continued barreling forward.

The young x-man crouched down and then leapt up, putting her booted foot on the man’s thigh and ran up over him, flipping over his shoulder and landing neatly behind him with a big grin. She then set off some of her fireworks to knock a banner down from the ceiling to fall and tangle up the thief.

The man struggled on the ground to get out from under the big tarp banner to no avail. The security guard ran up behind Jubilee, wheezing and out of breath.

“Good job young lady. That was *HUFF* amazing!” The mall cop said.

Jubilee shrugged and smirked at the older man.

“Eh, I didn’t even crack a sweat with this guy. Maybe, ya know, it’s time for you to retire or find a desk job dude.” She said in a snarky tone and she walked back to find her friends.

There was cheering and clapping coming over from where she had left her friends so she assumed that Dazzler had taken the stage. The high pitched tone of feedback wailed as the portable sound systems microphone got too close to the speaker and then a husky middle-aged woman’s voice echoed through the halls of the mall.

“Hey party people! Thank you all so much for coming out this afternoon. It’s been a while since I’ve done something like this but it also feels nice - I started out performing in malls like this 35 years ago when my mom would take me around to them before I got signed to a record label.” Dazzler reminisced into the microphone.

“Wooo! I love you Dazzler!” One of the few younger fans screamed for the audience, an attractive young woman with crazy eyes.

“Aww that’s sweet. Thank you so much. And to all of my old fans here today and my new ones - I just want to say that you’ve made a girl’s dreams come true!” Dazzler proclaimed.

Jubilee got back to the crowd to see the 50-year-old woman standing on the stage in her iconic bedazzled jumpsuit, her saggy chest visible through the plunging neckline. Some blue face paint depicting a pair of shooting stars covered her jowly cheeks and crinkling eyes. The aging pop star lifted a veiny hand up toward the sky and shot out some beams of light at the mirror ball hanging above her.

*“A little girl on sunlit lawn dreams of the day
when she will be grown
She thinks her daddy and mommy
will always be there,
long as they are,*

she hasn't a care

But then she grows up,

all too soon, s

he grows up and the light of the moon” Dazzler sings into the microphone and the older women in the crowd go nuts.

Jubilee and her friends smirk at one another.

“Wow. I remember this song. It played like all the time at the rollerskating rink when I was a kid.” Karri recalled.

“I always thought that this was a Donna Summer song.” Vic remarked.

“I think I heard this in an elevator once.” Molly mused.

Jubilee just shook her head and grimaced at the stage where the middle-aged singer was swinging her wide hips and bopping around the stage as well as she could at her age.

“Yeah this is just kind of sad. Old people are super depressing. I hope I get fried by some sentinels way before I get like that.” Jubilee said mostly to herself as she continued to watch.

“Tells her that things aren't going to be

the way they are in poetry

And all's that she's left with

are a little girl's dreams!” Dazzler sang, shooting some more streams of light over her modest crowd.

“Seriously, who came out here today to see some washed-up menopausal biddy belt out songs from 30 years ago...?” Nina asked.

“You’re embarrassing yourself ma’am!” Vic yelled up to the stage.

“A little girl's dreams,

she'd love to go back

For a day, an hour

or even for a minute.” Dazzler continued to sing either not hearing or ignoring the heckling teams outburst.

“Haha time to hang up your disco boots granny!!” Lara joined in.

*“But life's too fast, love's too hard
And all she's left with
All I'm left with*

Are a little girl's dreams.” Dazzler sang the chorus, but her voice shook a bit clearly hearing some of the heckling that she was getting.

“Hey! Shut your dirty stupid mouths! Dazzler is a living legend!” The young woman with the crazy eyes yelled coming over to confront Jubilee and her friends.

“What is she your mom or something?” Nina asked with a smirk.

“No! She’s just the best pop star of all time and she deserves your respect! She deserves all of your respect!!!” The woman screamed.

Dazzler had meanwhile take a sip of water, cleared her throat of some flem and moved on to her next song.

*“Mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm
Hush now baby
Aaa Aaa Aaa Ahh
Don't you cry
Momma loves you
She will hold you
'Til the day when
We all fly!”*

A lot of the middle-aged people in the crowd were singing along and getting wrapped up in memories of the song playing back when they were in high school and middle-school but another group of teenagers were as equally unimpressed by the performance as Jubilee and her friends.

“Booo!!!” Several teens called through cupped hands.

“You suck Dazzler!” A teen boy shouted.

“And get a change of clothes! Nobody wants to see your saggy body anymore!”
A teen girl yelled.

They began to toss food at the stage.

“Hey! Stop that!” The wild-eyed girl yelled turning to the other group of teenagers.

Dazzler continued to press on despite having fries and popcorn thrown at her. But Jubilee had seen enough.

“Hey guys let’s get out of here.” She suggested.

Lara wiped some sweat from her forehead not noticing that it had creases across it that hadn’t been there a moment ago.

“Yeah sure... I kind of feel funny anyway.” The redhead remarked.

Molly nodded as bags were beginning to form under her eyes.

“Yeah and like, this is super lame...” She added as a gray strand of hair popped up in her wavy brown hair.

Jubilee squinted at her friends... something was definitely off but she wasn’t sure what. They looked maybe more grown up and mature? She shook off the feeling and broke away from the group.

“Hey I kind of wanted to step up my choker game so I’m going to hit ye ole Hot Topic.” She told her friends.

“Cool, we’re heading up to the food court - meet you up there.” Vic said with a yawn.

Jubilee headed over to the trendy clothing store, adjusting her top and shorts as she walked - for some reason her clothes felt like they were fitting a bit more snugly on her body than they usually did. She pulled up her pink shades over her raven-toned hair unaware of the first grays beginning to pop up throughout her mane.

Her eyes were also beginning to get slight creases in the corners - the beginnings of crows feet, not unheard of for a woman in her 30s or 40s but very out of place on the eyes of a 16-year-old.

The pair of 20-somethings working at the store gave her sideways looks as she entered. Jubilee assumed that it was because of her incredibly stylish wardrobe. She flashed a proud smirk at them and began to look through the cases of nose piercing studs and arm jewelry.

“Um, anything I can help you find, lady?” A tattooed young woman who was about 10 years older than Jubilee's age asked her

Jubilee shrug.

“I was kind of thinking of getting a cool choker.” The asian-american teen(?) replied.

The two clothing store workers looked at one another and then back at Jubilee.

“Oh! Like for your daughter?” The male employee asked.

Jubilee burst out a laugh.

“Daughter? I'm not old enough to have kids!... But what do you guys sell spiked collars for babies? I bet they are adorable!” She said looking around to see where the 'infant' section of Hot Topic was.

The employees looked at each other again and then back to Jubilee with a patronizing shake of their heads.

“Uh no... this store really mostly caters to *young* people? Like in their teens and 20s?” The female employee explained with a bit of a cringing smile like she was apologizing for something.

Jubilee shrugged and looked confused.

“Yeah? So? Exactly... Why are you guys acting like you’ve never seen someone like me in your store before? Ohmigod, is it because i’m a mutant? Is Hot Topic totally bigoted against mutants!?” Jubilee exclaimed in shock.

The employees looked at one another in horror and vehemently shook their heads ‘no’.

“Woah woah woah! No way. We’re totally cool with mutants!” The male employee assured her.

“My cousin is a mutant!” The female employee assisted.

Jubilee looked at the two of them as they quickly scrambled to assure her that they weren’t anti-mutant.

“Well then why do you both keep staring at me like that? It’s not like I’m one of those weirdo goth soccer moms over there!” Jubilee said with a laugh.

She pointed over to a pair of women in their 40s or 50s with dyed black hair, black fishnets over their chunky cellulite-riddled legs and black lipstick on their pruning lips. Their piercings looked bizarre on the two women who looked like they were a pair of school board members that were dressing up like goth teens for halloween.

“Uh yeah... we thought they were with you...” The male employee said trailing off awkwardly and avoiding eye-contact with Jubilee.

She was about to ask him what that was supposed to mean when she heard a woman shout:

“Stop! That man stole my purse!”

Jubilee sprang into action - or at least she tried to.

As she turned to run out of the store and pursue the criminal her hip clicked and a pain shot up her leg. Then, as she took a few hobbling steps, her back spasmed causing her to reach around and grip it.

“Ow oh god! Did I just get a cramp?” She shouted.

“He’s getting away!” The owner of the stolen purse shouted.

“I know! I’m trying as best as I can lady! Give me a minute!” Jubilee shouted back.

She looked around the mall from side to side and was surprised at how blurry everything in the distance was. She rubbed her eyes and saw what seemed to be the figure of a man running down the hall to her left. She took a deep breath and began to chase after him.

It didn’t take long for her to begin to feel winded and out of breath - something that she hadn’t experienced before. She stopped to rest for a moment and wiped some sweat from her lined forehead.

Glancing down at her exposed stomach it looked much softer and less defined than it normally did. She was even developing a bit of a muffin top over the waist of her shorts. Jubilee didn’t know what to make of that so instead she took back to running after the thief.

“There! He went down there!” The purse owner shouted pointing to the left.

Jubilee took a deep breath, her body felt really sore and tired as she turned to continue her pursuit.

She saw the thief at the end of the hall looking from left to right to decided where to go. Normally she would have easily been able to run him down and catch him from here but now she felt incredibly winded and needed to stop and rest.

Jubilee felt suddenly very hot and sweaty. Like a wave of heat was washing over her. She lifted her hand up to tell the guy to halt but accidentally fired off a series of fireworks directly at him. They singed him in the back causing him to drop the purse and flee.

“Oh thank you! Thank you!” The woman called to Jubilee as she ran to retrieve her purse.

“That was quick thinking ma’am.” A mall cop in his 30s said patting Jubilee on her shoulder.

“...thanks.” Jubilee said catching her breath.

She felt exhausted, hot and kind of hungry. She didn’t know why she had struggled so much running down one stupid purse snatcher but that was a problem for another day. For now it was time to head up to the food court, meet up with her friends and scarf down some chili fries!

To be continued.