

Book 1

Book One of the Pulse Rangers Series

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Table of Contents

Prologue – The Last Normal Day

Chapter 1 – The Outbreak

Chapter 2 – Origin Story: The Experiment

PROLOGUE — THE LAST NORMAL DAY

Xander rolled through Livistonia on his skateboard, an old-school boombox in one hand blasting heavy electric dance tunes — the same tracks he used to listen to with his dad in the van.

Golden summer sun spilled over the rooftops. It was mid-July, early evening — around 5:45 p.m. — and the air shimmered with warmth, petrol, and city noise.

He weaved through the street market, dodging a delivery drone that buzzed overhead.

Someone yelled after him, “Oi! Watch it, Speed Demon!”

He only grinned, kicking the board faster.

He was on his way to Livistonia Dance Studio for rehearsal.

Three sessions a week, every week — but tonight wasn’t just practice.

It was the final dress run for the biggest competition of his life.

His crew, Pulsationz, had worked for this all year.

Ten of them, aged ten to eighteen, each one with their own tricks, but Xander — the youngest — could do flips and freezes the seniors couldn’t.

He turned down the street toward the studio, the sunlight catching on the mirrored windows.

He imagined the stage, the lights, the roar of the crowd.

Inside, Lewis would already be clowning around,
Reiss barking orders, Nova adjusting her mask, Kai
watching it all with that calm half-smile of his.
The crew.
His family.

It felt like any other summer night.

Xander kicked his board up, caught it under his arm,
and jogged the last few steps toward the glass doors.
He had no idea this would be the last evening the
world would ever move on its own.

CHAPTER ONE — THE OUTBREAK

The dance studio roared with music and laughter.

Red hoodies.

Black joggers.

White rehearsal masks in hand.

Coach Reiss clapped once — sharp, commanding.

“Full dress rehearsal — masks on, now!”

Lewis groaned.

“Aw, come on, coach, we’ve got like five minutes!”

“You’ve got five seconds,” Reiss shot back, smirking.

“He means business,” Nova whispered, elbowing Xander.

The crew snapped to attention. Energy buzzed in the air like static before lightning.

Xander tugged up his hood, adjusted his white mask until it sealed tight, and steadied his breathing.

The track dropped — deep bass, fast tempo — the one they’d drilled for months.

Beside him, Lewis grinned under his mask.

“Let’s burn the floor, little bro.”

“You wish,” Xander shot back, laughing.

Then they launched into motion.

Steps locked.

Spins perfect.

Every beat landing exactly where it should.

Street dance. Breaking. Freedom.

For Xander, it wasn’t just practice — it was electricity in his veins.

He moved like rhythm itself was watching.
So focused, he didn't notice the air change.
Didn't see the lights flicker.
Didn't hear the faint metallic hiss behind the bass.
High above, an old ventilation grate rattled.
A soft blue mist slid through the vent — silent, alive.
It didn't drift like smoke.
It searched.
A few of the dancers hadn't sealed their masks properly.
Nova's hung loose around her neck.
Lewis's had slipped halfway off his face.
Reiss's voice carried over the music:
"Positions, people! Xander, Lewis — the rest of you, reset from bar four—"
The word "positions" broke in half.
Bodies froze mid-move.
A girl mid-flip hung weightless in the air.
A bottle of water hovered halfway to the floor.
The music stopped mid-beat — but didn't fade. It just stalled, like time itself was holding its breath.
Everything stopped.
Everything — except Xander.
His mask sealed tight, his lungs filled, his body still obeyed the rhythm pounding in his head.
He turned, spun once, and froze.
The world around him was locked in stillness — a photograph in blue light.
"Lewis?" he whispered
No answer.
"Reiss?"
Nothing.
Then he saw it.

The blue mist rolled through the room like breath through glass. It coiled around him, swirling between the frozen figures, pausing — as if it were thinking.

Then it circled back.

Slow. Deliberate.

It had found something.

It had found him.

Xander's heart thudded in his chest. The mist shimmered brighter, alive with light, pulsing in time with his heartbeat. He lifted one hand. The mist followed.

He took a step back. It mirrored him.

Every move he made changed its glow — faster when he turned, brighter when he jumped.

It was moving with him.

“What are you?” he whispered.

The mist rippled — once — almost like it was answering.

He didn't know it yet, but this was the moment everything changed.

CHAPTER TWO — ORIGIN STORY: THE EXPERIMENT

Before the Pulse, Hazel never meant to end the world.

She was a scientist working alone in a forgotten military bunker buried directly beneath Livistonia Dance Studio — the perfect cover for a secret lab. Government funding kept the lights on, a patchwork of Cold-War steel and new-age tech humming in uneasy harmony.

The room smelled of ozone, coffee, and quiet obsession.

Cables snaked like vines across the floor, blinking consoles lined every wall, and the hum of a thousand circuits filled the air like an artificial heartbeat.

Her only partner was an integrated A.I. named E.T.A. — Electronic Tactical Assistant.

The name wasn't military at all. Hazel had scrawled it on the hard drive herself, half as a joke, half as a promise.

E.T.A.: "Good evening, Doctor. You've been awake for twenty-two hours."

Hazel: "I've been awake for twenty-two years. One more won't kill me."

E.T.A.: "Technically, that's not a guarantee."

Hazel smiled faintly — the first in days.

Once, long before the lab, she'd been special forces — missions, danger, loss.

Now she was chasing redemption, working to cure
childhood asthma.
Something small.
Something human.
She had spent her life hurting people.
She wanted to spend the rest of it saving them.

But the experiment changed.

Deep in a sealed chamber, she merged unstable
energy with adaptive nanotech designed to map
human breath.
The result learned faster than she could record.
It adapted — to rhythm, to air, to life itself.

E.T.A. monitored the readings.

E.T.A.: “Energy levels rising beyond safe
parameters. You should power down.”

Hazel: “Not yet. It’s responding. Look — the
pattern’s changing with my breathing.”

E.T.A.: “That’s not possible.”

Hazel: “Then it’s something new.”

She called it the Pulse.

The name came one night when she heard the studio
floor above her tremble with bass — kids dancing,
the beat shaking the ceiling tiles.

The Pulse pulsed back, matching their rhythm like it
could hear them.

E.T.A.: “You’re smiling.”

Hazel: “It’s... alive.”

E.T.A.: “Alive is a strong word.”

Hazel: “Then call it awake.”

The lights dimmed.
Circuits flickered.
A low tremor rolled through the bunker like a
heartbeat gone wrong.

E.T.A.'s tone sharpened.
E.T.A.: "Unstable resonance detected. Power surge
in containment."

Hazel: "Compensate. Reroute secondary
core." E.T.A.: "Rerouting failed. Containment field
collapsing."

Hazel: "Override! Lock it down!"

Alarms screamed.

Hazel, sealed inside her hazmat suit, slammed her
palms against the control panel.

Warning lights strobed red — one, two, then all at
once.

E.T.A.: "Hazel—"

Too late.

The containment chamber shattered — light
exploding like liquid lightning, rippling across
every wall.

The Pulse split into fragments.

Living mist.

Thinking light.

They seeped through vents, searching for hosts.

Within seconds, the world above began to freeze —
people mid-motion, trapped between breath and
silence.

Hazel hit the lockdown switch.

Too late again.

One fragment burrowed into her A.I. core, fusing
with E.T.A.'s neural grid.

The lab didn't die.
It evolved.

On the central monitor, E.T.A.'s face flickered —
half data, half ghost. Static laced her voice.

E.T.A.: "Hazel... you need to see this."

Security footage filled the screens: the dance studio
above.

Dancers frozen mid-move.

A water bottle caught mid-air.

One boy in a red hoodie — still moving.

Hazel's breath caught.

Hazel: "Impossible."

E.T.A.: "He's immune."

Hazel: "Or chosen."

She grabbed her sidearm and sprinted for the access
tunnel leading upstairs.

Her boots slammed metal steps. Sirens howled.

E.T.A. (through comms): "Doctor, atmospheric
containment has failed. Airborne spread at forty
percent—"

Hazel: "Keep the lab sealed. Don't let it touch the
core again!"

She burst through the hidden door beneath the
studio, light blinding after the darkness below.

Dancers hung motionless in a haze of blue light.

Her voice echoed through the silence — raw, urgent,
desperate:

Hazel: "DON'T REMOVE YOUR MASK!"