New To The Family

by moviefan_92

Summary

Takes place in the Justice League: War/Son of Batman movieverse, post the Justice League vs. Teen Titans, and pre-Justice League Dark.

Selina Kyle (Catwoman), disappeared from Gotham City and Bruce Wayne's life 11 years ago. Unbeknownst to him, she gave birth to his daughter, Helena (Huntress), who is now a 10 year old superhero with abilities making her borderline metahuman. But now, someone is after Helena, and they know their identities as Catwoman and Huntress. With nowhere else to turn, Selina returns to Gotham to seek aid from Batman, and introduce him to the daughter he never knew he had. Bruce's son, Damian (Robin), is not happy about Selina's return to his father's life, or that he now has a half-sister. And while Helena is eager to get to know him and her father, Damian wants nothing to do with her. Will these two siblings ever get along? Will Bruce and Selina reconcile their relationship? And who is behind these abduction attempts on Helena?

Adventure/Drama/Crime/Angst/Family/Friendship/Mystery/Romance/Supernatural. Pairings: Bruce/Batman and Selina/Catwoman, Damian/Robin and Raven (implied), Dick/Nightwing and Starfire. Rated for fight scenes and some language.

STORY COMPLETE

Notes

(A/N: IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ! Alright then, it's time for something new! Excluding my 'Teen Titans' one-shot, this will be my first DC full-length story. I was inspired after watching the latest Batman and Justice League animated movies. I don't get what the hate is about for them; I think they're the best ones so far. Anyway, the important notice in this Author's Note is to understand which DC universe this story takes place in, and that's the Son of Batman and Justice League: War universe. Basically, the New 52 universe. If you haven't seen the movies in that universe, I highly recommend them. There's quite a bit of retelling and reimagining of the characters and events, so things are going different from what you probably know. The six movies in the continuum are 'Justice League: War', 'Son of Batman', 'Justice League: Throne of Atlantis', 'Batman vs. Robin', 'Batman: Bad Blood', and 'Justice League vs. Teen Titans', in that order. So, excluding the sneak peek of Terra coming to Titan Tower in the mid-scene credits, this story takes place a few months after Justice League vs. Teen Titans. You'll want to at least see that movie, or you might be a little confused about what's going on in this story, but I still recommend them all; they're only an hour long, and they're really good. You can watch them on KissCartoon if you're interested. One last thing, I need a better name for this story, so if anyone can come up with one I like better, then I'll change it, and give credit to who comes up with it.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing
"NEW TO THE FAMILY"

Chapter 1: On the Roof

The tower was a marvel, standing tall and proud outside of Jump City on a small island. In the shape of a giant capital T, it was an appropriate location for the future heroes of the world known as the Teen Titans.

Always open to new members, the heroes in training consisted of five members, led by two full-fledged heroes. Having recently moved in, the cybernetic ex-football player and former member of the Justice League, Victor Stone, or Cyborg as he had come to be known, now worked alongside the alien princess, Koriand'r, or Kory Anders for her human name. To the rest of the team, and most of the world, she was known by the English translation of her Tamaranean name, Starfire.

Together, they saw to the training and welfare of the heroes in training, who were already heroes in their own right after having defeated the evil demon, Trigon, the father of arguably the most powerful member of the team, Rachel Roth, aka Raven, a half-demon witch with extraordinary powers.

The most annoying, yet most lovable member of the group was a yellow eyed, green skinned boy known as Garfield Logan, aka Beast Boy, appropriately named after having gained the ability to shape shift into any animal of the planet/dimension he was on/in. Like Raven, he was referred to almost all the time by his alter ego's name.

The tag-team duo of Jaime Reyes and the mysterious life form known as the Blue Beetle Scarab had formed a symbiotic relationship with the beetle having fused itself to Jaime's spine, granting him several extraordinary abilities, from flight to firing energy beams. Together, they had come to be known as Blue Beetle.

Not all members possessed superpowers, but then again, the newest member, Damian Wayne, didn't really need them. Obtaining the title Ibn al Xu'ffasch, he was indeed that, the "Son of the Bat"; the bat in this case being none other Gotham City's Bruce Wayne, aka Batman. Raised most of his life by his mother and grandfather, Talia and Ra's al Ghul, to be the future leader of the League of Assassins, and eventually the world, he had been made into a living weapon, a master assassin that could even hold his own against his father, eventually becoming the fifth Robin after Ra's, and later his mother, were killed.

Currently, he and the other Titans were in the training room, fighting holograms of ninjas for practice; at least three of them were while Raven was off meditating. While the digital opponents could land blows on the trainees, they couldn't do any real physical damage. It was a good thing too,
as Beast Boy was having a pretty rough time. His movements were slow and sluggish, and even his animals transformations seemed to be delayed for a second or two.

After transforming into a tiger, green like all his forms, he mauled a digital ninja. Tackling it to the ground, he tore its throat out, and the ninja broke down into data. He shifted back to his human form, only to have another ninja come up behind him and bring their sword down on him. Beast Boy received an electric shock and was knocked to the ground, but wasn't physically harmed. The ninja raised their sword again, only to have another sword, a real one, burst through their chest, and they broke down into data.

Damian, dressed, in his Robin costume, sheathed his sword and glared down at the green boy. "You're sloppy today. That can get you killed in the field."

Rolling onto his back, Beast Boy rubbed his face as he looked up at Robin with tired eyes. "Sorry, I didn't get much sleep last night. Kory and Dick kept me up most of the night."

Blue Beetle walked over, his body covered in his so-called "pet's" bodysuit. "How'd they keep you up? Were they talking loudly or something?"

Beast Boy looked somewhat uncomfortable. "No, they weren't talking, but they were doing something too loudly." He sighed. "Sometimes, it really sucks having a dog's hearing."

The blue clad Titan looked confused for a moment, but then the red eyes of his Scarab Beetle on his back glowed as it conveyed a message to him, and Blue Beetle's own eyes widened in understanding. "Ooooh." He too now looked uncomfortable. "Yeah, I guess you wouldn't want to hear something like that."

Robin just glared at him. "Grow up already. It's not a big deal. People and animals have been doing that for millions of years. How do you think you were born?" He turned and began walking back towards the center of the room. "Personally though, I don't think Grayson is good enough for Kory."

Beast Boy stood up. "Dude, what's your beef with him anyway? Isn't he like, your brother?"

Robin stopped. Scowling, he rounded on the green boy, marching over to him with a hostile expression that was barely concealed by his mask. "That guy is not my brother. He's just some orphan boy that my father took pity on." He scoffed. "He should have left him with the circus."

The two stared as the Boy Wonder went back to training. They exchanged a confused look before turning back to him. "I still don't get why you don't like him," Blue Beetle stated. "I think he's pretty cool."

"Yeah, and didn't he save your life a few times?"

Sword flying, Robin cut down three more digital ninjas. "I didn't need his help. I'd be better off without him." With a serious expression, he looked back at them. "As far as I'm concerned, I'm an only child."

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Several miles away in a neighboring city, a dark figure raced across rooftops. Briefly slipping out of the shadows into the light of the moon, the figure revealed themself to be a woman in a skin tight black leather suit. It did little, if anything, to hide her curves and athletic build, but that was actually meant to serve a purpose, and had come in handy when dealing with male opponents.
Selina Kyle, aka Catwoman, was good at what she did. Lifting her red glass goggles to her forehead beside her suit's cat-like ears, she scanned the rooftop for any pursuers. She wasn't entirely sure who they were yet, but they were quite persistent. Being a heroine/antihero/vigilantly/spy/jewel thief, she had made quite a few enemies, both on the sides of the law, and on the criminal side. Fortunately, she had friends on both sides as well.

These people, however, were not friends. Friends didn't shout threats or fire guns at you. Not that this was anything new to her. Having worked with and against other heroes in the past, like the world famous Batman, she was quite used to these things, and rather good at getting out of such situations. Truthfully though, she rather enjoyed it, especially when it was the Dark Knight doing the chasing.

Not this time though. This time something far more precious than her own life was at stake, and she was not willing to lose it, but these pursuers were proving to be quite resilient. Especially that one. She had no idea who he was, but the guy just wouldn't stay down.

She heard it a moment before it happened. The cocking of a gun. Reacting as such, she did a backflip as a series of bullets came flying at her. Taking cover behind a chimney, she pressed herself against the bricks as pieces chipped off from the spray of bullets.

"That's enough," a deep masculine voice declared, and the onslaught of bullets ceased.

Catwoman recognized the voice, and slowly peaked out from behind her hiding place. She saw them now, a group of six men hidden in the shadows. The one who had spoken, she could see him now, and it was indeed him, the one who had been after her for several weeks now. He was extremely tall, over 7 feet, and had muscle upon muscle. There was something wrong with the face though. He wasn't scarred or deformed, but there was something not quite right about it.

Until a few weeks ago, she had never seen him before. He had just shown up out of the blue with a gang of thugs and had made a rather unreasonable demand of her, one she was not willing to comply with under any circumstances. And this time would be no different; even though she was sure he was about to make it again.

"You've got nowhere to go, kitty cat," the big man growled. "It would be easier for you to just give us the girl."

Catwoman just scoffed at that. "You truly are all brawn and no brains."

"I'm done playing games with you, cat. Surrender the girl to us, or I'll make all nine of your lives a living hell."

Emerald green eyes narrowed as she reached for the whip attached to her belt. "I'll show you a living hell." She rolled out of her hiding place, lashing out with her whip. It wrapped around the big man's leg, and she gave it a yank, bringing him crashing down. She smirked at his fallen form. "Besides, cats are the guardians of the underworld in Egyptian mythology."

The big man sat up, glaring at her with milky white eyes. "Kill the bitch!"

His men open fired. Catwoman moved quickly, leaping impossibly high in the air and landing into the group of thugs. Moving with incredible speed and extreme flexibility, she lashed out with a series of kicks and punches that even the greatest of acrobats and gymnasts would be envious of.

At this close range, the guns the men wielded weren't of much use unless they wanted to risk shooting themselves and their comrades. Catwoman did quick work of knocking them aside before
landing several blows to the thugs, the metal heels on her boots providing an extra helping of pain. Brandishing the claws on her gloves, she slashed at them, drawing blood, but was careful not to land any killing blows; she wouldn't take a life unless absolutely necessary.

Kneeing a thug in the gut, bringing him to his knees, she raised her claw to give him a nice scratch across the face to serve as a reminder for the next several days not to mess with her when she felt her arm being grabbed. The big man was on his feet again. She had barely glanced over his shoulder at him before he wrapped his arm around her throat, lifting her off her feet. But Catwoman was quick and agile. She did a backflip, going completely over the big man's head, slipping out of his grip. She took off running, but the big man whirled around, swinging his fists, and his big hand slammed into the back of her head.

She went down, dazed. Regardless, she began to get up, only to have the big man's hand wrap around the back of her head. He lifted her up and slammed her back down, then turned her onto her back, his fingers wrapping around her throat and squeezing. Catwoman gasped as her air supply was cut off. She began clawing at his arm and hand with the sharp talons attached to her glove, but the big man didn't ease up.

"You're going to that big litter box in the sky," he told her with a demented grin.

Like hell she was. Selina Kyle would not go out like this. But she couldn't break his grip, and his arm was so long that he could hold her down while keeping his body out of range of her kicks. Her movements began to slow as the big man tightened his grip. Her vision began to get blurry and started to go dark as she began slipping into unconsciousness. Moving soundlessly, her lips shaped themselves into a single name.

"Helena…"

The big man's sadistic grin was wiped off his face as a smaller shadowy figure leapt up over him and brought down a metal pole over his head. Despite the blow, he didn't go down, but his hands did release Catwoman's throat and cover the place he was hit on reflex.

Catwoman breathed deeply, taking in a much needed gulp of air as the big man stumbled around over her. She rolled to the side and jumped to her feet, trying to maintain her balance as her brain began functioning again with renewed oxygen. Her rescuer was beside her a moment later, spinning the metal rod around like a baton.

While Selina's Catwoman costume suit was simple and without much detail, the newcomer's was much more elaborate. Mostly black, it had bands of purple strapped across her body, along with purple gloves, boots, shoulder and kneepad, and utility belt, along with a light gray striped going down her chest and across her shoulder. She wore a purple mask over her face, the ends curling up. Long black hair flowed around her, the pointy ends of the mask disappearing beneath the dark strands and coming up to almost resemble horns. And in the traditional hero sense, she wore a cape, black with white edges. But her most notable feature, that not even her costume could hide, was that she was only a child.

With a traditional martial arts battle cry, the mystery girl jumped up, swinging the metal pole. It struck the big man in the chin, snapping his head back. The moment she landed, she dove at the big man, kicking him away from her and Catwoman.

"Huntress!" Catwoman cried.

The girl turned to her with a smile. "Looked like you could use a hand."
One of the thugs lunged at her, and the girl, Huntress, jumped up and then came down on him, slamming her feet down on his shoulders, knocking him to the ground. Another grabbed her from behind, and Catwoman moved, chopping the thug in the back of the head, instantly knocking him out. She then spun around, delivering a roundhouse kick to the three thugs that were coming at her.

The big man was dazed, but still standing, and he grinned at the sight of the little girl. "There you are, my dear. You ready to come along quietly?"

Huntress turned to him. "Not interested, but here's a consolation prize."

Quick as lightning, she grabbed at the crossbow on her belt and fired a series of arrows at the big man. Her skills could rival that of the superhero known as Green Arrow, though they weren't needed to hit such a large target. The big man raised an arm to shield his face, and the five arrows fired burried into his beefy limb.

He lowered his arm, scowling at the girl, when a beeping nose drew his attention. He looked down at his feet to find a miniature shuriken with a red flashing light buried into the rooftop, having been thrown by Huntress without him noticing. It went off in a small explosion, and the roof caved in beneath his feet, causing the big man to go crashing through the rooftop, and several floors beneath him.

A hand grabbed her arm from behind, but she recognized the touch, and turned to see Catwoman behind her. The thugs that had been pursuing them were all unconscious. They would later make an anonymous call to the police about them. It wasn't the first time this had happened; there would be more just like them, but hopefully the big man would finally end up behind bars.

"Lets go," Catwoman ordered.

There was no complaint from Huntress as she followed after the leather-clad woman. They jumped from rooftop to rooftop with relative ease, covering ground very quickly. When they reached an end to their rooftops, Catwoman jumped out into open air over the busy road below. She lashed out with her whip, snagging a pipe on one of the apartments on the other side of the street, pulling herself over to it. She ran up the length of the wall, pulled her whip free, and reattached it to her belt.

Huntress was right behind her, using a different means to get across. Grabbing at the grapple gun attached to her utility belt, she fired it across the street, allowing her to pull herself to the other side where she landed beside Catwoman. She expected the older woman to praise her, but was only met with a scowl. "What?"

Reaching up, Catwoman pulled off her Catwoman hood to reveal the face of a stunningly beautiful woman with long black hair. "I thought I told you to head for home."

The girl crossed her arms. "Thanks for saving me, Helena. Gee, you're welcome, Mother; glad I made it in time."

Selina's eyes narrowed at her daughter's tone. "I would have been fine on my own."

"Well, it sure didn't look like it."

The two glared at each other, but then Selina's expression softened and she sighed. Leaning down, she pulled the girl to her, pressing their foreheads together. "I was worried about you. If I lost you, I don't know what I would do."

Huntress' own features softened, and she wrapped her arms around the older woman. "I was on my way back, but got ambushed by a group of those creeps, so I came to find you." She broke the hug
and gave her mother a sorrowful look. "I think they found out where we live."

Selina stared at her for several moments, her expression unreadable. She appeared to be deep in
thought as she looked out over the city. "Then we have no choice. They're getting too close." She
began to walk away, knowing that Huntress would follow her. "We'll make a quick stop at the
hideout, then get out of the city."

Huntress was indeed right behind her. "And go where?"

Her mother hesitated a moment before answering. "Gotham City."

The girl stopped. She stared at her mother for a few moments, her expression hopeful. "Gotham?
You mean…?"

"Yes," Selina replied, slipping her Catwoman mask and goggles back on. "I'm taking you to see
your father."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Well, that's the first chapter, and I've got a lot more planned. Seriously, I've got
big plans for this story that I'm really excited about. Though this story is primarily
Batman, there will also be some Teen Titans and Justice League stuff appearing based
on the New 52 movies, as you saw in the first part of this chapter. Another thing, I'm
fully aware that in the comics, Damian and Helena are two different characters from two
different universes, but this is my story, so there. Hope you stay tuned for the next
installment. I'll be updating every other Wednesday, so look forward to it.)
(A/N: IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ! Alright, a pretty good turn out for only the first chapter so far. Got a lot more Favorites and Alerts than I expected. And a decent amount of Reviews too, and some Private Messages. Just one thing though, most of those Reviews and Private Messages are people either asking me NOT to pair up Damian and Raven, or asking TO pair them up. I was rather surprised by the number of these requests on both sides. So since it seems to be such a big deal, I'm saying this right now. Damian and Raven did in fact show some romantic interest in each other in "Justice League vs Teen Titans", or at least potential romantic interest; that's a fact whether you ship them or not. BUT are they a couple in this story? Well, no, not officially. They are very close though. Be that as it may, this story is NOT about their relationship. The primary relationship will be focusing on Damian and Helena as siblings, and the standard Batman/Catwoman stuff as they try and find whoever is after their daughter. Romance is not the focus of this story, though there will be some involving Bruce and Selina. As of now, I plan to leave Damian and Raven's relationship open-ended like the movie did with them possibly getting together like the movie suggested, but not showing it. That should satisfy both the shippers and anti-shippers as they can each envision their own outcome. So, now that that's out of the way, lets get to the next chapter. Oh, and alternate names for this story are still open for suggestion.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing
Damian had his own demons. A murderous dictator wannabe for a grandfather who had trained him to kill since he was old enough to walk, and a psycho for a mother who had been hell-bent on fulfilling her father's dream to rule the world, regardless of the methods she had used. Fortunately for the Damian, he had been able to face his demons when his mother had tried to kill them and his grandfather had come back from the dead as a demon loyal to Trigon.

Bruce, it seemed, was never able to overcome his demons. In fact, they seemed to shape and define him as a person. And with a psychotic clown always trying to push the borders of his sanity, well, it made Batman a very complex character buried beneath so many layers that it didn't seem like he would ever be able to dig himself out.

It seemed that there was hope for Damian though. And after all the progress he made, he was now coming back to Wayne Manor for a visit. Dick had been the lucky individual to get to provide the transport since Bruce was attending an important meeting with Alfred as his driver.

Pulling up to Titan Tower, he was greeted by the whole gang. His gaze was drawn to the gorgeous alien princess, and he regretted not being able to stay a little longer. She was truly an exotic beauty with her orange skin, bright red hair, and green within green eyes, but piss her off, and she might start firing beams from those eyes. But when she smiled, she would light up like the brightest star.

Like right now. She was smiling at him in a way that made his heart race as she walked up to his modified car. "Welcome back, Nightwing. Good to see you."

He returned her smile with a slightly suggestive tone as he replied, "Good to see you too, Kory. It's been a while."

Beside Cyborg, Beast Boy waved. "Yo, wingman! What's happening?"

Nightwing gave a salute to the green boy and the rest of the Titans. Jaime and Raven were there too. The latter's face was visible, this being one of the rare times Raven pulled down her hood. The red crystal containing Trigon was visible on her forehead, standing out against her pale, grayish skin. Jaime was also out of his Blue Beetle suit, revealing the face of a young boy with a strip of hair down the center of his buzz cut head, though Nightwing knew that the Scarab Beetle fused to his back could encase him in armor in an instant if there was danger.

Cyborg nodded to him in greeting, but Damian was glaring. Out of his Robin suit, he slung his bag over his shoulder and made his way over to the car, giving Nightwing a look of disapproval. "Flirt later. I don't have time for you to try and get into Kory's pants right now."

The Tamaranean princess scowled at him. "Damian!"

Placing a very forced grin on his face, Nightwing tried to keep his tone steady. "He's such a kidder." He motioned to the passenger's seat, his voice becoming hard. "Climb in."

Damian just scowled and jumped up onto the roof of his car rather than going around it, ignoring Nightwing's protests. He waved goodbye to his fellow Titans as he opened the door. "I'll catch you guys later."

"Have a safe trip," Raven replied, smiling at him fondly.

"And, dude, don't forget to get me Batman's autograph!" Beast Boy begged.

Cyborg gave him a thumbs up. "And give him my best."

Damian raised an eyebrow. "You could always just 'boom' to him if you want."
Chuckling, the ex-football player crossed his arms. "Who says I wanted to?"

With a smirk, the eleven year old boy climbed into the passenger's seat. "I want to drive."

"Yeah," Nightwing muttered, "over my dead body."

"I can arrange that."

"Damian," Starfire warned. "Behave yourself." She looked back at Nightwing. "Call me tonight?"

He gave her a knowing smirk. "You know it."

He rolled up the window, and they of them were off. They drove in silence for about a minute before Nightwing glanced at his passenger. "You know, you could thank me for the ride."

The boy didn't even look at him. "I never asked you to pick me up. Why couldn't Father or Pennyworth give me a ride?"

Eyes narrowing, his grip on the steering wheel tightened. "He wanted to, but he had an important meeting?"

"A Justice League meeting?" Damian asked curiously.

"No, a Wayne Enterprises one. He does run a multibillion dollar company?"

Now looking bored, Damian rested his cheek on his hand. "Isn't that Fox's job?"

"This wasn't something Lucius could take care of. Don't worry, he should be back by the time we get there."

"Who says I was worried? I'm just glad I won't be stuck with you all day."

Nightwing took a deep breath as he prayed for patience.

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It seemed Nightwing was right, by the time they reached Wayne Manor, Bruce had already returned. They pulled up into the Batcave and were greeted by the Wayne family butler, Alfred Pennyworth. The always stoic yet kind butler was waiting for them as the car came to a stop, and the two climbed out.

"Hey, Alfred," Nightwing greeted.

"Master Dick," Alfred replied with a nod, "always a pleasure. And Master Damian, welcome back."

"Thank you, Pennyworth," Damian replied, causally handing him his bag as he passed. "Take that up to my room."

If the boy's attitude bothered the butler at all, he gave no sign of it other than the somewhat sarcastic reply of, "I live to serve." Reminding himself that Damian had been brought up with a hoard of servants who were expected to serve his every wish without question, he let the matter drop. "I trust your stay at the Tower was pleasant?"

"It had preferable company," Damian replied, glancing at Nightwing, who scowled at him. "Where's my father?"
"The last I saw him, he was coming up on 100 bench-presses, but he may have since finished since I left. Shall I fetch him for you?"

"No need. I'll find him myself."

With that, he walked off. Alfred watched him leave, his expression unreadable as Nightwing came up beside him. "Doesn't look like he learned any manners while he was away."

"On the contrary, Master Dick, I think there has been a significant improvement in young Damian's mannerism." He turned to the former Robin. "Will you be joining us for dinner this evening?"

"Thanks, Alfred, but I think three would be crowd tonight." He climbed back into his car. "Maybe some other time."

Alfred approached the car. "You do realize that yours and Master Damian's relationship will never improve if you continue to avoid each other."

Nightwing didn't even bother to look at him. "Quite frankly, Alfred, I don't think he wants it to improve."

With that said, he rolled up the window and took off. Alfred watched him go with a slightly disappointed look on his face. "In that case, sir, I shall continue to try and change his mind."

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The weight room came complete with a shower attached to it. A cloud of steam escaped it as Bruce Wayne exited the bathroom, a towel wrapped around his waist and another one over his head as he dried his hair.

He wondered if his son had arrived. Dick had gone to pick him up some time ago. Hopefully, the two hadn't antagonized each other too much on the drive. Or, more specifically, he hoped his son hadn't gotten on Dick's nerves too much; the boy had a way of pushing people's buttons, especially Dick's. Bruce had long since determined that it was due to jealousy.

Hopefully things would be better. Based on the reports he had received, Damian had improved a great deal. He now socialized and interacted more with others, at least with the Teen Titans. That was good; he was learning to be part of a team. If only he could get him to get along better with Dick. But he was at a loss of how to do that.

Bruce could admit, he hadn't been the best parent, but then, he never had a chance to learn. Damian had just been dropped on him out of the blue, and he had been disobedient and rebellious to the end. He hadn't had that problem with Dick, at least not to that extent, but he supposed he should have expected as much considering who the boy's mother and grandfather were.

Sending him to live with the monks in the Himalayas had helped, but the most improvement had come from his interaction with the Titans. They had been good for him, enough for Damian to actually defy, not only him, but also Wonder Woman, the Flash, and Cyborg when it came to dealing with the possibility of Raven's father coming to Earth. And, apparently, according to the reports, he had grown especially close to the girl. It made Bruce wonder if he should have 'the talk' with him soon.

But he was getting ahead of himself. He still wasn't entirely sure what he would say to the boy when he saw him again. He was still thinking about it as he walked out of the bathroom and into the weight room to be and greeted by a familiar voice. "Eight hundred pounds. Pennyworth said you were closing in on 100 bench-presses when he left. Was that you're limit, or did you do more than
Removing the towel over his head, he saw his son standing by his weight bench, examining the weights he had been lifting. Bruce couldn't help but to smile at that as he walked over to him. "That's nothing compared to what others can do."

Damian looked back at him. He didn't return the smile, but his usual hard look visibly softened. "You're talking about Superman, I presume. The abilities one is born with are nothing compared to what one works for and gains for themselves."

"It's not a person's abilities that defines them, but how you use them that determines who you are." He placed his hands on the boy's shoulders. "Welcome back. I trust your trip went well."

Damian shrugged. "The company could have been better."

Bruce decided to play this comment off as a joke. "I'm sorry I was unable to pick you up myself. I hope you didn't annoy Dick too much."

"No more than he annoyed me. You know, you could have just had Cyborg 'boom' me here."

"Casual use of ones powers is not a good thing. We end up taking them for granted and abusing them. Remember, there's a price to be paid for convenience."

Damian nodded. "I know, Father."

Bruce smiled with pride as he and his son turned to leave. "How are things going with your team?"

The boy shrugged. "Nothing special I guess. Things have been pretty quiet since Trigon was sealed away."

"I see." He carefully thought about how to approach the subject. "And how is Raven handling that?"

"She's fine. All her father can do is talk to her, so he keeps trying to convince her to let him out, sometimes with threats, sometimes with bribes, but she ignores him." He glanced at his father. "What about you? How are things in Gotham, and with your team?"

His team, meaning the Justice League, a group of, so far, consisting of him, Superman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Green Lantern, and Shazam, who, for some reason, had also been introducing himself to the public as Captain Marvel. Trying to gain more publicity with two names perhaps? There was also Cyborg, but he seemed to be more of a Teen Titan now rather than a member of the Justice League, and then the unofficial member, Arthur Curry, who was now being called Aquaman by the world.

"I'm more of a part-timer rather than a member," Bruce replied, "but things are as well as they can be. As for Gotham, there've been your run of the mill common criminals. The Joker escaped again, but he was caught before long."

Damian's eyes narrowed at the news of yet another escape by the Joker. "You should really look into the security of that place. How'd he get out this time?"

"He seduced and drove a psychiatrist named Harleen Quinzel mad. She's now dressing like a clown and calling herself Harley Quinn."

The boy scoffed. "Figures. There's no shortage of lunatics in this city."
This time it was Bruce's turn to narrow his eyes. "We can't look at the negative. We have to think about all the good people in this town, and remember that we're doing this for them."

"Yes, Father."

Bruce looked at him again. As different as they were, they were remarkably the same in many ways. He was even the spitting image of him as a child, only he had his mother's green eyes. But both their eyes possessed the same hardness, looking at the world, and all the people in it, with distrustful and criticizing gazes.

He pushed those dark thoughts away. They wouldn't focus on that tonight. This was Damian's first night back; they wouldn't dwell on the negative aspects of the world. Putting a smile on his face, he put a hand on the boy's shoulder. "Lets not worry about that tonight. Alfred is providing a huge feasts to welcome you back."

Damian crossed his arms. "I'm only going to be here two weeks. There's no need to do anything extravagant."

His father chuckled. "I'm happy to have you for however long I can. Even if it is only for a short time. Lets enjoy it."

The boy seemed to consider this before giving his father a suspicious look. "Grayson isn't going to be there, is he?"

The question was answered by Alfred making his way towards Damian's room with the bag the boy had handed to him. "Master Dick has opted for spending the evening elsewhere."

Damian scoffed. "Yeah, probably in Kory's bed."

Bruce cleared his throat, eager to change topics. "So, Alfred, what's on the menu for tonight?"

The first night had been an enjoyable one where father and son got caught up on things since they last spoke. That time being shortly after Trigon's defeat, they had a few month's worth of things to catch up on.

The following nights, both donned their alter ego's costumes and patrolled the streets like they did in the old days. Nightwing joined them on a few occasions, and they ran into Batgirl one night, but didn't see Batwoman or Batwing during that time.

Crime consisted of run of the mills criminals committing average everyday crimes, nothing extravagant. At least not until the eighth night. It was on this night that the Bat-Signal was shined into the sky, alerting the Dark Knight to the trouble at hand.

It happened while Bruce and Damian were enjoying a movie before going out on patrol. Having heard all the good reviews about it, they had opted for watching the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movie. The irony that they were watching a movie about superheroes was not lost to them, but they both found it to be rather enjoyable.

That is, until Alfred was forced to interrupt them. He politely knocked before entering, and Damian turned to him. "Pennyworth, good timing." He held up his empty bowl. "We need more popcorn."

The butler bowed respectfully. "My deepest apologies, Master Damian, but I'm afraid there is a more important matter at hand."
He looked regretfully at the curtain. It was all Bruce needed to see to know what was going on. He got up and opened the curtains, and sure enough, the Bat-Signal was shining high in the sky.

Damian grabbed the remote and changed the channel to the news. A report was being given of a man in a mysterious suit holding the people at a charity events hostage with a group of criminals.

"Suit up," Bruce unnecessarily told Damian. "Alfred, contact Dick."

"Already done, sir. He is on his way there right now."

Damian got up from the couch. "We don't need him. We can handle this ourselves."

Bruce looked at the TV, assessing the situation. "This is no ordinary robbery. It's best not to take any chances."

The boy scowled. "Fine, but I'm driving this time."

This led to yet another argument, but the duo was soon speeding down the street in the Batmobile. People jumped to their windows and ran into the streets to get a glimpse of the famous vehicle, but two specific individuals caught sight of it from the rooftop they were perched on. Catwoman stared after the custom made car with Huntress by her side, the two having entered Gotham City that very night.

"Where's he going?" the younger of the two asked.

A smile grazed Catwoman's ruby red lips. "To do what he does best." She chuckled and shook her head. "He never changes, but I like that about him."

Huntress glanced at her. "So what do we do now?"

Catwoman placed her hands on her hips. "Well, we came to meet your father. Now you'll get to see him in action."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Father and son are reunited, and now they're off to do what they do best. And it looks like they're going to have some unexpected help. That will certainly be an interesting reunion. So, are there any guesses as to who is holding the people hostage? There's a whole barrage of villains left to choose from. Props to whoever guesses correctly. And since pairings seem to be a big deal to people right now, let me make it clear that Nightwing and Starfire are together, they made that very obvious in four of the movies, particularly with a few rather suggestive phone conversations. As for Damian and Raven, like I said before, I currently plan to leave it open-ended, and harping me about it won't change my mind for my plans. Again, that's not the focus of this story. Either way, I hope you'll stay tuned for more. See you next time.)
(A/N: Ok, so since I'm going to start introducing villains, I thought I'd give those of you that haven't seen the New 52 movie series universe this story takes place in a quick review of the villains in those movies. This way you'll be somewhat up to speed in case any of you are reading this story without having seen them so you're not completely in the dark:

"Justice League: War" – Darkseid is blinded, injured, and banished back to Apokolips. Desaad is killed off.

"Son of Batman" – Deathstroke (Slade Wilson), Ra's al Ghul, Man-Bat(s), White Ghost (Dusan al Ghul), and the entire League of Assassins with the exception of Talia and Uba are killed off. Joker, Two-Face, and Killer Croc are shown to be in Arkham.

"Justice League: Throne of Atlantis" – Ocean Master (Orm) and Scarecrow are arrested. Black Manta is killed off.

"Batman vs. Robin" – Dollmaker (Anton Schott), Talon, and the entire Court of Owls are killed off.

"Batman: Bad Blood" – Talia al Ghul, Heretic, Mad Hatter (Jervis Tetch), Calculator (Noah Kuttler), Electrocutioner, Firefly (Garfield Lynns), Hellhound, Killer Moth, and Onyx are killed off. Black Mask (Roman Sionis) and Penguin (Oswald Cobblepot) are arrested.

"Justice League vs. Teen Titans" – Trigon is sealed away in the crystal on Raven's forehead. Lex Luthor, Cheetah (Barbara Ann Minerva), Toymaster, Weather Wizard (Mark Mardon), Atomic Skull, and Soloman Grundy (Cyrus Gold), are arrested. A resurrected and demonized Ra's al Gul is killed off.

Phew, that was a lot, but now you have a general idea. There's also some debate of whether the "Batman: Assault on Arkham" movie is part of the continuum, but that won't have any impact on this story one way or the other.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: A Cold Front

What made a villain? What made a super villain? Where was the line, and how far did one have to go to cross it? While the answers to these questions were uncertain, this was certainly a prime example of one. With a room full of people cowering at the hands of a gang of criminals, the leader of the group certainly had the look of a super villain down.

Bald with chalk-white skin with a bluish hue and permanent bloodshot eyes that had turned them completely red, the man known as Victor Fries had donned the alias Mr. Freeze after an accident had
altered his body forever. Unable to live outside of subzero temperatures, the full body mechanical suit he wore brought the air down to freezing inside it. And right now, he was currently dropping levels in the room down by several degrees as well with a custom made gun that fired freeze rays that instantly covered anything in ice. Already several people were encased in blocks of it, and Freeze was threatening to do it to more if they didn't give him all their valuables.

"Everything," he demanded of both his men and the victims. "Make sure you get everything."

One individual, an elderly woman, dared to raise her head to Freeze as one of the thugs attempted to move her wedding ring. "Please, sir, not my ring. It's all I have left of my husband."

Freeze turned to her. The thug moved away as he slowly approached, his freeze ray at the ready. "You hold onto something to honor the memory of a loved one that's gone. I, however, still have a chance to save the one I love. I will not allow a memory to stand in my way."

He fired upon her, and the woman was immediately frozen. Fearful cries rang out through the room as yet another victim was encased in ice. Freeze, however, showed no remorse as he turned to address the crowd. "I hope you all see how serious I am. Ask yourselves, what would you be willing to do to save the one you love the most in this world? You are looking at a man who is willing to do anything for this very thing, and who has nothing to lose. I will have what I've come for, and I will either take it from you willingly, or from your cold dead hands."

He held out his hand, and one of his men handed him a crowbar. He stood above the elderly woman he had just frozen, his intent clear. "Let this be a lesson to all of you of what will happen to those that stand in my way."

He raised the crowbar to smash the frozen woman, but something struck his hand, knocking it out of his grip. Freeze grunted, more in surprise than pain, and glanced at what hit him. On the ground lay a bat-shaped ninja star, appropriately dubbed a Batarang. That could only mean one thing.

"That's enough, Freeze," the Dark Knight declared as he dropped from the ceiling, "you've made your point."

"Batman," Freeze growled, taking a step away from him. "You've interfered for the last time."

Someone else dropped down behind him, and he turned to find Nightwing behind him. "Gee, I've never heard that one before."

Freeze raised his freeze ray, but Nightwing did a roundhouse kick, knocking it out of his hands. Freeze looked at his gun, then at Nightwing, then at Batman. His face twisted with fury as he looked at his men. "What are you waiting for? Kill them?"

The thugs raised their guns, but Batman threw smoke bombs at the ground and was suddenly concealed by a cloud of smoke. Nightwing fired his grapple gun into the air, pulling himself out of the bullets' path. Freeze glared at the grappling superhero and dove for his gun, but several more Batarangs cut him off as he reached for it.

Robin landed in front of him, giving Freeze a dirty look. "You've got to be the lamest super villain ever."

"Clearly you've never met Polka Dot Man or the Condiment King," Freeze replied, and threw a small round object at him.

Robin sincerely hoped he was kidding as he jumped away from the small device. It was apparently a bomb of some kind as it exploded, encasing the spot he had been standing in ice, leaving behind a
large ice block.

Freeze retrieved his weapon and pointed it at the young hero. "Little boys should stay at home with their mommies."

As quick as lightning, Robin whipped out his sword and swiped it at the freeze ray, cutting it in two. When Freeze fired, there was a burst of cold, and most of Freeze's arms were covered in ice. Robin charged forward and jumped up, kicking Freeze in the head. The glass helmet protected him from most of the blow, but his head still got rattled on the inside.

"My mother's dead," Robin growled.

Freeze grunted and brought his frozen together hands down on Robin's head, shattering the ice on his hands over his skull. The Boy Wonder went down, groaning. Freeze glared down at him and looked at the other two heroes at the scene. The cloud of smoke Batman was hiding in had expanded, and the Dark Knight moved through it unseen. He grabbed one thug after another, pulling them into the smoke and giving them an unseen yet undoubtedly painful beating. Nightwing was fighting out in the open, using his agility and fighting techniques, accompanied with his Eskrima Sticks to knock out one thug after another.

Recognizing a lost cause when he saw one, Freeze grabbed a bag containing the wallets, cash, and jewelry his men had managed to obtain and made a break for it. Robin saw him leaving and struggled to get to his feet, but fell back down again. He'd gotten careless and now likely had a concussion; he'd take special care not to let Alfred find out about it this time.

"Freeze is getting away," he called to Batman.

The Dark Knight glanced at the retreating super villain. "Nightwing, can you handle things here?"

Nightwing grabbed a thug and flipped him over his head. "Won't be a problem."

"Good. I'll go after Freeze. Robin, you get to work attaching heaters to the ones he froze."

"I can handle these losers," Robin objected, once again on his feet.

"That's an order," Batman snapped, and took off after the head honcho.

Freeze already had a head start on him, but his freeze suit slowed him down. Already the faster of the two, Batman quickly closed the gap between them. Freeze seemed to sense that he was coming and dropped one of his ice bombs in the road. Batman silently swore and dove for it as the cars sped by around him. He threw it as far away as he could, and it went off on the sidewalk, freezing the area over in ice.

Batman turned just as Freeze disappeared down a dark alley. But Batman was used to working in the darkness and went in after him. "Give it up, Victor. It's over."

A few seconds of silence passed before the villain spoke, and there was a notable amount of desperation in his voice. "I can't give up. I have to keep going."

Batman wasn't just an expert at fighting criminals with his hands; he was also an expert at fighting them on a psychological level. "I know you want to help your wife, but this isn't the way."

"It's the only way," Freeze's voice replied from in the shadows. "I'm willing to do whatever is necessary to save her. And if the world won't help me, then I'll take what I need from the world to help her myself."
He was moving around him. He just had to pinpoint his location. "Do you really think your wife would want that?"

"She would want to live. And I intend to make sure she does. No matter what it takes."

Batman's eyes narrowed, both at Freeze's claim and to squint into the darkness. "By hurting innocent people? By stealing? Killing? What would she say to that? Even if you do manage to find a cure for her, how will she be able to cope with all the blood on your hands, with all the sacrifices you made to save her."

"We'll cross that bridge when we get to it."

There! He found him. "I'm sorry, Victor, but I can't let you do that."

He threw a smoke bomb at the icy villain. Freeze swore as he was blinded by the gray cloud. Batman rushed at him, delivering a blow to his helmet. Freeze stumbled back and swung the sack full of stolen goods at him. Batman easily dodged it and reached for one of the tubes on Freeze's suit, pulling it loose. Freezing air began escaping the suit, and Freeze cried out as the warm night air began slipping inside, the sack slipping from his hands.

Sputtering and gasping for breathe, Freeze pressed a button on his wrist. A small compartment popped open and sprayed a cooling fluid across the ground, which Batman unfortunately stepped it. The fluid froze almost instantly, covering the ground in ice. It traveled up Batman's legs to his knees, freezing him in place. The Dark Knight would have fallen over if his legs weren't encased.

Still gasping, Freeze reattached the tube Batman had pulled loose, and the cold air began circulating once more. Batman was busy trying to pull his legs lose, not making much progress. He grabbed at a small circular object on his utility belt and attached it to his frozen legs. The ice began to melt as the miniature heater rapidly rose in temperature.

Freeze picked up the sack he had dropped and swung it at Batman, hitting him in the head. He swung it again, and Batman raised his arms to defend himself. It snagged on one of the blade on his gauntlet, ripping open, and all of the contents came spilling out. Freeze snarled with rage and threw a punch, his suit amplifying his strength. And with Batman unable to move, all he could do was defend against the blows as best as he could.

But even with Batman's endurance and stamina, the metal fist slamming against him began to take their toll. When the ice covering his legs finally melted enough, the remaining ice shattered under the force of Freeze's pounding, and Batman dropped to his knees.

"This time, Batman, I'm putting you on ice," Freeze growled, delivering a kick to the Dark Knight's face with his metal boot.

Batman went down, dazed, and Freeze took a moment to look around. His gaze landed on a metal pipe in the wall, and he walked over to it. With his enhanced strength, he pulled it out off the wall and marched back over to Batman. The Dark Knight was already beginning to get up when Freeze swung the pipe, nailing him in the head. Batman went down again, and Freeze swung a second time. This time Batman lifted his arm to defend himself, and the pipe painfully knocked it out of the way.

Raising the pipe once more to bring it down on the fallen hero, it was unexpectedly snatched out of his hands as a whip coiled around it and pulled back. Freeze turned to find a well-known face that had not been seen in Gotham for years.

"You're off your game, big boy," Catwoman teased the fallen Dark Knight.
"You?!" Freeze exclaimed.

The leather-clad woman leapt at him. She landed in a handstand and kicked out at him, her legs slamming into his chest and knocking Freeze off his feet, despite the extra weight his suit added. He flew through the air, landing on a few trashcans that did little to cushion his fall.

Catwoman dropped down beside Batman, who was currently seeing double from the blows to his head. "C-Catwoman?"

She smirked at him in that arrogant seductive way that he knew so well. "Long time no see, lover boy. Just let me take care of this for you, then we can catch up."

He had to warn her. "He's got some new tricks."

She just smiled at that. "So do I."

Freeze was getting to his feet, and Catwoman did a series of flips towards him. She somehow managed to leap into the air and land with her legs wrapped around his head. She then flipped backwards, pulling Freeze along with her, and he crashed to the ground. With some fancy maneuvering, she spun around on top of him, ending up sitting on his back while grabbing his arm and pulling it back in the wrong direction. Even with his suit, it was incredibly painful, and Freeze cried out.

"Just like old times," Catwoman called to Batman, pulling Freeze's arm back further. "How about tossing me some of those bat handcuffs you carry around."

With a snarl, Freeze elbowed her with his other arm, knocking her off him. She turned it into a roll and leapt to her feet as Freeze rose to his. Before he had fully regained his balance, Catwoman charged at him, delivery a series of kicks and punches to his freeze suit.

He stumbled back until he hit the wall. Pushing off it, he used the momentum to throw a punch. She sidestepped his fist and slammed her elbow into his helmet, knocking him sideways. He whirled around again, throwing another punch. Grabbing his flying fist, she used it to launch herself into the air and delivered a powerful kick to his head. Her metal heel made a crack in the glass.

Freeze's hand went to his cracked helmet. Catwoman took a step back and smirked. She tauntingly motioned for him to come at her, and he complied. He lunged at her, and she grabbed his arm, dropping to the ground to trip him. They both went down, and she rolled over, once again bending his arm back.

"This seems familiar," she joked.

Trying to ignore the pain, he reached for something on his belt with his other hand. He slapped it against Catwoman's back, and she, on reflex released him and leapt away. The small device on her back activated, and Catwoman was suddenly completely frozen in ice.

Groaning, Freeze climbed to his feet and turned to the frozen woman. "I've had had enough of costumed freaks ruining everything."

He moved to smash the ice-encased Catwoman when a hand landed on his shoulder. He turned to see Batman's fist flying towards his face. It hit with such force that the glass of his helmet shattered, and the fist slammed into his jaw.

"So have I," the Dark Knight replied.
Freeze went down, a large hole in his helmet that the cold escaped through. He clawed at his helmet, but there was nothing he could do to stop the cold from seeping out and the warm air from getting in. Batman stood above him, watching as the villain suffered against the heat. It was especially warm tonight, and it was affecting Freeze very quickly.

It wasn't long before he stopped moving. Batman's gaze traveled over the unconscious villain to his belt. He reached down and picked up one of the devices Freeze had attached to Catwoman to instantly freeze her. He activated it and attached it to Freeze's suit, and the villain was instantly encased in ice. That would keep him alive long enough for the authorities to transport him to a suitable holding cell.

He turned his attention to the frozen Catwoman. Having her turn up here was a real surprise. He hadn't seen her in 11 years, though he had been keeping track of reported Catwoman sightings in nearby cities. Based on their brief interaction, she was exactly like he remembered. Though he couldn't tell due to the costume she was wearing, from what he could see, she hadn't changed physically either; something his playboy nature could really appreciate, as could his crime fighting nature when he sized up an opponent.

But why had she returned? For that matter, why had she left to begin with? She had just up and disappeared one day. He had worried, thinking something horrible may have happened to her, but had never found any evidence of foul play. And upon investigating her home, had discovered all her belongings gone.

And now she was back, and he had very mixed feelings about that. But then, when hadn't he had mixed feelings when it came to her? Catwoman was a unique individual all around, a mystery he had never been able to solve. And though she would occasionally stand on the opposite side of the law, her good nature had stopped him from taking her in.

And maybe something more.

Reaching to his utility belt, he slapped a heater onto her frozen form and stood back as he watched the ice melt.

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Back at the scene of the crime, the police had already arrived, as had the ambulances. The criminals were being rounded up while those that Freeze had frozen were being treated after having been freed from the ice. Most were still unconscious, but unharmed.

Nightwing and Robin watched from a distance beside their vehicles. Neither were speaking to each other, but that was normal for the most part. Nightwing glanced at the back of Robin's head, having witnessed the blow he had received by Freeze, and broke the silence. "How's your head?"

The Boy Wonder didn't even look at him. "It'd be better if you'd keep quiet."

Lips thinning, Nightwing had to remind himself to be patient with the boy. "You should have that checked out."

Robin scoffed. "And get grounded to my room for 'rest and recovery' again? I'll bet you'd love that."

"It's not about what I want, it's about what you need. We're not invincible."

He finally looked at him. "I don't need you to worry about me," he turned back to the crime scene. "And I didn't need your help out there; I could have handled it."
This time, the older hero couldn't resist smirking. "I'm sure you could have, but a team helps each other out. I would have thought you'd learned that by now."

Whirling around, Robin pointed an accusing finger at his predecessor. "You don't have any right to be part of Batman's team. You abandoned him, just threw away everything he did for you. Yet you have the nerve to think you can still stand beside him. You make me sick."

Nightwing's eyebrows rose. Ok, so they were going to have a serious personal talk, were they? Well that was fine. It was about time they straightened things out between them. "It's called moving on and finding your own place in the world." He pointed to himself. "I'm grateful for everything Batman's done for me, and I respect him more than anyone, but I got tired of living in his shadow. I didn't want to just be Batman's sidekick anymore. I wanted to be my own man, so yes, I left. I had to in order to make my own way, much the way you did when you went to the Himalayas."

"I came back."

"So did I."

The two stared each other down, neither looking away. Eventually though, Robin turned his back to him. "I still say you're an ingrate."

Nightwing crossed his arms. "Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. At least I didn't betray him to the Court of Owls."

He'd gone too far, he realized it the moment he said it. Robin whirled around and threw a punch, knocking Nightwing into the wall. He was on him instantly, grabbing a fistful of the older hero's shirt. "I never betrayed Batman to the Court."

"Well, you sure gave in to Talon."

"Enough!"

Batman dropped down from up above, his form hidden in the shadows. Robin let go of Nightwing's shirt, and the older hero dusted himself off. "What happened to Freeze?"

Still in the darkness, Batman approached them, heading towards the Batmobile. "The police have him. Let's go."

He stepped into the light, revealing that he was carrying the unconscious form of Catwoman in his arms. Both Nightwing and Robin's eyes widened as they stared at the leather-clad woman, both recognizing her; the latter from reading her file after hacking into the computer in the Batcave, the former from having met her and even worked with her several times back when he was still Robin. "Hey, isn't that…?"

"I said we're leaving," Batman remarked, walking past them.

Nightwing sighed deeply and rubbed his head while Robin glared at his father in disapproval. Neither rose any objections though as Nightwing headed for his own car and Robin reluctantly got into the passenger's side of the Batmobile. Batman placed the unconscious Catwoman in the backseat and strapped her in before climbing into the driver's seat.

As the two vehicles sped off, no one was aware of the dark figure of a girl watching from the rooftop of the ally. Her eyes narrowed and she reached to her belt to retrieve a circular device. She popped it open like a handheld mirror, the screen revealing a digital bird's eye view of Gotham with a blinking light signaling the Batmobile's location.
Raising her grapple gun, she fired it at a building and disappeared into the night sky.

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: So, Batman and Catwoman have reunited and managed to take out Mr. Freeze, though it seems like Catwoman's arrogance had gotten the best of her; she needs to watch that. Even though he never met her, Damian doesn't seem happy with Selina's sudden reappearance. And Dick, well, let's just wait and see how he feels about things when he finds out why she returned. And what of Helena? It looks like she'll be meeting her father and brother soon. That'll certainly be an interesting meeting. See you in two weeks.)
(A/N: I had someone Private Message me in regards to Helena and Damian's ages. In the comics, Helena, and Power Girl, end up traveling to an alternate reality where she meets Damian, and she's a lot older than him there. Yes, I'm aware of that. But when traveling to different realities, you go through space and time, so time doesn't always match up correctly. It doesn't mean Helena is automatically older than Damian; it depends on what point in time she goes to and comes from. In this universe/reality, she's a year younger than him. I thought her being the younger sibling worked better. And besides, it's my story, so I can do what I want, but I did do my research. I am aware that Helena may seem a little OOC from her comic counterpart, but don't forget that she's a 10 year old girl in this story. Not a full-grown superhero like in the comics. So, that being said, lets get to the next chapter. It's shorter than I wanted, but I think it turned out well.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 4: A Huntress In The Night

In the depths of the Batcave, Catwoman lay unconscious on a makeshift cot. Alfred was tending to her as the heart monitor hooked up to the computer kept track of her vitals. She was unharmed physically, but had not yet awoken from the hibernative state being frozen had put her in.

"All in all, Miss Kyle is unharmed," Alfred reported, as calm as ever. "It is just a matter of waiting for her to wake up."

"Thank you, Alfred," Batman replied. "Could you prepare a warm meal for her for when she wakes up."

"But of course, sir. And, if I may ask, how long will Miss Kyle be staying with us?"

Batman looked back at his old flame. "That depends on why she came back."

"Very good, sir," the butler replied, and made for the exit.

Leaning against the wall, Nightwing watched his old mentor with interest. "So you think she specifically came back looking for you?"

Turning his attention to his computer, the Dark Knight began going through his files. "I have little doubt."

"Any idea why?"

"There's no telling. When it comes to Catwoman, there's really no figuring out what her true motives are."

Robin was sitting on the railing, looking moodier than usual to have their "guest" in the Batcave.
"Who cares what her reasons are? You should have just handed her over to the police."

"It's complicated," Batman replied simply.

"No, it's not," Robin snapped. "She's a criminal. We take down criminals. It's as simple as that."

"We're criminals too," Nightwing pointed out. "Vigilantism is against the law, as are a lot of other things we do. Assault, blackmail, threats, trespassing, taking police evidence. The list goes on."

The Boy Wonder hopped off the railing. "I wasn't talking to you, Grayson. And you know that she's not like us."

"It's true that Selina Kyle has violated the laws in ways we would not," Batman admitted, "but she's also been a valuable friend and ally on several occasions. She even saved our lives on more than one occasions."

Robin crossed his arms. "And how many times has she used and betrayed you?"

"Never with malicious intent. Catwoman may be a criminal, but she's not a threat to anyone. It's a game to her, a thrill, but she won't let anyone get hurt in the process."

But Robin wasn't convinced, and he wasn't ignorant to his father's relationship with the leather-clad woman. It was a well-known fact that Batman and Catwoman had been involved with each other for several years before her disappearance. The same could be said for Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle. As far as he was concerned, his father's judgment was clouded when it came to her.

He walked over to their so-called guest, looking down at her with distrust. "As far as I'm concerned, we should have let her be taken in with the others."

"Dually noted," his father replied, not taking his eyes off the screen.

Dissatisfied with Batman's response, Robin's gaze traveled to Catwoman's face. Much like his father's mask, she too wore a similar one, only cat based rather than bat based, and a pair of orange goggles covered her eyes, leaving only her nose and mouth visible. He reached for her mask to remove it. He already knew what she looked like from the time he looked at her file on the computer, but he wanted to see how much she had changed in the 11 years since her disappearance.

Something whizzed through the air, flying between his hand and Catwoman's head, cutting him off. He pulled his hand back, and saw that it was a shuriken, the more traditional type of ninja star rather than the bat-based one they used.

Whirling around, he drew his sword and looked into the darkness of the Batcave. Having been watching the interaction, Nightwing had seen the shuriken land beside Catwoman's head too, and pushed off the wall. Batman had had his back turned, but had heard the clang of the ninja star hitting it's mark, and was immediately on his feet.

"What's going on?" he demanded.

"The cave's been breeched!" Nightwing cried, pulling out his Eskrima Sticks.

"What?" Batman exclaimed, looking around the darkness, seeing nothing. His eyes landed on the Batmobile, and he rushed over to it. He scanned along the surface of the car, and found what he was searching for, a tracer. Someone had put a tracer on the Batmobile. He grit his teeth at his carelessness and crushed the small object in his hand.
Turning into the darkness, he called out, "Who are you?"

"A hunter in the night," a young girl's voice replied.

All three were caught off guard as they identified the voice undoubtedly belonging to a child. They didn't lower their defenses though. Just because their intruder was a child, that didn't mean they weren't dangerous; Damian was a prime example of this.

"Then show yourself, oh mighty hunter," Robin demanded.

There was a giggle from the girl, her voice coming from a different location; she was moving, fast, and knew how to hide in the darkness and shadows, using them to her advantage. "Oh, I'm going to have a lot of fun with you… Damian."

The boy's eyes widened in surprise at his real name being spoken. It was the moment the girl needed to strike. She dropped from the ceiling, landing right behind him. He whirled around, swinging his still sheathed sword at her; it would bruise, but not cut. The girl moved to the side, and then ducked beneath the punch he threw. When she came up, she elbows him hard in the face. Robin stumbled back, and she dropped to the ground, kicking his legs out from under him, and then took off before he even hit the ground.

She charged at Nightwing, who raised his Eskrima Sticks as she came at him. Grabbing at her utility belt, she pulled off a small metal rod. With a flick of her hand, it extended into a metal pole. She lunged at Nightwing, using the pole to pole-vault herself at him, kicking him in the chest. Nightwing went down, and she landed on his torso.

Batman threw a bolas at the girl while her back was turned, but she somehow knew they were coming. Nightwing grunted as she jumped backwards off him, avoiding the bolas as she back-flipped towards the Dark Knight. Landing in a handstand in front of him, she kicked out. Batman held up his arms and blocked the blow, yet from there she somehow managed to wrap her legs around his arms and lift herself up to deliver a punch to his face.

As Batman stumbled back she dropped back down and threw something in the air. Nightwing and Robin were on their feet, coming at her, but their gazes were drawn to the object in the air. The girl shut her eyes tightly and plugged her fingers in her ears as the object revealed itself to be a stun grenade. The non-lethal explosion unleashed a deafening blast accompanied by a blinding flash of light, dulling the senses of the other three. The girl fired a grapple into the air, pulling herself back up to the ceiling.

Batman lowered his hands from his eyes, trying to see. Everything was a distorted blur, and his ears were ringing. He could just barely make out the forms of Nightwing and Robin, but the girl was gone. Who was she, and what was she doing here? Was she some kind of assassin?

"Is anyone there?" Nightwing asked.

"Of course we're here!" Robin snapped. "Where'd she go?"

"Right here!" The girl came swinging down behind him. She wrapped her legs around his back, locking them around his front, and swung into the air, up to a higher floor, dropping him there. She landed a short distance away, and Robin climbed to his feet, blinking as he tried to make her out.

"You're messing with the wrong people," he warned her.

"Likewise," the girl replied with a smirk.
Robin went on the attack, throwing punches and kicks. The girl backed away, dodging and deflecting his blows with great skill. She did a backflip, her foot colliding with Robin's chin, flipping away from him. She kicked off the wall, launching herself back at the boy and kneeing him in the face. Robin dropped to the ground, his lip bleeding, and completely pissed off. It seemed this girl knew how to deliver damage without causing serious injury or death. That was some very skilled combat training she had undergone.

Batman dropped down on the upper layer behind the girl, and Nightwing joined him on the other side. The girl looked from one to the other before grabbing at her utility belt. Spinning around, she threw a handful of shuriken at Batman and another handful at Nightwing. The latter knocked them away with his Eskrima Sticks while Batman rolled to the side.

The girl was already on the move, and Batman fired his grapple gun at her. It wrapped around her leg, pulling her back, but she made quick work of it, snatching a knife on her belt and cutting herself free. She leapt up onto the railing and jumped down to the lower level. As she fell, she mimicked Batman by firing her grapple gun, her target being Nightwing. It wrapped around his leg, the girl's drop pulling him along. He almost went down with her, but grabbed hold of the railing.

"Who is this girl?" he wondered out loud.

Batman jumped onto the railing as well. "I don't know, but I don't think we need to worry about holding back too much."

He fired his spare grapple gun, swinging down, but the girl had been waiting for this, and threw a shuriken that severed the cord. Batman dropped the remaining distance to the floor, but managed to land on his feet. The girl took a fighting stance and charged at him. The Dark Knight fended off her punches, impressed by her skill. She was incredibly agile, and surprisingly strong for her age. She was also very skilled; someone had trained her well.

The girl threw a punch and Batman grabbed her arm. He spun her around, bending her arm behind her back, and lifted her off the ground. He thought this would restrain her, but the girl showed incredible flexibility, her leg coming straight up and kicking him in the face. His hold loosened and the girl actually managed to flip up and over his head.

She landed behind him, and landed a few well-placed blows to his back. Batman grunted as his knees threatened to collapse. Those were pressure point location she had hit. Just who was it that trained her?

He turned around, only to have the girl drop down and slide between his legs. She took off again, but suddenly jumped back as several Batarangs landed in her path, courtesy of Robin. He and Nightwing landed on different sides of her, the three heroes forming a triangle with the girl caught in the middle.

Despite being surrounded, the girl didn't seem like she was about to give up. Grabbing two more handfuls of shuriken, she held them up by her face, using the reflecting metal to see who was behind her while keeping an eye on those in front of her.

"Huntress, stop!" The cry had come from Catwoman, and the other four turned to her. She was on her feet, holding onto the cot for support, but at least she wasn't unconscious.

The girl, Huntress, lowered her arms, returning the shuriken to her utility belt, and ran over to her. "Are you ok?"

Catwoman smiled down at her, patting the girl's head. "I'm fine. Just a little mishap." Her smile
shifted to a frown. "But what were you doing? I told you to stay put."

Huntress motioned towards Batman. "He took you away, so I improvised."

The older woman raised an eyebrow. "And picking a fight with them was part of your improvised plan?"

She shrugged. "They were about to remove your mask, so I stopped them."

Catwoman chuckled at that. "Ordinarily, I would appreciate that, but there are no need for masks here." She looked at Batman with a knowing smile. "Isn't that right, Bruce?"

The Dark Knight looked at her, his expression unreadable. "That depends what we're trying to hide."

Catwoman smirked, lowering her goggles and pulling back her mask, revealing her face. "I guess it gets complicated when the masks we wear are our real faces."

Batman was inclined to agree. "Something like that."

He studied the unmasked woman. She was just as she remembered him. Still incredibly beautiful, manipulatively so. She had used her beauty and seductive ways against him before, and he knew she would do it again to get her way.

His hidden gaze shifted from her to Huntress. "Who's the girl? Your protégé?"

Her smile widened. "Something like that," she said, throwing his words right back at him. "A lot has changed since we last met."

"Eleven years is a long time," he confirmed. "Why are you here?"

She sat down on the cot, making herself suggestively comfortable. "Why, because you brought me here, of course."

"You know what I mean, Selina. You disappeared for 11 years. You wouldn't come back unless you were in trouble."

She sighed at that, looking up at the cave ceiling. "Well, you're right about that."

"Big surprise," Nightwing remarked. "Let me guess, you stole from someone you shouldn't have, and now they're after you."

Selina turned her attention to him. "That's Grayson behind there, isn't it? Look at you all grown up."

She looked at Robin next. "And a new Robin too. And he's your son to boot."

Robin glared. "What's it to you?"

Her eyebrows rose. "My, that's quite an attitude you have there. I assume you get that from your mother's side of the family. Talia, right?" She looked back at Batman and smiled flirtatiously. "If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were trying to make me jealous."

Batman was as stoic as ever. "No games, Selina. Tell me what you want."

She just laughed. "Oops, I forgot. I'm talking to Batman right now, and the Dark Knight is all business." She shook her head and stood up. "That's something about you I find both vexing and endearing."
"Selina…"

Smiling, she shook her head again. "Well, your former sidekick is right about one thing, there are some bad people after me." She looked towards Huntress. "Or should I say us."

Nightwing crossed his arms. "So you did piss off the wrong people, and I'm guessing you can't just give back what you stole."

Mimicking him, Selina crossed her arms as well. "You wound me. I gave all that up a long time ago. I don't steal anymore." She looked back at Batman. Even with his mask on, she could tell he was giving her a skeptic look. "Ok, well, hardly ever. Only if it's from someone who really deserves," she smirked, "or if it's something I really want."

"And who 'deserved it' this time?" Robin asked, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

"No one. That's not why they want me. Actually, it's not even me they want." She placed her hands on Huntress' shoulders. "It's her."

Batman looked at the girl. "Which brings me to my original question. Who is she?"

Selina took a deep breath, preparing herself. This was it, the moment of truth. She had no idea how he would react, or if he would even believe her, but the time for keeping the truth from him was at an end.

She bent down so she was level with the girl. "This is Helena. My daughter." She looked at Batman, locking eyes with him. "Our daughter.

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Dun, dun, dun. The moment you've all been waiting for is here. Well, ok, I guess that isn't saying much since we're only four chapters in, but you know what I mean. You'll have to wait until next chapter to find out how Batman, Nightwing, and Robin react to this revelation. By the way, I'm aware that Huntress picking a fight with them may not have been the best idea, but what was she supposed to do? Just announce herself and say who she was? It was also a bit of a game on her part. She is her mother's daughter after all. And in case you were wondering how she was able to stand up to Batman, Robin, and Nightwing, don't forget that they already had a pretty busy night, and they were going easy on her since she was a child, so she used those things to her advantage. Lets see where things go from here.)
Chapter Notes

(A/N: This chapter turned out to be much shorter than I wanted. I intended this chapter and last chapter to be a single chapter, but felt it was getting too long, and it had a good ending spot. So we ended up with two, one being shorter than I would have preferred. Oh well. It's time to see how Bruce and the others will react to Selina's after dropping that bomb last chapter. It's sure going to be interesting. One thing though, I had someone point out how Helena was able to hold her own against Batman, Nightwing, and Robin. While that was true, there are a few things to consider. First is that they were going easy on her since she's a child, second, they're worn out from fighting Mr. Freeze and his men. There's also another reason, which I will be getting to in this chapter. Enjoy.)

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 5: Not An Only Child

Different people experience different levels of déjà vu. Some experience it more often than others, some experience it more intently than others. And Batman was experiencing it right now. A little over a year ago, Talia had come to him, revealing that the two of them had a son, and now Selina was here, claiming that they had a daughter.

While the Dark Knight was an expert on appearing to remain stoic and inexpressive, Nightwing was a different story. He pinched the bridge of his nose and threw his head back as he emitted a frustrated groan. "Oh, God, you've got to be kidding me.

Batman ignored him as he studied the two women in front of him, trying to determine how truthful Selina was being. She may be his friend and ally, but she was also very manipulative, making it very hard even for him to determine whether she was being truthful or not from time to time. This claim she was making, it could very well be a ploy.

"What type of game are you playing, Selina?" he demanded, keeping his voice as neutral as he could.

The leather-clad woman stood up, keeping her hands on the girl's shoulders. "No game, not this time. She's your daughter. You know it's not impossible. I have a copy of her birth certificate, and a DNA paternity test if you want to see them." She shrugged. "And if you still don't believe me, feel free to do your own paternity test. The results will be the same."

She spoke the truth. He could easily find out if this girl, Helena, was indeed his daughter. Hell, he could do the test himself right here and now in the Batcave and have an answer in minutes. And she was right; it wasn't impossible. While Bruce Wayne was always careful to use protection, contraceptives weren't exactly something Batman carried around with him when he went out hunting down criminals. And during nights where he and Catwoman would sometimes find themselves lost in an unexpected state of lust and passion, well, accidents could happen.

Besides, if Catwoman really needed his help, she wouldn't need to make up a story like this to get it,
and she knew that.

He looked at the girl, studying her carefully. While her mask hid enough of her face to keep her identity a secret, he could still see her eyes. They were the same blue ones he saw in the mirror everyday. "How old are you?"

The girl blinked at the unexpected question. "Um, ten."

So she was born about a year after Selina had disappeared. "When's your birthday?"

"December 17th."

Batman fell silent, doing some quick calculations in his head as he compared the approximate date of her conception to the last time he and Selina had slept together. If she was ten years old, and born on December 17th…

He looked back at Selina, the visible part of his face still betraying nothing to what he was thinking or feeling. "I believe you."

"Father!" Robin objected.

"Quiet, Robin." He approached the two women, bending down to Huntress' level. "Do you mind?"

Huntress shook her head, and Batman slowly reached up and removed her mask, revealing her face. She smiled at him and reached for his own mask. His hand came up to stop her, holding her own for a moment, but then he let it go, and Helena removed his mask, looking into at the face of her father for the first time; not a picture or an image on TV, but the real thing.

"I've wanted to meet you," she told him, unable to keep the happiness out of her voice. "For the longest time."

Selina smiled and stroked her daughter's hair. "She's the reason I left. I have a lot of enemies here, some who know I'm Catwoman. I couldn't risk staying with her on the way. So I left."

A flood of emotions were running through Bruce, but he did his best to keep them in check as he stood up to fix her with an inquisitive look. "So why come back now?"

"Child support, probably," Robin quipped.

Helena glared at him. "Mom and I are very well off."

Robin crossed his arms. "And just how much of it was stolen?"

Selina couldn't help but smirk at this. "Only from the criminals we took down."

"I knew it."

Deliberately mimicking him, Helena crossed her arms, copying Robin's posture. "Better from than from all the blood money your mother and grandfather probably accumulated over the years."

Robin pulled out his sword and held it up threateningly. "Say that again!"

Nightwing had had enough. Feeling a massive headache coming on, he held his hands up in resignation. "Ok, you know what, I'm done with this. I just can't handle it. I'm going to bed." He walked off, leaving the newly acquainted family to work out their issues. "Good luck with the family dispute."
"Shut up, Grayson!"

Smirking, Helena looked up at her mother. "Big brothers are a real pain."

"You are not my sister!" Robin seethed.

"Robin, enough!" Bruce scolded. "Sheath your sword."

"Father."

"Now. And get upstairs."

It was obvious that the boy wanted to argue further, yet he reluctantly put away his sword and followed after Nightwing. He glanced one last time back at the others with a look of disapproval before running the rest of the way out of the Batcave.

Selina sat back down on the cot. "Cute kid. Seems like a handful though."

Even Bruce was unable to resist smiling at that. "You have no idea."

Helena pulled on his cape. "Dad, can I go see the Batmobile?"

Bruce was caught off guard. It had taken him a while to get used to having Damian call him "Father". To have this little girl addressing him as "Dad" was something that would take some getting used to, as would the fact that he now had a daughter as well as a son.

The girl cocked her head to the side. "Dad?"

He snapped out of his thoughts. "What? Oh, um, yes. Just don't touch anything."

"Yes!"

She ran for the modified vehicle, and Selina called after her. "Listen to your father. Don't touch anything."

"Yes, Mom."

Bruce watched as the girl examined the Batmobile. It wasn't just child curiosity and awe that he saw, she was studying the design, working things out, trying to determine what did what. He was impressed. "She's well trained."

Selina smiled. "She's a fast learner. Just like her father."

"And her mother," Bruce acknowledged. He looked back at her. "Why didn't you tell me?"

She sighed. "Where to begin?" She was frowning now. "Or do I even need to? It's the same reason our relationship never progressed more than it did. The same reason why you never let anyone get too close. It's why I left Gotham and the whole Catwoman routine behind. For her, to keep her safe, and to give her the life she deserved," she motioned to the Batcave, "away from all this."

He had to admit, she had him there. He did make it a point to never let anyone in, for their safety as well as his own. He even kept his allies at a distance, never letting them get too close, not even Dick or Damian. But if what she claimed about giving Helena a life away from all this was true, then why were they both here dressed as alter egos? "Then why the Huntress getup? And why the return of Catwoman?"
She smirked. "Do you mean to Gotham, or in general?"

"Both."

She shifted on the cot. Was the movement deliberate, or was she trying to distract him with certain… aspects? There was really no telling with her. "I could ask the same for your protégés." At the look he gave her, she relented. "Most people live in a fantasy world. They don't see how ugly the world really is, or they choose not to, and they end up hurt because of it. You were once like that too, weren't you?"

His eyes narrowed as she treaded on dangerous ground. She wasn't wrong though, he did once see the world a different way, not realizing how corrupt it actually was. It took the deaths of his parents to open his eyes, and he was never able to close again.

"Yes, I wanted her to have a life away from this," Selina continued, "but I also wanted her to be prepared, so she would never be a victim, never have to suffer the way so many others had." She chuckled despite the dreariness of the conversation. "She took to it like a duck to the water, and I eventually realized that she would follow in her parents' footsteps, whether I wanted her to or not. So yes, I trained her, taught her how to fight, how to reach her potential and be all she could be. And so Catwoman returned with her new sidekick." She leaned back and looked up at the ceiling. "I guess that there really is no use in pretending that we're anything other than what we really are."

Bruce was quiet for a moment. Slowly he looked to Huntress' mask in his hand. For some reason, it felt a lot heavier than it should have. "No, I guess not."

Selina looked at him. "She's special. More special than you know. And I think that's part of the problem."

"What type of problem?" When she didn't answer, he gave her a hard look. "Selina, why did you come back?"

Another sigh. "Someone is after us." She shook her head. "No, not us. Her. Someone is after our daughter, and I don't know why, but they want her."

Perhaps it was instinctual, but even though he had just found out mere minutes ago that he had a daughter, the thought of someone being after her sent a feeling of protectiveness through him. "Who? Who's after her?"

She shook her head. "I don't know. I only know the face of the one that works for them. He keeps coming back with a new gang of thugs. No matter how much of a beating I give him, he won't give up. And if you think Killer Croc is a big guy, you should see the size of him."

That didn't give him much to go on. "You don't have any information on him?"

"I could give you a detail description, but no, I have no idea. I never saw him before he started hunting us. There's something not right about him though. It's like he's some kind of monster, always getting up no matter how hard or how often I knock him down. And he was getting close, too close. That's why we came to you."

Bruce thought about this for a moment before heading over to his computer. "I can bring up police case files of known criminals, even those outside of Gotham. You can look at them and see if you can find the man you describe. Any idea of why he's after her?"

Getting up, she joined him beside the massive computer. "At first I thought they found out she was your daughter and wanted to ransom her, but I don't think that's the case anymore. If I had to make a
guess, I think that whoever he's working for want to turn her into some kind of a weapon."

"How so?"

She looked back at their daughter who was now sitting in the driver's seat of the Batmobile, pretending to drive. "When I said she was special, I meant it literally. In a way, she can almost be considered a metahuman. She has certain… abilities that separate her from others."

He raised an eyebrow at this with interest. "What type of abilities?"

"Well, for one thing, she's very smart, and has a near photographic memory."

"That's not unheard of."

"No, but that's not all she has. She's also got a sixth sense for danger, heightened senses, accelerated healing, and reflexes like you wouldn't believe. Watch."

Before Bruce could object, she lashed out with her whip. Helena's back was turned as she examined the wheels of the Batmobile. The whip wouldn't have hit her, but it never would have had the chance if it did. Without even turning around, Helena's hand shot up and grabbed the end of the whip. She looked at it curiously before giving her mother a curious look. "What was that for?"

Selina just smiled as she pulled the whip back. "Nothing, sweetie. Just showing your father how fast you are."

The girl's face lit up, and she hurried over to the two of them. "Is that all? I can go a lot faster than that. Want to see?"

Bruce had to admit, he was thoroughly impressed. "Maybe later."

Helena's eyes were drawn to the computer screen. "Wow, that's a big computer. What's on it?"

Pushing a button, Bruce caused the screen to go black. "Sorry, but that's private."

The girl pouted, but then she smiled mischievously. "I bet I can access your files. I hacked into the Pentagon when I was seven."

Bruce raised an eyebrow to Selina at this, and she held up her hands defensively. "I took no part in that; she did it on her own."

"I did it a few times. You wouldn't believe the information I found. I looked up a bunch of stuff on the Justice League." Her eyes lit up. "Hey, you're a member of the Justice League. Can I go with you to your next meeting? I want to meet Wonder Woman. Is it true she and Superman are a couple? That is so cool! They're the ultimate power couple. I mean, after you and Mom of course. Did you guys really meet on Valentine's Day? That's so romantic."

Bruce crossed his arms and smiled. "You're certainly inquisitive."

The girl giggled and made a muscle. "Mom says I'm almost a metahuman too. Do you think I could be a member of the Justice League when I grow up?"

Not sure how to respond, Bruce glanced at Selina, who just shrugged. He looked back at the girl's hopeful face and decided to humor her. "I see no reason why not? You've certainly got the skills."

Helena frowned at that. "Mom says that's why the bad men are after us."
Selina knelt down beside her daughter, rubbing her back soothingly. "I don't know that for sure, sweetheart."

The girl glared at her. "You don't have to lie, Mom. I'm old enough to handle it." She looked at her father. "And Dad's going to help us, right?"

The two looked at Bruce, waiting for his answer, both with hopeful looks on their faces. This he recognized as one of Selina's games. She knew there was no need to look at him like that. There was only one answer he could possibly give.

Damian was not going to like this.

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Well, it's finally out there in the open. Bruce has met his daughter, and Damian has met his sister. Bruce seems to be taking it well, though Damian doesn't seem too happy about it. Dick was right to get out of there. If you think Bruce didn't "react" enough to suddenly becoming a father of two, just remember how he reacted when he found out he had a son; it wasn't that different. There'll be more explanations and a deeper conversation about things like why Selina never told Bruce about Helena next chapter, and more of a backstory for both of them. By the way, has anyone seen the TV series 'Bird of Prey'? It's about a grownup Helena/Huntress, Barbara Gordon/Oracle, and Dinah Lance/Black Canary as a superhero team. In it, Helena was a metahuman. I based this version of Helena's abilities off the show's version's abilities, making her borderline metahuman rather than a full metahuman. More on that later though. And here's a fun fact, I chose December 17th for Helena's birthday because she first debuted in the December release of DC Super-Stars Vol 1 #17. So, there you go. Don't miss the next update, there's going to be a lot of drama, as well as a confrontation between Bruce and Selina about their past.)
(A/N: We last left our literal heroes with a few shocking discoveries. There were a few mixed reactions, some good, some bad, others just plain awkward. Bruce has agreed to let Selina and Helena stay with him and to help find who is hunting his daughter and why. Damian, however, is not happy about this new addition to the family. Nightwing was smart to get out of there when he did. But there's a lot more to come, and as this chapter title suggests, this chapter is about certain characters getting acclimated with the new situation. Let's see how things go.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

Chapter 6: Getting Acclimated

Out of costume, Helena skipped merrily down the hall beside Alfred as he led her to where she would be staying. This had proved to be a very interesting night. He was already surprised by Catwoman's return, but Helena came as a complete shock. Truth be told, he was a little disappointed in the girl's father. While Damian had been out of Bruce's control due to Talia slipping something in his drink, Helena was the result of pure carelessness; something Alfred had thought he had convinced Bruce to be careful of when engaging in, cough, certain activities.

But his disappointment was overshadowed by the delight the girl was. She certainly had much better manners than Damian, but he supposed that was more due to the boy's upbringing. After all, Talia and Ra's al Ghul weren't the best role models.

Selina Kyle, on the other hand, Alfred had always had a soft spot for, even after she was revealed to be Catwoman. He'd always hoped that she would one day get Bruce to give up his vigilante ways and settle down. It would be nice to hear the sound of little ones running and playing in the mansion again.

This, however, wasn't exactly what he had in mind. Now his master had two illegitimate children from different mothers. And he thought things had been complicated before. But he would do whatever he took to make Bruce happy, and his children, regardless of who they were. That was his own mission in life.

He opened the door to a room, presenting it to the girl. "This is where you will be staying, Miss Helena. I hope you will find these accommodations acceptable."

Helena's eyes widened at the size. "Wow, this is over twice the size of my old room." She hopped up onto the bed and began jumping up and down. "Our condo is pretty big, but nothing like this place. You could fit several families here. Do you clean this whole place by yourself?"

"I do what I must for the Wayne Family," Alfred replied.
"Mom makes me help out with the cleaning. She says it keeps us humble."

Something Alfred had wished Damian's mother had taken into consideration rather than spoiling him. "A wise decision on your mother's part, if I may say so. Now, is there anything you would like before I retire?"

Helena stopped bouncing, letting her feet hang off the side of the bed. "No, I'm good. Thanks. Hey, do you think Dad will let me go with him to fight crime?"

"I should hope not, young miss, but it is not my place to say. Good night, Miss Helena."

He began to close the door when Helena called out to him again. "Hey, Alfred, how come Mom and Dad never ended up together?"

He stopped, caught off guard by the unexpected question. "I'm sorry, Miss Helena, but once again, it is not my place to say. I would suggest asking your parents."

She sighed and flopped back, her long black hair framing her face. "I asked Mom. She just keeps telling that it's complicated."

That was an understatement. And though he knew he had no right to speak on behalf of the girl's father, the sadness in the girl's voice compelled him to at least give her something. "Many grownup things are. But if it's any consolation, I do believe your parents cared for each other a great deal, and still do."

She sat up, her eyes shining. "Then do you think there's hope?"

"I do not like to make such assumptions, but in my humble opinion, if there was a woman that could truly find her way into Master Wayne's heart, it would be your mother, if she hasn't already. Goodnight, Miss Helena."

He shut the door, leaving Helena alone. The girl looked around her new room. She wondered how long she would get to stay here. Despite their reason for coming, she was grateful to whoever it was that was trying to get to her. She had been wanting to meet her father for years, and now, thanks to her pursuers, she was being given that chance.

Hoping out of bed, she walked over to the window that nearly stretched from the ceiling to the floor. The Wayne property was so large, yet she had hardly gotten to see any of it. She wanted to go exploring.

Cracking her knuckles, she pushed the window open and jumped up onto the ledge. "Well, Mom always said to learn your surroundings."

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It was late, and Bruce was exhausted. Both physically and mentally. It wasn't everyday you took down a master criminal, had an old love interest return to your life, and suddenly find out you had a daughter, let alone get your ass kicked by said daughter and find out that she was being hunted down by an unknown assailant.

Running his hand over his face, he sighed as he looked at himself in the mirror. His life just kept getting more and more complicated. Sometimes he wondered how he dealt with it all. Well, no, that wasn't true. He did know how he dealt with it. He dealt with it because he had to, because someone had to. That was why he became Batman in the first place, because someone had to, and he was able to handle the burden.
There was a knock at the door, and Alfred poked his head in. "Is there anything else I can do for you, sir?"

Looking away from the mirror, Bruce walked over to the window, giving him a full view of the city. "No thank you, Alfred. Are Selina and Helena all settled in?"

"They are, Master Wayne. I put Miss Kyle in the second guest room and Miss Helena in the room just down the hall from her mother."

"Thank you, Alfred. I know this must be burdensome for you."

"Not quite as burdensome as it will be for you, Master Wayne. You now have two children to care for."

Bruce rubbed his eyes as he groaned at how much more complex his life had become in a single night. Lowering his hand, he looked at the butler's reflection in the glass, wondering what he was thinking. Despite being the man's boss, Bruce still sought his approval; the man had basically raised him. "Are you disappointed in me, Alfred?"

But Alfred had long since mastered his own emotionless mask. "I am just your butler, sir. It is not my place to judge you. I can only hope you make the right choices, and offer my help when you ask it or require it."

Bruce turned around to face him. "Then as a friend."

At those words, Alfred seemed to hold himself up a little higher. "Then as a friend, I do admit that I am glad you have children of your own, however, I would have preferred that the mother would have a ring on her finger. But despite any mishaps, I do not think the situation can't be salvaged. You have already done wonders for Master Damian."

Bruce rubbed his face again. "He certainly didn't seem happy about the new addition to the family."

"If I may say so, sir, still speaking as a friend, perhaps Master Damian is jealous of the fact that you now have a daughter, especially given the nature of yours and Miss Kyle's relationship compared to that of yours and his mother's."

Yes, Bruce had worked that much out for himself. While Helena was a result of mutual affection and shared passion, Damian was conceived after Talia had drugged and taken advantage of him in order to have "suitable" heir with a worthy father. Even with the monster his mother eventually revealed herself to be, there was no way he wouldn't feel some form of animosity.

He was also most likely envious of the loving relationship Selina and Helena clearly shared. The last time Damian had seen his own mother, she had declared him to be flawed and unworthy, and that she did not see how she could have ever loved him. This was minutes before she tried to kill him, followed shortly before her escape vessel exploded with her in it.

"I don't know what to do, Alfred. I'm at a complete loss right now."

The old man's shoulders slumped slightly as he shifted back to butler mode. "If I might offer a suggestion, sir. Take things one step at a time. First, find out whoever is after Miss Helena and take them down. Once she is safe, then you can work on any family disputes you may or may not have. Perhaps see where things go with Miss Kyle."

Bruce's eyes narrowed slightly. "I understand why she didn't tell me, at least at first. But I don't know why she didn't let me know when Helena got older."
"Then perhaps you should ask her yourself, sir. I suggest waiting until morning. You have all been through a great deal tonight. Which brings me to my earlier question, sir. Is there anything you require before I retire?"

A small smile grazed Bruce's face. "No, Alfred, that will be all."

"Very good, sir. Have a good night."

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"Wait, you're serious?"

Even though they were talking on the phone, Dick nodded. "Yup, no joke. He's now got two illegitimate children, a son and a daughter." He chuckled humorlessly. "The two already get along like siblings."

Starfire was quiet as she took this in. When her phone had woken her up, she had at first been happy to hear from Dick, but she certainly hadn't been ready for the bombshell he had dropped on her. Batman actually had another child? And it was Catwoman's daughter? That was quite a combination. Hopefully, she was more tolerable than Damian was before he made friends with the rest of the Teen Titans.

"So what's she like?"

Dick shrugged. "More like a ten year old kid than Damian was. I didn't really get a chance to get to know her yet, but she seemed ok." He thought back to her display of skills she exhibited in the Batcave. "She's certainly her father's daughter, I can tell you that much."

The alien girl sighed dreamily. "I think I'd like to have a daughter of my own someday. Hmm, I think I'd name her... Mar'i."

The name was Tamaranean, he recognized that much, but he had no idea what it meant. "And what's that translate to in English?"

There was an obvious smile in her voice as she said, "Nightfire."

He raised an eyebrow. "Why Nightfire?"

"Just think about it for a minute."

He did, considering the name. Nightfire. Night. Fire... Nightwing... Starfire... It clicked, and he chuckled. "Cute, Kory."

He heard her giggle. "I thought so." There was a moment of silence before the playful mood subsided as Starfire asked. "How's Damian taking it?"

"About as well as you'd expect. He's not too taken to Selina either. Guess I can understand why. The kid doesn't even like me, and I'm not actually the big guy's real son; the brat's been holding that over my head since he got here. So you can guess how he'd feel about a half-sister. I'm telling you, there's going to be some serious sibling rivalry in the days ahead."

He heard her chuckle on her side of the line. "He should meet my sister before he goes rejecting the one he has."

He definitely agreed with her there. Starfire's sister, Blackfire, was not someone you wanted to meet.
in a dark alley, or any time for that matter. Starfire had told him all about her older sibling, and he was glad he never met her.

"Still," she continued, no longer joking, "I do hope this doesn't affect the progress he's made with interacting with others."

Dick considered this. For the longest time, Damian hadn't gotten along well with others, usually seeing them as beneath him, and he was always eager to prove himself to be superior to them. That was part of the reason he always put Dick down, to prove that he, as Bruce's true son, was better than him. He would not have that excuse when it came to Helena, and would undoubtedly feel the need to prove that he was still the superior one. Though a lot of progress had been made when he went to live at Titan Tower, would suddenly having an unwanted little sister have a negative impact on him?

"Couldn't say. I suppose there's a chance it could help." He smirked at the thought of it. "Who knows, he might turn out to be the protective big brother type. Guess we'll just have to wait and see."

"Then I will hope for that. Perhaps he is just in shock. Maybe once he has gotten used to the idea of no longer being an only child, he will come to accept her."

He could practically hear the smile in her voice. She usually preferred to think on the positive side, as opposed to Batman, who would rather prepare for the worst. But even though Damian was difficult to deal with, there was indeed still hope. "Sometimes you've just got to have a little bit of faith."

"Yes!" Starfire declared. "One must have faith! And I am certain that things will work out."

He chuckled. "I'll hold you to that." He frowned as a thought occurred to him. "Oh, and, um, don't mention this to anyone else. Not too sure how Bruce wants to deal with things yet. He may want to keep it quiet."

"I will not say a word." She was silent for a moment. "So, did Selina say why she came back?"

He shrugged. "Something about having someone after her. I don't know; I got out of there before I got the details. It was just too much for me. I'll get the full story after a good night's sleep. I could really use one."

"Me too, but that might be a bit of a problem."

A look of concern crossed Dick's face. "Why? Is something wrong?"

"Just a minor issue. You woke me up when you called, so now you're going to have to help me get back to sleep."

He detected the seductive tone in her voice, and grinned as he caught on to her game. "Is that so? How rude of me. I guess I'm going to have to take care of that."

"Mmm, and how are you planning on doing that?"

Sitting down on the bed, he made himself comfortable. "Well, first I plan to."

There was a knock at the door, interrupting what had promised to be a very entertaining phone conversation, and Dick scowled as Alfred spoke through the door. "Master Dick, might I have a brief word with you?"

Gripping the phone tightly, he glared at the door. "Now's not a good time, Alfred," he grumbled
through clenched teeth.

"It won't take but a moment, sir."

With a frustrated groan, he pinched the bridge of his nose. "Sorry, Kory, I've got to take care of something real quick."

"But Dick."

"I'll call you back in a minute." He hung up the phone and marched angrily to the door. "You really have some lousy timing," Trying to hide his aggravation, he opened the door to be greeted by the elderly butler. "What is it, Alfred? I was kind of in the middle of something."

The butler had his British stiff upper-lip look down as he addressed the young man. "My apologies, Master Dick. My concern is for Miss Helena and Master Damian."

Dick raised an eyebrow. "What about them?"

"It seems that Master Damian has not taken too keenly to the idea that he now has a sister. I hope it is merely shock, but I fear that he will not be even willing to give either her or Miss Kyle a chance. He would not even open the door when I attempted to speak with him."

Crossing his arms, Dick gave the butler a nonchalant shrug. "Doesn't surprise me, but what do you want me to do about it?"

"I know it is hardly my place to ask, but I would hope I could count on your assistance to help our guests, especially Miss Helena, to be part of the family, and to possibly do what you can to help Master Damian to get along with and accept Miss Helena."

Dick stared. Alfred wanted him to help Damian and Helena to get along? How exactly was he supposed to do that? Damian already didn't want anything to do with him and only tolerated his presence, so how was he supposed to make the kid get on good terms with his new sister? Knowing the boy, Damian would do everything he could not to get along with her.

"What exactly do you expect me to do?"

"Whatever you can, Master Dick, whatever you can."

He was feeling it, the headache that was coming on in the Batcave before he walked out, and he rubbed his head in annoyance. "Fine, whatever. I doubt much good will come of it, but I'll do what I can."

Alfred nodded. "That is all I ask, Master Dick."

It looked like he was about to leave, but Dick was curious about something. "How's the new dad taking it?"

The butler's expression gave away nothing. "As well as can be expected given the circumstances. One of Master Wayne's many skills is adapting to any given situation."

Dick rolled his eyes. "Tell me about it. Remember what I said when Damian first arrived about being ticked off after all those speeches of safe sex he gave me. Well, I'd like to reaffirm my complaint."

"Indeed, sir. I do hope you and Miss Starfire are taking better precautions."

Dick gave an embarrassed cough and looked away, playing innocent. "I don't know what you
"Of course not, sir, I am but thinking out loud. Have a good night. Do try to keep your phone conversation short so you can get to bed at a decent hour." He turned to leave. "Something tells me we will all be needed as much rest as we can get in the days ahead."

Dick awkwardly closed the door as Alfred left and walked back to the bed. Picking up the phone, he dialed Starfire's number and sat back down on the bed again. "Hey, babe, sorry about that."

"Is everything alright?"

"Yeah, just had to deal with a minor nuisance. So, where were we?"

"I believe you were about to tell me that."

He smirked. "Oh, right."

So absorbed he was in his phone call that he didn't notice a certain little girl peeking in through the window before she made a disgusted face and leapt off the ledge.

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Ok, I know I said that Selina would be giving a more in depth explanation about why she never told Bruce about Selina, but I couldn't find room for it in this chapter. Sorry about that. Sometimes stories just write themselves. You'll get the explanation next time, promise. In the mean time, use your imagination for how the rest of this conversation went between Dick and Starfire. By the way, did anyone pick up on the foreshadowing I threw in there for Mar'i? If you don't know who she is, she's Nightwing and Starfire's daughter from the Earth-22 universe from the The Kingdom series. I just couldn't resist throwing that in there.)
Confrontations

Chapter Notes

(A/N: Well, this sucks. I tripped over my brother's cat and broke my leg. Let me tell you, that freakin' huuuurt. But being immobile gave me the time to write a nice long chapter. I had a lot of fun with this one, as it really gets inside the characters' heads; I love doing that. Hopefully you love it just as much. Happy Thanksgiving.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 7: Confrontations

This wasn't the first time Bruce found someone in the Batcave without him being there. It was usually Alfred or Dick, or, more recently, Damian, but he was surprised to find Helena sitting at the computer when he got up the next morning. Not only had she managed to log in, she was going through his files, and seemed to have been at it for quite some time.

He stopped to stare at her at work for a few moments, surprised she had managed to gain access to it, and he wondered how she managed to accomplish that. Currently, she seemed to be reading up on the files he had on Bane, and was fully absorbed in what she was reading.

"Morning, Dad," she said, startling him. She hadn't even looked away from the screen; how had she known it was him? "Sleep well?"

He walked over to her. "For the most part. How about you?"

She still didn't look away. "Oh, I didn't sleep. I was too excited, so I went exploring."

"And decided to do some investigating I see."

"Yeah. It took me some time to get into the system though. You're got some pretty good security."

He was aware; it came from his company after all. "Clearly not good enough."

She chuckled as she continued reading up on Bane. "This venom Bane uses is fascinating, but it has some major drawbacks. I can't believe he'd want to inject it into himself. Do you know what will happen if he keeps using?"

Reaching out, Bruce hit a button and shut off the monitor. "Seeing as I included the information in my files, yes." He gave her a look of disapproval. "Why are you going through my computer?"

Sitting up on her knees, she began spinning around in the chair. "I was curious. I've been following the news reports on Batman and the criminals he's faced, but the news only knows, and reports, so much. Turns out they hardly know anything compared to you. Not just on these criminals, but on the Justice League and the Teen Titans."

Bruce crossed his arms. "You didn't answer my question."
"It's always good to learn as much as you can so you're prepared. Mom taught me that."

He couldn't help it; he cracked a smile. "She's right about that," he agreed, reaching out and rubbing her head. "But don't go through my files without my permission again."

"That's fine," Helena replied. "I've been here nearly all night. I think I got as much as I need." She smirked in a way that would make her mother proud. "For now anyway."

Yes, there was definitely a little too much Catwoman in that smile. "You're definitely your mother's daughter."

Her smile widened, and she winked. "I'm my father's daughter too. Mom would tell me that all the time." She began heading up the stairs, but stopped part of the way. She seemed to consider something before looking back at him. "Why didn't you and Mom ever get together? I mean really together."

The question was unexpected. Well, not entirely unexpected. He figured she would ask him at some point, but not so soon. He had yet to fully come to terms with the fact that he had a daughter with the woman he had let get closer to him than any other, and now he had to explain why the never officially got together?

Where to start? To say his and Selina's relationship was complicated would be an understatement. From Batman and Catwoman developing feelings for each other, to Bruce and Selina doing the same before their identities came to light, to finding themselves on different sides of the law, to being both friend and lover, ally and enemy. Complicated was the very definition of their relationship.

"It's not always as easy as it sounds," he began, "especially for people like your mother and I. Being Batman is a dangerous job, one that puts not only my own life at risk, but those I care for as well."

Helena sat down on the steps. "Yeah, Mom said something about that. You would never let anyone get too close because you don't want them to get hurt." She chuckled. "She said one of the reasons why she did bad things was to get attention from you, so you would have to go after her instead of avoid her."

Yes, he certainly remembered those days. Selina loved the chase. She practically lived for it. And there were indeed times she would deliberately break the law for the sole purpose of getting him to pursue her. It was one of the reasons why he never brought her in when he did catch her. It was a game to her. The crimes she committed were usually done simply to get him to come after her, most of the time anyway. He was the prize she was really after, not whatever it was she had stolen.

"Your mother's ideas of courtship are very different from others," he agreed, trying to keep the smile out of his voice. "Though I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy it from time to time."

That didn't mean that she didn't enjoy their time as Bruce and Selina. She did, and they got along great, but she truly relished their time as Batman and Catwoman. A lot of times, Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle were the real masks they wore to fool the world. She was right in what she had said last night, Batman and Catwoman were who they really were, or as close to the real them as they were willing to reveal.

Perhaps that was part of the problem, neither one of them would ever truly open up and be completely 100 percent honest with who they were. Perhaps they didn't know how to, or maybe they didn't even realize it themselves. There were times when Bruce truly didn't know himself at all, let alone who he really was. How could either of them truly open themselves up and show the real them to each other if they didn't even know themselves?
"She never stopped loving you," Helena told him. "She still loves you now. There's never been anyone else." She stared at him carefully. "But what about you?"

He sighed deeply. Did he love Selina? Of course he did. At least as much as he was able to love someone. Truthfully, he didn't know if he was even capable of loving someone unconditionally and wholeheartedly anymore. Not Alfred, not Dick, not even Damian. Perhaps it was the fear that he might lose them some day the way he lost his parents, and that fear, that pain, left a wall that he could not break down, causing him from ever truly opening his heart to another person completely.

He wasn't entirely sure about Selina though. He knew she loved him, and he knew that she knew he loved her. They both used their feelings for each other against one another several times in the past to get what they wanted or needed. Both were skilled manipulators when it came to the game, though Selina seemed to be able to get the best of him more often than he did her. It was all a part of the game.

He looked back at his daughter and saw that she was still waiting for an answer, one he didn't have, and might never have. But he could at least give her this much. "Your mother is a very special woman. I've never known anyone like her. If there ever was a woman I loved or could have loved, it was her, but sometimes there are things that just can't be helped."

He wasn't sure how to make her understand; he didn't even know if he understood it himself. Helena was giving him a look that suggested that she clearly didn't get it, and she shook her head in resignation. "You're just like Mom. You keep saying how complicated it is, but I think you guys are making it complicated. Adults are so silly sometimes. You guys love each other, so you should just be together."

Ah, the mind of a child, how simple it was. If only things could be that easy. "Well, there's no telling what the future might hold. Maybe things will work out some day. Now, how about we get some breakfast?"

Helena's face lit up. "I can make pancakes!"

"Can you now?"

"Yeah, Mom taught me. Come on, let's go." She began running up the stairs, heading for the door. She paused for a moment and smiled back at him. "You know, I'm really happy to be here."

She ran out before he could respond. Slowly, a smile made it's way up Bruce's face as well. "I'm happy to have you here too."

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The knock at the door came at good timing. Selina had just exited the attached bathroom, dressed only in a bathrobe and a towel wrapped around her hair. Having just gotten out of the shower, and having made a small change, she hadn't had time to get dressed yet, but if it was who she hoped it was, then her clothes might not even be necessary.

She opened the door just enough to see who it was, then smiled and opened it some more when she saw that it was indeed the billionaire playboy. Her eyes lit up as her smile took on a seductive nature. "Well, what brings you here, big boy?"

Almost against his will, Bruce found his eyes trailing up and down her scantily clad body. The white robe covered her lovely curves, but looked like it could fall off at any moment. He should have expected this, or at least been prepared for the possibility. Was catching her in this state of undress
just a coincidence, or had she somehow planned it? There was really no telling with her.

He mentally shook his head. There was no way she could have planned this; she had no way of knowing that he would come knocking on her door. "I thought we should talk. Do you mind if I come in?"

"Mmm," she practically purred, walking two fingers up his chest. "Are you sure talking is what's really on your mind?"

He predicted such a response from her. "Really, Selina. There are things we need to discuss."

She shrugged and moved back into the room. "It's your house."

He entered the room, watching as she walked over to the bed, sashaying her hips. It was a technique she used well. Keep him distracted, get him off his guard; it gave her an advantage, and he had fallen prey to this many times. Right now she was just playing games, but she could very easily use them when the situation was serious. A single word or movement for her could buy her a split second of time she needed to get the upper hand.

She turned back to him as her hands went to the towel on her head, drying her hair. "So what did you want to talk about?"

He cleared his throat. "Is it not obvious?"

"If this is about Helena, I thought we went over that last night."

He crossed his arms. "I thought we could discuss this more in depth… without our daughter present."

She shrugged and pulled her hair free of the towel. "Suit yourself."

What he had been planning to say was lost to him as he saw the change she made to herself. It caught him off guard and he lowered his arms. "You, um, you dyed your hair blonde?"

Indeed she had. Her jet-black locks were now a golden blonde color, hanging down past her shoulder like rays of light. Reaching up, she ran her fingers through it, combing it out around her. "Whoever is after us knows that Catwoman is Selina Kyle. I don't want anyone to recognize me in Gotham until we take them down."

The look on his face made her smirk. "What's wrong? Do you not like blondes?"

He diverted his eyes. "No, it was just… unexpected."

She chuckled as she dropped the towel on the bed and walked over to him. "Don't worry, I'll go back to my natural color once we deal with our pursuers."

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She ran her hands up his chest, feeling his hard muscles beneath his shirt, and lifted her leg, rubbing it along his hip. "I know how you loved to run your hands through my hair as we made love."

His own hands came up, taking hold of hers to stop her. "Selina, I didn't come here for this."

A disappointed sigh escaped her and she took a step back. "So you've said." She walked back over to the bed. "Well, go ahead, detective." She sat down. "Let the interrogation begin."

But he said nothing. This was… new ground for him. He was normally a master at asking question and getting answers out of people. But Selina had always been a tough shell to crack, and the subject matter, well, he wasn't entirely sure how to go about it.
With Damian, Talia had pretty much just dumped the boy off with him and disappeared, leaving the two of them to figure things out on their own. And while he did have feelings for Talia in the past, they paled in comparison to what he felt for Selina, for what he still felt. So how to broach the subject?

She raised an eyebrow. "What's wrong? Cat got your tongue?"

The joke wasn't lost to him, but he wasn't in the mood. "Why did you leave?"

Now she just looked bored. "I already told you."

"Really, Selina. You must have known that I would have taken care of you. Both of you."

Resting her arms on a bent knee, she gave him a hard look. "Did I know that, Bruce? Did I really?" They stared at each other for a few moments before she sighed. "Yes, I guess I did. Maybe I just got scared. I didn't know what to do? I didn't know what you would do. I had never been a mother before, and you had never been a father before." She shook her head. "Despite what we think of ourselves and others, there are some situations where we really don't know what we would do until we're in them."

She gave him a pleading look, begging for him to understand. He did, to an extent, but still, that was his daughter she had kept from him, and he was understandably upset about it, and made no attempt to hide his anger. "You didn't have the right to keep her away from me."

She fixed him with a glare that would usually mean she would scratch him if she were in her Catwoman suit, or maybe just unleash a series of martial arts moves on him. "I wanted what was best for her, but I wasn't sure if you could give that to her." She motioned to the luxurious room. "Bruce Wayne, the billionaire playboy by day, but by night," she used her fingers to form a mask over her face, "the caped vigilante, Batman, whose sole purpose is dedicated to the mission."

That was a low blow, but he supposed he deserved it. He had indeed sacrificed many things, hurt many people, all for the sake of the mission. Would he truly have been able to be a good father to Helena when she was a baby?

"I know the importance of what you do," she continued. "The world needs a Batman, but..." she hugged herself, her hair concealing her face as she hung her head, "it doesn't need a Catwoman."

It could be a ploy to calm his anger, he knew that, but it was working. He sat on the bed beside her, placing a hand on her shoulder. "You've done a lot of good for the world too, Selina. You've saved my life several times."

She chuckled humorlessly and looked at him. "You're sweet, Bruce, but the things I've done are nothing compared to what you've accomplished. Hell, most of the time Catwoman was just a hobby for me. I could give it up if I had to, and I did, for her. But I know you can't give up being Batman, not even if you wanted to. Not just because you need Batman, but because the world needs Batman. I didn't want Helena or I to be a burden or a liability to you. So I made a choice, and maybe it was the wrong one, but I was thinking about our daughter's sake, and I made the decision I believed was best at the time."

Damn, how could he argue with that? He too made decisions he believed were the right ones, despite other people disagreeing. And while most of the time his choice was right, he was big enough to admit that he had been wrong or had made bad decisions on several occasions, sometimes with serious repercussions.
There was also what she had said about being a liability to consider. If his identity was ever compromised, or if he died, then there would be no one to protect them. While his allies would be able to take care of themselves, an infant Helena would need to rely on her parents. Even Selina, as good as she was, wouldn't have been able to defend herself during her pregnancy. In Damian's case, he hadn't entered the world of Batman until he was old enough to take care of himself. Until then, he had been kept a secret, and had remained hidden far away under the protection of the League of Assassins.

So maybe she had made the right choice in giving up being Catwoman and leaving Gotham. She had been able to carry their child to full term and give her a place to grow and be happy away from all this until she was old enough. But from the sound of things, Helena had been capable of taking care of herself for a few years now, especially if what she had displayed in the Batcave was any indication of what she was capable of. So why stay away until now?

"If these men had never come after you," he asked in an accusatory tone, "would you have kept her from me indefinitely?" When she didn't answer, he grabbed her shoulders. "Tell me, would you never have told me if you didn't need my help?"

She recognized the bitterness in his voice, but for some reason it only made her angry. Perhaps she was angry at herself, or possibly just the situation in general. She didn't know. All she knew was that she didn't like his tone, and she slapped his hands away. "I wanted to tell you. I've wanted to tell you for years, but I didn't know how. How do you tell someone that you've been keeping their child from them for so long?"

She stood up and walked away from him, needing to put some distance between them. She made her way over to the vanity set, looking at her reflection in the mirror. She saw his reflection in it as well, and she reached out, placing her hand against the cool glass. "I did plan on telling you, I always had, but I didn't know how. And the more time that passed, the harder it became to tell you. Then things got even more complicated when I found out you had a son. And I was supposed to just drop another illegitimate child on you? As if telling you wouldn't already have been hard enough."

He heard the pain in her voice. She was truly sorry for what she had done. Truthfully, he couldn't remember the last time he had heard Selina Kyle apologize. Ok, technically she hadn't apologized, but she was sorry. She must have been torn up for years over this.

"Selina…"

She turned to him again. "Helena is an amazing girl. I wanted you to know your daughter. I wanted Helena to know her father. But things don't always work out the way you want them too. I told Helena all about you, and we followed the Batman's achievements, but it was a poor substitute. She wanted to meet you so badly. She idolized you. I hated having to keep her away, but I had to until I could decide what was best for her." Another sigh. "But then these men show up out of the blue and forced my hand. I had to come, ready or not."

He stared at her hard, taking this all in. She had given him a lot to think about. At least he had the answers he wanted. Well, most of them anyway. "Tell me more about these men that are after you."

She shrugged. "Unfortunately, I've told you all I know. They want Helena because of what she can do. I can only guess what their motives are. Maybe they want to study her. Maybe they hate metahumans and since she's almost is one, they want her dead. I already told you my theory of how they want to turn her into a weapon, but that's just a guess." Her fist clenched, and the look on her face was murderous. "When I find out who's behind this, I'll make them pay."

He believed her. Unlike him, she would kill if she absolutely had to, and he had no doubt that she
would do so to protect their daughter.

"I'm sorry, Selina," he said, surprising himself. He didn't even know what he was apologizing for. Sorry that this happened? Sorry that their daughter was in danger. Sorry that he hadn't been there for the two of them? Sorry that he had made her feel that she had had to run away to begin with? Well, that would be changing. "I promise you though, I will do whatever it takes to keep her safe."

She smiled at him then. "I know you will. That's what's most important." She gave him a flirtatious wink. "We can work on the rest of it later."

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"Really, a sister?" Raven asked as she and Damian communicated via Skype.

She had been surprised when he had contacted her, but nothing could have prepared her for this. Should she be happy for him? Her relationship with her own "siblings" was... hostile at best, thus making her a poor judge. But her case was unique. Usually, people were happy to find out they had or were going to have a younger sibling. Damian, however, didn't seem too thrilled. In fact, judging by the scowl on his face, saying he was upset didn't quite cover it.

"Half-sister," he grumbled unhappily, "with a common criminal for a mother."

Far from common, and far more than a criminal, Catwoman's name and reputation was well known. Still, Raven knew it was best not to correct Damian on such unimportant matters when he was in a bad mood. "It could be worse. At least your sister isn't a demonic half-breed with an inter-dimensional demon for a father."

Damian sighed. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to bring up-"

"You didn't, I did. Still, it must have been quite a shock."

"I've had worse. But at least I've been able to deal with those problems. This is something I'll never be able to escape from." He rested his chin on his hand. "Hopefully we can deal with whoever is chasing them quickly. Maybe then they'll go away."

"Even then, they'll never be gone," Raven replied. "You're family. No matter how far they go, even if they die, you'll always be bound to each other." Her hand went to the red crystal embedded in her forehead containing her father as he telepathically raged in her mind for her to release him; something she continued to ignore. "I should know."

"She's part of my father's family. Not mine. As if things weren't bad enough with Grayson acting like he's one of us."

Raven wished she were closer so she could sense what he was feeling. He was undoubtedly confused, and was most likely putting up stubborn front. Had he even tried to get along with Helena, or had he immediately dismissed her the way he had initially dismissed her and the rest of the Titans? Knowing him, it was most likely the latter.

"I'm not sure what you want me to say," she admitted. "If you want, I could talk to Jaime; he has a younger sister too."

Damian already knew this; he had done his research on his teammates. "No, I don't want them to know. It'll just cause unnecessary complications."

"I understand. And she did, she just wished he would open up to the rest of the team a little more.
He was, slowly, they both were, but there was still more room for improvement. At least they could confide in each other. Having been in each other's heads and having sensed what they had been through throughout their lives, there wasn't much more to hide. And after what they had been through together in her father's dimension, a place as close Hell as one could get while still alive.

"But still," she continued, "you shouldn't just dismiss her right away. Who knows, you might like having a sister." She smiled slightly. "If memory serves right, you weren't so keen on the idea of being a part of a team before either, or even having friends."

Predictably, he stubbornly looked away. "That was different. With you guys, it wasn't... Look, it's just not the same. They should have just stayed away and dealt with their problems on their own."

It really was hard to get a reading on him. She considered opening a dimensional portal over to where he was so they could talk face to face, but didn't think Batman would appreciate that. Despite the fact that she was incredibly powerful, she didn't want the Dark Knight pissed off at her.

Still, from what she could gather, and what he had told her so far, it wasn't just Helena that he had a problem with, but her mother. Most likely due to Selina's relationship with his father in comparison to his own mother's.

"Anyway," he continued, seeming to be talking to himself as much as to her, "I'll be coming back to the Tower in six days. Guess I'll just have to wait it out until then."

She nodded. "Ok. Just remember, I'm here if you need anything. And Damian, consider this, you should appreciate the family you have. They could be a lot worse, or they could be stripped from you in an instant."

He didn't respond to that, not wanting to let her words affect him. They had both fallen prey to this scenario as well. Wanting to know her father, Raven had summoned him from his hellish realm, and Trigon had completely destroyed her home world of Azarath in response, killing even her mother, before he planned to use Raven to open the gate to Earth to conquer it and steal the souls of the living.

His own experience hadn't been quite so apocalyptic, but was still equally as dark. Enraged at being replaced by Damian as the future leader of the League of Assassins before getting kicked out altogether, Slade Wilson, aka Deathstroke, had wiped out the entire league, even killing Ra's al Ghul in the process.

Ironically enough, Ra's had been in league with Trigon for hundreds of years, using the demon's Lazarus Pit to heal himself and retain youth. Even after his death, both Damian and Raven had met an undead Ra's in Trigon's fiery dimension, where Damian was forced to see his beloved grandfather as the monster he truly was before cutting off his head and sending him with a one-way ticket to actual Hell. Shortly after, Raven had sealed her father away in the crystal embedded in her head for all eternity, guarding it so no one would ever be able to set him free.

Lost in his thoughts, it took a moment for him to realize that Raven was talking to him. "Sorry, what?"

"I asked if that was her?"

He lifted an eyebrow. "Her who?"

"Me!"

Helena had popped up behind him. Startled, Damian spun around, throwing a punch on reflex. Still
smiling, Helena's own reflexes allowed her to easily catch his punch. Damian scowled when he realized it was her, but she just grinned, lifting herself up to look over his shoulder at the screen. "Who're you talking to?"

Damian stood up. "What are you doing in my room? How'd you get in here?" He should have seen her come in.

Giggling, she pointed to the open window. "I climbed in through the window."

He glared at her. "You're lying. No one can sneak up on me."

Casually twirling a lock of hair around her finger, she said in a sing-song voice, "Well, I did."

Raven was beginning to feel awkward as she watched the two interact. "Um, I'm just going to leave you two to it."

She pressed a button and the screen went black as she logged off. Helena looked around her brother at the black screen before smiling at him again. "That was Raven, right? Isn't she your girlfriend?"

"How do you know about Raven?" he demanded, deliberately dodging her question.

Jumping up, she did a handstand, balancing on the top of the chair he had been sitting on. "I went through Dad's computer. He's got files on everyone. You, Mom, Dick, the Justice League, the Teen Titans, the Court of Owls, the League of Assassins, Atlantis, Apokolips, every bad guy he's ever faced."

He raised an eyebrow. "You went through his files?"

"Sure did. Kind of like the way you went through Starfire's files." She smirked at him. "I read the tabs Dad has been keeping on you; that was in there too."

This just made him angrier. He'd known his father had been keeping track of him, but that closely? "Get out of my room."

His demand knocked the smile off her face, and she hopped back onto the floor. "But I thought we could spend some time together. Get to know each other a bit."

Damian crossed his arms. "I know all that I need to know about you, and I don't care to learn any more. Now get out."

She frowned at his tone. "What's your problem?"

His body seemed to move on its own, and he began marching over to her. Helena started walking backwards on reflex as he approached, looking at him uncertainly. "You want to know what my problem is? It's you and your mother suddenly butting into our lives like you have all the right in the world."

She backed up until her back hit the wall, then jumped up on reflex, flipping over his head, and landing behind him. She looked back over her shoulder with hooded eyes. "Oh, but it was ok for you and your mom?"

His fists clenched. "That was different."

"Really? So your mom didn't hide you from Dad for years until she was in trouble and was forced to come crawling back and reveal that she had a secret child with him, who suddenly inserted himself in
Batman's life as the new Robin and heir to the Wayne foundation? Certainly sounds familiar to me."

He slammed his fist against the wall. "My mother is nothing like yours. Yours is just some costumed jewel thief that does whatever the hell she pleases. My mother had a higher calling. She wanted to make the world a better place, to lead it into a new age."

Helena rolled her eyes. "And she did this by attempting to brainwash our father, use mind control on the world leaders, and kill millions, possibly billions of people, including her own son, who she saw as a failure. Yeah, all that was in Dad's files too." She casually flipped her hair back. "Yes, your mother was a saint."

Damian was seething. He wanted to argue, to defend his mother, but she was right. His mother had been a monster, kept in check by his grandfather, who he had learned was a monster as well. He hadn't seen it, had been blinded by his love and respect for them, and by the delusions of grandeur and promises of ruling a better world that they would create. But behind all that, it was all about control for them.

Maybe it was instinctual, but regardless of what his mother and grandfather were like, he still felt the need to defend them to some extent to his sister, well, his mother anyway since that's who they were discussing. "She lost her way."

"Or revealed her true character once Ra's no longer ran her life," Helena countered. "My mother may have her own agendas, but at least she cares. At least she not into massive genocide to achieve her goals and hell-bent on ruling the world." At the outraged look on his face, she just glared. "Hey, you opened this can of worms. I just wanted to get to know you a bit better. We are brother and sister after all."

He pointed to the door. "Get out, and don't talk to me. As far as I'm concerned, I don't have a sister."

It was clear she was disappointed. This hadn't gone anything like she had planned. She knew it would be hard for him to accept that he had a sister. She had the benefit of knowing about him for some time now. Maybe she shouldn't have come down on him so hard; he was dealing with a lot. But still, what he had said had pissed her off, and she had countered with equal hostility. Not to mention what had happened when they first met in the Batcave. That wasn't exactly the best first impression.

She decided to let him cool off and give him some more time to get used to the idea that he was a big brother before trying to forge a sibling bond with him. "Fine, I'm leaving." She headed for the door. "By the way, saying you don't have a sister doesn't make it true." She was about to leave, but paused. "Oh, right. Here, you can have this back."

She tossed something to him. He caught it on reflex and looked the small device. "What's this?"

"The tracer you put on me."

He scowled as he looked back at the tiny device. Yes, he had stuck one on both her and Selina. He'd done the same to the Teen Titans when he first met them. "So you found it."

She shook her head. "Nah, I noticed when you put it on me."

He doubted that. "And when was that?"

A smirk crept up her face. "About thirty seconds after we met." She winked at him. "About the same time I put one on you. See ya."
The door closed behind her. Damian glared at it as if she were standing there, wondering what the hell had just happened. She'd actually rattled him. How did she do that? She didn't tell him anything he didn't already know. Maybe it was the fact that she knew these things that upset him. It made him feel vulnerable, especially since the subject matter was sensitive to him.

With a frustrated groan, he threw himself onto his bed. He was glad he would be going back to Titan Tower soon. As long as Selina and Helena were here, he didn't want to be. And what was that nonsense about her putting a tracer on him? There was no way she be able to do something like that without him noticing.

…Right?

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: So, yeah. Some pretty intense interaction. And if you thought that the fight between Damian and Helena was bad, just wait until later chapters. We also got to hear Selina's full side of the story. Bruce understands why she did what she did, but whether it was the right decision or not, I'll leave that for you to decide. At least they managed to work things out between them. Oh, and did anyone catch the last thing Helena said to him. They were the same words Damian said to the Teen Titans about the tracers he put on them. I couldn't resist. By the way, I'm sure you realized it, but having Selina dye her hair blonde is a tribute Michelle Pfeiffer's Catwoman in "Batman Returns" and the blonde Selina from "Batman: The Animated Series". Don't worry, it's only temporary. As she said, it's a disguise so no one in Gotham recognizes her. There's still a lot more to come, so stay tuned. Reviews work as a great painkiller for my leg, hint, hint.)
(A/N: I had someone mention how that Helena didn't handle the interaction with Damian well. No, no she did not. But he really pissed her off. She went in there hoping to bond, and he rejected her completely and talked trash about her and her mother. She was hurt and disappointed, and so she lashed out. Not the smartest move, but she'll acknowledge this and address it later. Really though, how would you feel if you were hoping to get to know someone and they treated you the way Damian treated her? As for Damian, right now he's feeling jealous and envious towards her, not to mention he doesn't feel like she's "worthy". He also feels somewhat threatened by her, almost like she's going to take his father away, and he's already lost a lot. So they both got some things to work out. I also had a few people ask about Tim Drake and Jason Todd/Red Hood and if they'll be appearing. Well, since I'm sticking to the New 52 movies universe, as of now, I don't really plan to since they seem to be absent from it. I may change that later depending on what ideas come to me. Right now though, I don't have any plans for them.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 8: The Wall

"What do you mean I have to stay longer?" Damian demanded when his father told him.

Bruce looked at his son with a narrowed gaze. "I need your help here."

Damian crossed his arms. "Wasn't this supposed to be a vacation for me?"

Sighing, Bruce pinched the bridge of his nose, praying for patience, not the easiest thing when dealing with his son. "Things change sometimes. You sister needs your help."

"She's not my sister."

Bruce closed his eyes and counted to ten. "She still needs your help. And that is what we're going to do." He stood up from his chair. "I know this is hard for you. It's not easy for me either, but we all need to make adjustments."

Damian turned to leave the Batcave. "Maybe next time you should carry some Bat-condoms in your utility belt." He walked up the stairs, passing Selina as he did so. He threw her a dirty look as he passed, and she frowned at his back. Deciding not to worry about it for now, she walked into the room to find Bruce leaning against the computer, hanging his head.

"That could have gone better," she commented.

He looked at her, his weariness visible on his face. "It will be fine. He just needs some time."

Selina ran her hand through her hair; it was still strange having it blonde. "I didn't want to cause any problems. Not for you or for Damian."
A somewhat playful grin crept up his face. "You're the very definition of trouble, Selina." He seemed to catch himself. "But really, it's no trouble. And don't worry about Damian. He'll come around eventually." He sat down and began typing on the computer. "I have a lead of who might be after Helena."

Selina's attention immediately shifted to the screen. "Really? Who is it?" She paused for a moment. "And did Helena really go through your files?"

He heard the pride in her voice, and had to hold back a smile. "Um, yes, she did. I'll have to be more careful with things from now on." He clinked on a file. "Anyway, this is only a theory, but it takes all three of yours into account."

Her face scrunch up in thought. "My three?"

"Of what type of person is after Helena. Someone who either hates metahumans, wants to study them, or wants to use them. This one is all three." An image appeared on screen. "Amanda Waller. She works for the government, and she-"

"I know about her," Selina interrupted, staring at the image of the overweight woman on screen. "They call her The Wall, if I remember correctly."

Bruce was well aware of her name of reputation. "She's ruthless when it comes to public safety, even using questionable and underhanded tactics to get her way at times."

"Yes, I heard of her so-called Suicide Squad."

"She's expressed her distaste of metahumans before, and has spoken out against the Justice League and the potential threat they could present if they ever turned on humanity, and has taken steps to make plans in case they ever did. It wouldn't surprise me if she wanted to try and recruit other metahumans, or even borderline metahumans, to her side, even if she has to break the law to do so. To her, the ends justify the means when the public safety is at stake."

Selina's fingers curled as if she were eager to scratch the woman with her Catwoman claws. "The hell with public safety! That's my daughter! I'm not handing her over to that bitch!"

He placed a hand over hers. "Calm down, Selina. We don't know if she's behind this, but it is worth looking into."

"Sounds great," came a voice from the top of the stairs. Sitting on the railing, Helena slid down to the bottom of the stairs. "When do we leave?"

Bruce stood up. "We, as in your mother and I, will go tonight. You will be staying behind."

"What?! No way am I staying!" She looked to her mother. "I can handle it, you know I can. Let me go. I want to find out who's after me too."

"Helena," Selina consoled, "don't forget the whole reason we came here."

She crossed her arms. "Yeah, to keep me safe and to stop whoever's after me. So let's go deal with the situation. I'll follow you if I have to." She pouted, putting on a pleading look. "You wouldn't want me to go out all on my own, would you? The bad men might get me."

Bruce stared at her for a few moments before glancing at the girl's mother. "She gets this from you, doesn't she?"
Selina chuckled. "She knows how to get what she wants." She placed her hand on her daughter's head. "Fine, you can come, if you promise to do what we say."

The girl perked up. "Awesome! What am I doing?"

"Lookout duty," her parents said together.

Helena's face fell. "Aww…"

Having been eavesdropping at the top of the stairs, Damian quietly slipped away.

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Five shadows moved in the darkness. The mansion had nothing on Wayne Manor, but it was still an impressive size and had a great deal of land. Armed guards patrolled the area, but it was easy enough for Batman, Catwoman, Nightwing, Robin, and Huntress to sneak passed them.

Huntress wasn't the only one on guard duty. Robin was stuck with it too. And while the two of them stood on the roof of the mansion, the other three were making their way through the inside.

Catwoman handled the alarm system easily enough, mostly to show off to her two companions, one more so than the other. In a matter of minutes, the cameras were set on loop, and the alarms were disabled. She then used the diamond-cutter claws built into her gloves to carve open a hole in a window to reach inside and unlock it.

"I see your skills haven't gotten rusty," Nightwing commented.

She smirked as she opened the window and climbed inside. "I never stopped using them."

She proved this by picking the lock to the door leading to Waller's office. She slowly pushed it open and they crept into the dark room, the only light coming from the moon as it shined through the window. The computer on the desk proved to be a potential valuable source of information, and they made their way over to it.

The familiar click of a gun caused them to freeze, and the trio realized that they had underestimated their intended so-called host. "That's far enough, Batman," came the voice of Amanda Waller from the corner of the room. "You and you're friends are in a lot of trouble."

Ever so slyly, the Dark Knight's hand inched towards his utility belt. Pressing the button of something inside a pouch, a cloud of smoke exploded outward, consuming him and his companions. Waller fired into the cloud, but hit nothing but air. She saw movement in the smoke before a Batarang came flying out of it, knocking the gun from her hand.

Holding her hand, Waller moved. Reaching for a book on the bookshelf, she tilted it back and what seemed to be the door to a panic room opened. Catwoman leapt out of the cloud and lashed out with her whip. It coiled around Waller's wrist, pulling her back. The government agent fell over, failing to slip inside the room.

The trio walked over to her, Batman staring down intimidatingly at Waller. "We have some
questions for you."

She looked up at him, unfazed. "I don't have to tell you anything."

There was a commotion from outside the door, and four armed guards entered the room. Batman whirled around to face them, throwing two more Batarangs, disarming two of the men before shooting is grapple gun into the air, letting it carry him up.

The two guards with weapons open fired on the Dark Knight as Nightwing charged at them. The two that had been disarmed pulled out handguns and shot at him, but Nightwing dropped to the ground, sliding across the floor. When he was between them, he jumped up and lashed out with his Eskrima Sticks, knocking out one guard, then the other.

One of the guards that had been firing at Batman turned his gun on Nightwing, and Batman swung down, kicking him into the wall. The last guard aimed at him, and Catwoman's whip flew the air, striking the gun from his hand. She lashed out with it again, and it coiled around his leg, pulling him to the ground. Batman grabbed the fallen guard and delivered a punch to his face knocking him out.

Waller had managed to climb to her feet and slip into the panic room. As the door closed, Nightwing threw one of his Eskrima Sticks so it spun through the air. The door closed on it, the metal pole keeping the door open. Waller scowled and went for one of the guns on the wall, but Catwoman slipped into the room and pinned the larger woman to the wall. "That's enough of that. We said we had some questions."

Waller glanced over her shoulder, her face twisted into a scowl. "Catwoman. So you're back."

The leather-clad woman held up her claws, the pointy tips sparkling. "With a vengeance."

Batman entered the panic room, pressing a button to open the door so Nightwing could retrieve his other weapon. "We need to talk."

Still glaring, Waller pushed Catwoman's arms away, and Catwoman let her. Straightening her clothes, the government agent held her head up high. "There are significantly better ways to talk rather than breaking into my house in the middle of the night." She walked out of the panic room and sat down at her desk, as if there hadn't just been a brawl that had left four of her guards unconscious. "Well, what do you want?"

Batman tossed a picture onto her desk and waited. Waller stared at it a moment before picking it up and looking at the picture. It was of Helena in her Huntress suit, smiling at the camera while forming a V with her fingers. He watched as Waller studied the picture, not seeing anything in her face that suggested that she knew the girl.

Putting the picture back down, she looked up at her costumed intruders. "Am I supposed to know who this is?"

"She calls herself Huntress," the Dark Knight replied, still looking for any sign of recognition on the woman's face.

"Never heard of her. She another one of your little protégés?"

"In a manner of speaking."

Catwoman crossed her arms. "Someone is after her, and you're a prime suspect."

Waller raised an eyebrow, interested. "Am I now? May I ask why?"
Batman glanced at Catwoman, seeming to silently ask for permission, before replying. "She's special. She has abilities that make her borderline metahuman."

Understanding crossed Waller's face. "So you suspect that I might be behind it. She a new member of your Justice League, or one of your Teen Titans?"

So she knew about the Teen Titans. Batman decided to file that information away for later. "No, nothing like that. Just a little girl trying to live her life."

Waller scoffed. "Hardly. Since when has a metahuman, or even a borderline metahuman, ever been able to just 'live their life'. You people are always causing trouble. Either you're saving the day and causing a lot of destruction in the process, or you're trying to destroy the world."

"Not everyone with power is an enemy," Nightwing told her, thinking of Starfire and the rest of the Teen Titans.

"No," Waller agreed, "but they are a potential enemy, one humanity would be powerless against if they ever turn against us, unless we prepare for it."

Catwoman slammed her palms on the desk. "Is that why you formed your Suicide Squad? Are you maybe thinking of recruiting more members?"

An arrogant smirk made it's way up Waller's face. "Ah, now I see. You think I want to use her for a weapon. Mold her into a type of soldier to use in case the Justice League ever turned on humanity?" She sat back, now looking uninterested. "I suppose I can see why you would suspect me. Hope for the best; be prepared for the worst. It seems that's both of our philosophies." She chuckled humorlessly. "All the same, you've got the wrong woman." She tapped the picture on her desk. "I've never even heard of this girl before, and I hope this is the only time I do. Whatever she's capable of, make sure to keep her in check, and we won't have a problem."

This only seemed to irritate Catwoman further. Before either Batman or Nightwing could react, she reached across the desk and grabbed a fistful of Waller's shirt, pulling the woman close.

"Catwoman!" Batman scolded warningly.

She ignored him. Raising her hand, she held her fingers close to Waller's face, showing off the razor sharp tips. "If I find out you're lying, or if you do decide to take any action against her, I'll poke out your eyes."

Waller didn't even flinch at Catwoman's threat. "You sure seem very concerned about this little girl. Why would you care so much?"

"That's none of your damn business."

Waller's eyes narrowed suspiciously and shifted to the picture on her desk, then back at Catwoman. A knowing smile slowly crossed her face as a chuckle escaped her. "I see now. So that's why you disappeared for 11 years. I wondered." She picked up the picture, studying it closely. "Yes, even with the mask, she does appear to be about 10 years old."

The leather-clad woman scowled and pushed her away. "You know nothing."

Still smirking, Waller folded her hands and rested her chin on top of them. "Oh, I know. A mother always knows."

The two women stared at each other for several seconds before Catwoman finally crossed her arms.
"Then you should know that I would do anything to protect her. Just like you would for your two daughters. I heard what happened to the one, Damita. She was raped by some freak calling himself Candyman. And when your husband went after him for revenge, and the two of them killed each other." She noted cold fury that appeared in the other woman's eyes. "Tell me, if Candyman weren't dead, what would you do if he were standing in front of you right now? No, what would you do if you could prevent him from hurting your daughter to begin with?" She leaned in. "Now ask yourself, what do you think I would do for my daughter?"

Batman placed a hand on her shoulder. "That's enough. She gets the point." He glanced at Waller. "If you know anything, I would appreciate you sharing."

Though normally cool and collect, Waller was visibly shaken by what Catwoman had said, but was quickly regaining control of herself, despite the fury she was clearly suppressing. "As I said, this was the first I've heard of her."

Nightwing stepped forward. "Then do you know anyone that would be after metahumans?"

Despite her rage, Waller gave a snort of laughter. "There's no shortage of them, but I'm sure the bat here has an even bigger list of suspects than I do. Better get a start on that. I suggest looking into Luthor first. He's made how he feels about metahumans very clear."

She definitely had a point there. With Lex Luthor's hatred for metahumans, especially a certain Kryptonian, he was a prime suspect, having recruited several individuals, including Aquaman's half-brother, Orm, to his cause. In fact, the Justice League had faced him and a group of his cronies only a few months ago, just a few days before Trigon appeared.

"We'll do that," the Dark Knight replied. "Thank you for your time."

He gave Catwoman's shoulder a light squeeze before turning to leave. Catwoman gave Waller one last warning look before following. Nightwing lingered just long enough to give her a mock-salute. "Sorry for the trouble." He motioned to her unconscious guards. "And you should give them a raise."

Waller watched as they made their way to the door. She glanced at her desk at the picture of Huntress, but it was gone. She looked back at the Dark Knight in surprise. When had he taken it? "What's in this for you, Batman? Are you just helping your old girlfriend, or do you have another agenda?"

Batman stopped for a second. "Something like that."

Waller prided herself on being able to read people and figure things out. Being a genius when it came to tactical analysis, she would make a lot of assumptions about things, and was usually right about it. She had learned to trust her instincts, and they were telling her something right now, something that should have been plainly obvious. How had she not realized it before?

"Well, I'll be damned. The girl, she is your agenda, isn't she. The same agenda as your feline friend there." She laughed mockingly. "The cat and the bat. That's quite a combination. With parents like that, she's bound to be extraordinary. No wonder whoever's after her wants her. She'll make quite the superhero one day." Her eyes narrowed. "Just make sure she never gives us a reason to move against her. That goes for your Justice League friends too."

Catwoman held up her hand, the tips of her claws sparkling in the moonlight. "I'll give you a reason."
Batman took her hand in his. "We'll do that." He gave Catwoman's hand a small tug. "Come on."

"And, Batman," Waller called, "the next time you sneak into my house, I'll shoot you where you stand."

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Robin and Huntress were still on the roof. Nothing eventful was going on. The guards were still making their rounds around the mansion, unaware of what was going on inside. The communicators in the two pre-teens' ears kept them in the loop of what was going on in the mansion.

Nothing had been said between the two siblings. In fact, they hadn't spoken a word to each other since their argument back at Wayne Manor. Usually, it was the woman who gave the cold shoulder, but in this case, it was Robin who was giving it to his sister.

Huntress could sense his coldness, and his unwillingness to talk to her. Coupled with the silent treatment he had been giving to her, she had given him his space, waiting for him to say something to her. But he never did, and her patience was running out.

She didn't want things to be like this between them, but she saw that if she didn't do anything, then they would never have the type of relationship she wanted. True, their family was the very definition of dysfunctional, and not due to the two of them being illegitimate half-brother and half-sister, but that didn't mean they couldn't all get along.

Sighing, she realized that she would have to make the first move and decided to take the plunge. "Is this how it's going to be between us all the time? Are we just going to ignore each other for the rest of our lives?"

Keeping his eyes on the guards below, Robin didn't even glance at her. "Who says it has to be that long. Soon I'll be going back to Titan Tower, and once we take care of whoever's after you, then you and your mother will be out of my life for good."

Huntress frowned. He really did make things difficult. "It doesn't have to be that way."

Even behind his mask, his face was unreadable. "Yes, it does. And I'll be glad when you're both gone."

Annoyance was creeping in, but she held it in check, flipping back her hair. "Even if we're not around, even if one of us ends up dead, we'll always be connected, forever. We're family, we're blood."

Raven had said pretty much the same thing, and he hadn't wanted to hear it then either. Finally turning around, he poked her in the chest. "Not my blood. My father's."

"Which we both share."

With a scowl, he turned away, storming to the other side of the mansion to keep watch there. Huntress stared at his crouched down form, realizing she wasn't approaching this the right way. She gave him a minute to cool off a bit before going over to join him again. "Look, I'm sorry about what I said yesterday. I shouldn't have said what I did about your mother, but you kind of pissed me off with what you said about mine."

Robin was silent for a moment before he spoke. "You didn't tell me anything I didn't know," he reluctantly admitted. "My mother was a monster."
"But I didn't have to say so, or rub it in your face."

"Just forget about it. Father and I already worked through it. Just let it go; we're working surveillance."

She smirked. "I'm really good at multitasking." This didn't get the reaction she was hoping for. Did her brother ever laugh, or even smile? "Come on, I'm kidding. Can't we at least be friendly with each other?"

He stood up straight and turned to her. "What is so hard for you to understand about this? I don't want to be friendly with you. I don't even want to get to know you, so just stay out of my way."

He turned his back on her, fully intending to ignore her for the rest of the night. The determine look on Huntress' face slowly became a heartbroken look of sadness. She wanted to say something, anything to get a genuine response from him, something other than this cold hostility, but he seemed determine to make this as complicated as complicated as possible. "Look, I feel we got off on the wrong foot. Can't we just start over?"

There was silence. Huntress couldn't see his face with his back, but she hoped that was a good sign, that he was considering it. It was possible that he was ignoring her, but she sensed that this wasn't the case. If he opened up to her, even a little, then she could-

"There's nothing to start over," he said suddenly. "There was never anything there at all."

And that was it; she got nothing else out of him. The two stood in silence, keeping watch without talking. A few minutes later, Batman, Catwoman, and Nightwing joined them on the roof. The two pre-teens turned to them, the younger of the two giving her parents an expectant look while Robin just looked on in boredom.

"This was a dead end," the Dark Knight told them. "We're leaving."

He turned to leave, and Robin went after him without even glancing at his sister. Catwoman watched as the boy walked past before holding out her hand for her daughter. Slowly, Huntress walked over to her, and her mother put an arm around her shoulder.

"How'd it go, sweetheart?" the older woman asked. "Any problems?"

Still frowning, Huntress shook her head. "No, nothing happened." She looked at her brother sadly. "Nothing at all."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: I had a lot of fun writer Waller. She really is a great character, as both a villain and a hero in her own right. But it looks like she was a dead end. But come on, you didn't expect them to find their man, or woman, right off the bat did you? Ha, ha, 'off the bat', puns. But they did get a new lead. Now they're going to look into Lex Luthor. That'll be interesting. In other news, it was the first "outing" for the new Bat Family, though it didn't seem to go over so well for Helena. Things didn't exactly go as she planned with Damian, and he seems determine to keep things hostile between them. It's going to take a while for him to accept her, if he ever does, but Helena is not willing to give up. Guess we'll have to wait and see where things go from here. Hopefully, things
will improve with Helena and Damian, and the next lead Batman and Catwoman gets will be more beneficial. Or maybe he should just call in the Justice League. More to come soon.)
Infiltrating LexCorp

Chapter Notes

(A/N: Alright, this chapter is pretty exciting as it starts to expand the Batman universe and start getting into a little Justice League. Or at least Batman/Superman. You'll see what I mean. It mostly focuses on Bruce and Selina this chapter, but don't worry, we'll be getting back to Damian and Helena. I'm planning their own chapter where they'll try some sibling bonding. You'll see what I mean. Until then, enjoy the next installment, and I hope everyone has a happy holiday.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 9: Infiltrating LexCorp

Amanda Waller may have been a dead end, but she did make a good suggestion of where to look next. Bruce had already been planning on looking into Lex Luthor anyway. He'd been monitoring him ever since he made bail after being arrested with the rest of his League of Doom at the Hall of Justice. Despite the fact that the man had been caught red-handed committing crimes time and time again, he had the power, money, and intelligence to get himself out of whatever jam he found himself in.

But Luthor was crafty, and as good as Bruce was with what he did, Luthor had resources to keep certain things a secret from even the great Batman. In order to find out more about Luthor's more personal projects, he would have to get in close. Fortunately, an opportunity was presenting itself where he would be able to do just that.

A presentation for experimental perpetual energy was being made by LexCorp. Naturally, they were looking investors, and being the billionaire that he was, no one would find anything suspicious about Bruce Wayne going to said presentation. And with his playboy reputation, no one would blink if he had a beautiful female escort.

That was the plan. He and Selina would go to the presentation as themselves, or as Irena Dubrovna for Selina's case since she didn't want anyone to know that Selina Kyle had return to Gotham as long as there were still people looking for her and Helena.

This time though, there would be no children accompanying them. Luthor was far too dangerous. Even for Batman and Catwoman, it would be risky. The plan was go to the presentation, and then Bruce would meet with Luthor and keep him distracted while Selina slipped away to do what she did best. If all went well, she would be able to download all of Luthor's secret files and they would be out of there before anyone even noticed.

Neither Damian nor Helena were happy when they found out they were staying behind. Dick wasn't too thrilled either since he would be the one babysitting them. He'd been planning on making a trip to Titan Tower to spend some time with Starfire, but it seemed his plans were, once again, shot down thanks to family problems.

"Tell me again why Alfred can't watch the kids," he demanded. "Do they even need a sitter?"
"Alfred can stay if you want volunteer to be my chauffeur for the night," Bruce told him as he straightened his tie. "And do I really need to answer your second question?" He checked his appearance in the mirror. "Just do me a favor, if either of them do sneak out, just have them back in before we get back and pretend that nothing happened."

Dick raised an eyebrow. "Is that a joke?"

"A suggestion. And I also suggest trying to keep them entertained so they won't try and sneak out in the first place."

There was a knock at the door. "Is my date ready yet?" came Selina's voice.

Dick scowled. "How is it that I get screwed out of my date just so you can go on yours?"

Bruce sighed as he walked to the door. "This isn't a date, Dick. This is business."

The younger man cut his eyes at him. "Could have fooled me."

Ignoring him, Bruce opened the door, and froze. Selina stood there in a sparkling silvery white dress. It was sleeveless and backless, with a single strap going over her left shoulder, exposing a good deal of skin, and was slit at the bottom, showing much of her right calf. Bruce's eyes traveled over her body, landing on her ruby red lips that curled into a knowing smile. The blonde hair went nice with the dress, but he knew it would have looked even better with her midnight black hair.

"See anything you like, big boy?" she asked seductively. She reached out and ran a finger up his chest. "I certainly do."

"Ok!" Dick said loudly. "That is my cue to leave."

He moved to walk out of the room, needing to squeeze by the two, as they seemed to be lost in the other. The look on Selina's face made it seem like she wanted to devour the man standing in front of her, and he was looking at her like he was more of a nervous virgin than a billionaire playboy. It made Dick roll his eyes as he muttered, "Business my ass."

Selina truly had a gorgeous figure, and she worked hard to keep herself in excellent shape. Having a child had done nothing to ruin her body, and Bruce desperately wanted to strip the dress off her and relive those times with her that they shared over a decade ago, but there wasn't any time for that. They had a presentation to get to. But maybe when they got back…

"Hey, big boy, my eyes are up here," she told him playfully. "Don't forget the real reason why we're playing dress up." Gripping his tie, she pulled him in close so she could whisper in his ear. "We can take off our costumes later."

Her tongue darted out and licked his cheek. He felt a shiver go down his spine in response. He had forgotten she could do that to him. "Which reminds me," he said with a smirk.

He walked over to a painting hanging on the wall and pulled it open like a door, revealing a safe behind it. Looking back at Selina, he saw that she was watching with interest. He gave her a knowing smile and motioned that she should turn around. Selina rolled her eyes, but was still smiling as she turned her back to him and covered her eyes. Bruce was momentarily distracted by the open back of her dress before he began entering the combination in his safe, stealing glances at Selina to make sure she wasn't peaking, even as he used his body to shield her view of the safe in case she watching.

"Keep your eyes closed," he told her as he retrieved what he wanted from the safe and closed it.
"Yes, Daddy," Selina joked. She heard him coming up behind her, feeling his body heat when he stopped just behind her. She felt his hands come up and go around her neck, feeling him place something there, a necklace of some sort.

"Ok, you can open your eyes."

She did, and looked down to see what he had put on her. It was a string of pearls. Smirking, she walked over to the mirror and looked at her reflection. They were definitely the real thing, and they were beautiful. Reaching up, she played with the beads, running them over her finger.

Coming up behind her, Bruce placed his hands on her shoulders as he looked at her reflection. "They were my mother's," he whispered in her ear. "They've been sitting in my safe all this time, but they certainly look better on you."

"Oh, Bruce, you shouldn't have."

"I didn't," he told her in a teasing voice. "You don't get to keep those, no matter how much they suit you."

She turned in his arms, pouting playfully. "Oh, Bruce, you should know better than to tease a lady. Especially this lady."

He stroked her chin, cupping it gently as if he were going to kiss her. "And you should know better than to make assumptions." He stepped back and offered her his arm. "Miss Kyle."

She shook her finger at him. "Ah, ah, ah. What are you supposed to call me tonight?"

He chuckled. "My apologies, Miss Dubrovna."

"Much better, Mr. Wayne." Still smiling, she took his arm. She paused for a moment to play with the pearls around her neck. "Are you sure I can't keep these?"

He gave her a look as if she were a naughty child. "As lovely as they look on you, I'm afraid not."

She chuckled, still fingerling the beads. "Then you better keep a close eye on them, 'cause I might just have to take them with me anyway when I leave."

Oh, he was familiar with this game. Filing away what she had mentioned about leaving for later, he decided to play. "I'll come after you," he told her playfully.

Her smile widened. "I'm counting on it."

They made their way down the stairs where both Damian and Helena were waiting. Helena's face lit up upon seeing them, and she quickly held up a camera and took a picture of the two. Damian scowled and walked away without saying anything. Helena just rolled her eyes and held up the camera again. "Ok, now this time, give her a little kiss."

Bruce gave her a warning look, but was smiling. "Helena."

"Just a little peck on the cheek?"

"We're already running late."

Selina laughed. "Oh, don't be so uptight." Giving into her daughter's request, she kissed him on the cheek, leaving a mark of lipstick. Helena practically squealed as she jumped up and down.
"Come on already!" Damian called from the other room. "What are you, two years old?"

"You just don't understand women," his sister called back.

She continued snapping pictures of them as they reached the bottom of the stairs. Bruce smiled at her and patted her head as they passed. "Be a good girl."

"Always."

"And don't fight with your brother."

"That's up to him."

"Helena…"

"Dad…"

Selina chuckled and pulled him along. "You know she's got you wrapped around her finger, Mr. Wayne."

Bruce smiled at her. "Only as much as I allow."

She leaned close to his ear. "So do I." She lightly blew in his ear, giving him chills. "I always have."

Moving his hand down to her hip, he pulled her close. "I could say the same about you."

Her eyes lit up playfully. "Oh, care to bet on that?"

"Perhaps later."

He opened the door for her, and they exited the manor. Alfred was waiting outside by the limo. He opened the door as the two approached, tipping his chauffer hat in greeting. "Master Wayne, Miss Kyle."

Selina smiled at him. "Good evening, Alfred. Is my Catwoman suit in the trunk?"

"As is your equipment, madam," the butler replied. He looked at Bruce. "Are you sure Batman will not be making an appearance tonight?"

He shook his head. "This is a job for Bruce Wayne."

"Very good, sir."

They climbed into the car, and Alfred shut the door behind them and headed for the driver's side. Helena waved from the door until the limo was out of sight. Damian watched as well from the window, staying hidden behind the curtain, before looking away in disgust.

Luthor's presentation was everything Bruce expected it to be. The man hadn't gotten to where he was for nothing, and Bruce had to admit, he was impressed. Though there was no doubt a great deal of shadiness to whatever it was Luthor was planning, his project did show promise, that is, considering how much of what the man said was plausible and could actually be done. They were still far off from achieving true perpetual energy, but it was indeed a start. Bruce decided that he would look further into what it was Luthor was working on.
Selina didn't seem to into what Luthor was saying, but she did play her part well. Her skills in dealing with the public were just as good as ever. She was confident and engaging in her role as Bruce's date, turning many heads with little to no effort. The blonde hair seemed to do the trick, as no one seemed to recognize her as Selina Kyle after an eleven year disappearance.

Soon the time came for Bruce and Selina to make their move. Excusing herself from the others, Selina slipped away as Bruce made his way towards Luthor. The man was currently engaging in conversation with a certain news reporting known as Lois Lane, who had come to report on the event. It was clear the two had had dealing with each other in the past, and both were good at having a silent battle that seemed civil on the outside, but held a whole new meaning when reading between the lines.

"And what about the negative effects your project could have on the environment?" Lois was asking.

Luthor wore a calm smile on his face as he continued shaking hands with potential sponsors. "The environment? Miss Lane, what harm could possibly befall the environment?"

"Well, as any first grader would know, for every action, there is a reaction. For every positive effect, there is a negative effect. You spoke about many ways your perpetual energy project will benefit the world, but I couldn't help but realize that you didn't bring up any risk factors."

Luthor openly laughed at that. "Oh, Miss Lane, you crack me up. Need I remind you that this event is meant to gain sponsors? I wouldn't gain many if I only spoke of the risks."

It was enough information for Lois to pounce on. "So you admit there are some risks?"

"There are always risk, Miss Lane. But I think the promise of unlimited perpetual energy is worth a little risk." It was only noticeable to the trained ear, but a hint of malice crept into the businessman's voice. "And, of course, if anything does go wrong, the world has its precious Justice League to save it."

Lois' eyes narrowed slightly as the battle between them started up again. "Yes, the promise of unlimited energy does sound like it's worth a little risk, doesn't it? Possibly to challenge a man with unlimited strength."

He didn't rise to the bait. "I have no idea what you mean, Miss Lane. I'm just a simple businessman trying to make the world a better place."

It was at this point that Bruce decided to step in. "We all have our own ideas of what will make the world a better place."

Luthor's attention shifted to him, and he smiled. "Bruce Wayne. I'm glad you could make it. Where is the lovely blonde you were with?"

Bruce looked out into the crowd. "If you mean Irena, I honestly couldn't tell you. Last time I saw her, she was headed for the restroom." He smiled at the man. "I suppose she got lost in the crowd. I didn't think I would be that hard to find again."

Lois pointed the tape recorder at him. "Mr. Wayne, what do you make of Luthor's promise for perpetual energy, especially in light of the crimes he has been accused of?"

"Accused of, is far from being found guilty of," Luthor replied.

Putting on his public persona, Bruce tried his best to hide his disgust for the man. "I try not to listen to rumors, and feel that everyone deserves the benefit of the doubt. And I am rather intrigued about
Mr. Luthor's ideas. I would like to learn more about them, if that's alright?"

Beaming with pride, Luthor practically threw his hands in the air. "Of course, Mr. Wayne, of course. I'll have my people call your people, and we'll set up a meeting."

"Of course, I look forward to it," Bruce replied, then added a hint of warning in his voice. "However, it wouldn't do for Wayne Enterprises to get involved in any shady business, even if they are just rumors. It could be harmful to one's reputation. I hope there won't be anymore… incidents like the one that happened at the Hall of Justice."

That sly smile Luthor always had was now plastered on his face. "Of course, Mr. Wayne. I was but an innocent bystander caught up in forces beyond my comprehension."

"Yes," said Bruce, his own knowing smile in place, "so was I."

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Catwoman had seen some impressive security in her day, but LexCorp took things to a whole new level. If it were anyone else besides her, they would undoubtedly have been caught. Some of the security were even traps in case someone tried to hack in or bypass the security. There were a few close calls, but she managed to get into the more private sectors of LexCorp.

"Alright, Luthor," she whispered to herself, "just what are you planning that would require this much protection?"

It took longer than she thought it would, but she managed to make her way to LexCorp's computer servers. Well, almost. She was currently in the air ducts, and even those had security cameras in them. Her claws had come in use then as she used them to cut a hole into the metal in order to reach the wires behind them. After a bit of her special handiwork, she had the cameras playing on a loop.

Still making her way through the small space, she crawled right above the heads of the two guards and into the room containing the computer servers. But even when she reached an air vent, she noticed that they contained small, nearly invisible lasers. Whether they would set off an alarm or simple cut through anything they touched, she didn't know, and wasn't willing to find out.

"Guess I'll make my own way in," she said to herself. Cracking her knuckles, she dragged the claw on her index finger along the metal surface. It was much tougher than cutting through glass, but she managed to carve an opening large enough for her to slip through. She wouldn't be able to hide that hole, and Luthor would undoubtedly realize that someone had gotten in, but at least he wouldn't know who snuck in.

Lowering herself into the room, she made sure to stay on top of the large servers. Based on how great Luthor's security was, she wouldn't put it past him to have a Mission Impossible style alarm system, where even a single drop of water touching the floor would set off the alarm. It would be best not to take any unnecessary risks.

Looking at all the different servers, she sought the main one. "Eeny, meeny, miney," her eyes landed on it, and she smirked, "mo."

Hopping from server to server, she pulled out the device that resembled a miniature laptop. Popping it open, she attached a cable to the main server and began typing on the small keyboard.

"Aaaaand download."

The process began. On the screen, a black bar slowly filled with green as the percentage slowly
increased. In a matter of minutes, she would have all of Luthor's dirty little secrets. Soon she would know if he was the one after her daughter. If he was, then God help him. To hell with Batman's no killing rule. She knew that Luthor would never give up on his ambitions, and he had the power, money, and connections to avoid jail. If he was the one who wanted Helena, then Catwoman would do what she had to in order to keep her safe.

"For your sake, Luthor, you better be innocent this time."

A few minutes later, the green bar filled up 100 percent, and a message popped up, informing her that the download was complete. Smirking, she unplugged from the computer server and shut the device. Hopping back to the hole she had carved out of the ceiling, she crawled back inside, and began making her way through the air duct once more. Though she knew it wouldn't keep it hidden for long, she pushed the pieces of the metal air duct she had torn open back into place. There was still an obvious rip in the air duct, but at least it wasn't a gaping hole.

"Mission accomplished," she said with a smile. Now all she had to do was sneak back to the limo, change back into her dress, and slip into the party once more, and no one would be any wiser. "You were good, Lex, but nothing compared to this kitty."

But things didn't go according to plan. As she was making her way back, the entire building shook as the sound of what was undoubtedly an explosion shook the building. Catwoman blinked in surprise, wondering what had happened. Echoing through the air duct, she heard the unmistakable sound of people screaming. Had someone set off a bomb?

"You've got to be kidding me," she growled. And with Batman stuck as Bruce Wayne, there was no one to save the day. No one except a certain cat burglar. "Damn!"

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Well, here's some trouble. Something's going on at LexCorp, Batman won't be showing up any time soon, and Catwoman is stuck in the air ducts with a laptop containing all of Luthor's secrets. Sheesh, what a pickle. Will it be up to her to save the day, or will someone else come to help? Who's attacking anyway? And what of Helena and Damian? Are they being a good little boy and girl for Dick? Do I even need to ask? Next chapter is going to be a doozy.)
Party Crashers

Chapter Notes

(A/N: HAAAAAPY NEW YEAR! Hope everyone had a good holiday and New Year's. Me, I passed out drunk at a party and missed the ball drop. Yeah, not my finest hour, but it was fun. Speaking of parties, in our last chapter, a sudden explosion interrupted the one Bruce was attending while Selina was off, er, Catwoman-ing. I guess that's one way of putting it. I'm really excited about this chapter, and had a lot of fun with it, both the first and second half. Hope you enjoy it.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 10: Party Crashers

Bruce coughed as the smoke cleared. He felt dazed, and his ears were ringing. The force of the explosion had knocked him off his feet, but, fortunately, he had been far away enough from the blast to not be harmed.

The same couldn't be said for everyone else. The explosion had been small, but it had still caused damage, to both the building and its inhabitants. A large hole in the wall had been made, and several masked, armed men and women had come charging in. One of them, the obvious leader, jumped up onto a table and fired his gun in the air.

"Is everyone having a good time?"

Yes, that was definitely the leader. What was this? A terrorist attack? An attempt to hold rich folks hostage? A robbery? Bruce wasn't sure. For now, it would be best to play along and assess the situation. Without his Batman suit, he wouldn't be able to do anything anyway without exposing himself.

"I can't hear you!" the leader raged, and he sounded angry. "Is everyone having a good time? Answer me!"

He fired into the air again, and there were more screams of fright. One individual, however, did not scream, and did a very good job of putting up a calm front as he stood up straight, adjusting his tie. "Well, we were, until a couple of party crashers decided to ruin the fun."

The leader turned to Luthor, pointing his gun at him. "Lex Luthor. Of course you'd be having fun. Destroying the environment, killing off our mother Earth. That's what you're guilty of." He looked at the other guest. "That's what you're all guilty of. The very fact that you showed up here tells us that you support this madman's ways."

Luthor just humphed, holding his head up high, even with the barrel of a gun pointed directly at him. "Tell me, what exactly is this crime my guests and I are guilty of? This is merely a presentation for a plan of achieving perpetual energy."

"At what cost?" another armed man demanded. "Just how will this affect the planet? For every
action, there's a reaction. We've already seen plenty of negative impact on the earth with humanity's so-called progress. Global warming, forests disappearing, plants and animals becoming endangered or going extinct, litter everywhere, the polar icecaps melting, the o-zone layer deteriorating, manmade areas spreading across the planet."

"Well spoken, brother!" the leader exclaimed. "Just how much is your project for perpetual energy going to damage the earth? There's bound to be consequences. But you don't care about that, do you? Not as long as it fills your pockets with money and makes things more convenient for humans. Well, we're not going to just stand around and let you destroy our planet!"

So that was it. These were environmental extremists, eco-terrorists. Bruce had plenty of experience with that philosophy, having faced down a certain genocidal lunatic known as Pamela Isley, aka Poison Ivy. This though, this seemed like a group of people that wanted to put a stop to Luthor's project, fearing that it might have a negative affect on the planet; something Bruce himself was wary of and intending to keep an eye on.

Still smiling, Luthor opened his arms as if he were welcoming the gun-wielding leader. "If that is your concern, then I can assure you that you have nothing to worry about. This project is completely environmentally safe. What more, it will actually help reduce the damage we have done to the planet already while making things simpler and less expensive for everyone."

The leader fired his gun at Luthor's feet, deliberately missing. "Do you really expect us to believe that? You're a liar and murderer. We know what you've done, no matter what loopholes or technicalities you've used to get out of trouble for it. You'll say and do anything to get your way."

He looked at the guests again. "And you all just let him get away with it. No, worse. You show up here to help him. However indirectly, you're all just as guilty. You sit in your fancy mansions with all your money, safe and sound from the repercussions your actions cause. And then you show up to these events, throwing your money to monsters like this man, claiming you're doing it for the planet and it's inhabitants, when really you're just looking for ways to make more money while the world suffers as a result of your little projects."

His eyes continued scanning the crowd, stopping as they landed on a certain individual. "Some of you come from rather prestigious families, hiding behind the good deeds you do with your donations, but in the end, it's all about putting on a good face for the public, when you really have your own agenda. Is that true, Mr. Wayne? That's why you're here, isn't it?"

Bruce did his best to maintain a perfect balance between calmness and fear so as to not break the character of his public image. "Sir, I can assure you, the Wayne Foundation has always-"

"Shut up!" the leader shouted. Jumping off the table, he began making his way over to him. "Bruce Wayne, the billionaire playboy. I know all about you. Flaunting your money around like you own the world, when you could be doing some real good with it. Tell me, what have you done for our world besides make just enough donations to make you look good with the public? You could really make an impact, but instead you come to a charity event hosted by a madman to destroy our mother Earth, pretending it's for a noble cause."

Bruce tried not to take offense to that. This man clearly had no idea of what he did. Not just as Batman, but as Bruce Wayne. Tens of millions of dollars every year went to charities to make the world a better place, but it seemed this man didn't see beyond the playboy persona he showed to the public to help hide his identity as Batman. He knew there would be those that would see him in a negative light for that, but it was something he had to do. He had been prepared for some people having this type of opinion of him, but it still frustrated him.
The leader pointed his gun at him. "I think the Wayne Foundation would be better off without some spoiled orphan who disgraces his parents' name so he can spend his nights fooling around with woman."

"You sound jealous," came a voice from up above. A moment later, a whip came down, coiled around the man's gun, and pulling it out of his hands. Catwoman suddenly dropped down in front of him, flashing the man a smile. "How about fooling around with me."

She delivered a blow to the man's head, knocking him out cold. There were enraged cries from the other eco-terrorists, and the closest one turned his gun on her and began firing. Catwoman began back-flipping over to him, leaping up in the air and landing with her legs wrapped around his neck, her weight bringing him to the ground before she drove her fist into his face.

From across the room, Lois Lane's eyes widened as she recognized the leather-clad woman. "Hey, isn't that…?"

As she began snapping pictures, another eco-terrorists grabbed Catwoman from behind, wrapping his arms around her neck. Catwoman reached back and threw him over her head and onto a table, breaking it in half. Two more began firing at her, and she jumped up and cartwheeled to the side, taking cover. A third joined her comrades and began firing at the pillar Catwoman was hiding behind, pieces of marble being chipped away by the bullets.

"This is hardly a fair fight," Catwoman remarked. A smirk grazed her lips. "I should give them a handicap."

Her whip lashed out from behind the pillar, and Catwoman came swinging around the side, plowing into the three gun-wielders, knocking them off their feet. A distance away, the leader was getting to his feet. Glaring at Catwoman, he pulled a handgun from his jacket. "Filthy cat-whore!"

He took aim, but Bruce came to her defense, breaking a chair over the back of his head, knocking him out; he could at least do this much as himself. Catwoman glanced in his direction and gave him a grateful smile, followed by a wink and blowing a kiss at him.

Several more eco-terrorists came over, pointing their guns at Catwoman, but didn't fire. She studied them for a few moments, reading their body language, ready to react if they showed even the slightest hint of firing. "This isn't going to accomplish anything. You should just leave while you still can."

"Shut up!" one of the eco-terrorists snapped. "If you're defending these people, then you're no better than them. You're helping them destroy the world."

Catwoman smirked. "Trust me, sonny, if anyone understands the importance of preserving the environment for the animals, it's me, but I'm not going to resort to terrorism to do it. Tell me, how much time, energy, and money is it going to take to repair all the damage you've done. You're hurting your cause."

"Screw you!"

She recognized their body language, signaling that they were about to fire, and she moved. Jumping back, she kicked off the wall as their bullets began flying. She landed in a handstand and pushed of the ground, thrusting her feet outward and kicking two of them in the heads, then jumped straight up and kicked outward again, doing a perfect split in the air, knocking two more off their feet.

Only one remained, and he pointed his gun at Catwoman. She lashed out with her whip, knocking
the firearm from his hand, and smirked at him. The man's face twisted with anger beneath his mask and he reached into his jacket. "Fine then, if it's come to this!"

Catwoman's eyes widened as she realized what it was he was holding. It was a grenade, and he was about to pull the pin. She quickly lashed out with her whip again, and it coiled around the man's leg. She yanked his leg out from under him, and the man toppled over. The grenade fell from his hand and rolled over to Catwoman. The pin was no longer in it.

"Oh, hell," she hissed, and dove for cover behind a table, turning it on its side as she ducked behind it. She knew that the explosion from a grenade wasn't that strong, it was the pieces of it that blew apart that were the real danger.

The table shielded her from the shards, but the blast still sent her flying, and she hit the ground hard, dazed. It provided the eco-terrorists the opportunity to get to their feet and recover their weapons. Catwoman groaned as they surrounded her, and when she looked up, she found seven armed men and women pointing their guns at her. One of them stepped forward, pointing their gun directly at Catwoman's head.

Bruce saw that he was going to fire, and he was too far away to do anything about it. Almost. Grabbing a fork off the ground, he threw it at the man. It spun through the air, stabbing into his wrist, knocking his arm sideways as he fired. The bullet missed, and Catwoman jumped up, kicking upward, her heel colliding with the man's chin, knocking him off his feet.

"Kill her!" another shouted, and the other six began firing.

Something came bursting through the ceiling, moving too fast to see. The red and blue blur was suddenly in front of Catwoman, the bullets bouncing harmlessly off the figure.

The gunfire didn't last long once the eco-terrorists realized what they were shooting at. Any amount of control they had felt over the situation vanished instantly as they stared at the newcomer.

"I understand your concerns," Superman told them. "I too worry about the welfare of the planet, and seek to do all that I can to help it. But this is not the way. Now stand down."

One of the eco-terrorists was either very brave or very foolish as they pointed their gun at the Kryptonian. "Y-You should be on our side. We want to save the world."

Superman glanced at him. Two red beams flew from his eyes, and the man's gun melted in his hands. "So do I, but there is a right way, and a wrong way. And no right way involves the taking of lives. Now, I'll say it one last time. Stand down."

"Screw you! You don't get to tell us what to do!"

He began firing. After a moments hesitation the others did too. Superman just sighed and vanished with a display of speed too fast for the human eye to follow. One after another, the eco-terrorists disappeared until they were all gone. A few seconds of silence passed before they dropped from up above, unconscious.

As Superman came down to land beside the motionless eco-terrorists, the leader of the group slowly got to his feet, his head pounding. With a groan, he looked up to see his comrades lying on the ground unconscious with Superman standing above them. There was no way in hell he was going to challenge that guy, especially without his friends. And as the crowd moved in to give their thanks, he decided to quietly slip away.

That is, until he backed up into something immobile. Slowly, he glanced over his shoulder to find
another red and blue clad superhero. Or heroine to be more precise. Wonder Woman scowled at him as if he were a child who had disappointed his parents, and the man leapt away.

"Are you going to abandon your comrades-in-arms?" she demanded in disgust.

The man nearly wet his pants as the Amazonian warrior stood tall and proud above him. "S-Shut up, Wonder Whore!"

He pulled out a switchblade knife and lunged at her. She easily sidestepped him and delivered a chop to the back of his neck, effectively knocking him out once again with a single blow. "Coward."

Grabbing him by the collar of his jacket, she carried him over to Superman, who was busy sitting the unconscious eco-terrorist back to back. Wonder Woman pulled out her Lasso of Truth and bound them together, then placed her hands on her hips as she proudly announced, "Justice has been served!"

There was applause from the crowd. One person, however, was not smiling. A notable scowl was plastered on Luthor's face, but it quickly shifted to a forced smile, one only few people would be able to see through. Slowly, he made his way over to the duo, stopping before the Kryptonian. Superman turned to him, and the two stared each other down for several seconds.

"I suppose I should say thanks," Luthor replied, holding out his hand.

Despite his words, Superman knew that Luthor was the furthest thing from grateful, but he masked his disgust a lot better than Wonder Woman, who was openly glaring at the man. With great reluctance, he reached out to shake the businessman's hand. "No thanks necessary. We're just doing what we can to make the world a better place."

"Yes," Luthor replied, "that's what we're all trying to do."

It was obvious from Wonder Woman's body language that she wanted nothing more than to knock Luthor's teeth in, yet she kept herself in check. "We have very different ideas of what would make the world a better place."

Releasing the Man of Steel's hand, Luthor placed his hands in his pockets and stood up as straight as possible. "Perhaps. History will say who is right in the end. But as you can see, there is no foul play here." He smirked as he glanced at the eco-terrorists. "Well, aside from these poor misled souls."

Superman gave him a look with what could only be described as a warning. "Lets hope their fears were unfounded."

Luthor's smile only grew wider. "You have my word."

As Lois rushed over to interview the two superheroes, Superman's gaze shifted to Bruce. The two stared at each other for a moment before Bruce gave him the smallest of nods and looked away. His eyes scanned the room for a certain leather-clad woman, but in all the confusion, she had successfully slipped away unnoticed.

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Dick was at a bit of a loss at what to do. Here he was, stuck babysitting two preteen children, one he knew little about who was a little too enthusiastic, and one that refused to communicate with him and was almost always moody. How was he supposed to appease both of them?

He decided that perhaps it would be best if he didn't, but left it to the entertainment industry. When
all else fails, a good movie always worked. Of course, that in itself still proved to be a bit of a problem, as young boys and girls tended to have different tastes.

He called Starfire, as she was better at this than him, especially since she worked with the Teen Titans, namely Damian, and she made an interesting suggestion, something they would all be able to relate to. After dinner, courteously of Alfred before he left with Bruce and Selina, he showed them their options.

"Ok, guys, for movie choices we've got Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Spiderman, Dare Devil, Fantastic Four, X-Men, or we could just mash a whole bunch into one with The Avengers?"

Damian cut his eyes at him. "Seriously? Superhero movies? Is that supposed to be a joke?"

"A compromise," Dick countered. "A more fun look at our alternate lifestyle you could say?"

The boy crossed his arms. "Could you?"

Helena chuckled. "How about a different one. Ever hear of The Toxic Avenger?"

Dick frowned. He had, and he didn't approve. "I don't think you're parents would approve of that type of movie." He gave her a suspicious look. "Er, your mother doesn't let you watch that stuff, does she?"

The girl giggled. "Nah, I just wanted to see what you would say."

Humphing, Damian pushed his seat back. "Whatever. I've had enough of this family bonding over dinner nonsense. I'm going to my room."

Dick waved the DVDs. "You don't want to watch?"

"Not with you two."

A smirk grazed Helena's face. "I guess it's not that strange for a twelve year old boy to spend a decent amount of time in his room, alone."

Dick coughed, looking away at her obvious implications. She was certainly her mother's daughter; Selina wouldn't hesitate to embarrass people with sexual remarks just to trigger a reaction out of them. Still, it was just plan weird hearing it from a ten year old girl.

"Do me a favor," he begged. "Please don't say stuff like that around me."

Her smile widened. "What? A lot of boys enjoy playing video games or reading comics." Her eyes danced mischievously as they studied him. "What did you think I was talking about?"

She was playing him, he knew it, but he wouldn't rise to the bait. "Nothing."

"He could also be looking up certain things on his computer," she tried again, with just enough mischievousness in her voice to possibly imply something.

Dick just cleared his throat; he wasn't falling for it this time. "Well, if he wants to stay in his room, that's his choice. So," he spread the movies out on the table, "which one did you want to watch first?"

She decided to cut him a break as she leaned onto the table and looked at the DVDs. "Hmm… I've already seen them all, so let's go with the best." She grabbed the last one. "The Avengers it is!"
Dick nodded. "Good choice."

She giggled, looking at the cover. "Hey, who do you think would win in a fight, the Avengers, or the Justice League?"

"Um…"

"Never mind, stupid question. It really wouldn't be a contest, what with Dad and Superman being on the team. Still, it'd make a good movie."

Geez this girl had a lot of energy. It made him wonder what she would be like once she grew up. "I guess so. Lets clean up, and we'll go watch."

"Here," She tossed the DVD to him. "You go set it up, I'll clean up here."

He raised an eyebrow at that. There weren't many children who were quick to offer to clean. Damian had certainly been against it, calling it servant work.

Helena noted the look on his face as she gathered the dishes. "What? Mom taught me that we should take care of things ourselves so we remain humble and don't depend on others all the time. Go on, go set it up while I handle this. I'll bring some snacks too."

She carried the pile of dishes away. Dick just shrugged and went to go set up the movie as she requested. A few minutes later, she returned with a soda for each of them, a bowl of popcorn, and a very large ice cream sundae with the works for herself. He raised an eyebrow at the sundae, but she just gave him a big grin.

"It's ok to indulge every now and then," she told him with a wink.

Handing him his soda, she flopped down on the couch next to him and began digging into her sundae. Dick shook his head with a smile and pressed PLAY. The movie began as Helena hummed happily, enjoying her ice cream. Dick couldn't help but notice that she seemed to be eating it rather fast. "Hey, slow down. You'll get a brain-freeze."

"It's fine," she replied, shoveling more ice cream into her mouth. "They pass quickly. Besides, I'm on a time limit."

He gave her a confused look. "What do you mean, a time limit?"

"You'll see in a bit- ah!" She pressed her palm to her forehead. "Ouch, ouch, ouch!"

A smirk crept up Dick's face. "Told you."

She was right though, it passed quickly, and she went right back to eating her ice cream. The movie continued to play, but a few minutes in, Dick started to get sleepy. No, not just sleepy, but barely able to keep his eyes open. His vision became blurry, and things began going dark.

"Helena…" he muttered, "I… I…"

She glanced at him. "Oh, that was fast."

"Fast…? What was…?" His gaze landed on the soda she had given him. It had already been opened when she handed it to him. "Did you just…?"

She giggled and folded her hands together apologetically. "Sorry, Dick. I'm tired of being cooped up. I'll make it up to you. Promise. Don't worry, it won't last long."
"Helena… you…"

It was all he was able to get out before he passed out. There were no dreams, and when he awoke some time later, he had no idea how much time had gone by. There was a bit of grogginess and disorientation, but he was soon back on his feet.

"That little brat," he grumbled, rubbing his head. "I can't believe she actually drugged me."

No, he could. As he was constantly being reminded, she was her mother's daughter. Selina had used many tricks to get her way, and she undoubtedly taught her daughter everything she knew.

"That's the last time I let my guard down around her. Make it up to me my ass." Then he remembered what she said about being tired of being cooped up. "Oh, hell."

He glanced at the timer on the DVD player, determining how long it had been since he had passed about. He estimated about an hour. She was long gone by now. He needed to go find her before her parents came back. And for that, he would need help.

Pulling out his cell phone, he made a call to Katherine, aka Batwoman, Luke Fox, aka Batwing, and Barbara Gordon, aka Batgirl, explaining the situation to them. They agreed to offer their assistance, and he hung up. There was one other person he needed to recruit, though he hated having to ask him. Regardless, he needed as many people as he could get out there searching before her parents came home, so he marched up to Damian's room.

Opening the door without knocking, he marched right in. "Damian, we've got a problem…"

As it turned out, the problem was even bigger than he realized, for Damian's room was empty. Not only that, but the window was wide open, the night breeze blowing the curtains.

A frustrated groan escaped Dick. "Bruce and Selina are gonna kill me."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: So, we got to see Catwoman in action before Superman and Wonder Woman came to save the day. Now it's time to find out what Luthor is up to. Is he the one they're searching for? Even if he isn't, you know he's up to no good. And speaking of being up to something, just where are Helena and Damian going, and will Dick or the others be able to find them before Bruce and Selina come home. One thing's for sure, Dick won't be letting his guard down around Helena again. But really, he should have known better considering who her mother is. Stay tuned for a fun-filled action-packed chapter. Hopefully, neither Helena or Damian will land themselves in too much trouble.)
Chapter Summary

(A/N: I've got some good news. I've decided to try and dedicate more time to this story due to how into it I'm getting. This means I'll be trying to update more frequently. My goal is now to update every Wednesday rather than every other Wednesday. If I don't post a new chapter one week, I'll definitely have it the following week like before. So look forward to new chapters either every Wednesday or every other Wednesday. This Wednesday, we'll be taking a look into Damian's mind and seeing things from his point of view and how he feels about everything that's happening in his life. Hopefully this will explain why he's behaving the way he is towards Helena and Selina somewhat.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Chapter 11: Playing Superhero

Robin was on the rooftops, keeping out of sight. He was really in the mood to pound some criminals to a pulp tonight. Anything would have been better than staying home and playing house with Grayson and her. The movie choices had been a nice touch in Grayson's part, but he wasn't falling for it.

Ever since Helena had shown up, he'd been training a lot more and a lot harder, unleashing his stress and frustration. Getting to take his aggravation out on criminal scum was a good outlet. That so-called mission to Amanda Waller's house had done nothing more than make him even more irritated. He didn't even get to beat up any guards. No, instead he had gotten stuck with his little sister, having to listen to her whine.

Robin grinded his teeth together. Just having her being around was frustrating. And he couldn't even vent his frustration, because she just threw it back in his face, countering with things he didn't want to hear. And she wouldn't leave him the hell alone! What was so hard for her to understand that he didn't want to have anything to do with her? In her constant attempts to bond with him, he just grew more frustrated, which caused her to inquire about his irritation, which resulted in an argument.

He just needed to get away for a while to clear his head. He thought about simply going back to Titan Tower, but that would just open a whole new can of worms since his father had insisted that he was needed here. The thought made him scowl. What was he needed for? He had a daughter now, one with unique and natural talent. What more, she was born of the woman his father had once held, still held, true affection for. Not like his mother.

Oh, there had been some affection for his mother, knew that, but not like his father had for Selina Kyle. That was one of the things that pissed him off so much. He had to look at Selina and Helena and constantly be reminded of how his sister was born from a union of genuine love, while his had come from trickery and deceit. And while Helena may have been an accident, he was simply a means to an end. The perfect heir to the League of Assassins, to be used and controlled by his mother and grandfather, made into a perfect puppet, and it pissed him off. And every time he had to
look at Helena and Selina, he was reminded of that fact.

A low growl escaped him, and he quickly suppressed it as he kept his eyes on the streets below. If there was indeed a crime about to be committed, these dark allies were an ideal location. Mugging, drug dealing, raping, murdering, it all went down in these small enclosed spaces where no one would see. No one but him that is, and he’d step in to stop it.

Something landed on the roof behind him and he whirled around, holding up a Batarang to throw. He froze as he saw one of the very people he was trying to get away from.

Raising her hand in greeting, Huntress gave him a smile. "Yo!"

He lowered his arm. "What are you doing here?"

She cocked her head to the side. "I could say the same for you."

"Answer my question. What are you doing here? Were you following me?"

She had a slightly mischievous smile on her face as she walked over to him. "Well, not at first. I snuck out to do some crime fighting of my own, then I sensed you nearby, so I came looking for you."

He raised an eyebrow. "You sensed me nearby?"

"Well, I sensed someone, and there aren't very many people hopping across rooftops at this time of night."

He humphed. "Whatever. Go find somewhere else. It's a big city, with no shortage of crime. I'm sure you can find some other scumbags to use your unique skills on."

He turned his back to her and jumped to the next rooftop. Though he was hoping for otherwise, he wasn't all that surprised when he heard her following him. He ignored her as he made his way across the rooftops, but quickly grew tired of this game of follow the leader.

"I thought I told you to go somewhere else."

She stubbornly crossed her arms. "You're not the boss of me."

His eyes narrowed. "Fine. You want to follow me? Just try."

He took off at a run. Huntress followed, managing to keep up. They came to an end of rooftops to run across, and Robin fired his grapple gun across the street, swinging to the other side. Huntress copied him, soaring out over the cars. She expected him to land on the other side, but instead he landed on top of a moving truck. She came down on top of a car, managing to remain on top even as the vehicle sped along, the driver inside glancing up curiously at the sound of the thud from her landing.

Crouching down in the standard superhero pose as she went along for the ride, her senses were telling her that she was being watched. Glancing to her left, she saw a boy about her age named Harry Sims staring at her from the backseat of his parents' car, his mouth hanging open in shock. Smirking, Huntress blew him a kiss before leaping off the moving car and landing on the one in front of her.

She continued jumping from car top to car top as she chased after her brother until she was only a few vehicles behind the truck he was on. Watching her progress, Robin smirked down at her
arrogantly and waved mockingly just before the truck turned a corner while the car Huntress was on kept going straight.

"Hey!" she cried objectively.

She quickly fired her grapple gun, hitting back of the truck. Jumping off the car, she pulled herself in towards the truck, landing against the back. She ran up its side and hopped onto the top.

"Not bad," Robin commented, legitimately impressed against his will.

Suddenly, he jumped off the truck. Grabbing hold of the length of a streetlight with both hands, he swung around like a professional gymnast before dropping down onto the sidewalk. Determine to one-up him, Huntress jumped after him, grabbing hold of the pole of another streetlight and spinning around until her feet hit the ground.

She ran after Robin, who had run down an alley, and she followed him, catching sight of his cape as he turned a corner. Firing his grapple gun again, he pulled himself up onto the roof. Huntress just smirked and improvised, kicking off the walls to make her way to the top.

When she reached the top, she caught sight of her brother crouching down on the other side of the roof. She walked over to him curiously. "Is the game over?"

He looked up at her, pressing a finger to his lips. "Shh!"

She blinked in surprise and looked over the side into yet another dark alley. This one wasn't so dark though. It was illuminated by the glow of a fire burning in a garbage can. Five lowlifes were smoking, drinking, and laugh around it, exactly the kind of scum they usually had to stop from performing some time of crime.

"Ah, possible candidates," Huntress remarked. "Guess the fun is over and it's time for work." She smirked and cracked her knuckles. "Then again, this can be kind of fun too."

Robin's eyes narrowed down at the men below. "This isn't fun for fun. This is something that needs to be done."

Her expression became more serious. "You think I don't know that? I'm not stupid. But if you don't learn to have fun with it, then you'll end up getting a very dark outlook on life. All this crime and evil that we fight, it'll start to get to you, turn you into something dark. That's why it's important to have some fun with it." She gave him a knowing look. "Come on, you do have to admit that it's a bit of a rush."

Yes, he could admit that, just not to her; he'd die before admitting she was right. "If you wanted to have fun, you should have stayed with Grayson." Now he gave her a curious look. "How'd you get away from him anyway?"

"Oh, I snuck something in his drink. He should be awake by now though."

Robin turned away, hiding the smirk that crept up his face. She had surprised him with her answer, and in a good way. What he would give to have seen the look on Grayson's face when he realized she had pulled a fast one on him.

The smile soon left his face as a couple walked past the alley, drawing the attention of the five men. One of them whispered to the others, who nodded in agreement, and began following the couple.

"Time to move," he told her.
Keeping watch from up above, they watched the five men follow the couple. The man and woman soon became conscious of the fact that they were being followed and sped up their pace. The men called mockingly after them, using some rather offensive words in reference to the woman.

The couple eventually broke out into a run, and the five men hurried after them, gaining ground. Upon realizing that they wouldn't be able to outrun their pursuers, the man turned to face them, shielding the woman with his body. The five men surrounded them, continuing with the taunts. Two lunged forward, grabbing the woman, who screamed and clung to her boyfriend. He turned to try and fight them off, and two more grabbed him, pulling the couple apart.

Robin stared at the scene in disgust as the last man pulled out a knife and waved it in front of the boyfriend's face. "These scum are a cancer of society."

Without hesitation, he jumped off the roof, dropping down to land on the head of the man with the knife. Before the two thugs holding the boyfriend could react, he jumped up and punched one in the gut, causing him to double over, then kicked him in the head while he was down.

Releasing the boyfriend, the third man raised the tire iron he was carrying, and swung it at Robin. The Boy Wonder pulled out his sword and blocked with it before delivering an uppercut to the man's lower jaw. He then dropped down, sliding between his legs, spun around, and kicked them out from under him.

"What the hell?" cried one of the men holding the woman. He raised a gun at Robin, but Huntress suddenly dropped down in front of him. Grabbing his arm, she forced the gun away from her brother as it went off, then kicked him in the kneecap. As he fell forward, she kept hold of his arm, using the leverage of his fall to flip him over onto his back.

She turned to the last thug, who released the woman, and pulled out a knife. Huntress just smirked as Robin came up beside her. The man stared at them in disbelief, holding his knife out threateningly. "What is this? You're just some punk kids."

"By all means," said Robin, "try and use that on us. Maybe you'll fare better than your friends."

The thug hesitated, debating whether or not he should. But he recognized the boy's costume. Everyone in Gotham knew of Batman's protégé. The girl though, he had no idea who she was, but from the moves she had just displayed, she was very good as well.

Cutting his losses, he turned and ran. Huntress shook her head in disappointment and reached for her belt. "Too bad." She glanced at the couple. "You two should get out of here too."

Taking her advice, the couple fled, but Huntress had already put them out of mind. Spinning around the bolas she held, she flung them at the fleeing thug, and they wrapped around his feet, causing him to topple over. The two walked up to the fallen man, who rolled over and threw his knife at Robin. Huntress hand flew out, grabbing the knife before it could hit her brother. Robin's eyes widened in surprise, knowing that the knife actually would have hit him had it not been for her. He ignored the smirk on her face though as he glared at the man.

"So you like hurting people?" he growled. Grabbing the man's arm, he twisted it the wrong way. "Let's see how you like it."

Huntress winced at the popping sound she heard as the man's arm was dislocated. He began screaming as he pulled his arm free of the boy's grasp, clutching it to himself. Robin just looked down at him in disgust. "Suck it up. They'll pop it back into place for you and you'll be fine in about a week. It won't even leave a mark." His eyes narrowed. "I'm sure that's more than you can say for
the people you've hurt before."

"Harsh, bro." Huntress commented.

Robin stepped back, not taking his eyes off the man. "I could have done worse, much worse. I'm sure he has. But that's what separates us from them. Justice, not vengeance."

Several feet behind them, one of the thugs had regained consciousness. Picking up the gun, they took aim. "You little bastards…"

The gun was suddenly kicked from his hand. A gloved fist grabbed him by the shirt and lifted him up before delivering a punch, sending him crashing into a couple of garbage cans.

Without even turning around, Huntress smirked. "Hello, Nightwing. You got here faster than I expected."

"And just in time too," he growled, his voice dripping with irritation.

She just chuckled. "Nah, I sensed him, but I knew you were there too."

"You shouldn't take chances like that, and that includes sneaking out in the first place. Both of you. What the hell were you two thinking? I had Batgirl, Batwoman, and Batwing out looking for you too. Poor Luke and Barbara even left in the middle of their date."

"Chill out, Grayson," Robin snapped. "It's not like this is the first time I've gone out." He motioned to Huntress. "And apparently this isn't the first time she's been out either."

Nightwing glared at him. "That's besides the point. You're father put me in charge."

"That's not my problem."

"No, it's mine, and I'm going to make sure it doesn't happen again. And you," he turned to Huntress, "I can't believe you drugged me."

She grinned innocently. "I did apologize."

Eyes narrowing, he slammed his fist against the wall. "That doesn't make it better."

"Better to ask for forgiveness than permission."

He wasn't in the mood for this. "In case you've forgotten, there are people after you. Just how long do you think it will be before they find out you're hear if you're out fighting crime. That's the part of the reason why we do this. We make it known that we're out there so criminals would be less inclined to…" He trailed off and pinched the bridge of his nose. "You know what, never mind. Lets just go back before your father comes down on all three of us."

He fired his grapple gun into the air. Robin reluctantly followed after him, as did Huntress, though she had a smile on her face. Despite whatever repercussions came from sneaking out, she felt like she had made some progress with her brother, and that was well worth it.

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"How was it?" he asked, praying Bruce hadn't somehow found out what had happened.

Bruce sighed. "A little more exciting than I thought it would be. How were the kids? Did they cause too much trouble?"

That was an understatement, but Dick kept his expression neutral. "Nothing more than usual. We watched a few movies, had some snacks, then I sent them to bed. How about you? You get what you were looking for?"

Selina smirked, holding up the miniature laptop "Catwoman always gets her prize. Well," she glanced at Bruce, "except for when a certain bat interferes."

Bruce took the device from her. "I'll go through the data tomorrow and see if I can find anything. Hopefully, we'll be able to determine if Luthor is the one after Helena or not."

"Well, good luck with that," Dick told him. He got to his feet, stretching. "As for me, I'm hitting the hay."

Bruce raised a suspicious eyebrow as the younger man walked past him. "Why were you up so late anyway?"

"Sherlock Holmes," Dick replied, tossing him the book he had been reading. "I couldn't put it down. Night."

Glancing at the book, Bruce noted the length and determined that at the speed in which Dick was able to read, it shouldn't have taken him this long to finish it. Either he had started reading it really late, or something else had been occupying his time and the book was just a cover. Did he even want to know the truth?

Smiling, Selina plucked the book from Bruce's hands, looking at the title. "Oh, A Scandal in Bohemia. Wasn't this the one with Holmes' love interest?"

Bruce was pulled out of his thoughts. "What? Oh, um, yes, it was. The opera singer, Irene Adler."

She playfully waved the book around. "She and I have a few things in common. We both have a thing for detectives, and we both managed to outwit said detective." Dropping the book onto the armchair, she reached up and tugged on Bruce's tie, pulling him towards her. "But the difference between you and Holmes is, he didn't get the girl in the end."

She kissed him, hard. Bruce was surprised as memories from years ago came back. He returned her kiss, reaching up to cup her face, and Selina wrapped her arms around him. Neither noticed as Alfred began to enter the room to ask if they needed anything before making a complete 180 and exiting right away.

Breaking the kiss, Bruce rested his forehead against hers. "This sure takes me back."

She purred like the cat her suit was designed after. "You're not the only one. I really missed this. Pulling a heist like this always gets me so excited. It really puts this kitty in heat." She placed her lips to ear. "So, my room or yours?"

Bruce chuckled. "You haven't changed at all. But we should really get some sleep. We've got a lot of data to go through tomorrow."

Smiling seductively, she trailed her finger up his chest, undoing the buttons along the way. "We can sleep later. We've got 11 years of catching up to do in other areas. Besides, it's important to get rid of
your stress to remain in good form." She pressed up against him. "And this is a very good way of getting rid of stress." Her smile widened. "Besides, you looked so good tonight in that suit, I just wanted to eat you up."

He had looked good tonight? Had she seen herself? Everyone else certainly had. That dress she was in had heads turning wherever she went.

Giggling, she gave his tie a tug, pulling him after her as she headed for the door. "Come on. You can see what it's like with me as a blonde."

A smile crept up his face. "You are very persuasive."

"So I've been told."

"Well, who am I to take away a cat's toy?"

Her eyes danced mischievously at his words. "Speaking of toys, did you know that they actually make Batman vibrators?" She chuckled at the look on his face; she'd actually made Bruce Wayne blush! "Of course, they've got nothing on the real thing. Now lets go. It's time for you to make this kitty purr."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: I'll leave the next part up to your imagination. I'm sure it's not that hard to figure out; Selina is not shy about saying what she wants. But it seems that despite everything that happened, the night was a success, and they got what they wanted, in more ways than one. *Cough* It also looks like Helena and Damian bonded a bit during their night out. At least she's managed to earn his respect somewhat. Now Helena's got to make it up to Dick for her escape. Seems it was worth it though. But the real question is, is Lex Luthor the one after Helena, or is he just another dead end? Much more to come. Oh, and if you don't know who Harry Sims, the boy Huntress blew a kiss to, is supposed to be, he's one of her main love interests in the comics. I thought it'd be cute to throw that little reference in there.)
The Problem With the Press

Chapter Notes

(A/N: Alright, I said I'd be updating more often, and here we go. This chapter turned out to be shorter than I intended, but I think I got across everything I wanted to cover. So far, Catwoman has managed to remain in the shadows, but after her grand appearance at LexCorp, she pretty much announced to the world that she's back. What will the consequences of those actions be? And what of Luthor? Is he the one after Helena? And if not, where do Bruce and Selina go from here? Let's find out.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 12: The Problem With the Press

Selina swore loudly as she threw her phone onto the couch, the only thing preventing it from shattering to pieces. Having just looked up something on it, she saw exactly what she had hoped she wouldn't see. Her picture as Catwoman in the *Daily Planet* for the Metropolis newspaper from two days ago. Of course, Superman and Wonder Woman saving the day had been the cover page, but she was mentioned as well.

"That bitch," she seethed, slamming her fist against the wall, "anything for a story."

Snatching her phone again, she headed for the Batcave, where Bruce had spent the last several hours going through the files she had stolen from Luthor. Something needed to be done about this. Now everyone would know that Catwoman was at large again.

True, there had been sightings of both her and Huntress over the years, but never any concrete proof like the photos Lois Lane had managed to obtain. It didn't matter that she had saved the lives of all those people that night, her resurfacing was now known to the general public, even though that was the last thing she wanted.

"No good deed goes unpunished," she grumbled, not noticing her daughter as she passed by.

Helena looked up from her book. "What's that, Mom?"

She forced a smile on her face. "Nothing, sweetie. Go back to your book. I just need to talk to your father."

She found him right where she last saw him, on his super computer in the Batcave, going through Luthor's files. The man was certainly dedicated to his work, that was for sure. She adored that about him, but she wished he would take a break every now and then, when the work he was doing didn't involve the safety of their daughter that is.

"Anything?" she asked, coming up behind him.

He didn't even take his eyes off the screen. "Nothing to go on. Luthor's definitely doing illegal activity, not to mention making plans for something big that have nothing to do with his perpetual energy project, but nothing that would suggest he's after Helena."
Selina didn’t know if that was good news or bad news. On the one hand, she was glad that a mad genius like Lex Luthor wasn’t the one after her daughter, but on the other hand, it meant that they had to keep up the search for whoever it was that was after her.

"Keeping her safe might become even harder now. Have you seen the Metropolis papers lately?"

"I’ve been a little busy."

Sighing, she brought up the news article on her phone again. "I got a little concerned after making myself known at LexCorp with Lois Lane there, so I did a quick search online. Seems like my fears were justified. Look."

She held the phone out to him. He looked away from the computer and took the phone. A news article written two days ago titled THE CAT RETURNS: Catwoman Appears In Metropolis with a picture of Catwoman taking out one of the eco-terrorists was on the screen. Bruce frowned at the phone, mentally kicking himself for not thinking about this sooner, but his concern had been on finding Helena’s pursuers.

"Now whoever is after Helena will know that I was in Metropolis," Selina complained. "It won't take them long to figure out we're in Gotham."

"There's a good chance," he reluctantly agreed. "We'll have to be extra careful when going out with her." He hesitated a moment. "Or maybe we shouldn't let her go out at all."

Selina frowned. "She's not going to like that."

"Hmm." Bruce considered this new development. He knew she was right. Now that it was confirmed that Catwoman was indeed back, and seen in Metropolis, it wouldn't be long before whoever was after Helena would think to search for her in Gotham. Something needed to be done.

Handing her back her phone he took out his own. "I know a guy who might be able to help."

Selina chuckled humorlessly. "You know everyone. Who is it?"

"You met him actually, the night we were at LexCorp."

She seemed confused at first, but then her eyes widened in shock. "Wait, you don't mean…?"

He gave her a cocky smile as the phone began ringing.

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The couple walked up to the hostess. In their everyday street clothes, no one recognized them for who they were, despite the simplicity of their so-called disguises. It was a simple concept, allowing them to hide in plain sight without even trying.

"Clark Kent," the man said, "Reservation for two."

The hostess looked at her clipboard and gave the two a smile. "Oh, yes, Mr. Kent. This way, please."

Clark smiled. "Thank you, ma'am." He offered his arm to his companion. "Miss Prince."

Diana chuckled and hooked her arm with his. "Such a gentleman."

They followed the hostess to their table, taking a seat beside the window. The hostess handed each
of them a menu as they sat across from each other. "Your waiter will be with you momentarily. Have a good meal."

"Thank you," replied Clark.

"Yes," said Diana, with perhaps a little too much enthusiasm, "your services are most appreciated. May the gods bless your place of work."

The hostess seemed a little taken aback and gave her an uncertain smile. "Um, yes, you too."

Clark smiled and rested his chin on his folded hands as the hostess returned to her post. "You're certainly in a good mood."

Diana adjusted her glasses. "We've been so busy lately. It has been a while since our last date."

He chuckled. "It goes with the job. A hero's work is never done. And we're superheroes."

"Yes, but as rewarding as it is, and as much as I enjoy battle, it is nice to have some time off."

"I'm sure Green Lantern and Flash can handle anything that happens, but they have our number in case it gets to be too much for them."

That is considering their ego and pride didn't get in the way of them making that call. As effective as they were as superheroes, Hal Jordon, aka Green Lantern, and Barry Allen, aka the Flash, were rather immature at times. Then there was Shazam, or Captain Marvel as the public called him, but he was even more childish than the other two, literally.

A small frown crossed Diana's face. "Speaking of Hal, how's the search for his girlfriend going? What was her name again?"

"Carol Ferris. He's still trying to find the Zamarons' location, but he says that the Guardians have a way to break the spell she's under. The Star Sapphires are offering their support; she is a member of their Corp after all." Deciding a change of topic was in order, he reached out and placed his hand over hers. "But let's not worry about any of that right now. Tonight is about you and me. No superhero talk."

She gave him a smile. "I like the sound of that. Hades himself shall not ruin our evening."

She was right about that. It wasn't Hades, but a fellow Justice League member calling Clark's phone who proved to be the one to interfere with their date. Ordinarily, he would ignore any calls, but the ringtone separated this one from any of the others, and Diana recognized it as well.

"Is that...?" she asked.

He unnecessarily looked at his phone. A blocked name and number was on the screen, but this particular number had a specific ringtone so he would know who was calling. "Yeah, it's him."

He gave her a questioning look, and Diana sighed. When Batman called, you answered. Period. "Best to see what he wants."

Clark reluctantly agreed, and answered the call. "Bruce, good to hear from you. No offense, but you kind of interrupted our date. Is this important?"

"I wouldn't be calling if it wasn't. Have you seen the Daily Planet in the past two days?"

The question was meant to be rhetorical, but he answered all the same. "Considering I work there,
"Then you're aware of your friend Lois' article on Catwoman from that night at LexCorp."

Yes, Clark had been curious about that. Even though he had let her get away that night since she was performing a hero's duty, he had been wondering why the leather-clad woman was there to begin with. And when he saw Bruce there, he had put two and two together, and decided that whatever they were planning either didn't concern him, or would be explained in time. Was this the time?

"Are you going to tell me the real reason why you were at LexCorp?" He saw that Diana was paying close attention; she too had had the same questions about that night as him.

"Not just yet. There's still some things I need to work on. I'm calling on behalf of Catwoman."

"So you two are working together. I'm assuming it's not for old time's sake."

"Not entirely. There are some really bad people after her and... a friend of hers. They came to me for help. We had reason to believe that Luthor may have been behind it, so we made a copy of his personal files."

How did he manage to accomplish that? Did he even want to know? Whatever he did, it was undoubtedly successful; Batman knew his stuff. "And? Did you find anything?"

"Nothing that would suggest Luthor is the culprit. All the same, Lois' article is going to cause some complications. Whoever's after her will eventually figure out that she's in Gotham."

"Tell that scavenger that there are more important things than a story!" came Selina's voice in the background.

Clark frowned. While it was true that Lois was... ambitious, she was a good person. All the same, her desire for a scoop did tend to cause problems from time to time. "I'm sorry for the trouble, but I'm not sure what you want me to do about it."

"Just keep a lookout," Bruce told him, more like ordered him. A normal human, with no powers whatsoever, giving the strongest man on the planet, an order like he was nothing. "Whoever is after her will most likely search for her in Metropolis once they see the article. Contact me if you see anything."

The guy sure was bossy. Was he even the leader of the Justice League, or did he just act like it? Clark certainly didn't remember having a vote. All the same, the guy was usually right... all the time. "I'll keep an eye out."

"Appreciate it. Oh, and one more thing. You might want to keep an eye on Luthor too. According to these files, he's working on something called project DOOMSDAY. I'm not sure what it is, but it doesn't sound good."

Nothing involving Lex Luthor ever was. "I'll do that. Thanks for the heads up."

"Keep me in the loop on whatever you learn. And enjoy your date. Tell Diana I said hi."

And just like that, he hung up. Clark was somewhat taken aback, but hey, that was Batman for you. The guy didn't beat around the bush. It was a rather annoying really; Green Lantern thought so anyway.

Putting away his phone, he looked up into the questioning face of Diana. "Well, what did he want?"
Deciding it could wait, he just gave her a smile. "Nothing we need to worry about right now. Remember, no hero talk today." He picked up his menu. "So, any idea of what you want?"

Diana looked back at her menu, her face scrunching up in confusion. "What is this… spa-ghet-ti?"

Clark burst out laughing.

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Bruce put his phone away and glanced at Selina. "He'll keep me informed if he finds anything."

She shook her head, chuckling. "Only you would talk to Superman that way." Leaning against the massive computer, she looked thoughtfully at the roof of the cave. "Speaking of which, did you even need to call him? Couldn't he have just heard you talking from here? The guy can hear across the galaxy, can't he?"

"Only if he's paying attention. He needs to focus on one specific sound to hear it among all the others." He went back to his computer. "Despite what some people may think, he's not some all powerful, all knowing, omnipotent god."

Selina smirked. "No, that's his girlfriend. Well, goddess."

"Demigoddess," Bruce corrected. "And even her powers have their limits."

She sighed humorously. "The alien with unlimited strength and the Amazonian demigoddess. Quite a pair. I'll bet the earth literally moves when they do it." She chuckled. "Can you imagine what there kids would be like?"

Bruce's eyes narrowed slightly. Yes, he had. Any offspring of Superman and Wonder Woman would be incredibly powerful, perhaps even more powerful than their parents. Though he always hoped for the best, he was also prepared for the first, like if Superman ever turned on humanity. Hence the reason why he always carried around Kryptonite, and had plans to take out the other members of the Justice League if they ever turned. But there was no preparing for what may or may not come if those two did have children who decided to destroy rather than protect.

"Hey," said Selina with a thoughtful smile, "what do you think their kids would call themselves? How about… Supergirl for a daughter, and Hyperm for a son?"

He raised an eyebrow at the second one. "Not Superboy?"

"Just so the 'Super' name doesn't become redundant."

He chuckled at that. "I'll suggest that if it ever happens."

She crossed her arms, looking thoughtful. "There is something I wonder about though. You, me, and the rest of the Justice League all have masks and stuff to hide our identities, but Superman and Wonder Woman don't. How do they keep people from recognizing them when they're not being heroes?"

"It's a fairly simple concept. People look at heroes like them as almighty, perfect beings capable of anything. So when Superman goes out as Clark Kent, he portrays himself as weak, cowardly, unsure of himself, slouching his shoulders, wearing glasses, flawed. People see that, and they don't recognize the great hero someone like Superman is in someone as flawed as him, a mere human, despite similar appearances. It allows him to hide in plan sight. The same goes for Wonder Woman when she goes out as Diana Prince."
Selina smirked. "I see. The best place to hide a tree is in the woods."

"Something like that."

"But us, we're just simple humans, so we need to wear the masks, even if those are our true faces." She placing her hands on his chair's armrest, leaning in close. "But that's ok, I think you look very appealing in your bat suit." Her finger ran up his chest. "And I know you enjoy my Catwoman look."

He grasped her hand. "Not now, Selina."

She pouted. "Oh, why not? This kitty has an itch she needs scratched. You certainly enjoyed it two nights ago."

He glared at her. "I'm trying to find out who's after our daughter."

All playfulness disappeared, and she placed her hands on her hips. "I am too." She gestured to the computer. "And clearly, from these files, it's not Luthor, so shouldn't we be out there searching some more?"

His attention returned to the computer. "I'm still not fully convinced Luthor isn't behind this, though it doesn't see to be the case. And this DOOMSDAY project worries me. It could be a threat to the planet."

"To hell with the planet!" Selina suddenly shouted, all her frustration coming out. "Our daughter is in danger, and now whatever freak is after her has a way to trace her back to Gotham thanks to Lane's article!" Sighing, she pinched the bridge of her nose. "Maybe we should leave."

"No!" Bruce said loudly, surprising even himself. He quickly regained his composure. "Even if they figure out you're here, this is still the safest place for her. People know that Batman is in Gotham too, but have not managed to find me, or anyone else."

Selina consider this. That much was true. Everyone knew that Batman, Robin, Nightwing, Batgirl, Batwoman, and Batwing were in Gotham, yet even after all these years, have never found their base of operation. Yes, perhaps Wayne Manor was still the safest place, even if the ones after Helena figured out she was in Gotham.

Still, Bruce's outburst had surprised her a bit. The man prided himself on always keeping his cool, but he seemed to have lost it for a moment there when she suggested leaving. Did he not want to lose them? She had to admit, she liked the thought of that. Despite his attempts to distance himself from people, Bruce Wayne did care for others and had feelings, no matter how hard he tried to hide them.

Besides that, she didn't want to separate father and daughter, especially after they finally got to meet each other after all these years. And, truthfully, she didn't want to leave either, even though she knew that she might have to one day.

"Fine," she said. "You're right, it's safer for her here. But we'll have to take safer precautions."

"Agreed. For now, I'm thinking no more letting her come out patrolling with us."

Selina sighed in resignation. "Yes, I think that would be best." She chuckled humorlessly. "Helena is not going to like this."

Bruce had to agree. As different as Helena was from Damian, he didn't think she'd take being confined to the mansion any better than her brother did.
The boss was calling, and he had a feeling he knew why. They still didn't have the girl, and they hadn't had any luck in finding her for over two weeks now. Both Catwoman and Huntress had simply disappeared. How could that be; they had been so close. But after the last night they had confronted them, when the little brat had sent him crashing through the roof, there hadn't been any sign of them.

That girl was seriously getting on his nerves. No, she was beyond on his nerves. At this point, he'd rather just kill her. He would if his employer wasn't paying him so much. The money was the only thing keeping her alive right now. This thing between him, the girl, and her mother was personal.

At least he would be able to choke the life out of Catwoman. The girl though, she was not to be touched. It was a shame, because she was the one he really wanted to kill. Chasing her these past several months had presented no end to the grief and frustration she had caused. Even if his employer decided to cease the pursuit, he would not, just for the satisfaction of killing the brat.

His phone rang again, and he glanced at it. The number was private, but he knew who it was, and he wasn't foolish enough to ignore it. "Yeah?"

"How goes the search, my boy? Any progress on tracking down the girl?"

The big man ground his teeth together. "Nothing. The bitches just disappeared. We've got nothing."

"Really? Have you considered the fact that they may have left the city? It's a big world out there. Perhaps they've moved on after their hiding place was compromised."

Yes, he had considered that. But if Selina Kyle disappeared, no one would be able to find her unless she resurfaced as her Catwoman persona again. The same could be said for her daughter, who she would never allow to leave her side.

"If she did, I don't see what we could do about it. Our resources are limited, even for you. If she doesn't want to be found, she won't be found."

There was silence on the other end of the line as his employer thought about this. "That is true. However, knowing what I know about Miss Kyle, she would rather get rid of the problem and be free of it rather than hide from it indefinitely. Not just because it's in her nature, but also for her daughter's sake." He chuckled. "Despite that, it seems that our little cat hasn't disappeared completely after all. When was the last time you looked at a newspaper?"

The man's eyebrows rose. "A newspaper? Um, this morning, why?"

"I like to keep track of the places metahumans are known to be found in, and the news is always reporting on what their heroes have done. A few days ago, I was looking at the Daily Planet in Metropolis, and you'll never guess who's picture was in it."

"Uh… Superman's."

His boss snickered. "Well, that much is true, but so was someone else's. A certain feline's, if you catch my drift."

The man's eyes widened in surprise. "They're in Metropolis?"

"Well, they were a few days ago. At least Catwoman was, but it's safe to say that her daughter was with her. Now, why do you think she went to Metropolis?"
Scratching his head, the man considered this. "For protection. Possibly from the big man himself. Or maybe the entire Justice League."

"A sound theory. Especially if she found out who you are, my friend. Let's go with the belief that she did seek the Justice League's aid. But one doesn't simply walk up to Superman, or any members of the Justice League. How would she even know how to find them? The Hall of Justice is more for show than anything, each hero staying in their own city and only meeting when they need to. So, how would she be able to meet with them? Very few people would be able to get in contact with them. The president, other government officials. But who else? Who would be able to contact a member of the Justice League? Think carefully."

His fist clenched. He hated it when his employer played games like this. His boss was a genius, but did he have to rub his intellect in his face like this? "Who else? Let's see? Um… I suppose another member of the Justice League."

"Correct. Now tell me, which member of the Justice League does Catwoman know personally?"

It clicked, and he understood what his employer was getting at. "Batman!"

"Very good. Now, one last question. If Huntress is with her mother, and Catwoman is with Batman, then where would the three of them most likely be?"

A sadistic grin crept up his face. "Gotham City."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Uh oh, it seems Selina's fears have been confirmed. Their pursuer is now on his way to Gotham. But who he is still remains a mystery, as who the identity of his employer. Unfortunately, Luthor was a dead end as well, but at least Bruce was able to give Superman a heads up about project DOOMSDAY, which I'm sure you can all guess what that is. That is NOT meant to indicate that what happened in the New 52 comics will happen here; it was just a reference {I still can't believe they ended it like that}. I also threw in a reference to Superman and Wonder Woman's son from Earth-22, Jonathan Kent, aka Hyperman from The Kingdom series, and from Earth-31, Lara Kent, aka Supergirl {no, not Kara} from The Dark Knight Strikes Again series. I had Catwoman mention them in this chapter as a reference/hint for the future, much like I did with Nightstar in Chapter 5. I'm pretty much indicating the direction I'm taking things in. By the way, I had a fan ask me about my opinion on Superman and Wonder Woman as a couple, so I posted my thoughts on them vs. Superman/Lois {see below}. Speaking of couples, it seems that Bruce and Selina are officially a thing again, for now anyway, you know how they can be. Now we need to work on continuing to build up a relationship with Damian and Helena. I know not much happened in this chapter, but the next one will be better.)

In comparison, I think Superman/Wonder Woman work much better. I mean, an amazonian demigoddess and a god-like alien being, how is that not, like, the coolest thing ever? Nothing against Superman/Lois Lane, but as far as I'm concerned, Lois just can't match up to Wonder Woman. One of my biggest hang ups about Superman/Lois is the whole damsel in distress thing. It's been done to death. All Lois seems to do is get herself in trouble, forcing Superman to save her over and over again. But
Superman/Wonder Woman brings a whole level of uniqueness. I get that Lois keeps
Superman humble and anchors his humanity, but Wonder Woman does that too in her
own way, as does he with her. Both Superman and Wonder Woman can also make the
other strive to be all they can be. They don't need to hide or hold back who or what they
are with each other like Superman needs to with Lois, and Superman doesn't need to
constantly worry about Wonder Woman's safety; she can handle herself and then some.
I know Lois has been around since the beginning, but like I said, the hero/damsel in
distress has been done to death. Besides, I'm pretty much over Lois at his point. And
there are times where she treats Clark with contempt while she's all over Superman.
That feels like a real insult to his character. Superman and Wonder Woman even have
children together in some universes/timelines/realities. Supergirl, who's a total badass,
and Hyperman, who can travel through time and hyperspace. I know Superman and
Lois have had children in a few universes too, like Lara-Lane, but they're basically just
another Superman/girl. Boring. But an alien/amazonian demigoddess hybrid, now
THAT'S a hero. Ah, I'm rambling again. I don't know if anyone's still even reading this
Author's Note, so I'll just end it now. See you next time.)
(A/N: Welcome back everyone. Before we get started, I feel the need to clarify something. I feel like last chapter, I may have come across as bashing Lois Lane. That was NOT my intention. I LIKE Lois. Having her report on Catwoman was a tribute to her character. Selina was just understandably upset by her exposure. Now more drastic measures are going to be taken to keep Helena hidden, and she's not going to be happy about it. Now, what do you suppose a rebellious ten year old girl that takes after her mother would do in a situation like this? That was a rhetorical question.)

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

Chapter 13: Hostage Situation

"But this isn't fair!" Helena raged. "I'm part of this family, I should get to help!"

Selina sighed. She couldn't blame her for being upset. The girl had been trapped inside the mansion for the better part of three weeks now, ever since Catwoman's picture had appeared in the Daily Planet. True, the mansion was enormous, but still, she must have been getting cabin fever by now.

"I'm sorry, sweetie. I know it's tough, but we don't want anyone to-"

"Don't give me that!" she shouted, pulling at her hair. "I get it, if they figured out we're here, then I'm in danger. But they don't know for sure."

Pulling on his Batman mask, Bruce spoke. "You're right, they don't know for sure. Which is why you need to stay hidden."

Helena pointed at her mother, now in complete Catwoman costume. "Then shouldn't she stay hidden too? How come she gets to go, but I have to stay?"

Placing her hands on her hips, Catwoman gave her daughter a stern look. "Because I'm not the one they're after. If you go out, there's the biggest risk that you'll get caught. And if your father or I end up getting captured, then at least you'll still be safe."

"Damn it! This sucks!" She kicked her father's chair in frustration.

Catwoman glared at her. "Watch your language, young lady."

Helena returned the glare and flopped herself down in the chair. "What are you going to do about it? Ground me?"

Damian, now dressed as Robin, couldn't help but smirk. "She's got a point."

Though things had improved somewhat between the two, Damian still remained hostile towards both his sister and her mother. Helena took what she could get though, and hoped that things would continue to improve, but her own sour attitude from being confined made her snappy, which didn't
go well with her brother's grumpiness.

As glad as he was to see his children getting along, or at least not being at each others' throats all the time like they were before, Bruce didn't want his son helping his sister out in this instance. "I don't want to hear any more about this. You're to stay in the mansion until your mother and I say otherwise. Is that understood?"

Grumbling, Helena leaned over the side of the chair, her head hanging over the armrest. "Yes, warden."

"Helena…"

"I heard you! I heard you! Geez."

Batman nodded. "Good. Behave for Alfred. We'll be back soon."

Catwoman waved to her. "Watch us on the news."

Rotating in her seat, Helena turned her attention to the computer screen. With a push of the button, she brought up the news. There was a report on about a hostage situation in progress, the ones responsible demanding that Batman come and face them. The Dark Knight, Catwoman, and Robin were answering the call while Nightwing had returned to Titan Tower a few days prior.

Helena sighed as she stared at the screen. "Say hello to the outside world for me. I'll just be here, wasting away."

Robin humphed as he climbed into the Batmobile. "Guess the Huntress is now the hunted."

There was that hostility that still remained. Helena flipped him the middle finger without even facing him, making her brother scowl. He let it go though as the other two climbed into the vehicle and the top came down. Helena turned around in the chair and watched as it sped off.

With a sigh, she slid back down in her seat. She went back to watching the news as the reporter went on and on about what was happening with the situation, asking where Batman was. Helena practically rolled her eyes. Criminals were always so predictable. Well, most were anyway. There weren't many that would actually demand Batman come, but she figured it was a display of power. Some idiot criminal probably wanted to make a name for themselves by taking out Batman, or face off against him to prove how big and bad they were.

"Dumbass," she commented, wondering who was fool enough to challenge her father.

"Such language is unbecoming for a lady."

Helena's frown deepened. "I'm not in the mood, Alfred. Life sucks enough with being a prisoner in my own home."

Alfred was at least pleased to hear that she considered Wayne Manor her home. "It is only temporary, Miss Helena. Your parents just want to make sure you're safe."

"I don't need safety, I need freedom!" she shouted, kicking her feet in the air. "Seriously, I'm going crazy here, Alfred! I need to get out for a bit!"

The butler sympathized with her, but all the same, the girl's safety was his top priority. He knew that deep down she understood that her parents were trying to keep her safe, but that didn't mean she had to like it. Children could be so rebellious at times.
"Would you care to watch upstairs?" he asked, hoping to coax her out of the cave.

Helena sighed and laid her head down on the computer, staring up at Alfred. "I'd rather just stay here." Her hand went to her stomach. "I am hungry though. Alfred, could you make dinner please?"

"But of course, Miss Helena. What would you like?"

"Whatever. Even cold cereal is fine."

Alfred raised an eyebrow in disapproval. "I'm sure we can do better than that. I'll make your favorite. Perhaps that will brighten your spirits."

Helena raised her hand, carelessly wobbling it back and forth. "Thanks, Alfred."

He turned to leave, but paused before heading up the stairs. "However, you will be dining at the dinner table."

"Fine, fine. Just call me when it's ready."

As the butler vanished up the stairs, Helena sighed and sat up. She watched the news for another minute or two before cracking her knuckles and hacked into her father's private files again. It seemed that, recently, he had neglected following some of the other criminal activity in favor of searching for whoever was after her and whatever Luthor was secretly planning.

Picking up where he left off with a specific case, she was able to piece together a few things that made her smirk. "Now this looks promising."

As Helena set to work in the batcave, Alfred was busy working in the kitchen. Soon enough, he had Helena's meal prepared and the table set, then went back down to the cave to fetch her.

"Miss Helena, your dinner is ready..." He trailed off as he found the cave empty, and a message on the computer screen that read *Sorry, Alfred.* The butler just sighed and hung his head. "Master Wayne is not going to like this."

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Police and cop cars were gathered around the restaurant where the hostage situation was being held. The scene was complete with news reporters and pedestrians watching and waiting to see what would happen. The men inside were getting impatient, demanding that Batman show up soon or hostages would begin to die.

Wielding a microphone, Commissioner James Gordon was attempting to speak with the leader of the group, who had occasionally poked his head out to scream his demands. "I assure you, Batman is coming. Please don't hurt the hostages!"

The door opened a crack, and the leader's voice rang out. "That all depends on the bat! He's got five minutes, then someone's blood is going to be on his hands!"

The commissioner lowered the microphone, grumbling under his breath as he looked to the sky, hoping to see the Dark Knight swinging from the buildings. The Bat Signal shined brightly in the sky in the distance, but neither Batman nor any of his comrades had yet to appear.

From behind Gordon, Harvey Bullock placed a hand on his shoulder. "We can't wait around for the bat anymore. We've got to do something."
"No!" Gordon snapped. "If we make a move, they'll kill the hostages."

"They're about to start doing that anyway! We should be negotiating for their release, not waiting for your pet bat to show up."

The commissioner rounded on him. "That's the problem! What they want is the Batman. They made that very clear."

Grinding his teeth, Bullock turned away. "Fine then. If anyone in there gets hurt, it's on him."

Gordon groaned, pinching the bridge of his nose in frustration as he wondered where Batman was.

In all actuality, Batman was already present. Crouching down at the top of a building, he looked through pair of binoculars at the scene. He couldn't make out any people inside, just blurry silhouettes. There was no way of knowing who these men were.

Well aware of the ticking clock, he pressed a finger to his earpiece. "Are you in position?"

A moment later, Catwoman's voice spoke in his ear. "Just about. You should be good to go."

"Excellent. Robin?"

"Standing by," his son replied, having snuck inside the restaurant without being notice. "It looks like eight armed men. I'm counting 26 hostages. There could be others hiding."

"Two minutes!" the leader shouted from the door.

Batman's eyes narrowed. "We're out of time. I'm going in."

Firing his grapple gun, he swung down to the scene below. He landed beside Bullock, who jumped at his sudden appearance. "Whoa! Hey, man, you gotta stop appearing out of the blue like that!"

The Dark Knight ignored him as Gordon came over to fill him in. "Batman, glad you could make it."

Bullock crossed his arms. "Cutting it kind of close, aren't you?"

Gordon ignored him as well. "No time to waste. Do you understand the situation?"

Batman nodded. "They want me."

He fearlessly marched towards the restaurant, no armor, no weapons of any kind aside from his utility belt. If the men inside decided to open fire on him, there was little he could do to defend himself, yet on he went.

Coming to the front door, he knocked. "You asked for me?"

Then was a moment of silence from the inside before the leader spoke. "Batman. That better be the real deal and not some copper playing dress up. If this is a trick, then a hostage dies."

He was serious; Batman could hear it in his voice. Whoever this was, he clearly had no issue with killing. That really made Batman's blood boil. He couldn't stand people with no regard for life. "No tricks. I'm here, just like you wanted."

More silence, and when the man spoken again, Batman could hear a smile in his voice. "The step inside, slowly."
Reaching out, Batman grabbed the door and pulled it open. Entering the restaurant, his eyes scanned the area. It was a place meant for the rich and fancy; he had come here himself as Bruce Wayne on a few occasions, but now it had been trashed.

The hostages were gathered in a corner where seven armed thugs stood. All weapons, however, were pointed at Batman rather than the hostages. Good, that would make things a little easier.

His eyes shifted to the door to the kitchen, from where Robin was hiding after he and Catwoman had snuck in. After climbing through the ventilation shaft on the outside, they had made their way through the restaurant, Robin coming out in the kitchen while Catwoman stayed in the walls. If she was positioned right, then she should be in the ceiling right now, right above the hostages and seven armed men.

But Robin had said that there were eight men. The eighth one, the leader, was standing separate from the others. He was a very large man, and looked very strong. He held a hostage in a headlock with a handgun pointed at their head.

When he saw that it was indeed Batman that walked through the door, he smiled. "So it is you. The big bad bat. So nice to meet you."

Batman's eyes narrowed. He would have to be very careful. "You wanted me, so here I am. So what do you want?"

The big man chuckled. "I just had a request."

"There are significantly much better ways to do that."

Another chuckle. "Perhaps," he cocked his gun, pressing it against his hostage's head, "but this way you know I mean business."

He found this funny. That meant that this man wasn't just willing to kill, he was almost eager for it, and likely enjoyed it. That made him all the more dangerous. "I understand."

"Good, that'll make this a lot easier. So let's get straight to it. There's someone I'm trying to find."

Interesting. That wasn't exactly what Batman had been expecting. "And I'm assuming the authorities weren't an option for you?"

The man sneered. "No, not for me. But even if they were, my quarry is very good at evading others. Fortunately, the person I'm searching for is an old friend of yours, and a much smaller companion."

The smallest widening of Batman's eyes was the only indication of what was going on in his head. Could it be that this man… was he the one pursuing Helena? He had known that there was a chance he would come to Gotham searching for her after Catwoman's return was printed in the Daily Planet, but he hadn't expected something like this.

The guy certainly fit Selina's description, now that he thought about it. If this was the man after his daughter, then he could deal with him here and now, and Helena would be safe. Just the thought of this brute going after his daughter made him want to…

His fists clenched. No, he had to remain calm. If he got emotional, he would become sloppy. "I know a lot of people. Perhaps if I had more information, I could get a better understanding of who you're looking for."

The gun moved from the hostage's head to point at Batman. "I'm not playing games here! You know
who I'm talking about! Where are Catwoman and her brat? I've been after those bitches for months! I know they're here! Now tell me where they are!"

Well that confirmed it; this was definitely the man after his daughter. He should rethink his strategy a bit. Once Catwoman entered the fight and recognized him, she might just try to kill him. But it was too late to alter the instructions he had given her without alerting this man to her presence, which would put the hostages in danger. He would just have to hope she wouldn't do anything rash, and step in if she did.

"What makes you think she's here?" he asked, stalling as he tried to work out an alternative plan.

The gun in the big man's hand went off. The bullet flew by Batman's head, but he didn't even flinch. He knew this man wouldn't kill him unless he had to; he needed him to find Helena. This was nothing but intimidation.

But the look on the big man's face was murder. "Don't play with me, Batso! I've had enough of this Hide-and-Seek, and the boss is getting impatient!"

"That's none of your damn business! All you gotta do is go get those two bitches from wherever you're hiding them and bring them here! Actually, we don't even need the cat, just bring the girl!"

The gun went back to the hostage's head. "Unless you want all these people dead, you've got one hour to hand her over! Do I make myself clear?"

No more time; he had to act. "Perfectly. I'll go now!"

He flung a Batarang. It struck the gun in the big man's hand, causing him to drop it. As the big man looked at his falling weapon in surprise, Batman charged at him and delivered an uppercut, causing him to stumble back and release his hostage. At the same time, Robin burst from the kitchen, throwing several smoke bombs. They exploded around the armed men and the hostages, covering everything in a thick cloud of smoke. No one would dare to shoot without being able to see.

Plaster rained down as Catwoman burst through the ceiling. She dropped down, right into the group of thugs, a pair of infrared goggles in place of her usual ones, allowing her to see her targets in the smoke.

Lashing out with her whip, she snagged one of the thugs around his ankles, pulling his feet out from under him. He hit the ground, but Catwoman was already on the move. Leaping at another, she did a handstand and wrapped her feet around his neck, then twisted her body to take him down. Sitting up, she punched another one in the gut, and when he doubled over, she used his momentum to lift him up and throw him away from her, and he came crashing down on a table.

Robin wasn't waiting around either. The moment he had thrown the smoke bombs, he had charged into the thick gray cloud. Also wearing a pair of infrared goggles, he slid across the ground, going through one of the thug's legs. Reaching up, he grabbed the man's shirt as he slid, the momentum pulling the man down and banging his chin on the ground. Robin then stood up and flipped backwards, landing hard on the thug's back.

Grabbing his sword, he pulled it out, and slammed the hilt into a nearby thug's abdomen, then chopped down hard on the back of his neck as he doubled over, and swung his sword, striking another on in the face with the flat end of the blade. Whirling around, both he and Catwoman attacked the seventh man at the same time. Catwoman kicked the man's knee with her metal heel,
causing him to drop down to Robin's level, allowing the Boy Wonder to deliver a punch to his face, possibly even breaking his nose.

Rubbing his jaw, the big man turned away from Batman and glanced at the cloud of smoke where the undeniable sound of a fight was heard. "What the hell is going on?"

"You should be worrying about me," Batman growled, before slamming his fist into the man's face once he glanced at him. Several more blows followed before the Dark Knight jumped up and kicked him in the chest. The big man went stumbling backwards, falling on top of a table, and it broke under his weight.

Batman turned away from the fallen man and looked at his companions. "How's the situation?"

The smoke was beginning to clear. Catwoman was standing over the defeated thugs while Robin sat on the back of the last one, placing a pair of handcuffs on him. Once they were on, he glanced at his father. "Hostiles are neutralized."

Batman nodded. "Well done."

Smirking, Catwoman reached up and pulled off the infrared goggles. "I'm feeling some real nostalgia here." Her gaze shifted from Batman to the big man slowly getting to his feet, and her face dropped. "You… It's you!"

Batman saw it coming. "Catwoman, wait!"

She lunged for the man, and Batman grabbed her. "I'll kill you, you son of a bitch!"

Once again on his feet, the big man sneered at her. "Hey there, kitty cat. Looks like Batman delivered after all."

Struggling in Batman's grip, she attempted to unleash her fury on the man that had been pursuing her and her daughter. "I've had enough of you! I'm done having you chase my daughter!"

Knowing that she just might kill the guy if he let her go, Batman turned his attention to his son. "Robin, take him down."

Pulling off his own infrared goggles, Robin glared at the big man. "With pleasure."

He charged at him. The big man threw a punch, needing to punch downward since he was so tall. Robin jumped up, flipping over his head, and spinning in the air to kick him in the head. Grunting, he backhanded the Boy Wonder, and Robin went flying towards a wall. He kicked off it, flying back towards the man, and slamming his elbow into his jaw. The big man went down again, and Robin stood over him, glaring down at him.

For a moment, it looked like it was over, but the big man suddenly lunged towards him. Robin jumped back to avoid his fist and threw a smoke bomb into his face. The big man coughed as he rose to his feet, and Robin jump kicked towards him, his foot colliding with the big man's gut.

The air was knocked out of the big man, but he recovered quickly and wrapped his arms around Robin. The Boy Wonder grunted and began struggling, but was unable to break his grip as the big man began crushing him in a powerful bear hug.

"Robin!" Batman cried.

His grip loosened slightly, and Catwoman used the opportunity to slam her head back into his face,
making him lose his grip further, then elbowed him in the gut. She broke out of his hold and charged at the big man. With his back to her and his arms crushing Robin to him, he was unaware that he was under attack.

Catwoman jumped up, delivering a roundhouse kick, the metal heel of her boot slamming into the big man’s head. Robin was released as the big man collapsed, and Catwoman hissed at him like her namesake, baring her claws.

Batman placed a hand on her shoulder, stopping her from attacking further. "That's enough. He's down."

"But not done for," she argued back. "He won't stop. He even followed us all the way here. Helena won't be safe as long as this big freak is around."

"He's not the one we want. It's whoever hired him. He can give us those answers."

Catwoman's teeth were clenched together tightly, and she looked like she wanted nothing more than to slash the big man's faces to ribbons, but she took a calming breath and lowered her fighting stance. "Fine, but when we find whoever is behind this, I'm dealing with them how I see fit."

Well, that was a start. At least she wouldn't be taking any lives… yet. "We'll talk about it later. For now, let's get some answers."

On the ground, the big man began to move. Not only that, he was chuckling as he started to get up. "So you want answers, is that it?" He turned back to them. "Well, you won't be getting any from me."

The looks on Batman, Catwoman, and Robin's faces became one of shocked horror. Even Batman was unable to hide his surprise, for the big man's face had become horribly distorted. A massive indentation from where Catwoman's metal heel had collided with his head had completely caved it, but it seemed as if he didn't even notice.

"What?" he demanded. "What are you looking at?" He reached up and felt his face, feeling the indentation and distortion. "Oh."

Robin stared at the big man in disgust. "What the hell are you?"

The big man just chuckled. "I guess the cat is out of the bag."

Before their very eyes he began to change. His entire body began to liquefy and turned a muddy brown color. His mass grew larger, his shape becoming less human, but still remaining humanoid in appearance, his upper body swelling to the point where he nearly had to slouch over. When the change was complete, he had gone from a large man, to a disfigured mud sculpture with crude facial features.

"Allow me to properly introduce myself," he said with a sneer. "You can call me Clayface."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Bum, bum, bum. It's Clayface. Did anyone expect him? Yes, Clayface is the one after Helena. But not of his own accord. We still don't know who his employer is, or why they want Helena. But now that they know who has been pursuing Helena, they
can find out who is actually behind the job. And speaking of Helena, it looks like she's been naughty again. At least she didn't drug anyone this time. But still, this means trouble. Will Batman and the others be able to take down Clayface? Is Helena going to get into trouble? More to come soon, so look forward to it. I hope to have it out next week again.)
(A/N: Alright, I recently got around to watching "Justice League Dark". It was, I thought, the weakest of the new movie continuum so far, but still very good. I hate ranking movies, I always feel I'm labeling the lowest ranked ones as 'bad movies', even if I really liked them. Same case here. I really liked it, but thought it was the bottom ranked of the 7 current "Batman/Justice League" movies. I also didn't think an R rating was necessary, but whatever. Just to clarify where this story takes place in the continuum, it occurs after "Justice League vs Teen Titans" {before the epilogue where Tera shows up} and "Justice League Dark". Hope that's cleared up. Now for this chapter. We last left off with our heroes discovering the identity of the big man who's been chasing Helena. Seems like I surprised a few people with who it was. Guess I accomplished my goal. But there's still the mystery of who his boss is. How will our heroes deal with the situation? Read on and find out. Oh, and if you didn't see "Batman: Bad Blood", there's a reference to it in this movie. Don't worry, what happened will be explained so you won't be lost. So, it seems like I surprised a lot of people with Clayface. Lets see how our heroes fair against him.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 14: Cleaning Up

Catwoman scowled at the giant clay monster. "Guess that explains why his face always looked like it was a clay sculpture."

The large brown monstrosity grinned. "Mimicry is one thing, making a face from scratch is much harder."

Robin, meanwhile, was giving the creature a disgusted look. "Clayface? More like mud man. What the hell are you supposed to be anyway?"

Clayface sneered at him. "More than you can handle, little boy."

He threw a punch, even though he was much too far away. His arm liquefied and stretched several feet, the end forming into an anvil embedded in the clay. Robin jumped to the side as the anvil slammed into the wall, breaking straight through it. It melted back into clay as Clayface retracted his arm, and it took on its natural shape once again.

"Careful," said Batman, "it seems he can shape his body into different objects, and even change the material."

Studying the monster's unusual body, Catwoman though back to the times she had fought him in the past few months. "Well, at least now I know why he always recovered from everything Huntress and I ever hit him with."

Clayface chuckled. "I wondered how long it would take you to figure it out. I can take anything you
"Like hell!" Catwoman snapped, and charged at him.

Grinning, Clayface raised his fist, his hand forming a sludge hammer. It came down, cracking the floor apart, but Catwoman had jumped up to avoid it and slashed at Clayface's face. Five gashes appeared across it, and he grunted in pain, but then broke out into a grin as the scratches filled in and disappeared.

As Catwoman stared in shock, he backhanded her, and she went flying through the air, crashing down on top of a table. Groaning, she sat up, staring at the shape-shifting monster. "Well, that's not going to work."

Robin pulled out his sword. "Then let's try something more effective."

Batman reached out for him. "Robin, wait!"

The Boy Wonder ignored him as he charged at the monster. The ends of Clayface's hands turned into spiky metal balls and chains, and he swung them at the boy. Robin ducked beneath the first and jumped over the second, leaping at Clayface. He swung his sword above the chain on one of Clayface's arm, slicing through the chain and severing his arm. He did the same with his other arm, then jumped up and cut his head in half.

The sword became stuck in Clayface's body in his midsection. It was sucked out of Robin's hand and pulled into his body. That didn't stop Robin though as he threw a punch, but the skin of Clayface's chest became a metal plate just before his blow landed, and he cried out as it felt like his knuckles broke.

Clayface's foot kicked out, sending Robin flying. The two halves of Clayface's head came back together and reformed. Sneering at the Boy Wonder, his chest spat out the sword, and it stabbed into the ground right between Robin's legs. Chuckling, his severed arms spilled out more clay, flowing over the severed limbs Robin had cut off. The balls and chains melted into clay once again and were sucked up, Clayface's arms taking form once again.

Pushing the broken half of the table that was on top of her of, Catwoman charged at Clayface again. Leaping up, she kicked off Batman's shoulder to gain altitude. She lashed out with her whip, hooking onto a chandelier above them, and swinging above Clayface. The monster glanced up at her as she came down, baring her claws, and he once again swatted her aside with his giant fist, causing her to hit the wall hard.

Looking back at Batman, Clayface grinned. "So, what can you do?"

For some reason, that comment really irked Batman. It was the same thing Superman had said to him when they first met, just before the Kryptonian all but made a fool out of him with his speed, strength, laser vision, and invulnerability. Not that Batman wouldn't have been able to take him if he had the time to prepare, yet therein lied the problem; he'd hadn't had the time to prepare.

Just like now. He was always ready for almost anything when it came to fighting crime, even the unexpected, but this monster, there was no way he could have been prepared to fight such a beast, even when expecting the unexpected.

But that wouldn't stop him from trying. Batman's mind worked quickly. He was smart, good at strategizing, and could improvise on the spot. He'd find a way to take out this monster and save his
daughter.

Cape flying out behind him, he charged at the beast. Clayface lashed out, his fist flying forward on a stream of clay, his knuckles turning to metal and sprouting spikes. Batman jumped over the flying fist and threw a smoke bomb into the monster's face. Coughing, Clayface stumbled back, out of the cloud, allowing Batman to close the distance between them.

He leapt up, flipping over Clayface's head. The monster grabbed for him, but missed, and Batman slapped a small explosive device on the back of his head. It went off, and Clayface's head and a portion of his upper body was blown apart. He stumbled about, his arms randomly grabbing at the air as Batman fired his grapple gun into his back. It burst out of Clayface's chest, before retracting.

The grapple latched onto Clayface's body from the other side, and Batman gave it a yank. Clayface stumbled a few steps back before the grapple went through his body again, and Batman fell forward. Turning around, Clayface's body reformed and he balled his fists together, fusing them into a large metal ball that he prepared to bring down on the Dark Knight.

A second grapple flew between Clayface's raised arms, and Robin came flying through. He sliced through one of Clayface's arms, then the other, as he passed through the space, and the large metal ball Clayface had turned his hands into dropped down onto his head, mashing it into his body.

Swinging back around, Robin slammed into Clayface's chest, knocking him over. The monster growled, his entire body liquefying and reshaping into one piece. Batman, by this time, had gotten to his feet, and Robin landed beside him. Clayface glared at them and started towards them, but Catwoman's whip suddenly coiled around his ankle, pulling him back. Clayface glanced at her as she yanked, but her whip simple went straight through his leg, making her fall over as Batman had.

"This is getting annoying," Robin growled. "How are we supposed to beat someone who can alter his body like that?"

Batman had yet to figure that out. "We'll find a way. We have to. Your sister's life is at stake."

That just made Robin frown in distaste. "Of course it is."

Clayface went on the attack. His chest changed into a wall of bricks, which he then launched at the two heroes. Batman rolled to the side and flung bolas at Clayface's feet while Robin jumped up, kicking off the brick wall before it smashed into the wall, and leapt towards Clayface. The bolas wrapped around the monster's feet, and almost immediately began sinking into them, but it took a moment for Clayface to slip through them, allowing Robin to land in front of him and stab his sword into his chest, slicing up his body, nearly cutting him in half.

The two halves of Clayface's body came back together, and he smacked Robin aside. Catwoman came up behind him, attacking in his place, and began slashing at Clayface's back with her claws. Her hand got stuck in the clay, and she was unable to pull it free, no matter how much she struggled. Chuckling, Clayface glanced back at her, and Catwoman was suddenly sucked inside his body, kicking and slashing.

"Let her go!" Batman demanded as Catwoman disappeared into his body.

Clayface turned to him, chuckling. "Come inside and get her."

Batmans eyes narrowed. Muttering a silent apology to the leather-clad woman, he grabbed at a Taser on his utility belt and fired it at the monster. Clayface cried out as he was electrocuted, his clay skin shifting about. One of Catwoman's kicking legs briefly became visible beneath the clay, and Batman
ran over and grabbed her ankle, pulling on her.

Still spasming, Clayface grabbed at the ends of the Taser and ripped them out of his body. Batman raised his arm and fired the blades on his gauntlets, and Clayface cried out as they buried into his face. He backhanded Batman, his arm turning into a large metal pipe in the process. The wind was knocked out of him, but the Dark Knight kept a grip on Catwoman's ankle, and she was pulled from the clay body. The two crashed to the ground, Catwoman on top of Batman, where she took a deep much needed breath of air.

Plucking the blades from his head, Clayface started towards them, but Robin jumped up onto his back, wrapping his arms around his neck in a headlock. Clayface tried to shake him off, but Robin refused to let go.

To his surprise, Clayface's body suddenly turned completely inside out, so he was now facing the boy, and he wrapped him into a bear-hug, his arms melting together to prevent the boy from escaping, even as he futilely kicked at his chest.

As Catwoman recovered from whatever damage had been done to her inside Clayface's body and from the electric shock, Batman climbed to his feet. Grabbing a Batarang, he flung it at a chandelier, and it dropped down onto Clayface's head. The monster fell to one knee, his arms coming apart, and Robin fell free. Turning to the Dark Knight, he snarled loudly and charged at him.

Batman was ready, but was surprised as Clayface punched towards him, his fist flying off his wrist towards him. He jumped back, and the mass of clay splattered against the ground. Four pairs of arms suddenly rose from the clay splatter and grabbed Batman's legs, holding him in place as Clayface came at him. He grabbed the Dark Knight and slammed him into the wall, the two bursting right through it.

Robin and Catwoman were getting to their feet. With a glance at the other, they ran over to the hole in the wall Clayface had made, leading to the kitchen. Inside, they found not one, but two Batmen standing opposite of one another. Clayface was nowhere in sight, but it was easy enough for the two to figure out what was happening.

"Careful," said the Batman on the right, "he can take the form of others."

"They're smart enough to see that for themselves," the Batman on the left replied.

Robin crossed his arms. "Are we really doing this?"

"You know what you have to do," the Batman on the right told them. "Just let me handle this. You go and bring the police in. We'll surround him so he can't get away."

The Batman on the left's eyes narrowed. "Yes, you know what you have to do."

Catwoman and Robin glanced at each other, a knowing look passing between them. "Yes," the former replied. "We know."

She lashed out with her whip, the end coiling around the Batman on the right. Robin charged at him, swiping his sword, slicing off his head. There was no blood though as the head dropped to the ground, only a clean cut of clay where head and neck were once attached.

"Did you really think we wouldn't know the real Batman?" Catwoman demanded, giving her whip a yank, causing the beheaded Batman to fall over.

More clay raced across the ground, flowing over the headless body and severed head on the floor.
Catwoman pulled her whip free as Clayface began to reform while Batman rushed over to the stove. His foot slammed into it, breaking it open, and gas came seeping out.

"Run!" he cried to the other two, and Robin and Catwoman fled the room. Batman was right behind them, pausing only to fling another small explosive towards the stove with the seeping gas.

The explosion filled the kitchen, flowing over Clayface, and the three heroes rolled away, covering their heads as pieces of debris came raining down around them. They got to their feet, looking at the now much bigger hole in the wall as smoke and fire filled the kitchen.

"Did that do it?" Catwoman asked.

Batman was still scowling. "I doubt it. It seems he can break off into smaller portions and still control them."

Robin frowned thoughtfully. "I wonder how small those pieces have to be or how far from his main body they have need to go be before he loses control over them."

Catwoman held up her claws. "Let's find out. I'll cut him into so many individual little pieces he'll never be able to reform."

They approached the hole in the wall trying to see through the smoke. Suddenly, another portion of the wall blew open as Clayface came bursting through, in one piece. He glanced at the three of them angrily before charging towards the front door. He didn't even bother to open it as he burst straight through.

Outside, the cops' mouth dropped open at the appearance of the monster. Bullock stared in horror as Clayface raised his hand to shield his eyes from the lights shining directly at him. "What the hell is that thing?" He pointed. "Hurry up, shoot it!"

"No, wait!" Gordon cried.

The police fired anyway, and bullets went flying through the air. Clayface grunted as they slammed into him, yet they passed through his body, leaving only small holes that quickly closed up. With a snarl, he charged at the gathering of cops. The police cried out, many ducking for cover, but Clayface's body suddenly liquefied, rising over their heads like a wave.

He came down on the other side of them, still a shapeless mass. Batman, Robin, and Catwoman came bursting out of the restaurant, just in time to see Clayface slip down a sewer grate and disappear.

"Damn!" Catwoman swore, and made to run towards the sewer grate, but Batman put a hand on her shoulder and shook his head.

"Don't, it's too late. He's gone." He fired his grapple gun into the air, wrapped an arm around her, and pulled her along with him. Robin followed close behind, and the three ended up on a roof.

"Well, that was new," Robin grumbled, crossing his arms. He glanced at Catwoman. "You and Helena are in even bigger trouble than we thought."

Batman turned to her questioningly. "Did you know?"

The leather-clad woman's eyes widened. "That he was some freakish clay monster? Of course not. I would have said something if I did. He was very careful to hide what he was until now." She gave a humorless snort of laughter. "Guess now I know why he never stayed down for the count."
Batman resisted the urge to sigh in frustration. This new development changed everything. Their enemy was not only seemingly indestructible, but had unusual shape-shifting powers, and was even able to take the form of others. He and Catwoman would have to discuss what to do about their daughter's safety some more now that they knew what they were up against.

Robin looked over the side, down at the sewer grate. "We should take up positions at different entrances to the sewers. We might get lucky and see which one he comes out of."

Before Batman could agree or disagree with this plan, a beeping in his ear distracted him. "Hold that thought." He pressed a finger to the earpiece in his ear. "What is it, Alfred?"

"Terribly sorry to disturb you, sir, but I'm afraid I have a bit of bad news."

Batman frowned. Something was telling him that this bad news had to do with his daughter. "What kind of bad news?"

"It seems Miss Helena has decided to, shall we say, take a late night stroll. She even got dressed for the occasion."

The Dark Knight's scowl deepened. "Thank you, Alfred. We'll take care of it." He turned to the others, not looking the least bit happy. "Change of plans. We've got a huntress to catch."

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A grin crept up the face of Edward Nygma as he stared at the shipment coming in. No, tonight he was not Edward Nygma; tonight he was the Riddler, dressed completely in green with question marks all over his clothes, holding a staff with the top also in the shape of a question mark. He had been waiting for months to get his hands on this delivery, and now it was finally here.

It hadn't been easy getting a hold of it, but he was a super genius and a master criminal. After a great deal of planning, bribing, and yes, even killing, it was finally in his grasp. With this, he would one day be able to take control of the entire city. No, the whole world!

As the truck pulled into the warehouse, he got up from his chair and approached. Hired men began unloading several boxes, and Riddler rubbed his hands together gleefully. None were aware of the dark figure up above, watching their every move.

Huntress surveyed the scene below her, knowing that nothing good was about to take place. Her father had been aware of Riddler's movement, but it seems he had gotten distracted by more important things the past few weeks. After all, there was a lot of crime in Gotham, but there was only one Batman. Even for him, there was only so much he could do.

Going through his files, she had come across the information regarding Riddler and his activities. After some in depth research that her father had put on hold, most likely for her sake, she had come to the conclusion that Riddler would be making his move tonight.

It seemed she had been right. The contents below had been stolen from a government transport. And now they were finally in Riddler's possession. Grinning like a certain deranged clown, he approached one of the crates. "Open it. I want to see my prize."

One of the men took up a crowbar and pried the top open. Riddler's eyes shined with delight as he stared down at the remains of the destroyed technology that had been recovered from a certain tech summit. "Ah, yes, the brainwashing technology of Jervis Tetch. Who would have thought the Mad Hatter could create such a splendid means of controlling the world?"
The thug who had opened the crate gave him an uncertain look. "But it's broken, and the program and data is gone. How can you expect to use it; the thing's useless."

Riddler chuckled. "My dear friend, we have everything we need to rebuild what the late Mr. Tetch had so cleverly devised. If anyone is capable of replicating his work, then it's me. I will pick up where he left off, and make it bigger and better than ever. Only it will be I, not some ancient League of Assassins, giving the orders."

He pointed his staff at the thug. "Riddle me this! I am all seeing and all knowing. I am everywhere and nowhere. I control all and am all. What am I?"

The thug seemed confused and looked to his comrades for answers, but they seemed equally as confused. "I don't know."

"God, my friend. With this, I will become God. All the world leaders will be under my control. I will be in all their heads, controlling all that they do. I'll know what goes on all around the world, and I will rule over everyone."

Huntress frowned. Over her dead body would she allow that to happen! Even though all the data and mind-controlling program had been completely wiped out, rendering it useless, this technology should have been completely destroyed so no one could ever rebuild and replicate the Mad Hatter's work. And one thing was for sure, if there was someone capable of doing just that, it was the Riddler.

Not on her watch. "Riddle me this, and riddle me that," she called down to the men below. "What do you get when you cross a bat with a cat?"

Riddler blinked in surprise, even as his mind automatically began coming up with several possible answers to the riddle. Huntress didn't even give him a chance to answer as she dropped down from up above. "Me."

Riddler blinked as he stared at the girl. He shared a look at his comrades, who seemed just as bewildered as him, before they burst into laughter. Huntress scowled, not liking the fact that they weren't taking her seriously.

Still laughing, Riddler strolled over to her, sticking out his staff to lift her chin. "Little girls should be in bed right now."

Huntress' eyes narrowed, and, quick as lightning, she kicked the staff out of his hands, much to Riddler's surprise. "I'm not as little as you think."

The man stared at her, getting over his shock, and grinned. "You don't say." He reached for her mask. "Maybe if you remove that mask I could get a better idea of how old you- arghh!"

Huntress had grabbed his wrist and bent it back. "Hands off."

Pulling his hand back, Riddler backed away, massaging his wrist. "Oh, a feisty little thing, aren't you?" One of the men made to make a move towards her, but Riddler waved him off. "You should go home if you want to play dress up. This isn't the place for children."

A smirk crept up the girl's face. "You want to talk about playing dress up. Just look at what you're wearing. Green with question marks. Seriously? What, it take you a whole five minutes to come up with this getup? I thought you were supposed to be a genius."

Rather than getting angry, Riddler just grinned. "Oh, I am. But lets see how intelligent you are, little
"The name's Huntress."

"In that case, Huntress, you mentioned a bat before, well, riddle me this. I see all around me, but my eyes never move. I'm wise beyond my years, and bats flee me in fear. As they take flight, I soar through the night. What am I?"

Frowning in disgust, Huntress wondered if this riddle was even supposed to be difficult. "A wise old owl."

Picking up his staff, Riddler grinned as he made his way back over to her. "Correct. Lets try something a little harder. My tales are taller than I'll ever stand, and yet I can never tell of them. What am I?"

Unsure as to why she was humoring this madman, she considered his clues. Who had tales to tell, but could never tell them, or was even capable of standing? She frowned as she thought about it. The answered seemed like it was right there, but she just couldn't grasp it.

"Give up?" Riddler asked as he approached. "A dead man. Dead men tell no tales. And like the owl that hunts in the night that sees without moving its eyes, you, my little Huntress have seen too much. And I'm afraid that I can't let you tell those tales. So..."

He twisted the question mark on his staff, and a blade popped out of the bottom of his staff. He swiped at the girl, but Huntress moved quickly, dodging the blade. He came at her swinging, and she backed away, hopping just out of his reach as he jabbed and swung. Jumping up, she landed on his staff as he stabbed forward, balancing on the end, and kicked upward, her foot slamming into his chin.

Riddler was knocked off his feet, landing hard in front of his men. Rubbing his chin, he glared at them and pointed at the girl. "Kill her."

Pulling out guns, the men open fired. Huntress fired her grapple gun into the air, pulling herself out of the bullets' path. As she was pulled into the air, she grabbed at the crossbow on her utility belt and fired several arrows at the men, knocking the guns from their hand. And, as an intimidation tactic, she fired one directly between Riddler's legs, a little too close to a certain area for comfort.

Reaching the ceiling, she kicked off it, launching herself at the men. Her foot slammed into the head of one as she pulled out her metal pole and whacked another one at the same time. Landing, she jabbed the pole into a third's gut, then, twirling the pole like a baton, whacked the fourth across his knees, causing him to fall over so she could deliver an uppercut to his face.

"Who is this girl?" Riddler wondered out loud as he crawled away. He thought back to the riddle she had thrown at him; a cross between a bat and a cat, the answer being her. Rolling over, he pointed his staff at her. "You're one of Batman's protégés, aren't you?"

She turned to him and smirked. "You are smart. But you're only half right. I was also trained by Catwoman."

His eyes widened. "She's back?" Suddenly, her riddle made sense to him; the girl was trained by both Batman and Catwoman. "Well then, give her this message for me."

The blade at the end of his staff was suddenly fired at Huntress. She swung her pole, knocking the blade away as Riddler got to his feet and took off. Huntress smirked as he disappeared amongst the countless crates. She knew he wouldn't go far though, not without the Mad Hatter's precious
brainwashing technology. Well, she had just the thing to deal with that.

"You're still there, aren't you?" she called into the darkness. "Well, I've got another riddle for you." She walked over to the crate his goons had pried open. Reaching for her utility belt, she held up a small explosive device. "What do you think I'm going to do with this?"

From his hiding place, Riddler scowled as he inched his head out to look at her. "That's not a riddle." His eyes widened as he saw her holding the device over the crate. "NO!"

She dropped it into the crate and dove for cover. It went off, blowing the crate to bits, pieces of burning metal flying in all different directions. With a cry of rage, Riddler twisted the question mark on his staff around, opening another chamber inside. He began pumping the end of the staff, and shotgun blasts went flying out of the end.

Huntress was moving, the bullets blasting apart the floor behind her as she stayed one step ahead of Riddler's shots. She ducked for cover behind the truck, and the shots stopped. She smirked at the thought of the precious cargo inside. Riddler had just lost part of the Mad Hatter's technology, he wouldn't risk causing the truck to explode by shooting it up.

A groan drew her attention, and she saw one of the thugs she had knocked out coming to. Grabbing a bola from her utility belt, she flung it at the man. It wrapped around the man's head, the hard ball at the end smacking into his face, knocking him out again.

Riddler's staff-gun went off again, the tire beside Huntress blowing apart, and the truck tilted to the side. She stayed where she was as she heard him go on the move. He was on the hood of the truck now, most likely climbing onto the top so he could get her from above. Closing her eyes, she reached out with her senses, using her gifts to her advantage. She could practically see him in her mind's eyes, slowly closing in on her. He may be a genius, but he had no idea who he was messing with.

Opening her eyes, she took aim with her crossbow. She fired at the wall at such an angle that the arrow bounced off it, changing direction. Riddler cried out as it struck his staff, causing him to drop it. At the same time, Huntress fired her grapple gun into the air, pulling herself up. Dropping down, she charged across the roof of the truck, slamming her elbow into his gut. Spittle flew from Riddler's mouth as he doubled over, clutching his stomach. Delivering a roundhouse kick, her foot slammed into his head, and he tumbled off the top of the truck.

Standing on the edge, Huntress looked down at the fallen villain. She took aim with her crossbow, firing several shots at him. The arrows stabbed into his shirt and pants along his arms, legs, and torso, pinning him down, but it seemed he was out cold.

Huntress bent her head side to side, cracking her neck, and jumped off the truck. Smirking, she looked at the various crates inside. So this was all that was left of the Mad Hatter's brainwashing technology from when Damian's mother tried to take over the world by brainwashing the world leaders, and Batman. Well, she would deal with this once she finished cleaning up. She'd destroy everything beyond repair so it could never be used for evil again.

In a matter of minutes, she had Riddler and his goons tied up, a nice little gift for the police when she called them. Then she siphoned some gas from the truck and poured it all over the crates inside. Leaving a small trail behind, she took a lighter from her utility belt and lit the trickle of gas, watching as it followed the trail and ignited the whole truck.

Smiling, Huntress put her hands on her hips as she watched it burn. "Mission accomplished." Her head turned to look into the darkness. "Are you proud of me, Dad?"
Batman, Catwoman, and Robin stepped out of the darkness. Not one of them was smiling. "That depends on what you're referring to," the Dark Knight told her, his voice hard. "What are you doing out?"

Still smiling, she turned to them, shrugging. "Cleaning up the streets of Gotham, like I'm supposed to."

Robin crossed his arms. "You're supposed to be back home."

She rolled her eyes and began twirling around a strand of her hair. "And how many times did you sneak out, big brother?"

Robin scowled, looking like he wanted to argue, but Batman beat him to it. "We're not talking about him, we're talking about you. Your mother and I specifically told you that you were to stay with Alfred."

Huntress threw her arms in the air in aggravation. "I couldn't take it in there anymore! I was going crazy being confined." She looked to her mother for help. "Mom, come on. You know how it feels, not being able to run free."

But Catwoman was not swayed by her daughter's tactics. "I am a grown woman, and I'm not being hunted by a giant clay monster."

Her mother's response caused the girl to frown in confusion. "Wait, what now?"

"We found out who is after you," Batman told her. "Or what is after you."

"For the most part," Robin added.

"The situation is more dire than we thought," the Dark Knight continued. "And now that we know his secret, he's no longer going to pretend to be something he's not. He's going to come for you with everything he's got. There's no longer any need for him to be discrete. He could be anyone, a random face in the crowd keeping a watch for you, even one of us."

Huntress was frowning. "Wait, you're saying whoever's after me can change his appearance?"

"And do a whole lot more than that," Catwoman added. She sighed, looking at her daughter sadly. "Gotham is no longer safe."

"Agreed," said Batman. "As soon as we get back, start packing."

He turned and began walking away, Catwoman and Robin right behind them.

Huntress frowned at this vague order. "Start packing? What do you mean start packing?" She didn't receive a response, and quickly ran after them. "Dad, wait, where am I going?!"

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: Problems are escalating. Bruce and Selina now know who's after their daughter, but he's still at large. And as Batman said, he doesn't need to hide what he is anymore. And there's still the question as to who he's working for. They're not taking any chances anymore, so that's why Helena has to leave. But where exactly is she going? Anyone
care to take a guess? At least we got to see some Huntress action. Review if you liked. Oh, and the reference to Batman: Bad Blood I mentioned was the brainwashing technology that Riddler was trying to get. In the movie, Talia and the Mad Hatter were attempting to use it to control the world leaders.)
Chapter Notes

(A/N: As you can tell from the chapter title, it's pretty obvious where Helena is going. I said they would be back. Wait, did, I, or was that in a review I answered? Ah, whatever. So, yes, Helena and Damian are returning to Titan Tower while Bruce and Selina stay in Gotham to find Clayface and his boss. Now, it may sound like a bad idea separating from each other, but you'll get an explanation for it towards the end which will hopefully make my reasoning clearer. So far, Helena seems to have gotten along reasonably well with the Bat Family, some more than others. Let's see how she relates to others more like her. But how will Damian feel about this. He was already sensitive about her interfering in one part of his life, safe to say he won't be too taken to her interfering with the other part.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 15: A New Titan?

Damian had wanted to go back to Titan Tower, but he didn't expect to be bringing a guest along. But that was exactly what was happening. Bruce had come up with the idea and had talked it over with Selina, who reluctantly agreed that the Tower would be the safest place for Helena until they could take down Clayface and find whoever his boss was.

Helena was having mixed feelings about this decision. Under one hand, she was thrilled about getting to meet her brother's teammates. Under the other, she didn't want to leave her parents, who would be staying behind to hunt down Clayface no less. She also wasn't too thrilled at the thought of running and hiding either, but her parents would not budge on this decision.

In the end, she decided to focus on the good rather than dwell on the bad. This would be a chance to make some new friends and meet the future heroes of the world, including former Justice League member, Cyborg. She was also eager to meet the leader of the group, Starfire, wondering what the alien princess who had captured Dick's heart would be like, as well as Raven, her brother's own sweetheart according to her father's files on Damian's time at the Tower.

Then there were the other two. The shape shifting Beast Boy, and the boy that had merged with the Blue Beetle Scarab. She wondered how their powers worked, and just what they were capable of. So much to do, and so much to learn; she couldn't wait to make friends with the lot of them, maybe become a member of the Teen Titans herself if she stuck around long enough. Even though her father was a master detective, it would prove to be difficult to find someone who could change their appearance at will.

But who was this Clayface freak, and why was he after her? How did he become to be what he was in the first place? An accident? An experiment gone wrong? So many possibilities, not enough information.

Nightwing would be providing transportation for them, and he wasn't too happy about it. Damian was never the best of company, at least for him, and he still remembered how Helena had drugged
him so she could sneak out. He still couldn't believe she had done that; where'd she even get a sleeping drug anyway? Did she keep a supply in that utility belt of hers?

As of now, he was leaning against his car, waiting as Helena said goodbye to her parents and Alfred. Damian was already sitting in the car, ignoring him as usual. He was fine with that. Hopefully, he would remain quiet for the length of the trip. Helena, however, would most likely try and strike up a conversation. From what he knew, things between her brother had improved, but not enough as far as he was concerned.

Selina was embracing her daughter tightly, stroking her long dark hair affectionately. This would be the first time they would be separated for such a long period of time. Days, weeks, maybe even months, but it was necessary. While Helena remained in the protection of the Tower, she and Bruce would hunt down Clayface and whoever was in charge of him.

"Please be careful," Selina begged her daughter, squeezing her tighter. Her own dark hair, changed back to its natural black color since there was no longer any reason to hide the fact that she was back in Gotham, hung around them as she held the girl close. "Don't take any reckless chances."

Helena just smiled as she buried her face into her mother's chest. "Mom, I'll be fine. I can handle anything. I've been trained for this type of life, remember."

A smile crept up Selina's face as she remembered all the training she had done with her and the missions she had gone on. "I know, but I still worry. Just promise me you won't fight any inter-dimensional demons that are virtually the devil."

Helena chuckled as she thought about the files her father had kept on the battle with Trigon. "I can promise I won't go searching for them, but if they come to me..."

A tear slid from Selina's eye, and she quickly brushed it away as she got down to her daughter's level and kissed her head. "I love you, Helena, my Huntress. Always."

Helena kissed her middle and index finger and placed them against her mother's lips. "I love you too, Mom. Always."

She finally broke away from her mother and went to her father, hugging him as well. Bruce seemed uncomfortable, not quite sure how to react. Damian wasn't exactly a hugger, and even though Helena was far more affectionate, he still wasn't quite used to these displays. He began awkwardly patting her head, and glanced at Selina. She rolled her eyes and mimed hugging someone, indicating that he should return his daughter's embrace. Bruce did so, uncertainly. He knew how to show affection to the ladies, but not so much to his own daughter.

After a few seconds, he held her away from him and got down to her level as well. "We'll wrap things up here as soon as we can. Just make sure to keep yourself from the public eye. As far as Clayface knows, you're in Gotham, and with your mother here, he'll continue to think so. Don't give him any reason to think otherwise. We'll come get you again once we stop him and whoever he's working for."

Helena rolled her eyes. "I know, Dad. You're Batman and Catwoman. There's nothing you can't do." She leaned forward and kissed his cheek. "Make them pay for messing with the Wayne family."

Then she turned to Alfred. His ever-stoic expression was on his face. Helena grinned broadly and clasped her hands together, holding them over her head in apology. "Sorry I ran away, Alfred. I wasn't trying to get you in trouble. Forgive me?"
The butler simply held his chin up higher. "It is not I who was in trouble, Miss Helena, nor is it my forgiveness you must seek, but your parents'. My trust, on the other hand, that is something that must be earned, and I'm afraid you have broken it."

Helena's shoulders sank. For some reason, the butler's approval was something she desperately wanted. Even though he was employed by her father, there was just something about the man that demanded respect, almost as if he were the one in charge, rather than her father.

"I'm sorry..." she muttered sadly.

"However," Alfred continued, "it is fortunate that trust may be earned back, if one is willing to work for it. I understand your reasons for sneaking out, but I believe you have learned your lesson and will not make the same mistake twice."

She beamed. "Yes, I promise! I won't sneak away again." Behind her back, she crossed her fingers so only her parents could see, making Bruce sigh and Selina smile. "Thank you for everything, Alfred. I'll miss you."

"And I you, young miss. I do hope you will come back soon."

She chuckled, nodding towards her parents. "That depends on them. Shouldn't take too long."

Grabbing her bag, she skipped merrily over to Nightwing's car. He raised an eyebrow at her. "Ready to go?"

"You mean ready for some freedom? Hell yeah!"

She waved to her parents before hopping into the driver's seat beside Damian. Nightwing gave a humorless laugh. "I don't think so."

"I can drive."

Damian snorted. "Don't bother. I've been barking up that tree for the longest time."

Snapping his fingers, Nightwing pointed to the backseat. "Come on, out."

Pouting, Helena performed a backflip while still sitting, landing in the backseat and crossing her arms. As Nightwing climbed into the driver's seat and the top closed, Selina stifled a sob, her hand covering her mouth as she thought about her little girl going out there into the world all on her own, even if she did have a bunch of superheroes watching out for her.

Bruce wrapped a comforting arm around her, holding her close. "She'll be fine. She's our daughter after all."

A sad smile crept up Selina's face. "I know, but she's still my little girl."

Alfred glanced at her. "If I may ask, Miss Kyle, at what age did you begin your... shall we say professional career?"

Selina chuckled. "I grew up on the streets, Alfred. I was a professional cat burglar when I was still a child."

"Then might I point out, as Master Bruce has, that since Miss Helena is indeed your daughter, I am confident in her ability to take care of herself."

Sighing, Selina watched as the car drove out of the Batcave. "So do I, but a parent always worries..."
About their child.

"So, where are we going?" Helena asked.

Nightwing glanced at her excited face in the mirror. "Titan Tower."

She rolled her eyes. "Yeah, I know that. I mean where is it? I know it's just outside Jump City, but where?"

"Officially, it has no address. It's somewhat hidden, but not impossible to find."

"Ok... then why don't criminals just overrun it?"

Damian smirked. "Because they're not stupid enough to break into a base filled with superheroes and top-notch security. You'll see when we get there."

Sighing, Helena decided she wasn't going to get any proper answers from them, and sat back, looking out the window. She paid close attention to their surroundings, memorizing how to get to the Tower. Having a near photographic memory as well as always being very aware of her surroundings due to her heightened senses really came in handy. She was certain that she could find her way to and from the Tower after a single trip.

"Do the others know about me?" she asked suddenly. "I mean of who I am?"

Nightwing considered how much he should tell her. Starfire, being the leader of the team, knew about Helena, and her parentage. Cyborg did as well, and both had been informed of the situation regarding Helena's pursuers. The rest of the Titans were still in the dark though.

"I told Raven," Damian admitted. He received a look of disapproval from Nightwing. "What?"

"That was not your call to make."

He just looked out the window again. "So sue me."

Smirking, Helena leaned forward. "No secrets from your girlfriend?"

Damian glared at her reflection in the window. While he and Raven didn't know everything about each other, having been in each other's heads, there were few secrets between them. They also both provided someone the other could confide in, able to relate to one another.

"Your father and Selina may not have wanted anyone else to know," Nightwing told him. "At least not until this situation is resolved."

Damian stubbornly refused to even look at him. "If anyone can keep a secret about one's parentage, it's Raven."

Nightwing had to admit, he had him there. Besides, Starfire tended to operate on a need to know basis, choosing to trust and have faith in others. That faith had only been shaken when Trigon had revealed himself months ago, but she was still willing to trust, having taken in Raven, Beast Boy, and Jaime without knowing much about them. As far as the rest of the Titans knew, Helena would be just another unique child in need of a place to belong.

In fact, the Tamaranean was informing her team of their new addition at that very moment. They were all happy and curious about who this new member was, though Raven had a sneaking
suspicion of who it might be.

"And it's a girl?" Beast Boy asked eagerly.

Starfire nodded. "It is. She's a borderline metahuman in need of a sanctuary for a while, so she will be staying with us until Batman has found the ones after her."


Raven resisted the urge to smile. If Beast Boy knew who this new member's parents and brother was, he most likely wouldn't be so eager to make such a claim. "You might want to meet her before you decide that."

"And she's only 10 years old," Cyborg added.

Beast Boy's shoulders sank. "Aw, bummer, man."

Jaime chuckled. "So, what's her name?"

Starfire smiled. "Helena, but she calls herself Huntress."

Beast Boy tapped his chin. "Huntress, huh? What are her powers?"

Cyborg checked his databanks for what he had been told of the girl. "Mostly strength, speed, reflexes, healing, and senses far beyond that of a normal person."

With a smirk, Beast Boy suddenly transformed into a dog. "I'll bet mine are still superior."

"Kory said she was only borderline metahuman," Raven reminded him. "She shouldn't be too different from a normal human. She's also had a lot of training, by Catwoman herself."

Jaime and Beast Boy looked at her, the latter changing back to normal. "No way, she was trained by thee Catwoman? That's awesome! Whatever happened to her anyway?"

The eyes on the Blue Beetle Scarab on Jaime's back flashed red as it emitted an indistinguishable sound. He responded to it with, "As far as we know."

Frowning, Beast Boy glanced at his fellow Titan's back. "Dude, did I ever tell you how creepy it is when you talk to that thing?"

"Many times. And as I've reminded you many times, it can hear you."

Starfire clapped her hands together. "Come now, let us not argue. We want to be on our best behavior to make our new friend feel welcome."

Cyborg checked his internal clock. "Which should be any minute now, if they left at the right time."

Standing by the entrance of the Tower, they waited a few minutes longer. Soon enough, Nightwing's car came driving up. It came to a stop in front of the group, and the top popped open. Damian hopped out right away, followed by Nightwing.

Starfire stepped forward to greet them, opening her arms to the older boy. "Welcome back. Is everything alright?"

He smiled at her. "Aside from Selina having a little trouble letting go, there weren't any problems."
"I am glad." She looked down at Damian. "And I am happy to have you back as well, Damian. Did you enjoy your visit to your father's home?"

It may have sounded as if she were talking to him like a child, but Damian knew she didn't mean it that way, and simply shrugged. "It was alright."

With that, he headed over to the others. Beast Boy held his hand up for a high-five. "Good to have you back, man. Up top?" He waited a few seconds, but Damian didn't move. Instead, he brought his hand down. "Um, down low?" Still nothing. "Right, good to see you too."

Beside him, Jaime gave Damian a nod in greeting, which the boy returned before glancing at Raven. She smiled at him and gave him a hug. "Glad to have you back."

When they pulled apart, he returned the smile. "Good to be back."

With the reunion over, Beast Boy returned his attention to Nightwing's car. "So, where's the new recruit. Helen, right?"

The girl hopped out of the car. "Helena, actually." She smiled as she looked the Teen Titans over. "Let me see if I got this. Kory, Jaime, Garfield, Raven, and Victor. Or would you prefer Cyborg?"

She had pointed to each in turn, and Cyborg smiled at her. "Either is fine."

"And you're guesses were correct," Starfire told her. "We're all very happy to have you here, Helena."

Raven glanced at Damian, quietly asking what she suspected. "Is she…?"

He nodded, though he still didn't look happy about it. "Yeah. Father thought it would be safer for her here. Don't tell the others."

As Raven nodded, Beast Boy spoke up. "Hey, is it true you were trained by Catwoman?"

Helena chuckled. "All my life."

"Dude, that's awesome! You must kick some serious butt in the field."

Smirking arrogantly, Helena flipped her hair back. "Well, being the daughter of Batman and Catwoman does have its perks."

Shocked gasps came from Jaime and Beast Boy while Damian scowled in disapproval. Raven sighed when she saw the look on his face; he'd just said how he wanted to keep his and Helena's relationship a secret.

"Oh dear," Starfire muttered, glancing at Nightwing, who had slapped his head.

Helena looked back at him, confused. "What? They didn't know?" She looked at her brother. "I thought you said you told them."

"I said I told Raven," Damian remarked harshly. "I never said anything about the others."

Beast Boy rounded on the young witch. "Wait, you knew, and you didn't say anything?"

"It wasn't my place to say," she said simply.

Nightwing sighed. "We were trying to trying to keep things discreet for the time being. Guess that's
not going to work now." He glanced to Helena, noting how she didn't look too worried about revealing her parentage. She hadn't told on purpose, had she? She was very proud of her parentage, and he wouldn't put it past her of wanting to brag about it after having kept it a secret for so long.

The Blue Beetle Scarab on Jaime's back spoke to him, and he responded in kind. "You're telling me." He looked at Helena in amazement. "Your parents are really Batman and Catwoman?"

Beast Boy was now staring at her with something akin to hero worship. "The bat and the cat. That. Is. So. Cool!" Then it clicked, and he looked back at Damian. "Hey, wait. If Batman is the father of both of you guys, then that means that you two are…"

Helena beamed. "We're siblings!"

Damian growled in response, his fists clenching. Without a word, he grabbed his bag and made to head inside, ignoring the others.

"Dude," Beast Boy called after him, "why didn't you ever tell us you had a sister?"

He paused, then turned back, glaring at them. "A biological accident does not make her my sister."

Helena giggled. "He's just shy. Oh!" She skipped over to the gray-skinned girl beside him. Without permission, she grabbed her hand. "Nice to meet you in person, Raven. I hope we can get along."

The young witch seemed to be somewhat at a loss by Helena's behavior. "Um, thanks…"

Smiling, Helena's eyes drifted to the red crystal embedded in the older girl's forehead. Once again without permission, she reached up and tapped the jewel. "Hey, is that the crystal Trigon is sealed in? How's he fit in there?"

Growling, Damian smacked her hand away from Raven. "Don't touch her!"

Helena gave him a bewildered look. "What's your problem? I was just curious."

Slinging his bag over his shoulder, he turned his back on her. "Your mother should know what happens to curious cats."

Without another word, he stormed inside. The others stared after him, surprised by his reaction.


"What's up with him?" Jaime wondered out loud, and his Beetle beeped in response.

"I'll go see if he's ok," Raven told them, and hurried in after him.

Starfire cleared her throat. "Um, Cyborg, would you be so kind as to show Helena to her room."

The girl's face lit up. "Oh, could you boom us there? I heard you could do that."

The former Justice League member smiled. "Maybe next time."

As the others headed inside, Starfire and Nightwing remained behind, the latter giving Nightwing a questioning look. "I thought you said their relationship was improving."

He almost laughed at her reaction. "That is an improvement. Damian held open hostility before. It's more like… reluctant acceptance now." He noted her raised eyebrow. "Well, not quite acceptance, but we're getting there."
Starfire crossed her arms. "Reluctant acceptance, huh?" She smiled. "Well, I think we can do better than that. We'll have them behaving like a proper brother and sister in no time."

Nightwing felt the urge to roll his eyes, but thought better of it. "It'd be nice, but it'll take more than a trip to the carnival to get those two to bond."

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Having taken on a new form, the creature known as Clayface found a public payphone. Grabbing the receiver, he punched the bottom of the phone, and several dozen quarters came spilling out; he couldn't risk calling the operator and connecting that way.

Putting a quarter into the slot, he dialed his boss' private number. He would no doubt be disappointed over this latest development, but it was important to keep him in the loop. And after a few rings, he heard his boss' voice on the other end.

"This better be important."

"Eh..." Clayface muttered, "I suppose you could say that."

"Did you get the girl?"

Best to deliver the good news first. "Well, no, but you were right, they did go to see the bat. She's here somewhere in Gotham."

"I figured as much. This could complicate things. If the Batman is protecting them, then getting a hold of the girl will become even more difficult."

Well, this was a good enough opening as any. "Yeah, about that. It may become even harder than you think. See, the men we hired, they got taken out by Batman, and he also saw the real me."

There was silence on the other end as his boss took this in. "I presume that means he also knows what you're capable of."

Clayface sighed. "Yes, including my ability to mimic others."

His boss growled in frustration. "If the Batman knows what you can do, then he'll most likely consider Gotham too dangerous a place for her to stay since anyone could potentially be you in disguise."

Rubbing the back of his head, Clayface considered what he was saying. "Yeah, I thought of that too. But do you really think he'd send her away? Wouldn't it be more prudent to keep her close so he could protect her."

"That, my friend, is what he would want you to think. Keeping her far away from you would be safer for her than even him keeping an eye on her. He would most likely want you to think she's still here in an attempt to draw you out, while in truth she'll be far away from you. This leads me to believe that the girl may even be separate from her mother."

This, Clayface disagreed with. "I don't think Catwoman will ever separate from her daughter."

"She would to keep her safe. A parent will do anything for their child. In an attempt to make you think the girl's still here, Catwoman will remain behind so they can draw you out, but the girl will be gone. With someone the Batman trusts and knows will be able to protect her in case you do figure out she's gone."
Having it put that way, Clayface had to admit it made sense. He had just admitted to thinking that the girl and her mother would never separate. As long as Catwoman was in Gotham, Clayface would have assumed the girl was as well, and he’d spend all his time searching for someone who wasn't there, giving the Dark Knight ample time to find him.

"Ok, you’ve got a good point. So where would he send her? To the Justice League?"

"The Justice League has world saving problems, and wouldn't have time to babysit one little girl twenty-four seven. No, he'd most likely send her to someone who wouldn't need to rush off to save the world at a moment's notice. Someone who is just as capable as the Justice League, or at least as potentially so. The next generation of superheroes, perhaps."

Confusion twisted Clayface's features. "I'm not following you."

"Surely you've must have heard the rumors of the secret tower in Jump City. There's been talk of metahumans training there for some time now. A group of superheroes with no obligations to save the world would make an ideal place to hide the girl. She'll be protected by other heroes-in-training." A frustrated groan escaped him. "If she's really there, then our chances of obtaining her are practically nonexistent."

Hearing his boss say this greatly frustrated Clayface. "What? Why?"

"Don't be a fool! These rumors of Titan Tower have been circulating for ages. But why do you think no one has ever tried to take it down? A tower full of a team of metahumans with untapped potential and state-of-the-art security, even alien technology, and most likely capable of contacting the Justice League at a moment's notice. It'd be a fool's errand to try and attack the Tower, if you could even find it, let alone abduct someone from it."

He sighed. "As much as it frustrates me, it would be best for us to lie low for a while. If you disappear for a few months, the Batman may think you've given up now that your true form has been exposed, and he'll at least lower his defenses, perhaps let the girl come back for a while to spend some time with her mother, giving us a chance to strike. Yes, for now it would be best to wait and watch."

Clayface was not happy about that. He'd been after this girl for months. She'd frustrated him beyond belief with the way she and her mother had constantly outwitted, defeated, and escaped from him time and time again. This was no longer just a job; it was personal now. At this rate, he wanted her dead more than anything, but he knew that if he killed her, he'd never get paid, as his boss had clearly stated that he wanted her alive. That was the only thing stopping him from flat out killing the girl. If he couldn't have that, then he at least wanted to deliver her to the boss. In fact, that might even end up as a fate worse than death for her.

In any case, he wasn't willing to wait. "I can do it. With my abilities, I can slip past any security they might have. And they can't hurt me, not really. Hell, I could even disguise myself as one of them and walk through the front door. I can get the girl, just give me another chance."

He waited for the ok from his boss. Regardless of what he said, he was planning on going after her anyway. That little brat would not escape him; he wouldn't allow it. But it would be best to get the boss' permission first.

After several seconds of silence, his boss spoke. "You are certain you can do this?"

A wicked grin crept up his face. "You know what I'm capable of. Who knows, maybe I can even grab one or two other heroes-in-training while I'm there. This could be a blessing in disguise for us."
More silence, then finally. "Very well, if you think you can manage it."

A chuckle escaped Clayface. "Oh, I can. So, where is this Tower?"

"That, my friend, you will have to find out for yourself. There have been rumors of where it's supposedly located, but you'll have to find it on your own."

With that, he hung up. Disappointed, Clayface smashed the phone booth. Scowling, he looked out at the city, cracking his knuckles in anticipation. "Oh, I'll find it. And I'll find that little brat too." He grinned with sinister intent. "Better run, little Huntress, because the one being hunted is you."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: So yay, Helena has now joined the Teen Titans. That'll be interesting. Hopefully she'll be able to fit in with them. Damian doesn't seem too happy about it though. Too bad, just when their relationship was beginning to improve. Maybe things will go better though; it seems like Starfire is making plans to help them bond. But not everything is going according to plan. It seems as if Clayface's boss has figured out Batman's plan to hide Helena away. Will the Teen Titans be able to handle an enemy like Clayface? And what of his boss? Will Batman and Catwoman manage to find out who it is? Come back next week {or the following} to find out.)
(A/N: Here it is, the big confrontation between Damian and Helena where everything comes out in the open. Things have been building up, and now everything is coming to a head. I hope you're ready, because things are about to get ugly. I'm not kidding; if you thought they're previous fights were bad, just take a look at this.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

Chapter 16: Sibling Rivalry

It was good to have friends in high places. Despite all his secrets, Batman had Commissioner Gordon's trust. Which was why, despite the Dark Knight being a vigilantly, who technically worked outside the law, Gordon was willing to let him speak with the prisoners, even though Bullock was against it.

There was a common saying, that a chain was only as strong as its weakest link. As such, Batman had been able to identify which of the men that had worked with Clayface would be the easiest to crack and get answers out of. It was finally time to find out who was after his daughter.

The man Batman had chosen to interrogate had been identified as Marcus Dodd, a common offender that had been in and out of jail over the years for theft and drug possession. Kidnapping was something new though, and the man was clearly uncomfortable about facing the charges.

Acquiescing with Batman's request, Gordon had placed Dodd in a private interrogation room. There would be no cameras or recording, and the only one sitting behind the two-way mirror would be Gordon himself. At least that was the plan, until Bullock had demanded to watch as well, ever distrustful of the Dark Knight.

Not having been informed as to what this was about, Dodd found himself sitting alone in an interrogation room with his hands cuffed behind his back. Batman let him sweat a little to make it easier to break him before finally entering the room. As expected, Dodd reacted with great unease at seeing the Dark Knight.

"Get away from me, man!" he cried. "I'm… I'm in police custody now. You can't touch me."

"That's fine," Batman told him as he approached. Picking up the chair he was meant to sit in, he jammed it against the door so it couldn't be opened.

In the other room, Bullock pointed at Batman. "Hey, are we gonna do anything about that?"

Gordon's eyes narrowed, but he still trusted the Dark Knight. "It's fine. Nothing's happening yet."
Batman turned back to Dodd. "I have some questions for you, and it'll be in everyone's best interest if you tell me the truth."

Dodd stubbornly looked away. "I already told the police everything I know."

Quick as lightning, Batman grabbed his shirt and pulled him close. "Do I look like the police?"

As expected, Dodd broke out in a nervous sweat, yet he attempted to put up a brave front. "I-I'm wise to your game, Bats. You can't hurt me as long as I'm in custody."

Batman stared at him for a moment before letting him go and stepping back. "It's not me you need to worry about." From behind Dodd, an air vent fell down from the ceiling. "It's her."

Catwoman dropped out of the air duct. Grabbing a handful of Dodd's hair, she pulled him back until his chair nearly tipped over. In the other room, Bullock pointed at the leather-clad woman. "Hey, that's…"

Understanding dawned on Gordon. So she was the reason why Batman had put a chair against the door. He'd heard that Catwoman had returned, having read the article by Lois Lane, but didn't know she had come back to Gotham.

"She's a criminal!" Bullock continued. "Shouldn't we arrest her?"

Truth be told, Gordon had mixed feelings about Catwoman. As Bullock pointed out, she was indeed a criminal, but she was also a hero, having helped Batman out numerous times in the past. It was for this reason that he, like the Dark Knight, had been lenient with her, usually only demanding she hand over anything she stole rather than take her in.

"As far as we know, she hasn't committed any crime since her return," he told his former partner. "The Batman wouldn't be teaming up with her if she were doing anything wrong."

Bullock stubbornly crossed his arms, his eyes traveling over the leather-clad woman's curves. "Yeah, well, I can think of a few reasons why he would team up with her."

Back in the room, Catwoman held her claws up to Dodd's face threateningly. "Alright, scumbag, I want to know who's after my daughter and why. And if you don't tell me, I'll scratch your eyes out of your head and feed them to you."

The man had been intimidated by Batman, but Catwoman's threat had him absolutely terrified. "I don't know anything, I swear!"

Batman gave him a skeptical look. "You were working with a giant clay monster, trying to kidnap a 10 year old girl, and you didn't know anything?"

"I didn't! I never knew what he was! He always stayed in his human form before! When he changed into that thing, I was just as surprised as you! I'd never work for a monster like that!"

Batman considered this. It was possible that Clayface had never shown his men what he really was. Perhaps he hadn't wanted to scare them off. If people found out you were a giant shape-shifting clay monster, it could prove to be difficult recruiting people to work for you.

"Then lets try something else. Why were you after the girl?"

Dodd shook his head. "That I don't know either."
"Bullshit!" Catwoman snapped. She placed the tip of her claw against his throat threateningly. "You expect me to believe that you went through all this to kidnap a girl you know nothing about."

"It was just a job! Karlo was looking for recruits, and I took the job."

Catwoman's eyes narrowed in suspicion. "Karlo? Who's Karlo?"

"The clay freak. He went by a few different allies, Matt Hagen, Todd Russell, Johnny Williams, but he introduced himself to us as Basil Karlo. It ain't uncommon for someone to not use their real name in this business, so I didn't think much of it. He said his boss was looking to hire some guys to stage a kidnapping, and I took the job."

Batman thought about this. The name sounded familiar. If he remembered correctly, Basil Karlo was the name of a movie actor that had disappeared several years ago. It was possible that the name Clayface had given his men was just another alias, but it was worth looking into.

"And who's his boss?" Catwoman demanded, asking the question on Batman's mind. "Who hired him to recruit you?"

Dodd shook his head furiously. "I don't know that either."

The table suddenly went flying as Batman kicked it over. "I don't buy it. You took a job knowing nothing about the one who hired you for it, or why he wants you to do the job."

Dodd shrugged. "Karlo was the medium. He was the only one who ever spoke to the guy in charge. The pay was good, and there were only two rules, don't harm the girl, and don't ask questions. So that's what we did." He glanced at Catwoman. "If it's any consolation, we weren't told it was your daughter we were supposed to take."

Her claws dug into his skin. "It doesn't. And it clearly didn't stop you from trying repeatedly."

"And it doesn't convince me that you don't know more than you say you do," Batman added. He leaned down so he was eye level with him. "This is your last chance. You're right that I won't touch you while you're in police custody," he glanced at Catwoman, "but I can't speak for her."

Placing her hand on top of Dodd's head, Catwoman let her claws dig into his scalp almost hard enough to break the skin. "I'll have no problem with it." She placed her mouth close to his ear, whispering dangerously into it. "Ever see those nature documentaries where some wild animal tries to mess with a mother's cub?"

Seeing how nervous Dodd was becoming, Batman began walking backwards towards the door. "Once I leave, she's the one you will have to deal with, and neither I nor anyone else will be coming in until she gives the ok. So you better think of something to tell me before I walk through that door."

Dodd was now sweating worse than ever. As Batman slowly approached the door, he desperately tried to think of something, anything he could give the Dark Knight. But with Catwoman tapping her claws against his cheek, it made it difficult to think straight.

Just as Batman pulled the chair away from the door, he cried out. "Wait! I think I have something! A name!"

Batman hesitated for a moment before putting the chair back. "Go on?"

A sigh of relief escaped Dodd, but it was short-lived as Catwoman's index finger moved to his neck, her claw grazing his throat. "It's not a name, per say. Karlo was always very careful not to mention
his boss' name, but I think he slipped up one time. Just before we stormed that restaurant, he said 'the
doctor is getting impatient'. I think he was referring to his boss. That's all I got, I swear!"

A frown of concentration crossed Batman's face. 'The doctor', was it? Well, it had been a theory that
whoever was after Helena may have wanted her for research due to her being borderline metahuman,
so a doctor of some kind was a possibility. It would certainly narrow down his list of suspects. It was
also possible that, depending on what type of research this doctor was doing, that they were the one
who either created Clayface or turned him into what he was.

Catwoman glanced at Batman questioningly. "What do you think?"

"I think it's worth looking into." He looked back at Dodd. "We appreciate your cooperation. I
suggest you think of anything else that might be helpful in case we decide to come back."

Smiling, Catwoman's hand ran down towards Dodd's crotch, and she dragged her claw over his
private area threateningly. "And don't go trying to kidnap little girls anymore, or else I'll turn you into
one, if you get my meaning."

A bead of sweat ran down Dodd's head. "Y-Yes, ma'am."

She placed a slap to his face for good measure. "Good boy."

With that, she jumped up into the air duct and was gone. Batman opted for the door, leaving a
traumatized looking Dodd behind. Gordon came out to greet him, followed by a sour looking
Bullock.

"So, you find out what you wanted?" the commissioner asked.

"Perhaps," the Dark Knight replied, as vague as always.

Bullock crossed his arms. "And what are you doing with cat-girl?"

"Nothing that concerns you."

Exciting the police station, he met up with Catwoman on building roof where she was waiting for
him by the batwing, newly constructed after Robin had crashed it into Mark Mardon, aka Weather
Wizard, when he was possessed by one of Trigon's demons. She appeared to be deep in thought as
he approached her, and wondered if she had any ideas. "Do you have anything?"

She looked up at him, still appearing thoughtful. "Just what he said about 'the doctor'. A few weeks
before those men started coming after us, Helena had a doctor's appointment."

Batman's eyes narrowed. "What kind of doctor? What kind of appointment?"

She shrugged. "Just a standard checkup. Her doctor was an ordinary physician too. And it was a
woman." She nodded to the police station. "And Dodd clearly said that the person who hired them
was a guy."

"Or so he believed," Batman pointed out. "Clayface was the medium. The men he hired never met
whoever was in charge. It's possible Clayface told them it was a man to mislead them and protect his
employer's identity. Or Clayface could have never made any indication of their gender and Dodd just
made assumed it was a man."

A smile crept up Catwoman's face and she approached him, tracing a finger over his chest.
"Underestimating a woman could prove to be quite disastrous."
His hand came up to stop hers. "As you've proven to me on several occasions." He looked out into the city. "All the same, this gives us something to go on."

Catwoman perked up at that. "You have an idea?"

"A new prime suspect." He led her over to the batwing, and they climbed inside. Going to the computer, brought up a file, and the picture of picture of an older man with a gray beard and bald head appeared on the screen. "Dr. Hugo Strange. He specializes in gene manipulation; his ultimate goal being to cure disease and any other imperfections he feels humans have. I've found several connections between him and the Court of Owls. Seems he was involved in their attempts to find a way to achieve eternal life." He glanced at Catwoman. "Someone like Helena could prove to be very useful in his experiments."

Catwoman was openly scowling. "If you knew all this, then why haven't you taken him down yet?"

"It's complicated. Lets just say that he's very good at keeping his real work secret and maintaining his innocence. I've been working on gathering enough evidence to put him away for good."

That didn't seem good enough for Catwoman. "Screw that! If this freak is after our daughter, I'm not going to play nice and gather evidence! I'm taking him out!"

She began to storm off, but Batman grabbed her. She glared at him and struggled to get out of his grip. What she had told him was true; she wasn't going to do this the 'right way'. This was one of the areas where she and the Dark Knight differed. He had lines he wouldn't cross that she would if she needed to. And protecting Helena was more than enough reason to storm Strange's laboratory, or secret base, or wherever the hell he was doing his so-called work. Forget putting him away, if he was the one after her daughter, she would kill him.

"Let go of me!" she snapped as she continued to struggle. "I don't care about the law when my daughter's safety is at stake! Don't try and stop me!"

He stared at her for a moment before letting her go. "Who said anything about stopping you?"

Like Damian when he first arrived, Helena had no problem making friends and bonding with the others. She looked at Cyborg and Starfire with something akin to hero worship, asking the former a lot of questions about the Justice League that her father had refused to tell her. She was also curious and eager to learn about the Titans and their abilities outside of the files her father kept on them, even attempting to befriend Jaime's Scarab Beetle.

It was rather awkward for Raven. She was the closest to Damian out of all of them, yet while he seemed to hold his sister in contempt, she didn't find anything distasteful about the girl aside from the fact that she was a little too friendly and overly curious. She supposed she could see how Helena could get on Damian's nerves, but she also knew that there was more to it than that, both from what he had told her and what she could see with her own eyes.

While Starfire had been confident about being able to get the two siblings to bond, that hope was beginning to diminish. As the days went by, Damian seemed to grow colder towards his sister. In fact, the more she seemed to bond with the other Titans, the more he seemed to be giving her the cold shoulder.

Helena had noticed this as well, and it confused her. Their relationship had improved from when she and her mother had first arrived, but now it seemed to be relapsing. Ever since she had come to Titan
Tower, Damian had gone from acknowledging her presence to not wanting to have anything to do with her again, and she couldn't figure out why. What had she done?

She wanted to talk to him about it, but simply finding a moment to talk to him was proving to be difficult since he was avoiding her. But it seemed she might have found an opportunity. He was training now in the hologram room, slicing holographic ninjas to digital bits. Donning her Huntress costume, she entered the training room too.

Beast Boy, Jaime, and Raven were standing off to the side, waiting for their turn. While it was common for more than one Titan to train at a time, when Damian got in one of his foul moods, like he was now, he wouldn't give anyone else a chance to fight any holograms, taking them out before anyone else could even land a single blow.

The green boy glanced at her as she came up beside them. "Take a seat. This could take a while."

Jaime nodded in agreement. "Yeah, when he gets like this, your brother will go on for hours."

Huntress smirked and cracked her knuckles. "Good, then he won't be going anywhere for a while."

She stepped out onto the field. Damian, in his Robin getup, had his back to her, fighting off a group of five ninjas as once. Smirking, Huntress whipped out her crossbow and fired, taking out three of the ninjas. Robin stabbed through one of the remaining two and beheaded the last before turning to glare at his sister.

"I'm using the training room now," he growled at her.

She just shrugged. "It's a big room. Let's share."

Still scowling, he turned his back on her. "We've been sharing more than enough."

Huntress blinked. Where had that come from? "Um, did I miss something?"

He ignored her as he resumed fighting the holograms. Huntress cocked her head to the side, trying to figure out what he was thinking. He was behaving the way he had when she first moved into Wayne Manor. Well, she wouldn't have that. Pulling out her pole, she joined him in battle, taking out a few ninjas beside him. He allowed it for a few minutes, then turned his sword on her, the blade meeting her metal pole.

"What's your problem?" she demanded, pushing against his sword.

He pushed back, just as hard. "The same thing that's been the problem since you and your mother arrived in the first place."

She cut her eyes at him. "Are you really going to bring this up again? I thought you were over that."

"Kind of hard get over when someone begins stealing everything from you."

The two came apart and began fighting each other, completely ignoring the digital ninjas. Sparks flew from their weapons each time they came together as the two did battle. The other Titans looked on, flabbergasted as the two continued to fight until Raven sighed and shut off the holograms, letting the two duke it out.

Robin brought his sword down, and Huntress caught it with her pole. "What are you talking about? Just what have I been stealing?"
"My home, my father, and now my friends. You're just inserting yourself into my life and taking over."

With a scowl, she pulled back and went on the attack, forcing Robin to back away as she hammered his sword again and again. "Do you even hear yourself? Do you seriously think I'm trying to take your place in our father's life, or your friends'? I want to be a part of your life, I don't want to take it over."

Ducking beneath her pole as she swung it at him, he swiped his sword at her, making sure to use the blunt side of the blade, but there was no need to worry as she jumped out of range of his sword. His missing just seemed to make him angrier.

"It all comes so easy to you, doesn't it?" he snarled. "The prodigal child, the daughter of Batman and Catwoman, complete with super senses. It all comes so naturally to you; with your metahuman senses and other abilities. Well, let me tell you something, hard work beats natural talent every time."

Surprise crossed Huntress face at his declaration, but it soon gave way to anger. "Is that what you think? You think this just comes easy to me?" She attacked furiously, beating Robin back with savage blows from her pole. "I may have special abilities, but I still trained very hard. Want to know what I did for seven months when I was eight to enhance my senses to their fullest? I spent an entire month blindfolded, not seeing anything that entire time, sharpening my already heightened other senses. Then I did the same for another month with special earphones so I couldn't hear, then another with nose plugs so I couldn't smell. Then I cut off two senses at once, switching every month before spending the seventh month not seeing, hearing, or smelling anything, perfecting my abilities. You think that wasn't hard? It was very hard, but it paid off."

This didn't seem to make Robin feel any better. He thrust his sword at her, and she jumped straight up, balancing on the end of it. Robin looked up at her in surprise just before the end of her pole came down on his head, and she pole-vaulted over him. He whirled around as she came down behind him, only to have her drop down and kick his feet out from under him.

Seething, he glared up at her as she looked down at him in contempt. "And I wasn't born with fighting skills either. I may have great reflexes, but I had to learn to fight, just like you did. I went through extensive training my entire life. Mom knew what kind of people were out there in the world, and she wanted me to be able to protect myself in case I ever ran into them. She and I studied, trained, and ate properly everyday to stay in perfect shape and push our limits. I wasn't just born with special skills, I worked hard to sharpen them and reach my fullest potential. So don't talk about things you know nothing about."

For some reason, this only seemed to make Robin angrier, and he jumped to his feet, holding his sword out in front of him, assuming a fighting stance. "So now you're saying that you trained harder than me? The perfect protégé to take the Batman mantle, huh?"

Huntress' mouth dropped open. "Oh my God, are you jealous? Is that the real reason you don't like me? Do you think I'm some kind of threat to your place beside Dad or something?" At Robin's growl, she knew she hit the nail on the head. "That's it, you're jealous of me! No, not just me, of my mother too, of the relationship we have, and of the one she and our father share. That's why you don't like her either."

From the sidelines, Raven looked at Robin nervously. Being an empath, she was able to sense other people's emotions, Robin's especially due to their bond. She had guessed long ago what he was feeling, even if he didn't realize it himself, or simply refused to acknowledge it. And something was telling her that he wouldn't like having his sister shoving some of his innermost feelings into his face. And the fact that she was rendering some of his feelings as unjustifiable was only making him
angrier.

Her suspicions were proven to be true when Robin reacted very hostilely to Huntress’ declaration. "You think I'm jealous of you, or your mother? What do I have to be jealous of? You're just an accident that was a result of our father having a moment of weakness with a common thief who can't keep her legs crossed around him."

Huntress felt her temper snap as he insulted her mother in such a crude way, making her parents' relationship sound so demeaning. "It's better than having a mother who's a psychotic murderer who had to drug and rape our father just so she could have a suitable heir, one she later considered unworthy and even tried to kill off."

On the sidelines, Beast Boy's mouth dropped open. He exchanged a shocked look with Jaime before glancing at Raven. "Dude, and I thought the circumstances of your birth were messed up."

Robin's very mask seemed to twist with the fury that was boiling within him. He cried out and swung his sword. Huntress blocked with her pole, and he threw a punch, but she caught his fist. Her hand shook as she gripped his fist, preventing him from landing the blow, before she back-flipped away from him, putting distance between the two, and he gave her a look of fury. "You know nothing!"

"That's because you don't tell me anything! Every time I try to get close, you just push me away! I don't get why you want to make things so difficult!"

"You're the one who made things difficult," Robin insisted, pointing his sword at her. "By coming into my life in the first place!"

He charged at her, sword raised, Huntress came at him as well. On the sides, Beast Boy warped into a turtle, hiding inside his shell, while Raven and Jaime cringed in anticipation.

Before the two could meet, a green energy beam struck the ground between them, causing them both to come to a halt. Starfire flew down in between them, holding her hands out to prevent them from coming together again.

"What is the meaning of this?" she demanded furiously. Her attention shifted to the other Titans. "And how could you let this go on?"

Coming out of his shell, Beast Boy turned back to normal. "Dude, what were we supposed to do? You've seen them."

"No," Raven said regretfully, "she's right. We should have told her what was happening."

"What is happening?" another voice demanded, and Nightwing entered the room. He looked at the two siblings with disapproval. "Well?"

Huntress threw her metal pole against the wall and pointed at her brother. "Ask him! I'm done with this! I tried to be a good sister, but he's determined to keep me as a stranger! Well, fine then! Screw you, Damian!"

She stormed out of the room, shoving past Nightwing and the other Titans. They watched her go, and the latter turned to Starfire and Robin. "Just what went on here?"

"It was bad," Jaime admitted. "Real bad."

"It's none of your damn business, Grayson," Robin snarled. "It's family stuff. Stay out of it."
Then he too marched out of the room, not even looking at anyone. The other Titans looked back at Starfire and Nightwing and began backing away.

"Um…" Beast Boy muttered, "we're just gonna… We'll catch you later."

The three hurried after Huntress and Robin, leaving the other two heroes alone in the room. They exchanged uncertain looks before Nightwing sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. "Ok, I don't know what that was about, but I can make a pretty good guess."

Starfire was frowning. "This is not what I was hoping for. Now they're physically fighting. We need to get them to work together in a way so they'll set aside their differences."

Nightwing considered this. "I guess it's worth a shot. Any ideas?"

The Tamaranean sighed sadly. "Not right now, but I'll let you know if I come up with something."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: So, yeah, I told you it would be bad. At least we know why Damian feels the way he does about Helena and Selina. And, truthfully, I can't exactly blame him. Not that he's handling things the right way, but hopefully you can understand what he's feeling. A lot of people, "real world" people, give criticize Damian's character for his attitude, but I think a lot of it comes to him having a lot of emotions that he doesn't know how to deal with or express. Hopefully Starfire will be able help him and Helena bond. And in other news, Batman and Catwoman now have another lead. Will this one prove to be the right one? Stay tuned to find out.)
Chapter Notes

(A/N: Ok, I have some really good news and some minor bad news. The good news is that for the past couple of years, I've been writing an original novel. I've recently hired an editor, and just heard back from them a couple of days ago. Now for the bad news. In order to dedicate some time to editing my original novel, I'm going to have to go back to updating this story every two weeks once more. Don't worry, I've have no intention of abandoning it, but you'll have to wait another week between updates. Sorry. For now, enjoy this shorter than I would have liked chapter. It was going to be a lot longer, but I decided to split it up into two chapters instead, so enjoy the first part.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 17: Intruders

In the days that followed, Helena gave Damian exactly what he wanted, her absence from his life. She had tried, really she did, but it was clear that he didn't want anything to do with her. She thought she'd be able to change his mind and have a real sibling bond with him, but that hope was almost gone after their fight.

She considered what she had learned during that time, how Damian was jealous of her. Now just of her, but of her mother too, and the relationship she had with their father compared to his own mother. That included the different relationships each of them had to their own mothers. Envy could be a powerful thing; was it any wonder it was one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Not only that, it seemed he was insecure, almost threatened by her and her abilities, as if he saw her as someone trying to take his place, not just in their father's life, but now in his friends'. She supposed that was one of the biggest factors that made him begin acting coldly towards her once again, when he saw how well she was interacting with them.

But what did he expect of her, to always just stand in the shadows so he could feel secure? To hide who and what she was so he wouldn't feel jealous? It wasn't her fault she had unique abilities. It wasn't her fault her father held more affection for her mother and had a better relationship with her than he did with Talia. And it certainly wasn't her fault that she had a better relationship with her mother than he did with his.

Still, she did acknowledge that she went too far with what she had said. The circumstances of her brother's birth must have been a sensitive topic for him. But then again, he had brought up the subject and provoked her into giving her rather harsh response. She regretted what she had said, even if it was true, but he had ticked her off.

If there was any hope for salvaging or building their relationship, she certainly didn't see it. As long as Damian held these feelings and continued to see her in this negative light, she didn't know how things would ever improve. She just hoped he would be able to come to terms with his feelings and reach out to her. But until then, she would give him his space.
That had been a little over a week ago. It was now late at night, and Helena was sleeping. Yet even as she dreamed, she had a keen sixth sense for danger, which was how she sensed the approach in her sleep. On reflex, her eyes snapped open and she lashed out at the dark figure standing over her bed.

She never landed the blow. Her hand was smacked away, and something was placed over her mouth. Her mind just barely registered the smell of chloroform before it began to take affect. She struggled, but her muscles were already failing her and she was losing consciousness. A natural sleep she could wake up from when in danger, but a chemical induced one was something else, and she soon dropped off into a much deeper slumber.

Even so, her body's rapid healing allowed her to fight off the affects of the chloroform faster than a normal person, and she climbed out of the depths of unconsciousness. She became aware of several things right away. First, she was no longer in her bed, and second, she was no longer in her pajamas. In fact, she was in her Huntress costume. How she had gotten in it, she had no idea. Had whoever chloroformed her dressed her in her suit? If so, why? They even left her with her utility belt.

She wasn't the only one here either. She sensed another presence. Sitting up, she found Damian, in full Robin getup, lying down beside her, unconscious. They were still in Titan Tower, in the communication room. The large screen lay before them, powered on. On the screen, someone was sitting in a rotating chair, their back to the camera.

Huntress scowled, not sure what was going on. Where were the other Titans? How had someone gotten passed the security system? Why were they here? What the hell was going on? Had that Clayface person found her?

No, if he had found her, he would have taken her to his boss. This was something else. Leaning over, she shook her brother awake. It was harder than she thought, and she figured that he must have been chloroformed too.

With a sigh, she reached into her utility belt and retrieved a capsule of smelling salt. She placed it beneath Robin's nose, and watched as he began to awaken. His eyes snapped open, and he pushed her hand away from him. "What is that? Get it away from me." He sat up, rubbing his nose. His glare soon became a look of confusion as he looked around. "What the hell is going on?"

"I was hoping you could tell me," Huntress replied as she put away the smelling salt. "I woke up here, same as you." She cracked her knuckles. "And I'm going to kick the ass of whoever undressed me."

A deranged laughter came from the screen, and the two preteens turned towards it. Whoever was sitting in the chair had found what she had said absolutely hilarious. A little too hilarious perhaps. And there was something very… off about the laugh too.

"If it makes you feel any better," they said, "it wasn't me that undressed you, but an associate of mine."

A deranged laughter came from the screen, and the two preteens turned towards it. Whoever was sitting in the chair had found what she had said absolutely hilarious. A little too hilarious perhaps. And there was something very… off about the laugh too.

"If it makes you feel any better," they said, "it wasn't me that undressed you, but an associate of mine."

Huntress glared. "Then I'll just kick both your asses."

"Who the hell are you?" Robin demanded. "Do you know who were are?"

"Oh, I know. I know very well."

The rotating chair slowly turned around to reveal the speaker. Skin of the purest white, hair as green as spring grass, wild yellow eyes that held the deepest of madness with black rings around them,
blood red lips twisted into a permanent sinister grin of pure insanity, exposing yellowish teeth. Not one bit of it was makeup.

"The question is, do you know me? I know you, Damian and Helena Wayne."

Robin's eyes narrowed. "Joker. How the hell did you get here?"

The mad clown laughed maniacally. "Oh, I have my ways, and my secrets. And I now know yours, little bird. And now that I know who you are, it's easy enough to guess who the bat is." He frowned. "Honestly, it's a little disappointing. Part of me wishes I still didn't know, so I could keep guessing. After all, multiple choice is the best option."

"Where are our friends?" Huntress demanded.

More deranged laughter, though this did not come from the Joker, and was much higher pitched. Popping up on frame was another clown, this one female, with blond hair in unbraided pigtails, the end of the right one dyed blue and the one on the left dyed pink. Her lips were coated with black lipstick, and her face covered in white makeup with black eye-shadow so that it almost looked as of she were wearing a mask. She was dressed in a revealing red, blue, and black corset and shirt, and thigh-high boots of two different colors. "Oh, they're as snug as bugs in a rug, right puddin'?"

Reaching over, the Joker stroked her chin. "That's right, my little harlequin. Why don't you show them?"

"You got it, Mistah J!"

The camera turned slightly to show Starfire, Cyborg, Nightwing, and the Teen Titans tied up and unconscious. An albino hyena was circling them hungrily, and Harley skipped over to them, wielding a large wooden sludge hammer. She held the hammer out over Cyborg's head, as if she was about to smash it in. Then she moved to Starfire, wobbling the end back and forth, then shifted over to Jaime.

"Eeny, meeny, miny, moe," Harley said in a singsong voice, now holding the hammer over Raven's head. Her black lips shifted into a wicked smile, and she lifted the hammer as if she were going to bring it down. "Give the raven a mighty blow."

Robin reached out to the screen. "Don't!"

Harley froze, blinked a few times, then grinned and held the hammer behind her back, as if she were caught doing something naughty. The Joker just laughed as he moved the camera back to him. "Now that I have your attention, let's have a little fun."

Robin glared. He'd never met the Joker himself, or his so-called girlfriend, but the files he had read about them, not to mention what he'd been told by his father, seemed pretty accurate based on what he was seeing. "You think this is fun? You're sick."

Harley hopped back into frame and placed a hand to the Joker's forehead. "Aw, puddin', are you feeling ok?"

A frown crossed the Joker's face. "Now that you mention it, spending so much time in Arkham has left me feeling a little under the weather."

She pouted. "Oh, my poor, poor puddin'. You've got dark rings around your eyes, and you're looking rather pale." She giggled at her joke. "Good thing I'm a doctor."
"Any suggestions?"

Twirling her hammer around, she placed a kiss on his cheek. "A good healthy dose of death." She pointed the hammer at the Titans. "So, which one will it be?"

Huntress pounded her fist against the screen, cracking it. "If you touch them, you're dead."

Grinning, the Joker crossed his arms. "That will be up to you. You two are going to have to find us before I start to feel too under the weather and decide to take my little Harley's medical advice. Let's see if the bat's offspring are up to their old man's standards."

In the background, Harley waved. "Toodle-loo!"

The screen went black, leaving Robin and Huntress in the dark. The two stared at the blank screen for a moment before Damian kicked over a chair. "Damn it!"

"We have to find them," Huntress told him. "They're somewhere in the Tower, but I couldn't see where, it was too dark."

"No kidding," Robin snapped. He crossed his arms, and seemed to become lost in his thoughts. "But it doesn't make sense. How did they get in undetected? How did they capture the others?"

Huntress was wondering the same thing. She had looked into the security since coming here. It would be nearly impossible for someone to break in. And how had the Joker and Harley found them? When and how had they broken out of Arkham? Why hadn't their father informed them of their escape? Did he not want them to worry? Did he not know? And why did the two clowns come after them? To get to Batman? So many questions, not enough answers.

"We should contact Dad," she suggested. "Maybe he and Mom can-"

"There's not enough time," Robin told her. "That clown freak will kill them." He glanced at her, and it was obvious that he was trying to hide his desperation. "You read his file; you know what he's like. He gets off on chaos, and he's completely unpredictable. We have to do something about this ourselves."

Huntress stared at him, wondering. He'd said 'we'. Was he actually… asking for her help? Or as close to asking for her help as he ever would. It was somewhat surprising. Her brother, it seemed, was a loner most of the time when it came to fighting, with the exception of his team and their father. Even when they were on ok terms back at Wayne Manor, he never cared to fight with her. But now he was asking for her help, to save his friends.

Despite the situation, a smile grazed her lips. "I'm with you. I always have been. So what's the plan?"

He pulled out his sword. "It's obvious. We search the Tower until we find them, and then we take them down." His eyes shined with righteous fury behind his mask. "I'm not losing anyone else."

Coming up to stand beside him, Huntress whipped out her pole and twirled it around. "And you can count on me, brother."

He cut his eyes at her. "Don't press your luck."

Together, they began making their way through the Tower, searching for their friends. From the looks of things, all the Tower's power was down, leaving everything in darkness, and the security was shut off. It gave Huntress an uneasy feeling, as she still didn't understand how the two clowns had managed to accomplish this. But what confused her more was something else she was sensing.
Something about the situation that just didn't add up.

She froze as she detected something, holding out her hand to halt Robin. "Wait."

He gave her a suspicious look. "What is it?"

She placed a finger to her lips to shush him and closed her eyes. Robin waited, wondering what she was sensing, assuming that's why she had stopped him. Neither moved for several moments before something large burst through the wall. A massively large man with bulging muscles of such a large size that it should have made it impossible to move came storming through the wall. He wore a mask and had several strange gadgets attached to his back with several green tubes running from them and going into his torso.

"Bane!" Robin cried, just before the large man punched down towards him. The two heroes jumped away, and the floor all but exploded into dust as the brute's fist shook the entire Tower.

"Where the hell did he come from?" Huntress cried.

"The clowns must have brought him along for muscle support," Robin replied. "We can take him."

Bane roared and charged at them. Robin rushed at him as well, dropping down and going between his legs as Huntress jumped up and came down on his head. She landed beside Robin behind him, and Bane turned around. Both lunged at him, delivering a kick to his stomach, and Bane slammed into the wall, cracking it from the floor to the ceiling.

Bane grabbed a handful of each of their capes and lifted them off the ground. He slammed the two together and tossed them away from him. He stormed a few feet to the left and lifted up a table with ease. As the preteens started to get to their feet, Bane threw the table at them. They ducked as the table flew over their heads, then felt the ground shake as Bane came charging at them, arms extended outward to grab them.

Robin and Huntress glanced at each other. The former cupped his hands together and Huntress jumped up onto them. He gave her a boost, allowing her to jump higher, and she kicked off the ceiling, launching herself at Bane. She brought her staff down on his head, and Bane dropped to his knees. Huntress landed in front of him and held her hand out to Robin. He grasped it, and she swung him around, allowing him to deliver a kick to Bane's head, knocking him over.

A groan escaped the medically enhanced brute and he began to get to sit up. Robin growled impatiently as he and Huntress backed away. "He's not going to stay down." He recalled when Trigon had possessed the Justice League, and remembered how Batman prevented possession by injecting himself with a special neurotoxin specifically designed to stop Bane. "Father has a toxin that can take him down, but I don't have any."

Huntress smirked and reached for her utility belt. "You mean this?"

Robin gave her a look of disbelief. "Where'd you get that?"

"Nicked it from the Batcave. Thought it'd be good to have."

Impressed against his will, Robin smirked. "Alright, let's use it."

Bane roared to the ceiling and grabbed a couch off to the side. He lifted it over his head and charged at them. Robin and Huntress glanced at each other, seeming to think the same thing. They jumped up and kicked off each other's feet, sending themselves flying in different directions as the couch came down where the two had been standing. Still in the air, the two kicked off the walls,
both heading back towards Bane.

Aware of the toxin Huntress held, Bane's hand shot out and grabbed her as she came at him. She didn't hesitate before tossing it to Robin. He caught it as he landed on Bane's back, wrapping his legs around the brute's neck to keep balance. Bane reached up with his free hand to grab him, but Huntress whacked it with her pole, allowing Robin to inject the neurotoxin into his neck.

Bane grunted, his body spasming and contorting. He dropped Huntress, and Robin slid off his back as his hands went to his head, grabbing it tightly as his muscles bulged. They watched for several seconds as Bane's body throbbed erratically, but then he seemed to calm and turned his attention back to them, seemingly no longer affected by the toxin.

"The hell?" Huntress cried. "It didn't work. Why?"

Robin scowled. "He must be using a different type of Venom that counteracts the neurotoxin. Damn it."

Bane chuckled as he slowly stomped towards the two. Huntress and Robin backed away, as he came at them, cracking his knuckles with a murderous look in his eyes. Robin held his sword out in front of him as Huntress did the same with her pole. Bane just sneered, looking unconcerned with their refusal to give up.

"We don't have time for this," Robin growled. "We need to get to the others before that clown freak does something. Do you have any more of that stuff?"

Huntress shook her head. "That's all I brought." Her eyes shifted to the green tubes going into Bane's arms and back. "We have to cut off his supply of Venom. Think you can sever those tubes?"

His grip on his sword tightened. "If I can get close enough. Can you provide a distraction?"

She smirked. "With pleasure."

Tossing aside her pole, she grabbed at her crossbow and fired at Bane. He held up his massively large arms, the arrows burying in them. As he lowered them, he saw several smoke bombs come flying at him, and they exploded in his face. Coughing, he backed away as Huntress fired her grapple gun over his head. It pulled her along, and she passed by over his head.

Bane made a grab for her, missed, and he whirled around, only to have Huntress throw a bola at him. It wrapped around his head, the beads smashing into his face. Robin made his move, charging at Bane and jumping up. He slashed at the tubes, sending Venom spraying from the severed ends, and Bane backhanded him before he could cut the last two.

As he fell to the ground, Bane whirled around to face him and lifted his large foot to bring it down on him. Huntress immediately threw several shuriken at him, and they cut through the remaining tubes. Bane cried out as no more Venom was pumped into his body, the green fluid spraying in all different directions. He stumbled about before finally collapsing.

Huntress hurried over to her brother, offering him her hand. He hesitated for a moment before taking it, and she pulled him to his feet. They stared down at the fallen brute of a man, watching as his bulging muscles began deflating like balloons, shrinking down in size as Venom seeped out of him.

"Nice moves," Robin admitted.

Huntress looked at him, surprised, but then a smile crept up her face. "You too."
(A/N: Well would you look at that, Damian and Helena are actually working together, and pretty well too. They'll have to in order to beat the Joker. You know he had to make an appearance at some point. And now he's playing some sick game with the two siblings. But how did he, Harley, and Bane get into Titan Tower and capture the others in the first place? Is Clayface's boss behind this too? Will Robin and Huntress be able to save the day? And what will they do now that their identities are exposed. More to come soon. Remember, I'm updating every two weeks again.)
The Joke Is On You

Chapter Notes

(A/N: Hello to all. Sorry to have left you on that cliffhanger for so long, but working on an original novel takes a LOT more time and effort than a fanfic. But now I'm here with the next chapter. Finally we'll get our answers to how Joker, Bane, and Harley got into the Tower and what their aim is. Robin and Huntress have managed to hold their own against Bane, but how will they deal with the Clown Prince of Crime? And what of their friends? I shall leave you in anticipation no longer.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 18: The Joke Is On You

Staring down at Bane's fallen form, Huntress and Robin had their attention drawn as a very unwelcome voice spoke over the announcer. "Hello! Testing. Is this thing on? Harley, is it working?"

"Yes, Mistah J. I read you loud and clear."

"Yes, but can they hear me?"

"They should be able to."

Huntress glared up at the loud speaker. "We can hear you."

"Ah, there you are. Good. I do hope you're close. I'm getting rather antsy. I may need to have my doctor smash a few eggs. Egg noggins, that is."

"Ready and waiting, puddin'? Just say the word!"

Though he knew it wasn't a camera, Robin pointed at the loudspeaker. "You better not hurt them!"

"Then you better hurry up and get here. I'm getting bored, and I may decide to kill more than time. But for now, my darling diva here shall entertain you with a little number."

"Our song, puddin'?"

"I wouldn't pick any other, my sweet."

Much to Robin and Huntress' irritation, Harley began singing *Crazy* by Gnarls Barkley. The irony of the song choice was not lost to either of them; it certainly fit the psychotic couple.

"I remember when. I remember, I remember when I lost my mind. There was something so pleasant about that place. Even your emotions have an echo in so much space."

"I hate this song," Robin growled, throwing a glare up at the intercom.

"It certainly suits them though," Huntress pointed out.
Behind his mask, Robin rolled his eyes. "This whole thing is just a big joke to them. Let's just find them before they take it farther than they already have.

"Does that make me craaaaazy?" Harley's singing voice continued to boom over the intercom. "Does that make me craaaaazy? Does that make me craaaaazy. Possibly."

Scowling, Huntress fired an arrow at the intercom, and it went dead. "Enough of that. Come on, let's find these freak already. I'm going to make them regret ever leaving Arkham."

Robin was frowning in disgust as well. "You'll have to get behind me. Let's go."

With one last glance at the fallen Bane, the two left the room. Where the Joker and Harley were was anyone's guess, but there were only so many places they could be. The problem was finding them before the Joker had any of their friends killed. He hadn't given them an actual time limit, but he made it clear that he would have one or more of them executed if they took too long.

As they searched, Huntress was deep in thought. Something about that battle with Bane hadn't felt right, but she couldn't quite put her finger on it. Something had been off though. It was almost as if…

"This door is locked," said Robin as he tried to turn the knob, bringing his sister out of her thoughts. He tried it again, but to no avail. "A good sign."

Taking a step back, he kicked the door open. The room inside was dark as well, and the two preteens charged inside. A vicious growl reached their ears, and they turned to find the albino hyena inside, salivating at the sight of them. Huntress had read that the Joker had obtained two albino hyenas. If one was here, where was the other one?

It wasn't alone though, a certain girl dressed as a clown wielding a hammer was standing behind it. It seemed she had changed clothes, and was now wearing her red and black clown suit, her jester hood, and a big smile on her face.

"Maybe I'm craaaaazy," she was still singing as she casually walked behind the hyena, her arms leisurely draped over the length of the hammer resting on her shoulder. "Maybe you're craaaaazy. Maybe we're craaaaazy. Probably."

"Crazy for sure," Robin grumbled. "Where are our friends?"

The crazed clown girl shook a finger at them. "Ah, ah, ah. You've got to win the game before you get the prize, sillies."

A frustrated growl escaped the Boy Wonder. "Don't be stupid, Harley. Joker's just using you. He always has been."

Harley stomped her foot. "Shut up! You don't know anything! I mean, sure he smacks me around a bit, but all couples have their problems. I know my puddin' loves me."

"Yeah," Robin replied, "the way a person loves their pet, the way a kid loves their favorite toy. He doesn't want anyone playing with or taking what's his, but if he breaks it or throws it away, then it's fine."

It wasn't working. Huntress knew it wouldn't from Harley's profile in the Batcave. One could even say she was addicted to the Joker. Even if she did resolve to have nothing to do with him, simply seeing his face or hearing his voice was more than enough to draw her back in.

She decided to try a different tactic. "Come on, Dr. Quinzel. You're a psychiatrist. You have to
recognize you're situation."

Harley shook a finger at her. "Uh, uh. One of the most important rules of being a psychiatrist, never psychoanalyze your friends, your family, or yourself." She pointed a gloved hand at the two as she gave the hyena a command. "Ok, baby, go get them!"

Snarling the hyena charged at them. Robin glared and kicked out at it. Surprisingly, the beast ducked beneath his foot and pounced on him. Robin grabbed at the hyena's snapping jaws, keeping them away from his neck as saliva dripped down on him.

Huntress whirled around, delivering a roundhouse kick to the hyena, knocking the beast off him. The hyena whimpered and slid across the room, but it recovered quickly, shaking its head, and began growling at her.

The girl blinked, wondering how it had shaken off the blow so easily. The hyena charged at her and she pulled out her crossbow, firing at it. The hyena leapt out of the path of the arrows and jumped at her. She reacted quickly, tossing aside her crossbow and whipping out her pole. The hyena's jaws bit down on the length, struggling to knock the girl onto her back as she held it back.

"Huntress!" Robin cried, but was distracted as a shadow fell over him.

Harley was standing above him, hammer raised, a deranged grin on her face. "Time to play whack-a-bird!"

She brought the hammer down, and Robin rolled to the side. He jumped to his feet and kicked the hammer out of her hands, sending it went flying threw the air where it landed on the other side of the room. Robin threw a punch at her, but Harley was very quick and flexible, able to bend her body out of range from his kicks and punches.

"You gotta be quicker!" Harley sang as she danced away from him.

Huntress was still fighting against the hyena. "How about this!"

She whirled around, swinging her pole. The hyena flew off the length of it and crashed into Harley. Robin stood above her as Harley looked up at him, frowning. "You hurt my baby!"

From seemingly out of nowhere, she pulled out what seemed to be a modified flare gun. Robin briefly wondered where the hell she had been hiding that before she fired at him. Whatever blasted out of the end wasn't fatal, but it still blasted him off his feet.

The hyena rolled, once again shaking its head, as Harley got to her feet. She pointed at Huntress, and gave her pet the command, and the beast charged at her. Huntress flung a bola at the animal, and it wrapped around its feet, effectively binding its legs. Harley gave a shriek of rage and pointed her weapon at her.

"My baby! You'll pay for that!"

She fired. Huntress used her pole to deflect the blast. She managed to stop it from hitting her, but the pole was knocked out of her hands. Harley grinned broadly and took aim again as the girl's hands went to her utility belt.

A Batarang flew through the air, knocking the weapon from Harley's hand. She glared at the one who threw it, and saw Robin charging at her. The two met and began to engage in hand-to-hand combat. Huntress watched for several moments, studying the clown's movements, trying to figure things out. This whole thing was making less and less sense to her.
As Robin threw a punch, Harley grabbed his arm, twisting it around his body and pulling him into a headlock. Smirking, she turned to Huntress, giving her a mocking look. "What's wrong, sweetie? Don't you care about your brother?"

Huntress continued to study her, her eyes narrowing behind her mask. "What are you playing at?"

Growling, Robin brought his foot flying up, kicking Harley in the face. She released him, and he whirled around, burying his elbow in her gut. Huntress made her move as the clown doubled over, throwing an explosive shuriken at the older woman's feet. It went off, resulting in a small explosion, blasting Harley off her feet. She hit the ground hard and groaned.

"You ok?" Huntress asked, tossing him a pair of handcuffs.

Robin caught them without even looking at her. "I'm fine. Nice shot."

As Harley started to sit up, rubbing her head, Robin grabbed her hand and pulled it behind her back, slapping the handcuffs on her, then did the same to her other hand. Harley glanced at him over her shoulder, pouting. "Hey, what gives?"

"No more fooling around," Robin told her. "You better takes us to our friends, right now."

She smirked. "Oh, I didn't know you two were on such good terms. I'm surprised you could work together so well."

Glaring down at her, Robin pulled her to her feet, keeping a hold of the chain of the handcuffs. "Get moving."

Harley's black lips grew into a bigger smile. "Whatever you say."

Instead of moving forward, she did a backflip over him. She must have been double-jointed, because she was able to twist her arms around in Robin's grip as she landed behind him. Wrapping her hands around his throat, she lifted him in the air, strangling him. Huntress charged forward and kicked Harley's legs out from beneath her. She dropped down, releasing Robin, and he quickly got to his feet.

Putting some distance between him and her, he pulled out his sword and pointed it at her. "Try that again, I dare you."

Retrieving her pole and crossbow, Huntress pointed them at the clown as well. "So do I."

With an innocent look on her face, Harley held up her hands. "Ok, ok. You win. I'll take you to your friends."

With Harley out in front and Robin right behind her with his sword pointed at her back, Huntress followed close behind with her crossbow aimed at her. Harley hummed happily to herself as she led them through the tower, seemingly unconcerned with what was happening. But that wasn't what was bothering Huntress. As strange as it sounded, there was no sense of danger she was feeling.

She'd always had a sixth sense for danger, and been able to feel it her whole life. But for some reason, ever since she had woken up, even with the danger she and Robin had just faced, even with their friends being held hostage by the Joker, she hadn't felt any sense of danger, and she just couldn't figure out why. There was no malicious intent from Harley or Bane, not even the hyena. It was like when she trained with the holographic ninjas. Despite the threat they seemed to present, there was no feeling of threat or danger.
Had she been drugged in a way that dulled her enhanced senses? No, that couldn't be it. They had been working just fine. Her heightened eye sight, hearing, smell, all her senses, had been working just as they always had. Her healing ability was just as good as ever, her speed, her strength her reflexes, nothing was off about them. Yet this was clearly a threatening situation. Not just for her, but for her brother and friends as well. So why was there no feeling of danger? What were Joker and Harley doing or planning that would leave her feeling this way? Were they just fooling around right now and planning something bigger later?

The thought sent made her stomach clench. Were Joker and Harley really that mad to think of life and death as a mere game? Did they truly not see the danger in this, or how horrible it was to take a life? Was that why she didn't sense any hostility from them, because there was no true hostility or malice, because it was just a joke? The thought almost made Huntress shiver. And what did this mean for their friends? What sick, twisted fate would be in store for them all in the same of a joke from the two psychotic clowns?

"Stop," she said suddenly, and the three came to a halt.

Robin glanced at her out of the corner of his eye, not letting Harley leave his line of vision. "What's wrong?"

Huntress was visibly in deep concentration. "This whole thing is all wrong. What I'm feeling. No, what I'm not feeling. It's not right. There's no sense of danger. It's almost like... they don't plan on killing anyone, at least not now. Like this is just a game, or part of some big joke." She pointed at Harley. "Just what are you planning? What type of game is this?"

Harley's smile slowly grew wider, and she began laughing. "That's just it exactly. It's a game. One you're playing very well. Now it's time for the boss level."

Using her foot, she pushed open a door. Inside was yet another dark room, and the sound of lazy applause came from within. Harley calmly walked inside, followed closely by Robin and Huntress. The door shut behind them, and a light came on, illuminating the ringleader. The Joker was still sitting in the chair, clapping his hands. A light chuckle escaped him as he got to his feet.

"Well done, Harley," he said to his companion. "You played your part well." He held his arms out, as if he were going to embrace them. "And you two, Robin, Huntress, congratulations on getting this far. The game is almost over."

Robin took his sword off Harley, while Huntress kept her crossbow on her. "No more games, Joker. Where are our friends? You better not have hurt them."

The Clown Prince of Crime chuckled. "Oh, they're still alive."

He snapped his fingers, and all the lights came on. The others were still bound and unconscious on the other side of the room, unaware of what was taking place. Both Robin and Huntress breathed sighs of relief at seeing them alive.

The Joker snickered. "Oh, don't breathe easy just yet. In fact," he pointed what looked a weapon similar to the one Harley had wielded at them, "don't breathe at all."

Robin flung a Batarang at him, but the Joker avoided it and fired. What seemed to be a gas grenade flew towards them, but Robin kicked it away before it went off. It landed on the other side of the room where it unleashed a cloud of yellowish green gas. Both Robin and Huntress knew what it was; the Joker was known for using a toxic gas that caused a person to laugh uncontrollably until they suffocated to death, dying with a smile on their face.
The Joker's green eyebrows rose. "Oh, nice move." He took aim again, his grin widening. "But can you keep them all away?"

Robin's eyes narrowed. "Huntress, watch her," he said, referring to Harley as he charged at the deranged clown.

The Joker laughed as the boy came at him, firing again and again. Robin knocked away one gas grenade after another with his sword, making sure none landed near him or his sister. When he was close enough, he leapt at the clown, bringing down the blunt edge of his sword. Quick as lightning, the Joker tossed aside his weapon and pulled out two Eskrima sticks, blocking Robin's sword.

"Hey," the boy growled as he pressed against them, "those belong to Nightwing."

"Yes," the Joker agreed, "but he's not using them right now, so I'm borrowing them for a bit."

He surprised Robin with a rapid movement, smacking him in the head with one of his Eskrima sticks. Robin stumbled back, surprised by the Joker's speed. Reaching up, he wiped his bloody lip, then lunged at the Clown Prince of Crime. The Joker just laughed as he dodged and combatted the boy, deflecting the swipes of his sword.

Though he would refuse to admit it, Robin was shocked and impressed by the Joker's combat skills. He knew from reputation that the clown was skilled in street fighting, but as far as he knew, he hadn't practiced any martial arts. Clearly though, that wasn't the case, as the madman revealed himself to be very obvious skilled in battle.

"You're pretty good, boy," the Joker commented. "Not quite up to your father's level, but still descent." His gaze shifted to Huntress. "And what about you, little hunter? Are you just going to stand there and let your big brother get beaten?"

Huntress glared at him. "Robin will beat you."

The Joker raised an eyebrow. "Oh really? Let's see."

The two continued to battle, sword and Eskrima sticks coming together again and again. Harley cheered from her position whenever the Joker gained the upper hand, and Huntress poked her in the back with her crossbow to be silent.

Clamping his Eskrima sticks together, the Joker trapped Robin's sword between them and grinned at the boy. "You're certainly going all out. Trying to compensate for something? Maybe trying to prove yourself?"

Robin glared at him. "Hardly. Just plan on taking down another scumbag."

The Joker chuckled and pushed the boy's sword to the side before head-butting him. "You're going to have to do better than that. You're certainly not up to Daddy's standards."

Rubbing his head, Robin threw the clown a dirty look. "I'll settle for wiping that smirk off your face."

He swiped his sword at him, and the Joker maneuvered away from the blade again and again. "Why not get your little sister to help? Or are you afraid she'll best you?"

"No one bests me," Robin snarled, and stabbed forward.

The Joker trapped the blade between his body and his arm, then pressed his white face up against
Robin's. "You're an idiot, boy. You get so emotional and competitive, and making your own enemies. In fact, you are your own worst enemy. You need to lighten up. Life is one big joke, not a competition. Not everyone is out to get you." His grin widened. "Well, I am."

Robin ground his teeth together furiously before copying the Joker. He slammed his forehead into the clown's face, causing him to let go of his sword. Jumping up, he hit the clown in the side of the head with the hilt of his sword. The Joker raised an Eskrima stick, but Robin kicked it out of his hand. He raised his sword, preparing to bring the blunt end down on the clown, but the Joker surprised him when his hand shot out, grasping both of Robin's hands clutching the hilt of his sword, stopping him from bringing it down.

"You seem a little frustrated, boy," the clown mocked as he held Robin's sword back. "Tell me, why so serious?"

Grinning sadistically, he used the remaining Eskrima stick to jab Robin in the gut. The boy grunted, but stubbornly refused release his grip. The Joker just chuckled and lifted him in the air, keeping hold of his hands and sword. He began beating him in the head and torso with his Eskrima stick, laughing all the while.

Huntress glared at the clown, wanting to help, but knowing she had to keep Harley under arrow point. Her eyes began scanning the room, and she took aim while her captive was focused on the battle, determining the trajectory before firing a single arrow. It ricocheted off the wall, off the ceiling, and struck the Eskrima stick the Joker held, knocking it from his hand.

The clown blinked in surprise as the weapon disappeared from his hand, and Robin made his move. Lifting his body up, he brought both feet down on the Joker's head. The clown released him and Robin slammed the hilt of his sword into the Joker's chest. When he doubled over, Robin delivered a kick to his jaw, knocking the Joker off his feet and onto his back.

The Joker groaned, but his groan soon became a grunt of pain as Robin brought his foot down on his chest and pointed his sword directly at the clown's face. "It's over. We beat you."

The Joker looked up at him, staring at the boy for a few moments before smiling. "Yes, it seems you have." There was something different about this smile. There was less madness in it, and he looked to the Titans. "Ok, that's enough."

Much to Robin and Huntress' surprise, both Raven and Jaime stood up. The former waved her hand, and shadows began moving across the room, and the forms of Starfire, Nightwing, Cyborg, and Beast Boy disappeared. As the shadows continued flowing over the room, the door opened, and Bane and the hyena walked in. The shadows flowed over them, and the hyena changed from white to green as Bane suddenly became Cyborg. A moment later, the green hyena shifted into Beast Boy. The shadows now moved across the floor, flowing over Harley, who was revealed to be Starfire, and finally the Joker, who became Nightwing.

Robin blinked in surprise as he stared down at his predecessor. "Grayson?"

He smiled up at the boy. "Nicely done. Now, would you mind getting off me?"

The Boy Wonder's eyes narrowed down at him. "It's a trick."

"No trick," Starfire assured him. "We used a combination of Cyborg's holographs and Raven's magic to create an illusion."

"Yeah, dude," said Beast Boy. "It was all to get you and Huntress to work together."
Cyborg smirked. "And you two did great."

Robin and Huntress were stunned by this revelation, but as Nightwing got to his feet, things suddenly began to make sense to the girl. "So that's why I never sensed any hostility from anyone. I couldn't figure it out. We were here fighting for our lives and the lives of our friends, but there was no sense of danger. That's because there wasn't any."

Beast Boy rubbed his cheek. "Well, not to you guys, but the two of you sure didn't pull any punches."

"All the same," said Nightwing, "you two worked very well together, as a team. You had each other's back, worked together, trusted each other, and you came out on top. Congratulations."

Huntress looked back at Cyborg and snapped her fingers. "So that's why the neurotoxin didn't work on you. I was wondering about that."

The former Justice League member rubbed the back of his head bashfully. "Yeah, good thing you didn't stick me anywhere I'm still human."

Robin still seemed to be stunned speechless, but he was slowly coming out of his stupor. "Well… in that case…" He suddenly delivered a punch to Nightwing's jaw, knocking him down again. "I guess you thought that was pretty damn funny, making fools out of us. You make a pretty good Joker, Grayson. I guess the joke really was on me."

"Damian," said Starfire harshly, "this was a training exercise to get you to-"

"I know what it was!" he interrupted angrily. He pointed his sword at his sister. "It was an attempt to get me to work together with her. Well, congratulations, your plan worked, for all the good it did."

He glared down at Nightwing. "Was this your plan, Grayson? An attempt to get us to be one big happy family?"

Starfire crossed her arms. "Actually, it was my plan."

Robin was silent for a moment before he sheathed his sword. "I should have known. This is your trip to the carnival all over again. I expected better."

He stormed out of the room, leaving the others behind. Cyborg sighed and rubbed the back of his head. "That could have gone better."

Jaime nodded in agreement. "Yeah, he's really ticked off now."

"I'll go talk to him," said Raven, and she hurried after the Boy Wonder.

Several seconds of silence passed, then, one by one, all heads shifted to Huntress, waiting for her reaction. She seemed uncertain of how to react, but she didn't seem angry the way her brother was. "Um… I appreciate the help, but I don't want you guys to sacrifice the friendship you have with him for my sake."

Nightwing shook his head. "That's not what we're doing, Helena."

"He is right," Starfire agreed. "We are a team, and both you and Damian are a part of it. And a team helps each other out, no matter what." She smiled at the as she approached her, placing her hands on the girl's shoulders. "You too are part of this team, Helena. You are one of us."

Behind her mask, Huntress' eyes shined with happiness.
Robin was on the roof of the Tower, looking out across the ocean. The sun was beginning to rise, painting the sky with a mixture of orange and pink. A mixture of emotions were churning through him that he didn't know how to deal with. Starfire and Nightwing's little... experiment had made him realize a few things, things he wasn't sure he wanted to know, or was ready to face.

"I knew I'd find you here," came a familiar voice behind him. "Mind if I join you?"

Right now, if it had been anyone else, especially Nightwing, he would have turned them away, but Raven, he always felt like he could open up and relate to. "It's not my roof."

She came up beside him. "No, but you could afford it if you wanted to," she joked, and sat down beside him, letting her feet hang off the side. The two sat in silence for a few moments before she spoke again. "Are you mad at me?"

Robin considered how he felt carefully. He was angry, yes, but not at her. In fact, he was surprised to find that he wasn't really angry with any of them. If he was angry with someone, it was himself. "You would know; you can sense emotions."

She nodded. "True, but I try not to, and I thought it'd be polite to ask." When he didn't answer, she glanced at him, frowning. "I'm sorry we tricked you. I knew you wouldn't be happy when you found out, but-"

"You were trying to help. I get it. But I never asked for your help."

She gave him a hard look. "Sometimes we need help, whether we ask for it or want it or not. You taught me that."

He considered this, thinking back to the conflict with Trigon. Back then, she had wanted to run, but he and the others had refused to let her, even standing against the Justice League when they came to take her away to monitor her, and then again after Trigon was defeated, when she had opted to stay in his hellish realm to keep watch over him.

"Was it really Kory's idea?" he asked. "Or was she just covering up for Grayson?"

Raven shook her head. "No, it was her plan, though to be fair, they were both trying to come up with a way for you two to work together."

Robin's eyes narrowed, angry that their plan had actually worked. "I don't need anyone to help me and Helena to become closer."

She stared at him for several moments before sighing. "You know, you're lucky."

He raised an eyebrow at her. "Lucky?"

"You have a family, a real family. A dysfunctional one, yes, but a real one. One I would kill to have. Look at me. My mother is dead, my father is an inter-dimensional demon, and my siblings, if you can even call them that, are demonic entities. I wish I had a sister like Helena, a normal sibling. Well, almost normal."

Robin looked back at the rising sun. "At least your siblings are openly your enemies."

"Helena isn't your enemy, Damian. What Dick said is true. Your emotions right now are your own enemy." She gave him a hard look. "I can feel her emotions too. I can tell what she's feeling. She's..."
really not trying to take your place, or trying to best you in any way. Everything you're feeling, whatever negative light you're painting her in, I can tell you, it's all in your head. She has no bad intentions towards you."

"Thanks, Raven, but I think it would be better if I speak for myself."

The two turned around to find Huntress walking towards them. She was alone, and seemed to be approaching with purpose. Robin's eyes narrowed slightly and he looked away, but Huntress was not deterred and continued towards them.

"A lot of people have been talking about us," she continued. "About how we should behave towards each other and what we should do, but I think it would be best if we worked that out for ourselves."

Robin didn't reply, and Raven looked back and forth between the two. "Um, I'll just leave you two alone."

She opened a portal and disappeared through it, leaving the two siblings alone. Neither said anything for the longest time as Robin watched the sun and Huntress watched him. She wouldn't say anything, not yet. He had to be the one to reach out to her. She would be here when he was ready.

"I suppose you're happy about that whole thing," he finally said. "Finally got things to work in your favor."

Frowning, she came up beside him. "Not necessarily. I appreciate their attempts, but I think we need to work this out for ourselves." Looking out upon the horizon, she sighed. "I realized something in there. I was being very self-centered, thinking only about what I wanted, and I didn't consider your feelings. I just kept trying to insert myself into your life without thinking about what you wanted. I pushed too hard too soon." She looked down at him. "I don't want to trick you into accepting me, Damian, and I never wanted to prove I was better than you." She sat down beside him. "Truth be told, I'm actually kind of jealous of you."

That surprised him, and he gave her as confused look. "You're jealous of me? What for?"

She leaned back, looking up at the sky, kicking her legs over the side. "Our lives were very different, there's no denying that. And yes, the relationships we had with our mothers was different too, as were the ones they had with our father. I can't do anything about that. But, Damian, despite the blessings that I've had in my life, there were many hardships too."

She looked at her hands, as if seeing something there. "These abilities I have, they're both a blessing and a curse. I was never really able to make friends because I was so different. Not only that, but because of who my mother was, and even my father, we always had to remain in hiding. I could never let people know the real me. I could never let anyone get close. I love my mother with all my heart, but I wanted more. I wanted to meet new people, make some friends. Real friends, who could see and get to know the real me, but I knew I would never be able to. I always had to hide who and what I was, and what I was capable of."

She looked back at him. "You faced many hardships too, but you've had a lot of people there to support you. Your mother, your grandfather, your servants, the entire League of Assassins. They all respected you and were there for you all your life. I know it's not the same as having friends, but it was still more than what I had. All I ever had was my mother."

He stared at her for several moments before looking away. "At least your mother loved you. At least you weren't a product of our father being drugged and raped just so the League of Assassins could have an heir."
Huntress winced at that. "I shouldn't have said that. That wasn't fair."

"It was true though. That's what I am. I was nothing more than a means to an end. Whatever love my mother and grandfather had for me was solely for what I could do for them."

She gave him a sympathetic look, her eyes shining with sadness behind her mask. "I'm sorry. It was a cruel thing they did. And I can understand why you wouldn't want to lose Dad's love. But, Damian, I don't want to take his love from you. I never did. I told you, I'm not trying to take your place, or prove I'm the better offspring. When Mom and I came to Gotham, all I wanted was to get to know you and Dad. I wanted to get to know the father and brother I never knew, to have the family I always wanted. That's it. This was never a competition, and I'm sorry if you felt it was. Maybe I tried too hard."

She looked back to the entrance to the roof. "The same goes for your friends. I'm not trying to steal them or take your place amongst them. I want to be one of them. They're like me, outcasts, people that can't fit in with normal society. I feel like I can be myself with them, and have the friends I always wanted." She turned back to him. "But I want you too, Damian. I want us to have a good relationship, as brother and sister. We're both our father's children; we're each half-Wayne. I can't change the relationship our mothers had with our father, and, quite frankly, I don't care about it. I never did. We're blood, Damian. I just want us to get along."

Having had her say, she stood up. "I don't know what else I can do, Damian. If you don't want to accept me for whatever reasons you have, well, I guess I'll have to come to terms with that. Even if you never see me as your sister, well, to me, you'll always be my brother, and I'll always be there for you, no matter what."

She began to walk away, letting what she had said to him be digested. She had gotten everything she had wanted to say out in the open. There really was nothing more she could do now. The rest would be up to him. Whatever he decided, she would have to accept. She just hoped that he would take what she said to heart, and—

"You know," he said suddenly, haltering her in her tracks. "You did pretty good in there; even if it was just a simulation." He glanced at her for a moment. "Thanks for having my back."

She was stunned, staring at him with wide eyes. Slowly, a smile broke out across her face, and it seemed to take all her restraint from running over and hugging him. "Sure! Anytime!"

He seemed to be struggling to find his voice. "You know... it may take me a while to... I mean, if you think you could..." He appeared to be frustrated with himself. "What I mean is... if you wanted, maybe we could train together sometime... sis..."

Within her mask, Huntress' eyes shined with tears of happiness. "I'd like that a lot."

Inside the Tower, the rest of the Titans were watching an illusion of the scene that Raven was projecting from her hand.

"You see," Starfire said with a smirk, "I told you it would work."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: How about that. It looks like the two of them are finally getting along and really
connecting. Who knew tat Helena held such insecurities herself. Maybe opening up to
Damian helped him see the truth about her and help him to deal with his own
insecurities he had because of her. Now they can really begin having a brother-sister
relationship. Sure, there are still some hurtles to get over and unresolved feelings to
contend with, but it looks like Damian is finally accepting her. Nothing like a little crime
fighting to help two people to bond. Speaking of which, I hope no one was too
disappointed to find out it was all a trick. Did anyone figure it out early on? I dropped
some hints, but I was afraid I made it too obvious. So, now that the sibling issue seems
to be resolved, we just have Clayface and his boss to dal with. We still don't know who
he is or why he wants Helena. Hopefully Batman and Catwoman can figure it out
before Clayface gets his hands on their daughter.)

Song and lyrics - "Crazy" by Gnarls Barkley
A Strange Situation

Chapter Notes

(A/N: So, apparently "Teen Titans: The Judas Contract" is coming out soon. I'm super psyched for that. Hopefully it's better than "Justice League Dark", that one didn't entirely meet my expectations; I think I set them too high. Just remember, this story takes place after "Justice League vs. Teen Titans" and whatever movies come after it. I like to keep it as canon as possible so it could actually fit in the movie series.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 19: A Strange Situation

The dim light reflected off the shiny bald head of the doctor as he made his way down the tunnel. Today promised to be very busy, but most days were. Not that that was a bad thing. After all, for Professor Hugo Strange, his work was his life, his very reason for being. And he was on the right track; he knew he was. He had to be. Sure, there had been hiccups, but there always were. But he needed to keep going. There was a very long road ahead, and he had to keep going, no matter what.

However, he couldn't let the general public know. Only a few select individuals could know the truth of his work; only those that would aid him. The rest of society wouldn't understand. They could never understand. Sometimes sacrifices needed to be made in order for mankind to progress. After all, didn't medical science usually experiment on animals before trying out their products on human volunteers?

Yes, sacrifices needed to be made, and Strange was no stranger to sacrifice. He had sacrificed much for his work. Within the last few years, he had lost a great deal more, mostly when it came to support. After crime boss Sal Maroni had stopped funding him due to the accursed Batman being on his case, his work had suffered. But the biggest blow came from the fall of the Court of Owls. They had been his greatest supporters, allies, and beneficiaries, sharing in his dream. The money, technology, and knowledge they had provided were of great use to him, but now he was on his own once again.

No matter, he would just keep moving forward. He was a patient man after all. Rushing things never paid off. And if he actually managed to pull off what he was trying to create, then it would be all worth it in the end. Not only that, he would have all the time in the world to take his work to all new levels. Yes, that was his destiny, and he eagerly embraced it.

Coming to the door at the end of the tunnel, he punched in the code, and heard the familiar sound of the door unlocking. Opening the door, he stepped into the darkness and switched on the lights. A demented grin that could rival even that of the Joker spread across his face as he surveyed his laboratory. This was his true home, this was his future, the world's future, and he held it all in the palm of his hands.

Stepping into his lab, he closed the door behind him, and it automatically locked. It would not do for anyone to find out about this place. That's why it was hidden away beneath the city. The Court of Owls had helped him build this place, and it suited his purpose very well. All around him were
essentials for his work; technology, medical equipment, anything and everything he needed. The Court of Owls may be gone, but he would complete their work, his work, his dream. And one day the world would know of his greatness, and they will bow down and worship him like a god.

Making his way through his lab, he entered a specific room to give his greetings to the only other person in the facility. Technically, it wasn't even a person, merely a corpse. Not an ordinary corpse though, but a hundreds of years old dead body that he had obtained from the Court. They'd had hundreds of them, soaking and embalming their deceased warriors in the substance, preserving them so they were as fresh as the day they died.

For years, the goal of the Court of Owls had been discovering how to obtain eternal life. So far, the closest thing they could find out was how to preserve and temporarily reanimate their dead warriors. The creature in the tank before Strange was one of them. The fluid it was soaking in preserved the ancient warrior, allowing the Court to reanimate it for a short period of time, sending it out to pull off a job, usually an assassination, before returning it to the tank before time ran out and it began to deteriorate.

It was useful, but it was not eternal life. The thing in the tank was not alive, just a soulless sack of meat with no freewill. It could move and follow orders, but it was still dead, unable to think or act beyond the commands given to it. And if left out of the preservation fluid for too long, it would completely disintegrate. And though this wasn't eternal life, or any form of life for that matter, it was, Strange believed, a step in the right direction. If they could preserve the dead, then they could find a way to preserve the living, eventually.

Yes, there was still a long way to go, but Strange would be the one to take that path. But he needed more. More research, more to work with. But with the Court of Owls finished, he was on his own, left to his own devices. Curse Batman for interfering. Why couldn't he have just minded his own business? There were so many other criminal organizations out there. Why did he have to go after the group that was aiding him in his work? The man should have heeded the warning.

"Beware the Court of Owls," he found himself saying as he ran his hand over the glass' surface, "that watches all the time. Ruling Gotham from a shadowed perch, behind granite and lime. They watch you at your hearth, they watch you in your bed."

"Speak not a whispered word about them," a deep voice spoke from behind him, "or they'll send the Talon for your head."

Strange whirled around, and from out of the shadows, the Dark Knight emerged. The doctor took a step back, surprised to see him. How did he find this place? What more, how had he gotten in here undetected? Strange could count the number of people that knew about his lab on a single hand, and Batman had certainly not been one of them. Had he discovered something from within the remains of the Court of Owls' base?

Well, no matter, he had figured that the Dark Knight would find him eventually. This may have been sooner than he thought, but he was prepared, and he plastered a smile on his face as he greeted the masked detective. "Well, well, well. Batman, so nice to meet you. I've heard a lot about you."

The Dark Knight's eyes narrowed. "Clearly not enough, or you would not be committing such atrocities."

"Atrocities?" the doctor repeated with a raised eyebrow. "Nonsense. I'm a scientist, and this is my life work."

Batman turned his eyes to the body in the tank. "And how many lives is your life's work worth?"
The grin on Strange's face widened. "Enough, my friend. Enough." He casually walked around to the other side of the tank, observing the Dark Knight from the other side. "This one, however, is not one of them. He's several hundred years old."

Batman eyed the dead warrior. "A gift from the Court of Owls, I presume. I had long since suspected that you were in league with them."

Strange just shrugged. "Well, we share a common goal. Or should I say, shared. The Court is no more, thanks to you. This one here," he tapped on the glass, "is the last of them. And he's the original Talon no less." He chuckled. "How ironic that the first is also the last."

"How ironic indeed."

The doctor was still smiling, and, truthfully, it unnerved Batman, though he did not show it. He'd dealt with madmen and the criminally insane before. He could recognize madness and insanity in the eyes and smiles they possessed. This man, he was just as bad as the worst criminal scum he had dealt with, but there was no insanity there. Strange was thinking clearly and rationally, there was no lunacy to impair his judgment. This was a man without morals, who was fully and completely in control of his actions.

"You know," said Strange, "I always figured we would meet one day. Not necessarily here though. Tell me, how did you find me, let alone this place? I'm quite curious to know."

Batman had no qualms in revealing this information. It would do good to let the doctor know that nothing was safe from him. Fear was his primary weapon after all; fear of him, and of how he would find anyone that dared to break the law.

"You're not an easy man to find," he admitted, "even for me. So rather than finding you, I found someone that knew where you were. I managed to track down your assistant and... persuade him into divulging the information."

Strange chuckled. "Very clever, Batman. It must have taken a great deal to break Sanjay."

"You can ask him when I take you in," Batman replied, as he began circling the tank. "Perhaps the two of you can share a cell."

Still grinning, Strange circled as well, keeping the tank between him and the Dark Knight. "I'm sorry to be difficult, but I can't possibly stop my work. I still have so much to do."

"And would that work involve the attempted abduction of a ten year old girl?"

His grin widened. "So you figured it out. I wondered how long it would take. I figured Miss Kyle would go to you for help, but I didn't expect you to trace it back to me. Tell, me, how is the pretty kitty?"

Batman stopped. "Why don't you ask her yourself."

Someone grabbed Strange from behind and slammed him against the tank. The doctor felt claws digging into his skin and the feel of leather against his skin, and he knew who had grabbed him. "Ah, there she is. So which one of you got through my security, or did you work together?"

Catwoman's claws dug deeper into Strange's skin, almost enough to draw blood. Upon hearing the doctor confess that he was indeed the one behind the attempted kidnappings on her daughter, it was taking all of her self-control not to claw his eyes out. "You twisted bastard. I should kill you right now."
"Oh, but can you?" Strange taunted. "Would Batman allow it?"

Hissing like her namesake, Catwoman threw him against the wall. He grunted in pain as he hit it, but still managed to chuckle. It pissed Catwoman all the more, and she bared her claws at him. "Don't tempt me. There's nothing a mother wouldn't do to save her child." She stared at him hard. "Nothing."

Strange dusted himself off, as if he hadn't just been assaulted. "No, I suppose not. Which bares the question, why haven't you killed me yet?"

Batman could see that she was close to giving in to the doctor's taunts, and placed a hand on her shoulder while giving Strange a warning look. "We have questions, and you will give us answers."

Strange held out his hands. "As I said, I'm a scientist, Batman. Answering questions is what I do."

"Then tell us who told you about her?" Catwoman demanded. "Who else do I need to kill?"

"Catwoman," Batman growled in warning before returning his attention to the doctor. "We figured out why you want Helena. You discovered that she's a metahuman, or borderline anyway. How?"

Strange just laughed. "If you're looking for someone to blame for that, you should know that no ill will was intended." He looked at Catwoman. "You should have been more careful in choosing a physician. The doctor you brought her to noticed an anomaly in her blood that he couldn't figure out. He was concerned it might be a new type of disease or mutation. It just so happens that this doctor was an old colleague of mine. He sent me a sample of her blood to see if I could figure it out. Upon examining it, I realized what she was."

Catwoman hissed furiously. "Damn it! I should have considered that." She kicked the tank, her metal heel cracking the glass, but not enough to spring a leak.

"Careful, my dear," Strange told her. "That body is a miracle of science."

Batman placed a calming hand on Catwoman's shoulder again. "Don't blame yourself. It was an understandable oversight."

"One I should have considered all the same, and one you never would have made."

Strange chuckled again. "Try not to be too angry with my colleague; he was merely concerned for dear little Helena's wellbeing. If it makes you feel any better, I managed to convince him that your daughter's blood was merely contaminated."

Catwoman glared at him. "Do you expect me to thank you for that? You were just trying to get rid of any unwanted attention for her so you could snatch her for yourself. Why? What do you want with her? What kind of sick experiments were you planning to do to her?"

Holding up a finger, Strange shook it and tsked at her as he casually began walking around the room. "Not on her, my dear. I want to use her for my research." He walked towards the tank once more. "I feel she is part of the equation to discovering eternal life. That is the ultimate goal of my research."

Batman's eyes narrowed. "Why her? There are a vast number of more suitable people you could have chosen from. Superman, Wonder Woman, the Flash. Wouldn't one of them be a better option?"

Strange's grin widened. "Right you are, Batman. However, therein lies the problem. There is a difference between humans and metahumans. Yes, indeed, a metahuman's abilities would indeed be more suitable in trying to discover how to gain eternal life, but my goals is to have humans gain
eternal life." He looked at Catwoman. "Your daughter is borderline metahuman. A missing link if you will. If I can find that middle ground, find out the differences between humans and metahumans, perhaps find out how to turn humans into metahumans, then I will be one step closer to my goal."

He held his hands far apart. "Right now, we humans are here." He shook his left hand. "And eternal life is here." He shook his right hand. "Now lets say that metahumans are here." He moved his right hand closer to his left and shook it again. "Before I can bring humans to gaining eternal life, I need to fill in the gap between humans and metahumans. With little Helena being a borderline metahuman, she can provide the answers of how to bring me to that next step. Right now I have a beginning and end point, I need everything in the middle, and she is part of that."

Catwoman wanted to lash out at him. "That's why you've been after her!? You have this wild theory that she might be able to provide you with a few of the answers you think you need, and you're willing to sacrifice her for that!?!"

"Sometimes sacrifices must be made for the greater good," Strange replied nonchalantly. He gave Batman a look. "Surely you understand that. Just how much have you sacrificed for the greater good?"

Now it was Batman who was restraining himself from beating the doctor to a bloody pulp. That was his daughter he was talking about. "Never a life, especially an innocent life."

"One life for all life," Strange argued. "For eternal life. Just think of it. Never having to grow old, never having to get sick, never having to grow weak, never having to die. Surely a few lives, even billions of lives, are worth sacrificing for such a dream."

"Not my daughter, you bastard!" Catwoman snapped, and Batman had to hold her back from throwing herself at the doctor. "Screw eternal life, screw the world itself, not if it costs my daughter's life!"

"It's the ultimate goal of medical science!" Strange practically raged. "The ultimate dream!"

"It's a pipe dream," Batman told him. "Something we can never obtain, and should never obtain. I can see how you would consider it a goal worth achieving, but the horror that would follow would bring humanity to an end. Where would we put everyone if no one ever died? The world is already overpopulated. Would you sterilize everyone in the world? And who would get this gift of eternal life? The rich and powerful? There are already enough unstable dictators that have come close to ending the world. Imagine if their reign never ended. And what of the rest of the world? Humanity would tear itself apart trying to gain this so-called gift. Wars and fights would destroy the planet. The discovery of eternal life will actually bring about the end of it."

Despite Batman's claims, Strange was still smiling. "Yes, perhaps you're right. But it is still better than the alternative. You're right, Batman, humanity would eventually destroy itself trying to take what only the rich and powerful can afford. But how long before that happens? A year, ten years, a hundred, a thousand? What does the average person live to currently? Their eighties, nineties? Even if obtaining eternal life does end the world eventually, how many more years would those that have obtained it get to live before that happens? Far more than what they currently have. And how rich would the one who made this discovery become? Thousands of times richer than Bruce Wayne, than even Bill Gates. A life of riches and luxury until the world finally tears itself apart trying to gain what I have created sounds very appealing, don't you think?"

He threw up his arms. "Just think of all the possibilities! The select few blessed with eternal life, they'll never have to worry about aging, getting sick, weak, tired, feeble! Just imagine it!" He looked at Catwoman. "Just imagine, my dear, staying young and beautiful like you are forever. Your looks
and talents never failing you." Eyes shining with excitement, they settled on Batman. "And you, Batman. Age will eventually creep up on you as well. You won't be able to keep up the crime fighting forever, not with mortality hanging over you. You'll grow slow, weak, your bones and muscles deteriorating. One day, you'll meet someone who will be able to overpower you in your old age, or time will force you to retire. But it doesn't have to be that way. You can go on keeping this city safe forever." His grin widened. "Or as long as humanity lasts. Just think."

Batman's eyes narrowed. "I do, but it seems you don't. You focus only on the good this will do, and don't take the bad into account. Or maybe you just don't care about it. That seems to be the biggest problem when it comes to progress. People are so focused on whether or not they can do something, they don't consider whether or not they should do something."

Strange just laughed as he leaned back against the controls of his computer. "But that's our purpose. To strive forward. To achieve the impossible. Yes, there will be much loss, but to give a few eternal life would be better than just letting all die, wouldn't you agree? I'm sure there are many things you've done that you regret. Do you not fear death, to have all your sins laid before you when face your final judgment? I'm offering an escape from fear, from death. Can you truly tell me you don't find it tempting even in the least?"

The Dark Knight continued to appear unmoved. "You're still thinking of the pros. Even if you do find a way to achieve eternal life, you're not considering the negative affects it will have on those you give it to. The body may endure, but will the mind? What about memories? How long will they last? The memory starts to go when a person reaches their twenties, it simply doesn't become noticeable until much later. What will happen when they live for hundreds of years, for thousands?"

Now it was Strange's turn to appear unmoved by Batman's claims. "Baby steps, Batman. We'll work on preserving the body, then work on preserving the mind."

This made Batman think of all the lunatics he had come across. Joker, Two-Face, Harley Quinn, Poison Ivy, the Mad Hatter, the Riddler, the list went on and on. He'd seen far too much madness and corruption. "Humanity already takes life for granted. If lifespan is no longer a factor, it will be taken for granted even more." He looked up, reminiscing of someone who had actually managed to achieve what the doctor was pursuing. "I once knew a man named Ra's al Ghul. He discovered a way to cheat death. He cheated it countless times, living for hundreds of years. And I can tell you, it did not work out for the best. He became the very corruption he sought to cleanse this world of. How much will others be able to take before it takes a toll on them too? Will they even be able to stand living on while everyone else they know and love dies around them? How long until the loss becomes too great and they simply take their own life, or just decide to destroy all life in general?"

He looked back at the doctor. "We are meant to live and to die. That is the nature of things. We make way for the future, not for ourselves, but for our children, for humanity as a whole. If lifespan wasn't an issue, we would never progress, because time would never be against us. We can always put things off for another time, because we will always have it, and humanity will never go anywhere. They'll be no motivation for anything. Life will come to a stand still. We find fulfillment in life, find our purpose, and we live it, not simply endure it. If we had eternal life, our sole focus would become simply trying not to get ourselves killed rather than actually living. Life is precious because it ends, because there's meaning in it. If we didn't have to die, then it would lose all meaning. We would take it for granted." His eyes narrowed. "We already do."

With a hiss, Catwoman slashed her claws against the wall, leaving a deep groove. "I don't give a damn about any of this! I don't even know why you're still talking to him. When it comes to my daughter's wellbeing, I don't care about humanity or the world, let it burn, but I will save my daughter." She held up her claws. "Even if I have to kill you to do it."
Strange just chuckled. "Oh my, you seem so serious." He began backing away. "Would you really take the life of a helpless man who's simply trying to benefit society?"

Reaching out, Batman placed a hand on her shoulder again. "That's enough. It's already over."

The sadistic grin on the doctor's face widened. "Oh, it's far from over, Batman. We're only just beginning."

Reaching back, he pressed a button on the computer. A loud gurgling sound drew Batman and Catwoman's attention, and they spun around to find a series of bubbles rapidly floating to the top of the tank, the liquid inside draining quickly.

Batman turned back to Strange and grabbed his jacket, pulling him in close. "What did you do?"

The doctor laughed. "I'm just giving you a taste of what science has to offer."

The corpse inside stirred, its eyes snapping open. They were large and blood red, nothing natural about them. Its misshapen mouth opened to reveal a jaw aligned with fangs, and an inhuman wail escaped as it punched the glass, shattering it and spilling the preservation fluid all over the floor.

"Batman!" Catwoman cried as the reanimated corpse stepped down.

The Dark Knight reluctantly turned his attention to the monstrous figure as it roared to the heavens. Strange backed away, adjusting his tie. "Good luck, Batman. I look forward to seeing how this will turn out."

He hurried over to another door. Placing his hand against the panel, it unlocked, and he rushed through it. Catwoman looked away from the monster, making a move to go after Strange. "He's getting away!"

"Look out!" Batman exclaimed, and tackled her as the corpse's massive fist came down where she had been standing. They quickly got to their feet and turned back to the reanimated warrior. "We'll have to take care of this thing first."

"But, Strange-"

"Don't worry about Strange. We'll catch up to him later." He took a fighting stance as the undead warrior stalked towards them. "We have bigger problems right now."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: It looks like Batman and Catwoman finally found their culprit. It's Hugo Strange. It seems he thinks Helena, being borderline metahuman, is a missing link between humans and metahumans, which he believes is a step in the right direction for finding out how to achieve eternal life. That has always been his long-term goal, as well as the Court of Owls'. And with the Court being responsible for Bruce's parents' deaths, at least in this universe, it was easy to connect Strange to them and have him be the main villain with Clayface as his second. But it looks like Batman and Catwoman may have underestimated him, and are now faced with his science project. And it's the original Talon no less. Will they be able to stop it before Strange gets away? Stay tuned.)
Facing the Darkness

Chapter Notes

(A/N: Recently saw "Teen Titans: The Judas Contract". It was awesome! A lot better than "Justice League Dark". I think that's going to be the last one in the continuum before they reboot the series again. It seems to take place a year after "Teen Titans vs. Justice League", so this story takes place before then, before Tara shows up. I'm pretty sure that that one is going to be the last in the continuum, even with Batman and Harley, coming out, which I'm pretty sure is going to be a stand-alone unrelated film. But enough of that. I left you at a cliffhanger last time. Strange has fled, and Batman and Catwoman are stuck fighting the original Talon. Well, the monstrous mutated corpse of the original Talon anyway. I was thinking about making the corpse Solomon Grundy, but decided not to.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 20: Facing the Darkness

Looking at the corpse outside of the tank, they could size him up without the distortion of the fluid. There was no way he had looked like this back when he was alive. Over 10 feet tall, semi-transparent skin that looked like it had been melted skin with bulging muscle clearly visible beneath it. The doctor had done a real number on him with his experiments.

And he had said that this was the first and original Talon of the Court of Owls. The Talon that Batman had faced several months ago had been a tough opponent. An undead one that felt no pain, never got tired, and just kept coming would undoubtedly be far worse. And there was no telling what other modifications Strange had done to it; he'd been introducing metahuman DNA into it after all.

No, defeating this thing would not be easy. Unless they somehow managed to subdue it, the only way to stop it would be to destroy it until it could no longer move, or to wait out its time limit from the preservation fluid and it degenerated. But since that wouldn't be for several hours, that wasn't an option.

The warrior threw another punch. Batman rolled to the side while Catwoman jumped up, doing a flip over the warrior's head while lashing out with her whip. It wrapped around his arm, and Catwoman pulled back, pushing against his back, yanking back his arm. Batman flung a bolas at the warrior's head. It coiled around his head and smashed against his face, yet he didn't go down.

Reaching up, the warrior ripped the bolas off his face. He pulled his arm forward and Catwoman pulled back, pushing against his back, yanking back his arm. Batman flung a bolas at the warrior's head. It coiled around his head and smashed against his face, yet he didn't go down.

Reaching up, the warrior ripped the bolas off his face. He pulled his arm forward and Catwoman went flying, slamming against the wall. Then he returned his attention to Batman. The Dark Knight didn't wait for him to come to him as he charged at the beast. He jumped up and punched him in the jaw. The warrior's arms came around him, squeezing tightly. Batman grunted and reached down, grabbing his grapple gun. He fired it into the air, using it to pull himself free from the warrior's grasp.

But the warrior did not release him, and rose up into the air with the Dark Knight. On the ground, Catwoman climbed to her feet. Reclaiming her whip, she coiled it around the warrior's feet and yanked. The warrior's attention shifted to her, even as he clung to Batman. The Dark Knight grabbed
for something else on his utility belt, and stuffed the flash grenade into the warrior's gaping misshapen mouth, and it went off.

The warrior fell, landing hard on the ground, and Batman dropped down, slamming his feet into the beast's chest. Catwoman set to work with wrapping her whip around his feet. It didn't do much good as the warrior threw a punch, knocking Batman off, and then sat up suddenly, reaching for Catwoman. His big hand wrapped around her throat, and he lifted her into the air. His other hand grabbed her whip, pulling it off his feet and tossing it aside. He got to his feet, still holding Catwoman, her feet dangling in the air. She kicked against his chest, but this accomplished nothing as he slammed her into the wall.

"Over here!" Batman shouted to the warrior, and threw a Batarang. The warrior turned to him, and the Batarang buried in his right eye. He didn't react, not feeling any pain, but the distraction gave Catwoman the chance to swing herself upward, wrapping her legs and arms around the warrior's thick arm.

She twisted her body around, pulling out of his grasp. She turned around and slashed at the warrior's face before jumping off him and landing beside Batman. "Nice shot. Is that no killing rule still in affect?"

"He's already dead," Batman told her. "No need to hold back."

She smirked, brandishing her claws. "Who says I was?"

She charged at the warrior. He swiped at her, and she dropped down, sliding beneath his arm. Rising to her feet, she began slashing at his torso everywhere she could reach. The warrior continued swiping at her, but she moved around him with her superior speed.

Compared to the undead warriors that had invaded the Batcave, this one was slow and clumsy, and seemed to have forgotten how to fight. It seemed that what was once a great warrior had deteriorated to little more than a mindless beast. Batman guessed that this was due to whatever experiments Strange had performed on it as he fired his grapple gun at the warrior. It burst through his back, exiting his front and stabbing into the wall. Charging forward, he began running circle around the warrior, coiling the cable around him.

Catwoman grabbed her whip again and lashed out, aiming at the warrior's feet, coiling it around his ankles. The warrior struggled to stand for a few moments before toppling over, his weight pulling the end of the grapple out of the wall.

"Got anything to keep him down?" she asked.

He did, but he didn't like it. "It's a bit crude, but yes."

He jumped onto the warrior's back, taking up a Batarang. He stabbed into the back of the warrior's neck and began sawing through. To his surprise, the warrior's head turned completely around to face him. His misshapen mouth opened further and a horrible wail escaped him with almost physical force. Batman was sent flying across the room, slamming into the wall.

When the wail finally died down, Catwoman lowered her hands from her ears and stared at the undead warrior in disbelief as he rose to his feet. Had that been Black Canary's cry? It certainly seemed like it. How had Strange given this thing her ability? Or had it come from another source? What other powers did this thing have?

Fortunately, it seemed that the warrior didn't possess the intelligence to accurately use whatever
abilities it had. Was that because it was dead and couldn't really think, or had Strange's experiments deteriorated its brain? She didn't know, having never faced a zombie before.

Unfortunately, one of the abilities the warrior did possess and was able to use was greatly enhanced strength. Kicking the whip off his feet, the warrior stood up and burst out of the cable wrapped around him. Reaching up, he ripped the first Batarang from his neck and the other one from his eye. He flung one and then the other at Catwoman. She cartwheeled out of their path, ending up in a pile of glass from the shattered tank the warrior had been in.

Smirking, she grabbed a handful of glass shards as the warrior came at her again. She sidestepped his punched, stabbing him in the arm with the glass shard, and then spun around, stabbing him in the side with the other. Dropping down, she grabbed more glass, and began burying the shards in any area she could reach until several dozen shards were protruding from the warrior's body.

Scooping up a handful of smaller pieces, she back-flipped away from him and threw her handful into the warrior's face. He didn't even react as it sprayed against his remaining eye. Catwoman swore as the warrior charged at her. She ran forward as well, dropping down to slide beneath his legs, and the clumsy walking corpse crashed into the wall.

Hearing a groan, she turned her attention to Batman, who was getting to his feet. She hurried over to him, wrapping his arm around her to help him stand. "You ok?"

"I've had worse," he replied.

"That was-"

"I know, Black Canary's cry. Or something similar to it." He observed the warrior as it got to its feet, noting all the glass stuck in it. "You certainly went all out."

"This thing won't stay down. He's worse than Clayface. At least that mud bucket reacted to pain and got tired. This guy just keeps coming. How'd you defeat the ones that had invaded the Batcave?"

Batman's eyes narrowed, and he cursed his stupidity. "You just gave me an idea on how to beat him." Grabbing at his utility belt, he took two items, handling one to Catwoman. "Use this when I get close to him."

"Can you still fight?"

"I can." He looked back at the warrior, his eyes narrowing. "I have to."

Coming out from under her arm, he charged at the warrior. Catwoman threw the smoke bomb he had given her, and it exploded in front of the warrior. This got no reaction as the warrior swiped at Batman. The Dark Knight easily avoided the blow and spun around. The blades on his gauntlet sliced open the warrior's stomach, and, completely his turn, Batman punched into the open wound with his other hand, activating the device in his grasp.

Jumping away, the Dark Knight put distance between himself and the warrior. The device he had stuck inside him that he had obtained from Freeze went off, freezing the warrior from the inside out. Ice crept out of the open wound in his stomach and from his mouth, spreading across his body. The warrior's movements slowed down more and more before it stopped moving all together and finally went down.

Batman's eyes narrowed at the fallen warrior. It seemed that not even Strange had found a way to remove these reanimated bodies from their weakness to the cold. It was a good thing he had kept some of Freeze's ice grenades, or whatever they were, with him. Now, with that threat out of the
"Catwoman, when we find Strange..." He trailed off as he turned to the leather-clad woman, only to find himself alone. He silently swore as he hurried out the door. He should have known better than to take his eyes off her. He needed to get to her before she got to Strange, otherwise they were going to wind up with another dead body.

"Don't do anything foolish, Selina," he whispered as he rushed down the hall.

Entering in a code, Strange pushed open the steel door. It closed behind him, locking once more, but Strange was already on the move. All around him were computer servers, containing all his precious research. He had been prepared for something like this to happen, having backed up everything on an external storage. He would grab that and be on his way while Batman and Catwoman dealt with his undead warrior.

Yes, it would be a major drawback, losing his test subject that he had been working on for so long, but he would be able to replicate what he had accomplished in time as long as he had the data. Maybe it would even be better to start from scratch with a new test subject, one that wasn't suffering from the failures his previous one had undergone.

Obtaining the preservation fluid would be difficult as well. With the Court of Owls no longer around, he would have to create more himself. He had yet to attempt this, but he had studied the fluid and was confident that he would be able to replicate it eventually. Again, as long as he had the data. Once he had that, he would disappear.

Making his way down an aisle of computer servers, he froze as a voice spoke out from up above. "I guess Batman was right to call me back for this." Dropping down a few feet from Strange, Nightwing crossed his arms and smirked at the doctor. "What's up, doc?"

Strange took a step back. The grin returned to his face, but there was a certain amount of frustration in it. "Well, well, Nightwing. I should have guessed that you would be here too."

Nightwing smirked. "Yeah, the boss sent me ahead in case you had any tricks up your sleeve. I guess you did."

The doctor chuckled. "You might want to go help them before it's too late. My warrior is already dead, but he can still kill your friends."

"Sorry, but I've got orders. I gotta take you in."

Strange sighed, his hand inching towards his lab coat. "I see. Well, in that case, I'll have to-"

He attempted to pull a gun, but Nightwing threw a Batarang, knocking it from his hand. Strange gasped in pain, grabbing the spot where the Batarang hit. Nightwing shook a finger at him. "None of that. Now, what do you say we do this the easy way?"

"Oh, you poor fool. You're fighting for the wrong side. You should be fighting for the good of humanity. That's what I'm trying to do with my work."

Behind his mask, Nightwing rolled his eyes. "Spare me the hypocritical oath, or whatever code of morality you pretend to follow. The last time I checked, the good of humanity didn't include hunting down and subjugating a little girl to whatever sick experiments you have in mind."
A low growl escaped the doctor as he lowered his head, looking at his feet. "You're all the same. You can't see the bigger picture."

"Well, bad news, doc. The only thing you'll be seeing for the rest of your life is the insides of a jail cell."

This was followed by a chuckle. "The rest of my life, huh? I've already dedicated most of my life to my work. Prison is not an option for me. I've still got so much more to do."

Nightwing held up a small device, placing his thumb on the red button at the top. "Then you're really not going to like this."

He pressed the button, and an electrical current suddenly flowed through the room, all over the computer servers. They all went haywire, electricity dancing across the surfaces. Even the lights began flashing violently, several bulbs bursting. Strange covered his head as glass rained down on him as all the electrical appliances in the room went wild.

Then, just as suddenly, it stopped, the room going dark. Smoke flowed up from the servers, the systems completely fried. Whatever data was on them was gone with no chance of recovery, and Strange knew it as he looked at them in horror.

"Sorry, doc," Nightwing told him, not sounding the least bit sincere. "But it looks like you're going to have to start from scratch."

"What have you done?" Strange whispered. He tore his eyes away from the servers and looked at Nightwing with madness in his eyes. "What have you done!?"

Nightwing just shrugged. "The big guy said to make sure you couldn't recover anything. Don't want you keeping up these sick experiments of yours on the off chance you escape."

"You fool!" Strange raged, charging at the former Boy Wonder. "You've ruined everything!"

Nightwing could tell that Strange was no fighter. He was simply coming at him in a blind rage. Spinning around, he delivered a roundhouse kick to the doctor's jaw, kicking him into the wall. Strange slammed against it and slid to the floor, groaning, a trail of blood dripping from his lip.

Nightwing just glared at him in open disgust. "Makes me wonder how much blood you spilled in the name of science. Just be glad I got to you before Catwoman did."

As if on cue, the door, no longer locked due to the lack of power, was pried open, and the leather-clad woman entered. Her eyes landed on Strange, who was rubbing his jaw, and she hissed like her costume's namesake.

Looking past her, Nightwing saw that Batman was not with her. That wasn't good. Not that he was worried about the Dark Knight, but if Catwoman was here and Batman wasn't, then he was the only one standing between her and Strange.

"He's mine!" she hissed, storming over to the doctor.

Nightwing quickly moved in her path, holding his hands open to stop her. "Hey, it's ok. I got him already."

She struck, open-palm striking him in the face, not hard enough to break his nose, but with enough force to draw blood. Then she dropped down and kicked his legs out from under him. "Stay out of my way."
She began making her way towards the doctor. Nightwing quickly climbed to his feet and reached for her. "Catwoman, it's over!"

He placed a hand on her shoulder to stop her. This proved to be a mistake. She grabbed his hand, and spun around while simultaneously throwing him over her shoulder so he crashed into the wall. "I'll say when it's over! This freak is after my daughter." She held up her claws. "I'm going to make sure he never gets his hands on her."

Strange was in the process of dragging himself across the floor when Catwoman grabbed him by the back of her lab coat, pulling him back up. She slammed him against the wall in a sitting position and crouched down in front of him. Wrapping a hand around his throat, she poised her claws on her other hand so he could see the deadly points.

"Going somewhere? And we were just getting to know each other."

He looked up at her, grinning arrogantly. "I suppose we were. So, what do you plan to do? Kill me for going after your daughter?"

She narrowed her eyes at him. "You're a doctor. Tell me, what do you do with a cancer?" Her diamond tipped claw ran down his cheek and across his jugular, threatening to slit his throat. "You cut it out." She lifted her hand to slash him. "If you want eternal life so much, you can have it in Hell!"

"Catwoman, stop!" Batman had arrived. He hurried into the room, coming to a stop a few feet from her and the doctor. "Don't do this."

She quickly placed the claw of her index finger against Strange's throat. "Don't try and stop me. He needs to die. It's the only way to keep Helena safe."

"You know that's not true," the Dark Knight replied. "He's finished. We have the evidence we need, and we have him. He'll never get out, his research is gone, he's finished."

"It's not enough. Freaks like him never learn. And they never stay locked up. How many times have the criminals you put away gotten free? How many innocents have died when they have. Not my daughter. I'm going to make sure she's safe. This is the only way."

"It's not, and you know it. We can keep Helena safe without resorting to this. You know we can. What you're doing now is not for Helena, it's for you."

He took a step towards her, getting as close as he dared. He recognized this moment for what it was, an essential defining point, one that Selina would have to face and conquer. He'd faced it himself, as had others. Now she was facing it as well. This was her moment, her choice. He couldn't make it for her; he could only help guide her in the right direction.

"Selina, I know what it's like. I've been there before, at the precipice. I've felt the temptation the darkness has offered. You have to make a decision. Is this really what you want? To be like them?"

"I've killed before."

She wasn't alone there either. He'd taken lives as well, but never directly. She may not have been as strict with the no-killing rule as he was, but she never flat out murdered in cold blood. The fact that she was arguing with him over this fact meant that she was fighting with herself between giving in to the darkness and doing what was right.

"Those times were different, Selina, and you know it. Killing in the heat of battle is one thing, but
this is murder. Is that what Helena needs? A killer for a mother?" She winced at that. Batman took that as a good sign. If Helena was the reason for her willing to take Strange's life, she was also a reason why she shouldn't. He had to remind her of that. "Think of Helena. How will you be able to look her in the eye after this? How will she be able to look at you?"

A tear slipped from Catwoman's eye, pooling at the bottom of her goggles. "I want her safe. That's all I ever wanted, to keep her safe."

"And you've done that. We took down Strange together. It's over now. There's nothing more you need to do. Anything else is just for your own satisfaction. Don't go down that path, Selina. Once you do, there is no turning back. Don't be like them. For your sake. For Helena's." He slowly held his hand to her. "Selina…"

Catwoman was shaking now, the trembling threatening to drive her claw into Strange's neck. More tears filled her goggles as she fought an inner battle until, finally, she let out an agonized scream. Rising to her feet, she dragged Strange with her, and threw him across the room into one of the servers.

Breathing heavily, she turned to Batman. "You better make sure he never gets out. If he does, and he goes after Helena again, I'll finish it. I mean it."

Batman just looked at her, doing his best not to show how relieved he was. "I know you do."

Giving the motionless doctor one last hateful look, she stormed out of the room. Batman glanced at Strange as Nightwing came up to him, holding the device that had emitted the electromagnetic pulse that had fried all the servers. "That was sure intense. I wasn't sure if she would do it or not."

Batman turned to him. "We've both been there, at the precipice. Now she's seen it too, that dividing line between us and them."

"Yeah, yeah, I know. Justice, not vengeance. You've said it so many times it's engraved in my head."

Behind him, Strange's hand slowly slipped into his pocket and pulled out a stun gun. "This is my vengeance."

With a cry, he jumped to his feet and lunged at Nightwing, the one who had destroyed his work. The former Boy Wonder spun around as Strange stabbed forward with the stun gun. It struck the EMP device, and electricity flowed from it into the doctor. Strange cried out and was blasted backwards, as was Nightwing. Batman caught his former protégé, while Strange crashed head first into one of the servers, his head breaking through glass and metal. A groan escaped the doctor and he collapsed.

Batman helped Nightwing stand up. "You ok?"

Rubbing his head, Nightwing regained his balance. "Yeah, I think so." He looked at the fallen doctor, the only movement he was making being his steady breathing, indicating that he was still alive. "Geez, what happened there?"

Batman looked back at the doctor, his eyes narrowing. "Justice."

Chapter End Notes
(A/N: Ok, I'm not going to lie, I took some inspiration from "The Killing Joke" when Batgirl almost killed that Paris Franz guy. I really like how the scene with Catwoman and Strange turned out. But there's going to be a more emotional moment in regards to it later. By the way, who liked how Batman beat the zombie warrior? Did you think I chose Mr. Freeze as a villain back in Chapter 3 by chance? Nope, it was all in preparation for this chapter. And now that Strange has been taken down, all that's left is to defeat Clayface. Stay tuned to see how that goes.)
Emotional Moments

Chapter Notes

(A/N: I had someone ask what "borderline metahuman" is, and what I meant about the writers rebooting the series. When I said rebooting the movie series, I meant start a new unrelated continuum that doesn't take place in the same universe. As for what a borderline metahuman is, a metahuman is someone "super", i.e. Superman, Flash, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, Beast Boy, etc. Borderline metahuman is somewhere in between. Not quite metahuman, but almost there, more than a normal human, but not quite at the level to be considered super. Think of it like a genius, you can be a lot smarter than the average human, but not quite at the level that is considered a genius. That's what Helena is, more than a normal human, but not quite a metahuman yet. That's why Strange wanted her, he saw her as a possible missing link between human and metahuman. But now that he's been taken care of, lets see what's happening with Clayface. As you can tell from this chapter title, I'll be examining a few of the characters' emotions, Catwoman's in particular after what almost happened last chapter. I won't say anymore than that, or else I'll end up spoiling things.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 21: Emotional Moments

"Who would have thought it would end up this way?" Nightwing wondered out loud as Batman climbed out of the Batmobile. "I mean, with Strange in a coma, we don't even need to worry about whether or not he'll even be able to escape, let alone come after Helena again. And even then, he won't have any of his research or experiments to pick up where he left off."

He glanced at Catwoman, who had yet to get out of the Batmobile. She hadn't said a word since almost killing the doctor. He didn't even know why he was telling her this, she was already aware of the situation. After they brought the unconscious Strange in, the doctors had looked him over. It turned out that the man was in a coma, and there was no telling when or if he would ever wake up. And if he did, there was likely to be severe brain damage after the blow he had taken to the head. The doctors had even said that there was a strong possibility that he would have amnesia.

As cruel as it sounded, Nightwing hoped that that would be the case if Strange ever did wake up. If he didn't even remember Helena, then there would be no fear of him going after her again, assuming his memory never came back of course. There was really no telling how extensive or permanent the brain damage was until he woke up though, if he did. Either way, he would never be a free man again, regardless of what he may or may not remember. The evidence they had gathered was overwhelming, and was more than enough to put the doctor away for life.

All this had made Nightwing feel better, but he couldn't get a reading on Batman or Catwoman. He'd have thought they'd be relieved that their daughter was out of danger. Not just because Strange was off the street, but because the chances of him escaping were zero while he was in a coma; again, if he even remembered more than his name if he ever did wake up.

Like always, Batman was as stoic as ever. Making his way over to his computer, he immediately
began doing what he did best. "Strange wasn't the only problem. We still have Clayface to consider. Until he's out of the way, Helena still isn't safe."

Nightwing stared, suddenly feeling very stupid for forgetting. "Right, the mud-man." He rubbed his forehead and sighed. "Would the guy even go after Helena anymore now that the doc is out of commission?"

Batman didn't even look at him. "Possibly. It's not a chance I'm willing to take. In any case, we still need to take him in, whether he's after Helena or not."

A snort of laughter escaped his former protégé. "And how exactly are we going to arrest him? The guy's a living blob of clay that can perfectly disguise himself as others and slip through the cracks of walls."

"We'll find a way. We have to."

Nightwing rolled his eyes. "Right. Well, let me know what you come up with, 'cause I'm at a loss." He looked back at Catwoman, she was still silently sitting in the Batmobile. "How about you? Any thoughts on how we can catch blobby?"

She didn't respond, but she did finally look at him, having been staring off in the distance until now. Without a word, she climbed out of the vehicle and made her way up the stairs and out of the Batcave. Nightwing sighed again as he watched her leave. "She's in a mood." He looked back at Batman. "You might want to go talk with her."

Batman was quiet for a moment. "She needs time. She faced the edge of the abyss tonight. She needs to sit with it for a while." He continued with whatever he was doing on the computer. "I still need to track down Clayface so we can end this once and for all."

Irritation gripped Nightwing. Bruce may be brilliant, but when he put on the bat-suit, he usually had a one-track mind. Walking over to the Dark Knight, he flicked the back of his head. "Hey, she doesn't need Batman right now, she needs Bruce Wayne. We got the main bad guy, and Helena is somewhere safe. The rest can wait. Get off your ass and go after her."

When Batman still didn't respond, Nightwing reached over and pushed a button, turning off the screen's monitor. "Now."

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Entering her room, Catwoman pulled off her goggles and tossed them onto the bed. She sat down next to them and sighed, dropping her head in her hands. She felt… she didn't know how she felt. There was a strange numbness that filled her, and beneath that, a deep underlying fear. Fear of what she had almost done.

Yes, she had killed before, but as Batman had pointed out, that had been in self-defense or in the heat of battle. What she had almost done tonight though, that would have been murder, even if it was to keep Helena safe. She would have had to live with Strange's blood on her hands for the rest of her life. Every time she would have looked at her daughter, she would have been reminded that she had committed murder for her. Would she even have been able to be a suitable mother after having taken a life in cold-blood?

It scared her, that feeling. What Batman had said about standing on the edge of the abyss was true. It was so very tempting, and so very scary. She knew that there would be no turning back once she crossed that line. It would be a slippery slope. One life would lead to two, then to three, until she
would cared if she killed at all, eventually becoming be no different than the murderers they took
down, killing without care anyone who crossed them. She couldn't do that, she couldn't become like
them. For her sake, for her daughter's.

Yes, she was relieved that Strange was out of the way, that was a major weight off her shoulders.
The coma and brain damage with possible amnesia was a plus too. But the fear of how close she had
come to ending the man's life overshadowed that relief. And they weren't out of the woods yet. As
Batman had pointed out, there was still Clayface to deal with. From the times she had gone up
against him before returning to Gotham, she knew that he wouldn't stop. This had become personal
to him. He'd still be after Helena. If Strange wasn't there to pay him for turning her over, then he
would go after Helena simply to kill her, just for his own satisfaction, to fulfill a grudge. No, Helena
wasn't out of danger until that freak was stopped.

Falling back against the bed, she stared up at the ceiling. Nightwing had brought up a good point too.
How would they stop Clayface? What prison would be able to hold him? Could they lock him in an
airtight room or something? That might work. But how would they even arrest him in the first place?
Too many questions, not enough answers. But if anyone could figure it out, it was Batman, she had
the utmost faith in him in that.

She sighed and sat up. She was exhausted, physically as well as mentally, especially mentally. Part
of her just wanted to crawl into bed and sleep for a year or two. Another part of her wanted to go
back out there right now and find Clayface, to put an end to this. And yet another part wanted to go
to Titan Tower and just hold her daughter, to know that she was safe and in her arms.

Then there was another part of her that wanted something else, but she knew she wouldn't get it
tonight. Bruce was in Batman-mode, trying to close the case on their daughter's pursuer. She was
glad for that, that he was so determine to get rid of the threat to Helena, but right now, she wanted
him here with her, to hold her and assure her it would all be ok.

She chuckled at the thought. Since when had she ever needed anyone? Selina Kyle was a strong and
independent woman. She didn't need anyone. Wanting someone, though, that was different.
Everyone wanted someone from time to time, someone they could open up to, rely on, to be themself
with, to love. It would be nice to be wrapped in Bruce's big strong arms for a while.

A knock at her door drew her attention and she sat up. She threw the door a dirty look, thinking it
was either Alfred or Dick. She didn't want to see either of them. She didn't want to see anyone right
now, not unless it was Helena, or-

"Selina?"

Her eyebrows rose. Bruce was here? No, that was Batman, she could tell by his voice; there was a
difference in the way he spoke. But why was he here? She'd thought he'd spend the night in front of
the computer trying to discover where Clayface was hiding, not come to see her. That was what
Batman did, always put the mission first, and keeping his daughter safe had to have been the most
important mission of all.

Despite that, she was glad to know he was there. She was about to open up for him, but hesitated.
What would she say to him after what happened tonight? She was feeling vulnerable right now, and
even though part of her wanted to take comfort in him, another part of her didn't want to appear
weak like that, not even to him.

She shook her head, pushing those thoughts aside. Selina Kyle was not afraid of anything, not even
her own feelings. She was always in control. She wouldn't let something like this get to her.
"Open the door, Selina," Batman insisted, his tone gentle, as if he knew what was bothering her.

Attempting to keep her face as neutral as possible, she did so, and was greeted by the Caped Crusader. "I thought you'd be spending the night in your cave, bat boy."

He didn't rise to the bait, possibly detecting that she was putting up a front. "Are you ok?"

She gave a forced chuckle and turned away, walking back into the room. "I'm perfectly fine," she replied, pulling the cat-eared hood back and letting her hair spill out. "We finally got the lunatic who's after our daughter. Now we just have to get his pet science project and everything will be alright."

Her act was convincing, very convincing. Batman might have believed her had he not known her better, having not known from personal experience what it was like to face the edge of the abyss. No one was alright after facing that for the first time. He'd faced it several times himself, usually when dealing with the Joker. The first time had been the hardest, and he'd almost given in.

"I'm proud if you," he told her, meaning every word despite his stoic tone. "I know how tempting it can be. And you had a good a cause as any to-"

"Helena's safe from him," she interrupted. "That's all that matters." She reached up and began to unzip her cat-suit. "We'll get Clayface in due time too. I'm sure everything will work out."

She was lying to herself, and to him. Batman could tell. She didn't want to show how much tonight affected her, and was trying to play it off as no big deal. "Selina…"

"I need a shower," she continued, slipping out of her suit, leaving her in only her black lace bra and matching panties. She looked over her shoulder and smiled at him. "Care to join me? We can have our own private celebration."

"You don't have to pretend with me, Selina."

She casually flipped her dark hair over her shoulder. "I'm not pretending anything. I'm glad we got the freaky doctor. Job's half done. Once we get Clayface, we're in the clear. I knew I could count on you." She curled her finger at him in invitation as she headed for the bathroom, beckoning him to come. "Let me give you a reward."

"Selina." She was trying to distract him with her sex appeal again. She was not shy about her body, and with a figure like that, had absolutely no reason to be. But as tempting as she was, this was one time where he would not be distracted.

"I'll get the shower warmed up," she told him with a sexy smile that held great promise. "You slip out of that suit. As sexy as it looks on you, I'd prefer to have you out of it."

Slipping into the bathroom, she began humming to herself. She reached into the shower and turned on the water, letting it heat up. Walking over to the mirror, she stared at herself in it. Despite the fact that she had a smile on her face, even she could see that it was forced, so of course Batman would be able to tell. He was the only one who could see through her, most of the time anyway.

Her bottom lip began to tremble as tears started to spill from her eyes. She closed them against the sight, fearing she would breakdown if she actually saw herself cry. She sensed more than heard Batman come up behind her and felt him place his hands on her shoulders. Reaching up, she hugged herself as she placed her hands over his, a small whimper escaping her.

"It'll be alright," he told her. "You beat the darkness in the most extreme of circumstances."
She squeezed her eyes shut tighter. "I wanted to do it, so badly. When he was lying there, smiling at me like that, all I could see was him standing over Helena with a scalpel in his hand, ready to do who knows what to her. All in the name of science."

"I know."

"I wanted him dead. Dead so he could never hurt her, or anyone else."

"I know."

She opened her eyes, staring at his reflection in the mirror. "Even now I still want to do it, put an end to that crazy, sadistic, scumbag. And that scares me."

"You're strong, Selina. And you're a good person. I've always known that about you, no matter how many times you broke the law. I know I can count on you to do the right thing."

For some reason, she chuckled at that, and turned around to face him, looking up into his masked face. "I'm no saint, Bruce."

One of his hands came up, cupping her cheek. "Neither am I."

She smiled at him then, leaning into his touch. Her own hand came up, covering his. She moved it to her mouth and kissed it, despite the gloves he was wearing. Moving in closer, she kissed him. He returned the kiss, his hands sliding around to embrace her, pulling her towards him. She wrapped her arms around him, kissing him harder, needing this, needing him.

When they finally broke apart, she reached up and pulled back his mask, letting it hang down his back. Running her hands up his chest, feeling his muscles through his suit, she cupped his cheeks before smiling and kissing him again.

Bruce's own hands unclasped her bra, letting drop between them. She leapt up, wrapping her legs around him as his hands grasped her bottom, holding her to him. Her tongue forced its way into his mouth as their kisses grew more fevered, and she began clawing at his suit, desperate to get him out of it.

Keeping a hold of her, Bruce turned and carried her off to the bed. All the while, the shower kept running, forgotten.

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Batman had contacted Titan Tower the next day to deliver the good news. The superhero team-in-training were gathered around the massive computer screen, in full costume, having had their training session interrupted by the call, as he gave them an update on the situation. Relieved cheers went around when he reported what had become of Strange.

"But we're not out of the woods yet," the Dark Knight told them. "We still have to find Clayface. So I want you to stay where you are for now."

Huntress nodded. "That's fine. We're all getting along great here."

Grinning, Beast Boy wrapped an arm around her. "Relax, Bats. We're taking good care of your little girl." He waited for a response from the screen, but Batman remained stoic and unresponsive. Beast Boy began to feel uncomfortable and removed his arm. "Dude, I was just kidding. We're all cool here."
"Keep it that way," Batman growled. He looked at his daughter. "And Helena, I don't want you going out. With Strange out of the picture, we don't know what Clayface will do."

Huntress cocked her head to the side. "Would he even do anything? Wouldn't he just crawl away like the slime he is?"

"Your mother seems to think otherwise, and I'm inclined to agree with her."

She rolled her eyes. "Mom worries too much."

"I heard that." Catwoman appeared on screen beside the Dark Knight. "I'm your mother, I have the right to worry about you."

Beast Boy's mouth dropped open. He glanced at Jaime and pointed at the screen. "Dude, that's freakin' Catwoman."

Huntress gave her mother a smile. "I worry about you too, Mom. But everything will be fine. I'll be a good girl and stay put."

"That goes for Huntress too," Catwoman added knowingly. She smirked at the disappointed look on her daughter's face. "I mean it, young lady."

"Kory, Victor," said Batman, "you'll make sure she remains in the Tower. Is that clear?"

Starfire hesitated. "Is that necessary? Can we not keep her safe?"

"Not without knowing who the enemy is. With Clayface's shape-shifting ability, he could be anyone. I don't want her to go out."

"I heard you the first time," Huntress grumbled irritably. "Don't worry, I won't go out until you give me the ok." At the skeptical look he gave her, even with his mask on, she could tell he was doubting her, and she supposed she couldn't blame him after having snuck out twice. "For real this time. I promise."

"Good. We'll check back in shortly."

"I love you, sweetie," Catwoman told her.

She smiled. "I know, Mom. I love you guys too."

The screen went black. The other Titans began patting Huntress on the back and congratulating her. The only one who wasn't present was Robin. He sat on the couch, having been listening from a distance as his father gave them the details of his and Catwoman's investigation. After having heard it, he was feeling overcome by several emotions he couldn't identify.

So some freak doctor who thought he was going to make the world a better place no matter how much blood he had to spill was behind everything. He could relate to that after what his mother and grandfather had attempted. Strange had just been another self-righteous freak attempting to satisfy his own ambitions under the misguided belief or delusion that he was doing the right thing.

But it wasn't the similarities Strange had with his mother and grandfather that was bothering Robin. It was hearing what the madman had been planning on doing to his sister that was bothering him. He'd expected to feel some form of anger and resentment towards the doctor, but he was surprised at just how pissed off he actually was. What Strange had been planning to do to her, it made Robin want to head back to Gotham and make sure the guy never woke up.
And that's what was confusing him. He'd managed to get control over the desire to kill the criminal scumbags he ran into, but now that feeling was back with a vengeance. The closest he had ever felt towards the way he did now was when he found the children that the Dollmaker had kidnapped. For some reason, the thought of Helena in the hands of that freak scientist pissed him off more than he was willing to admit.

"Damian," said Starfire, waving him over, "why are you sitting over there? This is a joyful occasion. The man who was after your sister has been apprehended."

Robin tapped his finger against his side impatiently, trying to work out his feelings. "There is nothing to be happy about. Father is right, until Clayface is taken down, the danger still remains."

"Dude, lighten up!" Beast Boy cried. "One victory at a time, man."

"Right," Robin muttered. "Well, I'm not one to celebrate until there's something to celebrate. I'll be in my room."

He got up and walked off. The others watched him leave, some more used to his attitude than others. On Jaime's back, the Blue Scarab Beetle's eyes blinked as it conveyed a message to its host.

"I don't know," Jaime replied. "Maybe he just doesn't like to leave things unfinished."

"Dude, come on," Beast Boy grumbled. "He's always so uptight."

"It's fine," Huntress said with a smile. "It's his way of showing he cares."

Starfire clapped her hands together. "I think we have cause for celebration. How about a party?"

Cyborg smirked. "Sounds good to me. I'll go pick up some pizzas."

Huntress' eyes lit up. "Ooh, are you going to do that 'boom' thing? I want to see!"

Beast Boy grabbed Jaime. "Great. While you go get the grub, Jaime and I will get the party supplies set up."

Raven looked in the direction Robin had walked off in. "Something tells me that not all of us are in a very festive mood."

Starfire gave the girl a pleading look. "Would you go talk to him, Raven? He seems to respond well to you. See if you can get him to join us."

Huntress chuckled. "Gee, I wonder why."

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In Robin's room, he sat on his bed, tossing a Batarang at the target on the wall, nailing a bull's eye. Grabbing the string attached to it, he pulled it back before tossing it again. He couldn't believe the others were celebrating right now. What was there to celebrate? The mission wasn't over yet. Helena was still in danger. And why did he care so much?

As reluctant as he was to admit it, what he was feeling was more that just the need to take down another dangerous criminal. It was more personal, and he also felt more concern for Helena than he cared to admit. But why? Sure, she didn't annoy him as much as she did when she first arrived; even her mother didn't bother him as much. But still, why? What had changed? Ok, he could admit that she wasn't as bad as he initially thought, but he had yet to fully accept her as his sister.
He tossed the Batarang again. As it struck the target, a portal suddenly appeared in front of it. He recognized it as Raven's magic, but she did not yet appear as her came from it. "Mind if I come in?"

He laid back, appreciative of her asking. "Sure." A moment later, Raven walked through the portal, and it disappeared behind her. Robin didn't even bother to look at her. "Everyone getting all hyped for the party?"

She shrugged. "More or less." She walked over to his bedside, sitting down on the mattress. "You should join us."

His eyes narrowed. "I'll celebrate when there's something to celebrate. Just because Father caught Strange doesn't mean the danger has passed. A lot of times the subordinates are more dangers than the ones in charge. As long as Clayface is at large, Helena is in danger, yet everyone is partying like we just removed all crime from the streets."

Raven smiled, getting a reading on his emotions, even if he couldn't figure out what they meant. "It almost sounds like you're worried about her."

Frowning in disapproval, Robin stubbornly roiled over onto his side. "She's more than capable of taking care of herself."

This time she chuckled. "Now it sounds like you're praising her. It seems like a lot has changed since you first told me about her."

"Not really."

So he was being difficult again. Well, she was used to that. And the feelings she was sensing from him were more truthful than his words. He could pretend and act unfeeling and uncaring all he wanted, but he couldn't fool her. "I know you care about her, Damian. You're starting to see her as a sister rather than an unworthy stranger trying to interfere and take over your life."

He sat up, throwing her a dirty look. "Stop reading my emotions."

"Sorry, I can't always help it, especially with how intently you're feeling them right now. You're worried about her, and you're angry at Strange for going after her."

"Stop it."

"And you're also angry at yourself for caring for her. These feelings don't make you weak, Damian. On the contrary, they give you a reason to keep fighting." She looked at the wall, not seeing it, but a memory from some time ago. "You guys gave me a reason to keep fighting rather than to just keep running. I never would have been able to defeat my father without you."

Robin just grumbled and remained silent. He didn't want to admit it, but she was right. He had come to care for Helena. When exactly had that happened? How exactly had that happened? Sure, they had bonded during their time together, but when had she actually become a sister in his eyes?

"Well, when exactly did all of us go from strangers to friends in your eyes?" Raven asked, having read his thoughts. "Sometimes we just end up feeling things and have no idea how or why we feel that way. You're not supposed to analyze them, Damian, you're just supposed to feel them. That's why they're called feelings."

He cut his eyes at her. "Are you going to get all philosophical on me?"

She smiled. "If it'll put you in a better mood and get you to join the party, then sure."
He stood up and walked over to the window. "The situation still hasn't changed. Clayface is still a threat… to my sister." He frowned, the words feeling foreign to him, despite the truth behind them. "Don't tell her I called her that."

Amusement danced in Raven's eyes. "I'll keep quiet. So, are you coming to the party?"

Robin sighed. "We should keep our wits about us. This isn't the time for fun."

Raven considered this. If he was going to be stubborn, then perhaps she could use his dedication to the mission to her advantage. "You know, studies have shown that when a person is stressed that they don't think or act accordingly. Fun and relaxation is always recommended to release your stress and keep your wits about you. So, if you really want to be the best you can be, you should join us."

Robin glared at her reflection in the window. He knew she was playing him, but she also had a point, and was correct in her reasoning. Being stressed would not do him or Helena any good. And capturing Strange was a victory in it's own right, even if the problem hadn't been entirely solved.

Sighing, he turned back to her, offering her a small smile. "Fine, but just for a while."

Raven returned the smile. "Whatever you say."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: It's party time. I can't really see Damian as the party type though. Raven may have a point about de-stressing, but is Damian right about Clayface? Is this the time to party, or should they be focusing on catching the last bad guy? We're entering the final phase of this story, so look forward to what's coming. I hope to make to epic.)
Cyborg normally didn't make a habit of using his ability to 'boom' for everyday things. He preferred to only reserve it for Justice League or Teen Titan duties. Doing things as normal as possible made him feel more normal than he actually was, and he liked to feel as normal as possible.

This time was an exception though. The party had been a spontaneous event, and they didn't have time to drive all the way to Jump City. So, after having placed his order, he had 'boomed' to the pizza place to pick up the orders.

Being Victor Stone, the popular football player, had gotten him a lot of attention when he went out. Being Cyborg, member of the Justice League and Teen Titans got him even more, only now he couldn't blend in with the crowd. And his flashy entrance only brought even more attention to him.

It wasn't that Cyborg didn't enjoy the attention of his fans, but it did prove to be a nuisance from time to time. Like now, when he was in a hurry. The crowd of people gathering around, asking for his autograph, taking pictures with him, or even simply shaking his hand, was proving to be a bit of a problem.

"People, please," he said as politely as he could without simply dismissing them, "I'm just here to pick up dinner."

"Do you even need to eat since you're a machine?" someone asked.

He tried not to take offense to that, knowing they were simply ignorant to his situation. "I'm not all machine. Now if you'll excuse me, the thirty minutes or it's free deal doesn't apply to me."

Not all attention was always good. As word quickly spread around the area that Cyborg was here, some rather unwanted attention came from a certain group of individuals. With scowls on their faces, the six of them made their way towards the pizza place that Cyborg had gone into, blending in with the crowd of people gathered around it.

With five pizza boxes in hand, Cyborg exited the restaurant. Flashes from cameras went off all around, reminding him of his football days. It seemed some things would never change. But he didn't have time for this now. The pizzas were getting cold, and he couldn't 'boom' right here with all these
people around, he didn't want any civilians ending up in Titan Tower.

"Sorry, people, but I've got to go," he told them. "The team is hungry."

He took to the air, flying away from the crowd, and set down in an ally. With no people around, he activated his Boom Tube, and a portal into the Tower appeared. He was about to walk through when a voice called out to him.

"Hey, Cyborg, you got a second?"

He turned around to find a group of six boys walking towards him. How had they caught up to him so fast? Or had they been there the whole time? That was strange; he hadn't seen them when he came down.

"Sorry, fellows," he said, "but I'm not doing autographs today."

The boy who seemed to be the leader of the group waved this off. "No, no, nothing like that. Just got a question for you. Word on the street says that the Teen Titans have a new member. We were just wondering if this was true."

Cyborg's only real eye narrowed. How had they learned of that? They had been very secretive about Helena, as per Batman's orders. "Where'd you hear that from?"

The leader smirked. "Let's just say we heard it through the grapevine. So, is it true? Is there a new member? A girl?"

So they knew. But how? They had been so careful. Perhaps he could convince them they were wrong. "Sorry, but there's no one new. We're always on the lookout for new recruits though. So if you know anyone, be sure to point them in our direction."

He turned to walk through the portal. A smirk crept up the leader's face. "Oh, we'll be sure to do that."

Something flew through the air, and Cyborg froze. The pizzas fell from his hand and he looked down. Sticking out of his chest was a large metal spike, having entered his back and was now protruding from his front. On the back of the spike, the material blended from steel to clay, the brown tendril having covered several yards.

The spike was pulled back, the tendril of clay reshaping itself into the lead boy's arm. He, along with his five friends, were smirking. All at once, they melted together and reformed into Clayface. With a sinister chuckle, he walked over to the fallen hero, grinning down at him.

"Thanks for showing me the way." He reached down and picked Cyborg up, then violently threw him into the wall. "I've got a score to settle with that little b*tch."

Cyborg struggled to lift his head as WARNING and ERROR messages flashed across his robotic eye's vision. He weakly lifted a hand towards the clay monstrosity as his systems notified him that they were shutting down. "No..."

The last thing he saw before everything went black was Clayface walking into the portal.

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The words to Taylor Swift's Blank Space flowed across the screen as Huntress sang into the microphone. The rest of the Titans sat on the couch, waiting for their turn as she continued to sing.
Robin and Raven had yet to join them since the former had disappeared into his room, and they were still waiting for Cyborg to return with the pizzas.

"But I've got a blank space, baby," Huntress sang, "and I'll write your name."

The song concluded, and the rest of the Titans clapped as Huntress took a bow. Starfire got up and walked over to her, still clapping, and gave her a smile. "You sang beautifully, Helena. I think that was even better than when you sang Dark Horse."

The young girl beamed at her. "Thanks, Kory. Blank Space and Dark Horse are actually two of my mom's favorite songs. She says they reminds her of her relationship with Dad."

"How?" Robin grumbled as he and Raven walked into the room. "The long list of ex-lovers part?"

Huntress glared at him. "Mom may use her looks to her advantage, but she's not a floozy. She's has very high standards when it comes to men. In fact, the only other guy she actually hooked up with was some guy named Slam Bradley. Turns out he was a superhero too called Smart Bomb, but their relationship was very short-lived. Probably because she still loved Dad." Her eyes narrowed. "Speaking of which, just how many women has Dad been with?" She glanced at Starfire. "Society has such a double-standard. If a guy sleeps around, he's complimented for being a stud, but if a girl sleeps around, she's condemned for being a whore. What's up with that? Shouldn't both be bad?"

The Tamaranean cleared her throat, looking uncomfortable. "Yes, um, so who is next?"

Beast Boy jumped up. "Me!"

Raven's shoulders sank, and she glanced at Damian. "I think we came in too soon."

"Hey!" the changeling objected. "I have a good singing voice. And Damian, Helena, lose the costumes. This is a party! Loosen up, have some fun!"

Huntress flicked her hair back. "I'm good. It's like a costume party."

Beast Boy rolled his eyes. "Whatever." She transformed into a dog. "Now bring up Who Let the Dogs Out."

Robin snorted. "No surprise there."

"Total stereotype," Raven agreed.

Smiling, Starfire typed in the song title for Beast Boy. Just as she hit ENTER, a loud boom followed by a bright light filled the room. "Ah, Cyborg has returned."

Beast Boy grinned and resumed his human form. "Just in time to listen to me tear this up."

Grumbling, Robin dropped down onto the couch. "Lucky us."

They waited, but Cyborg did not come through the portal. Seconds ticked by, stretching into a minute, and still he did not emerge. Frowning, Jaime got up and walked over to the portal. Moments before he stuck his head through, Cyborg stepped through the portal, carrying a stack of pizza boxes.

Jaime jumped back in surprise. "Cyborg! Man, you scared me."

"Yeah, dude, what took you?" Beast Boy asked. "Have trouble getting through the portal?"

As the portal closed behind him, Cyborg's remaining human eye scanned the room before landing on
Huntress. His eyebrows rose slightly before he turned his attention to the changeling. "Got surrounded by a group of fans. Had to shake them off."

Beast Boy waved him over. "Well, bring those pizzas over here, I'm starving. Just let me sing this little number, and we can chow down." His eyes narrowed. "You didn't get any meat toppings did you? You know I don't eat meat."

A somewhat dark smile spread across Cyborg's face. "Of course not."

He slowly walked across the room, setting the stack of pizzas on the table. Raven glanced at him with a frown on her face, sensing a strange amount of emotions from him, not the type she would have expected. "Hey, you ok?"

His expression didn't change as he looked at the young witch. "Of course. I'm just excited for the party."

Turning away, he slowly approached Helena. She was sitting on the couch, listening to Beast Boy sing, or try to sing anyway. As he got close, a frown crossed the young girl's face. Her senses were going crazy, alerting her to a sense of danger. She looked around the room, searching for anything that could be potentially dangerous, but saw nothing. Beast Boy was singing while Starfire, Robin, and Raven sat on the couch listening. Cyborg was coming over to join them while Jaime made his way over to the pizzas.

Her eyes narrowed in suspicion. She didn't see anything dangerous, yet she clearly sensed it. Was there something outside trying to get in? Was the threat already in the tower? Just what was she feeling?

"Oh man!" Jaime groaned as he lifted a pizza box cover. "Did you drop these? They're all messed up."

"Sorry," Cyborg replied, "the crowd was a little crazy."

"Hey, hey!" Beast Boy complained. "You're ruining my song!"

Huntress continued to look around, her uneasiness growing. Her sense of danger was all but screaming at her. She still didn't see or hear anything, but she trusted her senses, they had never let her down before. Closing her eyes, she sniffed the air, her enhanced sense of smell detecting traces of... clay.

Cyborg's fist came down, and Huntress jumped away from the couch before it hit. He made a grab for her, but she rolled out of reach and threw a smoke bomb at him. It blew up in his face, surrounding him in a cloud of smoke, and he coughed as he stumbled around blindly.

Starfire jumped to her feet. "Helena, Cyborg, what is the meaning of this?"

Still coughing, Cyborg stepped out of the cloud of smoke. With an angry cry, he charged at the Tamaranean, but a black light suddenly surrounded him and slammed him into the wall.

"Be careful!" Raven cried, her hand glowing with dark magic. "It's not him!"

Gritting his teeth, Cyborg lifted his arm. His fist suddenly turned into what appeared to be mud and a stream of it shot towards Raven, slamming into her. She was pushed backwards and slammed into the wall, her magic fading.

Cyborg glared at the rest of the Titans as his features began to shift, his skin turning a mud brown
color as he grew in size. Robin immediately pulled out his sword and pointed it at the monster, his expression furious. "Clayface!"

Beast Boy pointed. "That's Clayface?"

The big brown monster cracked his knuckles. "Pleased to make your acquaintance. Now hand over the girl."

"Go to Hell," Robin seethed.

Starfire held up her hand, a bolt of green energy shining in her palm. "What have you done with Cyborg?"

A wicked chuckle escaped the monstrosity. "If you're looking for your robot friend, he's laying in the street with a big hole in his chest. And you're all going to end up the same if you don't turn over the girl."

"You bastard," Starfire growled.

"Dude didn't you hear?" said Beast Boy. "Your boss, Dr. Strange, Batman got him. He's in the big house now, so you ain't getting paid."

A surprised look crossed Clayface's face. "What? The doctor is…?" His eyes narrowed. "You're lying."

Beast Boy shook his head. "Nope. How else would we even know about him? Batman found him and his laboratory and took him down. Why do you think we're celebrating?"

"He is right," Starfire added. "Your boss is finished. You will never get your reward. You have no reason to pursue Huntress further."

Clayface's hands clenched, his face twisting with fury. "All these months, wasted…" He let out as bellow of rage, and slammed his fist against the wall. His milky white gaze fell on Huntress, and his features twisted into a vicious snarl. "Then I guess I don't need to take her alive."

He let out a cry and lunged forward. Starfire immediately blasted him with a star-bolt, and he stumbled back as a hole was blasted into his body, but he did not go down. She blasted him again and again, but he refused to fall, his injuries healing within seconds.

"Get Huntress out of here!" she ordered. "I'll hold him off!"

"But what about you?" Jaime cried, as his Blue Scarab Beetle encased him in armor.

"I'll hold him off! Now go! This isn't an enemy we can fight against!"

Damian scowled, but knew she was right. Based on what he had seen Clayface do, and the way he was healing the injuries Starfire was giving him, it certainly didn't look like they would be able to defeat Clayface this way.

"Damn it," he growled, sheathing his sword. He hurried over to his sister and grabbed her arm. "Let's go."

She pulled her arm out of his grip. "No way, I'm going to stay and fight!"

"Don't be stupid! Now come on."
"I said I'm staying!"

Raven limped over to them, rubbing her sore arm. "There's no time for this. He really wants to kill you."

Beast Boy sighed. "Why are we debating this?" He transformed into a gorilla and scooped Huntress up, throwing her over his shoulder. "Let's go."

Kicking and pounding her fists against Beast Boy, Huntress struggled in his grip. "Damn it, Garfield, let me go!"

They reluctantly left Starfire alone to fight Clayface. He snarled furiously as he saw his prey escaping, and lashed out. His arm stretched towards Starfire, wrapping around her body. His clay flowed over her, trapping her in a cocoon of muck, but he wasn't able to hold her long as the cocoon blew apart with a burst of green energy. Starfire flew towards him, pelting him with more star-bolts.

Clayface roared, and his arms extended outward, his hands shifting into large maces. He swung them around, the spiky metal balls slamming into the ceiling, floor, and wall. Starfire maneuvered around them and flew towards Clayface, delivering a kick to his head. He snarled, and an extra arm flew from his chest and grabbed her leg. She responded by firing beams from her eyes into his face, and his head exploded.

The hand holding her leg let her go, and Clayface fell to his knees. Starfire hovered in the air, surprised he had actually gone down. It seemed she had made a mistake in letting her guard down though, as Clayface's body suddenly erupted into a geyser, slamming her into the ceiling.

Remaining as a shapeless blob, he swung the Tamaranean around, crashing her into the ceiling, wall, and floor. He finally brought her down one last time, then resumed his humanoid shape. Starfire groaned in pain, and struggled to get up. Grabbing the couch, Clayface lifted it over his head and brought it down on her.

"Alien bitch," he growled. "I'll deal with you later."

He turned and he marched out of the room, leaving the unconscious Tamaranean behind.

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"Goddammit, Garfield, put me down!" Huntress shouted, finally managing to knee him in the face.

Grunting, the green gorilla dropped her, grabbing his face, and Huntress jumped down. Robin immediately rounded on her. "Why are you being so difficult?"

Huntress glared at him. "Damn it, Damian, I've been running away from this guy for months! He chased me away from my home, my hideout, and Wayne Manor! I'm not letting him chase me out of here too! I'm tired of running from this guy! What would you do if your were me?"

Robin growled, knowing exactly what he would do, but he wasn't about to let her be stupid like that, and turned to Raven. "Make a portal. Get her out of here."

At that moment, Clayface burst into the room. "No one is going anywhere."

"Shit!" Robin sworn, pulling out his sword.

Clayface's arm shot out, grabbing a chair, and throwing it at Robin. It froze in the air, surrounded by a black light, and Raven flung it back at Clayface. It buried into his body, but he simply tore it out.
Raising his arm, he brought it down, and it stretched across the room, a metal blade forming along
the length. Raven held up her hands, and the black light flowed over Clayface's arm.

Glancing over her shoulder, she looked at the others. "I can't open a portal while doing this. Get out
another way."

"Bitch!" Clayface snarled, throwing a punch. His fist stretched across the room, turning into metal
with spiked knuckles. Raven froze this as well.

"Hurry!" she cried. "I can't hold him back much longer!"

But Huntress was not about to run away again. "I said I'm not leaving."

Losing his patience, Robin grabbed her and slapped her across the face. Huntress' eyes widened in
shock, and she looked at him in disbelief. "Damn it, Helena, this isn't about what you want! You said
you want to be a part of the team, well sometimes that means doing what's best for it. You're the one
he's after. We can't fight him and keep you safe! Just listen to me for once in your goddamn life!"

Clayface roared and kicked outward. His foot separated from his leg, transforming into a large
bolder. Jaime, now in full Blue Beetle mode, blasted the rock apart. "He's right, you have to trust us.
Let us help you."

Huntress looked back at Clayface as Raven continued to try and hold him back. She was torn
between wanting to fight, and trusting her friends.

"You're not leaving!" Clayface declared, and sent out several tendrils of clay to stab Raven. She
dropped her hold on him and formed a barrier around herself that the pointed end of his clay tentacles
repeatedly stabbed.

Beast Boy looked back at Robin and Huntress. "You two go. We'll hold him off for as long as we
can."

He transformed into a tiger and charged at Clayface, leaping onto him and biting. Blue Beetle flew
over and began firing beams of energy at him as well. Clayface snarled furiously, tearing the green
tiger off him and tossing him aside before making a grab for Blue Beetle, only to have his hand
blown apart by another energy blast.

Robin looked back at Huntress expectantly. She looked from him to Clayface, her mask doing
nothing to hide how torn she was. "Damn it. Fine." She grabbed an explosive shuriken and threw it
at Clayface. "Let's go."

She reluctantly let her brother lead her away as the shuriken blew up in the clay monster's shoulder
where it had struck him. Raven dropped her shield as the clay tentacles stopped stabbing her and
closed her eyes. "By the powers of Azarath, I beseech you. Azarath Metrion Zinthos!"

Shadows engulfed her body, and she melted into them. The shadows took the form of a raven and
flowed across the ground, settling beneath Clayface's feet. Black wings rose up from the ground and
wrapped around him, and Clayface was completely swallowed up by darkness. Beast Boy resumed
human form again and Blue Beetle set down beside him. They watched expectantly as the mass of
darkness struggled to keep Clayface contained.

The shadows finally burst about, sending Raven crashing into the wall, and a tide of clay spilled out.
It flowed towards the other two Titans, flowing over them in a large wave, knocking them to the
ground. The clay moved past them and formed into Clayface again, and he made to follow after the
siblings.
Climbing to his feet, Beast Boy transformed into a rhinoceros and rammed into Clayface. He slammed the monster into the wall, but Clayface suddenly turned inside out so he was facing Beast Boy. He grabbed the rhino, lifting him into the air, and slammed him down.

Raising his arm, he transformed it into solid metal, but a blast of energy from Blue Beetle severed his arm, and his limb dropped to the ground. Scowling, Clayface turned to him, but was blasted by a beam of darkness from Raven that blasted him against the wall and held him there.

"Bitch, you're dead!" he growled.

"No," she said, "you are. Azarath Metrion Zinthos!"

She transformed into pure shadow, taking the form of her namesake. Flying towards Clayface, she entered his body, and his face twisted in fury. The darkness expanded within him, and he cried out before he was blown to pieces, blobs of him splattering all across the room.

Raven stood glowing with dark power where Clayface had been. She took a calming breath, ignoring Trigon's encouragement to completely unleash her power and kill everyone in the Tower, and the shadows faded.

Beast Boy resumed human form and looked around at the splattered remains of Clayface. "Dude, remind me never to get on your bad side."

"I heard that," Blue Beetle agreed. He looked down at the clay. "Is he dead?"

Beast Boy nudged some with his foot. "I'd say yes, but I never faced anyone made out of clay before."

Raven was having similar thoughts. "We should contain it, just in case. Better to be safe than sorry. I'll take care of the cleanup, you guys go check on Kory."

Beast Boy shrugged. "Whatever you say, girl."

He turned to leave the room, and some of the clay by his feet suddenly shaped itself into a hand and grabbed his ankle. He cried out and began shaking his foot, but the clay began to spread up his body and hardened into rock.

"Garfield!" Raven cried.

The clay all around came to life and flew at her, splattering all over her body. Clayface reformed around her, and shifted her around inside him until she was in his grip. He slammed her against the ceiling and floor several times before a blast from Blue Beetle blew his shoulder apart, and he dropped her.

Bellowing, Clayface liquefied and flew at him in a stream. Blue Beetle was flattened against the wall, but the stream of clay kept coming, sliding to the floor before rejoining the main body and flying towards him again, creating a continuous loop.

"Hey, ugly, leave my friend alone!" Beast Boy shouted from his stone prison.

He transformed into a Tyrannosaurus, bursting out of the rock confining him. This left him with very little room to move in the room, and he transformed into a bear. He stomped over to the circling stream of clay and began slashing at it. This did no damage as the clay kept flowing.

"Cut it out!" he roared.
He shifted into a hippo and moved in front of the clay stream. It splattered against him, nearly knocking him off his feet, but he managed to hold his ground, and Blue Beetle slid to the floor, unconscious.

The clay stopped flowing and reformed into Clayface. Bricks appeared across his chest and flowed outward towards the green hippo. Beast Boy transformed into a bird and flew out of its path, and the bricks crashed into the wall, making a hole in it. He turned into a squirrel and raced into the next room, leaving the unconscious Raven and Blue Beetle behind.

Clayface stormed after him, and found himself in the kitchen. He was hit by a table by Beast Boy in gorilla form. He fell to one knee, and Beast Boy jumped onto him, wrapping his arms around him. Clayface just chuckled and slid out of his grip, reforming next to him. His arm hardened into cement, and he broke it over the gorilla's head. Beast Boy dropped to his hands and knees, and Clayface brought his other cement arm down on his head again. This time he fell to the ground and shifted back to human form.

Breathing heavily, Clayface summoned the pieces of broken cement back to him, and they melted into his clay body again. Glaring down at the fallen Titan, he made a fist, and it formed into a mace.

"I've had enough of you freaks interfering." He raised his hand. "You won't get in my way again."

A Batarang struck the back of his head. He barely had time to register it before it exploded. Headless, he turned to the one who threw it, despite missing everything above the shoulders.

"You're one to call someone a freak," Robin growled.

Clayface's head reformed and he charged at Robin. He brought his fist down, but Robin sidestepped him and slashed his arm with his sword. This did no lasting damage as the wound immediately healed, and he threw another punch. Robin jumped up and stabbed him in the face, his sword burrowing in his left eye and going out the back of his head.

Robin attempted to pull it out but the sword wouldn't budge. He reluctantly let it go as Clayface's hand reached up to grab him, and he jumped away. Turning to him, Clayface ripped the sword out of his head and tossed it aside. "You should have kept running, boy. I'll find the girl and kill her in front of you. Then I'll do the same to you and your friends. One by one."

Robin held out a hand. "Just try it."

He motioned for the monster to come at him, tauntingly. Just as he expected, Clayface rose to the bait and charged at him. Clayface prepared to throw a punch, his hand becoming a spiky metal fist. Robin jumped over the punch and slid beneath Clayface's legs and snatched up his sword as the monster's fist smashed into the sink.

A spray of water shot out, flowing over Clayface's arm. He cried out in pain and jumped back, his arm liquefying. Even his metal hand shifted back to clay and fell away in a wet puddle on the ground as Clayface backed away from the water.

Behind his mask, Robin's gaze landed on the water pouring out of the broken sink. "Water?" He looked back at Clayface, and realized that the monster wasn't reforming his melted hand. A smirk grazed his face. "I found your weakness."

Clayface glared at him. "And I found yours."

His other hand formed into a sludge hammer, and he stomped over to Beast Boy. Robin gasped and rushed over, but Clayface turned at the last moment and backhanded him. Chuckling he finally
managed to reform his melted arm and grabbed Robin's cape, lifting him into the air. Robin thrashed around as his sword fell to the floor, but Clayface held him at a distance. Swearing, he grabbed several Batarangs and threw them at Clayface. They became embedded in his body, but didn't seem to do any damage.

Chuckling, Clayface walked over to the floor to ceiling window and smashed it apart with his sludge hammer hand, then held Robin out of it. "Lets see if you can really fly, little bird."

He let him go, and Robin went falling. Smirking, he turned away, his fists clenching and unclenching in anticipation as he imagined the satisfaction he would get when he snapped the girl's neck. "I'm the hunter now, little bitch. And it's time I got my prey."

As he stalked away, a grapple latched onto the side of the Tower, stopping Robin's fall. He hung on for dear life and began to reel himself back up. "Stay where you are, Helena. I'm coming."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: I have to admit, this chapter didn't turn out as well as I expected. It felt less… epic than what I was going for. But I went over it several times, and this was the best I could get. Maybe I need a break. But tell me what you think. I'll have the next chapter out on schedule, so look forward to the confrontation between Clayface and Helena. Did I ever mention that one of the reasons why I chose Clayface as the main villain was because in "Birds of Prey" it was Clayface that killed Selina and was the one Helena was searching for when she sought out her mother's killer? No? Well, now you know. One last thing, I have a deadline for work that I'm running a little behind on, so the next chapter may be in 3 weeks rather than two. So if it's not out the following Wednesday, it'll {hopefully} be out the next.)
(A/N: Yay, I got this out on time. Thought it would take an extra week. I hope everyone has been enjoying the story up until now, because we're coming to the end. Anyway, last chapter Clayface had managed to overpower our heroes, and now Huntress is on her own wherever she she handle Clayface on her own, or will some come along to save her? it's part two of the big battle.)

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 23: Teamwork

Huntress hated the fact that she was hiding, but she was trusting her friends to deal with Clayface, just like Robin had asked. She wanted to go down and help them fight the monster, but reluctantly admitted that he was right. Clayface was after her, and they couldn’t fight him and keep her safe at the same time.

"I don't need to be kept safe," she grumbled irritably.

Yet she had agreed to let them take care of the threat all the same. However, she still refused to leave the Tower. If Clayface managed to beat her friends and couldn't find her, she knew he would kill them instead. But if she knew Clayface like she thought she did, as long as she was still in the Tower, if he did manage to beat them, he would use them to get to her to come out of hiding, and she would get chance to save them.

"Come on, guys," she whispered, "you can do it."

Her fingers tapped against her side impatiently as she waited. She had a shuriken in one hand and her pole in the other, ready in case it was Clayface that came in. She had faith in her friends, they were each very powerful in their own right, but Clayface was so… unique. It seemed impossible to damage him at all. How do you defeat someone with a body like his?

"Air tight jar," she quietly theorized out loud. "Deep freeze him. Would that even work?"

The sound of a door opening brought her out of her thoughts, and she tensed up, ready for anything. But then she heard Robin call out to her. "Helena, you still there? It's ok, you can come out now?"

She raised an eyebrow at this and looked out of the grates of the air duct she was hiding in. She saw not only Robin, but the rest of the team, minus Cyborg, who was still missing. They had to find out what Clayface did with him. She hoped he was ok.

"Helena," said Starfire, "it is safe. Raven opened a portal and sent him away."

The Azarathian nodded. "He won't be coming back any time soon."

"We're going to call Batman and Catwoman," Blue Beetle added. "Your mother would want to know you're alright."
Scowling slightly. Huntress kicked open the air duct and dropped down. "What about you guys? You all ok?"

Beast Boy gave her a thumbs up. "You bet. Old Clayface was no match for the Teen Titans."

Robin motioned her over. "Come on, let's call Batman."

Huntress stared at him for a moment before nodding. "Yeah, sure, just one thing."

Quick as lightning, she threw several shuriken, each one striking a different Titan in vital places. There was no blood anywhere, but the area around the shuriken had turned a brown mud color.

Huntress glared. "I wouldn't fall for your lame ass impersonation a second time."

All five phony Titans scowled at her. They liquefied and came together, forming Clayface, and the shuriken seeped out of his body, leaving him unharmed. "How'd you know?"

Huntress snorted. "You can imitate appearances, but there's some things you missed. Speeches patterns for one, accents, behaviors, body language. My friends have different traits that are exclusive to them that your copies lacked. Also, I could sense your hostility." She sniffed with her extra sensitive nose. "And then there's personal hygiene to consider. But besides all of that," she twirled around her pole, "your Robin copy didn't say the code word to let me know it's safe. That's a basic precaution, dumbass."

Clayface looked surprised, but then he chuckled. "Very cute. But if you knew, then why did you come out?"

Behind her mask, Huntress glared at him. "To find out what you did with my friends."

A sadistic grin crept up the clay monster's face. "They've been taken care of. It's just you and me now."

Her grip on her pole tightened as she tried not to think about the worst-case scenario. She had to keep a calm and collective mind if she was going to take him down. "About time."

She charged at Clayface. The giant monster's arms stretched out and became large, thick blades. He swiped at Huntress, but she flipped over the blade and whacked him in the head with her pole. It disfigured his head, but it immediately reformed, and he swiped at her again. She ducked beneath the first blade, then leapt back as he stabbed at her with the second, but then he surprised her when a flood of clay flowed out of his stomach and wrapped around her waist.

Clayface brought his blade arm down, and she raised her pole, blocking the blow. He struck again with the other one, sending sparks flying with each impact. Huntress' arms quickly began to ache with every blow, and she wasn't sure how much longer she would be able to hold off his attacks.

As he raised one blade and prepared to bring down the other, Huntress' hand went to her belt and grabbed a gas grenade. She tossed it in the air, and it exploded, surrounding them both in cloud of smoke. Grabbing at her belt again, she pulled free a clay cutting wire and whipped it out around the tendrils of clay wrapped around her, slicing herself free. Jumping up, she delivered a blow to his face with her knee, and the monster stumbled back.

Back-flipping, she put some space between her and her assailant. Pulling out her crossbow, she fired several arrows into the clay monster. Clayface snarled, his blade arms changing back to normal. He punched outward, his fist flying off his knuckle and hardening into rock. Huntress cartwheeled to the side as the giant stone fist broke through the wall.
Realizing that her crossbow was useless, she tossed it aside and grabbed at a stun grenade. Tossing it into the air, she kicked it at Clayface, and it struck him with enough force to get stuck in his body. She took cover as it went off, and heard Clayface cry out. Jumping up the moment it died down, she pulled out a Taser and fired it at him. It buried into his chest, but the electricity didn't seem to affect him. She wished she had more of the nerve toxin meant for Bane, but had only taken a small sample from the Batcave. Then again, it might not even affect him.

Reaching up, Clayface pulled the cable free, then lashed out at her, his arm turning into a flood of clay. She jumped aside, and he lashed out with his other one. She jumped over this and charged towards him, jumping up and delivering a punch to his lower jaw.

She realized she made a mistake a moment later as Clayface simply liquefied on top of her. Her reformed with her in his grasp, holding her out with his giant hands around her. She cried out and began kicking, but he was out of reach of her legs, and her arms were pinned to her side as he squeezed her.

"The doctor thought your body was so special," Clayface taunted, "but I'm about to break it."

He was struck from behind, Robin's sword slicing through his shoulder. A star-bolt struck his other shoulder, and his arms fell away. Huntress slipped out of his limp grasp and hopped away as Clayface turned around to see that all the Titans were all conscious once more. A growl escaped him as they surrounded him on all sides.

"Miss us, ugly?" Beast Boy asked.

"Time for some payback," Robin told him.

Clayface growled again, his severed arms slipping into his body and growing back. "I should have just killed you all earlier." He looked at Robin and scowled. "And how the hell are you alive?"

The Boy Wonder smirked arrogantly. "Looks like this bird can fly after all."

Clayface cracked his knuckles. "This time I'll make sure you fly away to Heaven. You and your friends."

Huntress whistled to him. "Hey, blobby, I'm the one you're after."

He looked back at her. "Your death I'll enjoy the most."

Robin pulled his sword back to strike. "If anyone is going to die tonight, it's you."

He charged forward. Clayface threw a punch, but Robin avoided the blow and slashed his arm with his sword. A star-bolt struck him from behind, and he turned to the Tamaranean. His arm transformed into giant a spiky metal bat, and he raised it over his head, only to have a beam of darkness strike his lower back. He fell to his knees, and turned to Raven, but one of Huntress' exploding shuriken hit him in his forehead and exploded. He fell back, and Blue Beetle blasted him with an energy beam.

Roaring, his entire body reshaped itself until he was on his feet again, and he lunged for Blue Beetle. Instead, Beast Boy's gorilla fist slammed into his jaw, knocking him back. Robin struck him from behind, slicing through one of his legs, and Clayface fell to one knee. Starfire shot her eye-beams, hitting him in the back of his head, and two green beams flew out of his mouth, having gone straight through his head. Blue Beetle blasted him again, firing a much larger beam from his chest, and blowing apart Clayface's torso. He fell to the ground in a pile, and Raven launched an aura of darkness from her body at him.
Clayface was pinned to the ground by the Azarathian's magic. His face twisted with fury, and he let out a bellow of rage. He pulled all his clay together, and his body expanded before all but blowing apart. Clay went flying everywhere, covering everything in the room, including the Titans. It clung to them, and then came back together, forming a brown flood. It moved about the room, dragging the Titans with it, crashing into walls and furniture.

A dark form rose up from the brown mass, taking the form of a raven. It spread its wings out, and Clayface's shapeless form was torn apart, splattering him across the floor and walls. The Titans were encased in a protective shield of shadow, protecting them from the monster. The clay came together, forming two separates Clayfaces half the size of the original. They walked over to each other and merged into one being again, and Raven let the barrier drop as they braced themselves for another round.

"Seriously," said Beast Boy, "what's it going to take to stop this guy?"

Clayface's scowl became an arrogant sneer. "You can't stop me. Nothing can."

"I can," Robin declared, and charged at him again. He jumped up and brought his sword down. Clayface just raised his arm to block, his arm turning to metal. Much to Robin's surprise, his blade snapped in two, the broken end flying through the air and burying in the wall.

Clayface chuckled, and lowered his arm. His entire head liquefied, and flowed out in a geyser, covering Robin and carrying him across the room, slamming him into the wall hard enough to crack it. He fell to the ground, clutching his side, an agonized groan escaping him. He looked badly hurt.

"No!" Raven cried, holding her arms out. Several bits of furniture rose into the air, engulfed in black light, but before she could throw any of them, a second geyser erupted from Clayface's chest. She dropped the furniture in favor of a shield, and the clay stream splattered against it. The shield protected her, but pushed her back until she hit the wall.

Both Starfire and Blue Beetle fired upon Clayface. The monster's entire body suddenly liquefied, the beams passing by above him, and he flowed towards the Titans, raising up in a giant wave. Beast Boy transformed into a bird and flew out of the way, as did Starfire and Blue Beetle. A large clay tentacle rose out of the flood and struck Starfire from below, slamming her into the ceiling. The tentacle lashed out and coiled around Blue Beetle's leg and threw him across the room.

Beast Boy transformed into a lion, landing on the giant tentacle, and chomped down on it. Clayface reformed and looked at the green lion now biting his arm. He tore him off and slammed him to the ground. Beast Boy suddenly transformed into an elephant and rose up onto his hind legs. He came down again, crushing Clayface beneath his front legs.

The clay monster simply liquefied before erupting into a powerful geyser, pushing the green elephant back and sending him crashing through the wall into the next room. When he attempted to get up, a giant clay fist with steel knuckles slammed into his face, knocking the elephant back down.

As Clayface reformed, Raven decided to try a different tactic. Summoning up her power, she opened a portal behind Clayface, fully intending to send him away. He turned to it, scowling, and a black light suddenly surrounded him, dragging him towards the portal.

Clayface realized what she was trying to do and glared at her. "I ain't going nowhere, bitch."

He threw a punch, his fist turning into solid metal. Raven put up a shield, but couldn't create one strong enough while maintaining the portal. It shattered upon impact, though still managing to protect her from the blow, but still knocking her off her feet. The metal hand became clay once more and
grabbed her leg. Chuckling, Clayface pulled her towards him and threw her through the portal she had created.

"So long, little witch," he chuckled as the portal closed behind her.

Something hit the back of his head, another shuriken from the feel of it, and an exploding one at that. As his head reformed, he turned back to Huntress, who was glaring at him.

"Where did you send her?" she demanded.

A chuckle escaped him as he saw that she was the only one standing. "Only she knows that." He grinned and marched towards her, mockingly motioning for her to come at him. "Now, come to your death."

A groan drew her attention, and she glanced at her friends. They were getting to their feet, looking pretty beat up, but still willing to fight. An angry snarl escaped her as she threw Clayface a dirty look. "You're going to pay for hurting my friends."

He chuckled again. "You mean like this?"

He stretched his arm out, swinging it around the room. Huntress ducked beneath it, but it struck Robin, Starfire, and Blue Beetle, knocking them off their feet again. With an angry cry, Huntress charged at Clayface. She threw three shuriken, and Clayface cried out as the first two buried in each of his eyes. The third one hit his chest, and began beeping with a red light. A moment later, it exploded, blowing apart a portion of Clayface's upper-body.

As Clayface stumbled back, Huntress jumped at him, kicking outward. Her foot collided with his chest, knocking him further back, but this proved to be a mistake. Huntress' entire leg suddenly sank into Clayface's body, and she felt herself being sucked in. Using her pole, she stabbed into his body, only to have it sucked out of her hands and spit out his back.

She cried out as she was submerged up to her stomach, and began punching at his clay body to no avail. "Let me go, you big ugly freak!"

Clayface chuckled as his body remolded itself into its natural shape once again, pulling Huntress in deeper. "Now why would I do that," he asked with a grin as the shuriken slide out of his eyes, the milky white spheres having reformed as if they had never been punctured, "when I have you right where I want you?"

She punched him again, her fist sinking into his body, only this time she was unable to pull it out. She tried reaching for her utility belt, but it was submerged into his clay flesh, and she couldn't reach anything on it. A tendril of clay extended from his body and wrapped around her other arm, pulling that one in too. Huntress struggled as she was sucked deeper into his body until only her head was sticking out. Clay snaked across her face, sliding over her nose and mouth, and Huntress found herself unable to breathe. She struggled harder, but it was impossible to escape.

"Let her go!" Starfire shouted as she rose into the air, holding up a hand glowing with green energy. Beside her, Blue Beetle stood at the ready, preparing to fire a blast of energy.

Clayface just chuckled as he turned to them. Inside his body, he shifted Huntress so she was directly in front of him, using her as a shield. "Go ahead, shoot me; I'll just reform. But as amazing as our little Huntress' healing is, I don't think she'll be able to recover as easily as I can."

Starfire and Blue Beetle hesitated, realizing he was right. They couldn't fire at him without hurting Huntress in the process. Clayface grinned and lashed out at them, his arm once again extending into
a giant tentacle. It slammed into both Starfire and Blue Beetle, knocking them across the room and sending them crashing into the wall.

As Clayface chuckled, Huntress continued to struggle, but her movements grew weaker and weaker as he continued to smother her. Grinning, he glanced down at his chest, where only a portion of Huntress' face was still visible. Her eyes began fluttering open and close as she began to lose consciousness.

"That's right," Clayface whispered, "don't fight it. It's almost over now. But don't worry, you'll be seeing your friends again real soon. Just let go."

Her movements stopped, and her eyes drifted shut as she finally passed out. Clayface chuckled as he looked down at his victim's still form, feeling as her heartbeat slowly grew weaker.

"Get your filthy hands off my sister!"

Clayface turned to see Robin on his feet. He grinned at the boy mockingly. "Why don't you come over here and make me, little bird."

The Boy Wonder's eyes narrowed. "Fine then."

He threw a Batarang, but it didn't hit Clayface. Instead, it stabbed into the ceiling above him. Clayface just laughed at the bad throw, sneering at the boy. But Robin's aim had been right on the mark. He had long since studied and memorized the layout of Titan Tower, knowing where everything was. And the Batarang he had thrown was also a small explosive, and when it went off, it blew a hole in the ceiling, blasting open the pipe in it.

Water came pouring out, spilling over Clayface. The monster cried out and backed away as his body unwillingly liquefied, unable to hold its shape. Most of his right side lost its form, and Huntress slipped free, dropping to the ground in a puddle of water and wet clay.

"Damn you!" Clayface roared, trying to pull his body together. He looked back at Huntress' unconscious form, wanting to reach for her, but the water continued to pour on her, threatening to liquefy him further if he touched it. Instead, he raised his hand, forming a giant metal sludge hammer to smash the girl.

Robin charged forward. He slid across the floor, using the water to help him move along, and protectively covered his sister with his body. Clayface grinned and brought down his sludge hammer fist. Only his arm didn't move from where it was. He looked up to see that it was consumed with black light. His gaze shifted to the other side of the room where Raven was emerging from a portal, her hands glowing with black magic.

"Blast him!" she shouted to the others.

Having recovered from the blow, Starfire flew up into the air and fired star-bolts from her hands and eyes. They struck Clayface, pushing him backwards until he slammed into one of the many giant windows aligning the outside of Titan Tower. The glass cracked behind him, but held.

Grinding his teeth together furiously, Clayface slowly turned to face Starfire as her star-bolts continued pushing against him. "Alien bitch."

With great effort, he took a step forward, then another, the green beams of energy slowing his movements. Starfire's face twisted with concentration, and she unleashed more power. Clayface struggled against the beams for a few seconds before he began making his way towards her again.
Groaning, Blue Beetle climbed to his feet. Stumbling forward, he made his way over to Starfire. Standing beside her, he fired a blast of energy. Clayface was blasted back once again, cracking the window further. The beams kept coming, the window cracking behind him more and more as he was pressed against it. Raven fired her own beam of dark energy at him, and the window behind him cracked some more.

Down on the ground, Robin was dragging Huntress away from the monster. Clayface saw the movement out of the corner of his eye, his face twisting with fury. With great effort, he pushed himself off the window, but was unable to close the distance with the three beams coming at it.

A familiar boom was heard behind the three attacking Titans. A circle of swirling energy appeared in the air, and someone came through. Clayface's eyes widened in shock at what he saw. "You!?"

Cyborg held up his weapon. "Me."

He fired, and a fourth beam of energy joined the other three, colliding with Clayface and pushing him back. This time the glass shattered as he slammed against it, and Clayface grabbed the window frame, preventing himself from being blasted out of the Tower. The four Titans continued to fire, but Clayface slowly pulled himself back inside.

Leaping through the elephant-sized hole in the wall, something sped across the room. Moving at its full 75 miles per hour, a green cheetah raced towards Clayface. When he was mere feet away from him, Beast Boy transformed into a triceratops, still moving at cheetah speed from his previous form's momentum. Clayface's expression turned to one of surprised horror as the green dinosaur came at him, and he was unable to defend himself.

Two figures, one green and one brown, went flew out of the Tower. Clayface cried out as he soared through the air, the impact sending him flying. He splashed down into the ocean, disappearing beneath the waves. He resurfaced a few moments later, his body melting apart. Crying out, he struggled to swim as he began to liquefy, chunks of him falling off.

Splashing about, he went under again, and came up even more disfigured, his eyes and mouth shifting across his face, his head losing its shape more and more as he went under again. He came up a third time, barely, his mouth now nothing more than a large gaping hole, his head a shapeless mass with only a single eye, and his two misshapen hands flailing about. Once more he went under, only this time a few shapeless chunks floated to the surface, breaking apart more and more before sinking below the surface and disappearing completely.

A green sparrow fluttered back through the broken window and turned into Beast Boy once more. He clapped his hands together, as if having completed an unpleasant job, and smiled at the others. "He's all washed up."

"Help!" Robin shouted, holding Huntress' still form. "She's not breathing!"

The rest of the Titans gathered around. He was right, Huntress was still unconscious, and her face was beginning to turn blue from lack of oxygen. Blue Beetle looked at her worriedly, his armor moving away from his face. "What do we do? Should we give her CPR?"

Raven moved forward, pushing him aside with her magic. "Move." She knelt down by the younger girl's side, placing her hands on her forehead. "She's still alive. I can resuscitate her."

"Hurry!" Robin insisted, unable to keep the fear out of his voice.

Closing her eyes, Raven poured her power into Huntress. "By the power of Azarath, I beseech you.
Mother spirit of the nether realm, save my sister. Bring her back to us. Azarath Metrion Zinthos!

Blackness flowed from her hands and over Huntress, once, twice, three times, four. Huntress' eyes suddenly snapped open and she took a deep breath. She broke out into a coughing fit as her lungs started working again. A blob of clay slid out of her mouth, glowing with Raven's black light, and she sent it out the window and into the ocean.

Huntress continued taking large gulps of air before she finally began to settle down. Robin placed her on her side in the recovery position, letting her body begin to function again normally. Her breathing slowly returned to normal, and she looked up at them. Her mouth moved, but she didn't seem to be able to find her voice, and instead reached out.

Robin took her hand. His finger automatically sought out her pulse, but he was unable to feel it beneath her glove or his, but she seemed to be calming down. While he knew how to provide First Aid, something was telling him that he wouldn't have been able to clear out that last bit of clay using the standard procedure. Thank God for Raven.

Looking up at her with hooded eyes, Huntress managed a weak smile. "I thought you didn't care."

Robin was glad his mask was in place as he tried to keep his expression neutral. "Yeah, well, I guess you grew on me a bit."

"Mmm," she muttered. "You called me 'sister'. That's the first time you called me your sister."

"Well, you are. Half-sister anyway."

Beast Boy made a pfft noise. "Dude, just admit it. You love her."

Robin glared at him. "Watch it, Gar." He looked back at Huntress. "By the way, sorry I slapped you earlier."

A small chuckle escaped her. "Yeah, well, I guess I deserved it. Never do it again though."

Starfire was visibly relieved to see that Huntress was doing ok. "I am glad you are well, but we should be sure. Cyborg, can you check her vitals."

The former football player stepped forward. "Sure thing. A quick scan ought to do it."

Huntress looked up at him, and her eyes widened as she saw the damage he had sustained. She bolted into a sitting position, her eyes locked on his chest. "Cyborg, you have a hole in your chest!"

He looked down and placed a hand over the hole. "It's not so bad. Nothing a few repairs can't fix."

His face fell, and a look of guilt crossed his features as his red eye scanned Huntress' body, not detecting any danger. "I'm sorry about this, guys. I was the one that let Clayface in."

Starfire placed a hand on his shoulder. "No, Cyborg, it is not your fault. Clayface was a master deceiver. He fooled us all."

Huntress nodded. "Yeah, I should have sensed he wasn't you the moment he entered the Tower."

"As should I," Raven replied. "We all let our guard down."

"We were overconfident," Robin corrected irritably. "We need to be more careful in the future."

A chuckle escaped Huntress, and she reached up and flicked his head. "I knew you'd be the overprotective big brother type."
Scowling slightly, he pushed her hand away. "Don't push your luck." He looked back at Cyborg. "How is she?"

He flashed the boy a smile. "She'll be just fine."

Huntress smirked and stood up. "Accelerated healing, remember?" She frowned. "Although, healing doesn't do much good against being smothered."

Robin stood up as well. "You can thank Raven for saving you."

"And you," the Azarathian pointed out. "You got her away from Clayface."

"Allowing us to totally kick butt!" Beast Boy declared, punching the air.

Starfire smiled at her team proudly "It was a team effort. I am very proud of all of you. We took down Clayface together."

Huntress bashfully reached up and began tugging on a lock of her hair. "About that. Um, I just wanted to say… well, thanks a lot you guys. I would have been a goner without you."

Jaime smiled. "Hey, we're a team. That's what teammates do. They look out for each other."

A smile crept up Huntress' face, but her bottom lip began trembling slightly. She sniffled as tears threatened to escape her, and she reached up to rub her eyes.

A look of concern crossed Starfire's face, and she bent down to her level. "Helena, what is wrong?" She looked over her shoulder at Cyborg. "You're sure you didn't detect anything wrong?"

Huntress shook her head. "It's not that. It's just… I've never had any real friends before. Not like you guys. Not like… like…" She rubbed her eyes some more. "You guys are the best friends anyone could ask for. For the longest time, it's just been Mom and me. Then there was Dad and Damian, and Dick and Alfred, and now… now…"

The Tamaranean smiled and pulled her into a hug. "And now you have us."

"Yeah!" Beast Boy cried, transforming into a large bear. "Group hug!"

He wrapped them all up in his furry arms, even Cyborg. Robin's eye twitched in annoyance as his face was flattened against the changeling's fuzzy green chest. "Garfield, if you don't let me go right now, I'm taking off your arms."

"I second that," Raven replied in a monotone voice.

Beast Boy immediately released them and changed back, holding his hands up. "Just trying to share the love. We did totally save the day. Case closed."

"Indeed," Starfire agreed. She turned to Huntress. "We should inform your parents. I'm sure they will be relieved to know that the danger has passed." She frowned slightly, looking out the broken window, then back at Beast Boy. "The danger has passed, has it? You're certain?"

The changeling nodded. "Oh, yeah, totally. He completely went to pieces in the water. Just, blahhhhh, melted apart."

Raven closed her eyes, reaching out with her power. "He's right, he's gone. Either dead or so disassembled that he can no longer function. Either way, his presence has completely vanished."
"Thank God," Huntress muttered. She breathed deeply. "I can already smell the sweet air of freedom."

Beast Boy grinned broadly. "Dudes, do you know what this means?"

"No," Jaime replied, "but I get the feeling you're going to tell us."

"It means, now we've got twice as much partying to do!"

He transformed into a seal and began clapping. Robin raised an eyebrow at this. "I think the partying will have to wait a few days."


The Boy Wonder simply gestured to the mess left behind from their battle with Clayface, and that was only in this room. Beast Boy's ears drooped as he realized that cleanup duty was going to be more difficult than the actual fight. "Dude, you're such a killjoy."

Chapter End Notes

(A/N: And that's the end of Clayface. Looks like everyone came out ok, even Cyborg; he just needs a little tuning up. And now the threat that has been pursuing Helena is finally gone. And what more, it seems that Damian has finally accepted her completely as his sister. But now poses an interesting question. What next? With Strange and Clayface out of the way, what will become of the Bat family? Where will Bruce and Selena go from here? What about Damian and Helena, not to mention her place on team Titan? There's only one chapter left, so stay tuned for it.)
(A/N: It's here, the last chapter. And I'm feeling very melancholic about it. This fic was a lot more fun to write than I thought it would be, and a lot longer too. Not too bad for my first Batman fic, if I do say so myself. Sorry, couldn't resist tooting my own horn. But I'm pretty sad to see it end. I hope you all enjoy the last chapter and will check out my other stories.)

{BIG NEWS: I'm in the process of attempting to publish my own original novel. I'll be updating information for it in my profile if anyone is interested, but it's never too early to start advertising.}

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 24: New Beginnings

Bruce Wayne was almost always at the top of his game, but there were times where even he was at a loss of what to do. He usually never had that problem with girls, but when it came to Selina Kyle, well, there were always exceptions. That's not to say he couldn't handle what she dished out, most of the time anyway, but there were certain times…

Now was one of those times. As he rode in the back of his limo towards Wayne Manor, having returned from yet another meeting, he contemplated on what he would say to Selina. It had been some weeks since Clayface was defeated, and neither of them had broached the subject, but now that the threat to Helena was gone, they had certain things to think about. Namely, where they would go from here.

Despite Selina's playful joking on the night of Luthor's presentation of how she might have to take his mother's pearls with her when she left, Bruce acknowledged that this meant that she did indeed plan to leave, and, likely, take Helena with her. Well, he had something to say about that, about both of those things actually.

He may not have known he had a daughter for long, but he wasn't about to just let her disappear from his life. And the same went for Selina. He'd lost her once before, for 11 years, he wasn't about to let that happen again. And not simply because she was the mother of his daughter. There was something between them, something neither could deny. It had been there since the beginning, and had only grown stronger over time. They had let circumstances get in the way before, but he had learned from his mistakes.

"Are you well, Master Wayne?" Alfred asked, glancing at him in the rearview mirror. "You seem rather… distracted."

He sighed. "I just have a lot on my mind, Alfred."

"I understand, sir. Is there anything I could do to help?"
He chuckled. "Thank you, Alfred, but this is something I need to take care of on my own."

"Very good, sir."

Looking out the window again, Bruce watched as the cars whizzed by, getting lost in his thoughts again. He was still wondering how he should say what he was planning to say to Selina. Despite their numerous romantic and illicit encounters, the two of them had never actually officially gotten together, at least not enough to actually be able to call each other boyfriend and girlfriend. Lover, yes, romantic interest, yes, but never anything official. He wanted to change that, and not just for their daughter's sake, but because Selina was, well, Selina.

It may be difficult though. Selina was a woman who greatly valued her freedom and independence. She didn't like to be tied down or forced to do things she didn't want to do. That had been one of the problems with their relationship. Selina's love for cat burglary and his sense of justice had often clashed. Though she had changed significantly for the better since they first met, and was far from a common thief, always had been, she had never completely been on the side of the law. She did, however, have a deep desire to stick up for the little people and help those in need and protect them from the real bad guys. It was for the reason he had gotten the ok from the rest of the team to offer her a place in the Justice League.

Becoming a mother had changed her a lot too. Though she admitted to still resorting to burglary, it seemed that she was focusing on criminals and snobby rich folk that didn't deserve what they had rather than simply anything that caught her eye. She never was truly a criminal to begin with, not like the scum he took down, but she had rebelled against his attempts to reform her, loving the thrill far too much. It seemed that that was what she had come to value and was really after rather than anything amount of jewelry or cash. And if she could get that thrill out of doing good, then all the better. But the point was that she didn't like being tied down.

Bruce had no plans of tying her down. Try and convince her to give up crime completely, yes, but not tie her down. He just hoped she wouldn't see it that way, the woman could be very stubborn. Even so, for all her stubbornness and flaws, he still wanted her in his life. She was unlike any woman he'd ever known. If there was ever a woman for Bruce Wayne, for Batman, it was Selina Kyle.

He wasn't about to jump the gun and ask her to marry him or anything, just to make their relationship official and see where it could go from here, for them to actually give the whole boyfriend-girlfriend thing a try, and see where things went from there. There was already something undeniable between them, and there was no doubt that they had very deep feelings for each other, they just had yet to make it 100 percent official.

He also wanted to be a good father to Helena. He was still upset that he hadn't been there for the girl, or her mother, all this time, despite not knowing about her, but he wanted to be there for her now, and in the future. He wanted them to be a family.

From the tabs he had been keeping on Titan Tower, and the reports he had received from Dick, Starfire, and Cyborg, Damian and Helena had bonded a lot and were no longer hostile towards each other. Still competitive, yes, but not hostile. Bruce had to admit, the ploy the Titans had staged with having the Joker take over the Tower to get them to work together had been genius. It had earned them each other's trust and respect. Working together to fight and save one another from Clayface had helped a great deal too.

It also seemed that Helena had managed to change Damian's opinion of her mother too. The boy might not yet approve of Selina, but it seemed he was softening towards her as well. Helena seemed to be getting through to him, and Damian seemed to have stopped comparing Selina towards his own...
mother and holding their relationship against her. It was a start, and it would undoubtedly take some more work, but it was still progress. What more, Damian was also getting along better with Dick too. Becoming a real family was seeming like more and more of a possibility.

But he was getting ahead of himself. He had to take what Selina wanted into consideration. He felt he could get through to her, he just had to figure out what to say and how to do it. His usual playboy nature would not work on her. Heck, more than likely he'd end up falling for her antics and giving in to her instead; she was very good at that, possibly better than him. But that was one of the things he loved about her, she could challenge and match him in ways no one else could. She truly was a special woman, and he didn't want to give her up.

It was late by the time he reached home. Selina might already be in bed. He made his way through the Manor, heading for his room. Even though Alfred had given Selina her own room, she had hardly ever used it and spent most of her nights in his. And no, they hadn't been sleeping. That was another difference between Selina and other women. As cheesy and cliché as it sounded, there was a difference between having sex and making love. There were real feelings involved, not mere lust and attraction.

He reached the door to his room, or should he just call it their room, and opened the door. He wouldn't have been surprised if she was actually waiting in there with him in some sexy lingerie with the room lit up with candlelight. But no, not this time. In fact, the room was empty.

Bruce frowned. There had been no sign that she was anywhere else in the Manor. Granted, it was a big place. Had she gone down to the Batcave, or maybe gone out as Catwoman? Perhaps she saw something on the news and decided to go take care of the problem. The thought made him chuckle. That'd be just like her. Hopefully she wasn't causing more trouble than the actual criminals.

"Excuse me, Master Wayne."

He turned to the butler. "Yes, Alfred?"

"I do not wish to alarm you, sir, but I found this note taped to my door. I think you should take a look at it."

Raising an eyebrow, Bruce accepted the note. He scanned the contents, his eyes widening at what he read. It was from Selina to Alfred, thanking him for taking care of her and Helena while they were here, and bidding him farewell.

"I took the liberty of checking the room I had given Miss Kyle," the butler continued. "I am sorry to say that all her belongings are gone."

Bruce continued to stare at the note, trying to wrap his head around this new development. "But why would she…?"

A thought suddenly occurred to him, and he hurried over to the portrait on his wall that hid his safe. He quickly put in the combination and opened it. Sure enough, his mother's pearls were gone, and in their place was another note that read, *Come and get them, big boy.*

There was a kiss mark on the note of red lipstick. Bruce stared at it for a few moments before a smile crept up his face and he chuckled. She'd told him she might have to take the pearls with her when she left, and he'd told her that he'd come after her if she did. She'd responded by saying she would be counting on it. And, truth be told, so would he. Not just to retrieve the pearls, but to retrieve her as well.
"Just like old times," he said with a smile, tucking the note into his pocket.

In the doorway, Alfred raised an eyebrow. "Is there anything to be worried about, sir?"

Bruce chuckled. "Not at all, Alfred. I just have a cat to catch."

Helena had always been a light sleeper. It came as a result to her heightened senses and training. So, despite being in a deep sleep, when her cellphone went off, she immediately woke up. Rubbing her eyes, she reached for it, checking her messages. There was a text from her mother that simply read, *Roof, now.*

Immediately wide-awake, she threw off the covers and tiptoed out of her room, creeping through the Tower, being careful not to make any noise; Starfire didn't like it when they were up after light's out, claiming how they needed the right amount of sleep.

Making her way up to the roof of the Tower, she stepped out into the night and looked around. "Mom?"

She suddenly sensed it, and cartwheeled away. A moment later, Catwoman's whip struck the ground where she had been standing. A smile grazed the older woman's face as she walked towards her daughter, wrapping up the whip. "As fast as ever, I see."

Helena giggled. "As if you would have really hit me." She ran towards the leather clad woman, hugging her tightly. "I missed you."

Catwoman smiled down at her and began stroking her hair. "I missed you too, my dearest."

Breaking the hug, Helena placed her hands on her hips. "What took you so long? I mean, we defeated Clayface over four weeks ago." She smirked. "Too busy *celebrating* with Dad?"

Catwoman flicked her forehead. "Watch it, young lady."

"No, really, I think it's a good thing. I'm glad you and Dad are doing so well." She looked around. "Is he here too?"

An eager smile crept up the older woman's face. "No, but I assume he'll catch up to me very soon. And this will probably be the first place he'd look."

Catching the knowing tone in her mother's voice Helena studied her curiously. "Ooh, Mom, what'd you do?"

"Nothing he wouldn't expect of me, or shouldn't have seen coming." She tapped her chin. "Hmm, I wonder what he's more eager to get back."

"What do you mean?"

She shook her head. "It's nothing for you to worry about. Your father and I have done this several times. We're just having some fun."

Helena tried to work out what she meant, but was at a loss. "Adults are weird."

Catwoman chuckled. "You'll understand some day." She stroked her daughter's hair. "So how are things with your new teammate?"
"Terra? Yeah, she's cool. A little rough around the edges, but pretty she's interesting. She's got Geokinesis. You should see the way she controls the earth." She chuckled as she thought back to the new member's arrival. "It was quite a surprise when she came. Here we are, finally having our party for having defeated Clayface, and she comes flying in on a big rock. Guess she chose a good time too arrive since we had just finished the repairs to the Tower."

Catwoman smiled. "Well, I'm glad you're getting along with her. How about Damian? Are you getting along well with him?"

Helena beamed. "Oh, yes, things are going great. We're not fighting anymore. Not too much anyway. He's even getting along with Dick a lot better."

Catwoman was glad to hear it. It seemed that in accepting that he had a sister was also helping him to accept Dick as his brother. She'd had a feeling that would be the case. She hoped that one day she too would be able to get along with him as well.

But, sadly, that day was not today. She sent a quick glance at the door to the roof before turning back to her daughter. "Does anyone know I'm here?"

Smirking, Helena rolled her eyes. "Mom, come on. This is me we're talking about."

Catwoman nodded. "Good. Then, when you're ready, go pack up. It's time for us to leave."

The smile immediately fell from the younger girl's face. "What?"

"We have things to do. We've still got some unfinished business to deal with that we never got to because Strange sent his men coming after us. Now that that's taken care of, we can get back to it."

"Oh… yeah… I guess…"

Catwoman leaned down and kissed her daughter's forehead. "We'll meet up tomorrow. Go pack your things and say your goodbyes. Text me when you're ready. I'll send you the address to meet me at." She walked past her, heading for the edge of the Tower. When she got to the edge, she glanced back at her daughter, seeing that she hadn't moved. "Helena?"

Helena remained silent, her head racing. She didn't know why she was surprised; she had known that this would happen from the beginning. She and her mother had things they needed to do; Clayface and Strange had interrupted that. The threat to her may be gone, but they still had unfinished business elsewhere.

Still, a part of her had hoped that… well, had hoped for something else. But what? That they'd stay in Gotham? That her parents would get married and they could all be one big happy family? That she'd get to stay here with the rest of the Titans?

But that wasn't reality. There were things in this world that needed to be taken care of. It was all for the sake of the mission, to make this world a better place. That was why they did what they did, why they became superheroes, because the world needed them, and there were things that only they could do.

All the same, did she have to leave everything behind? The friends she had made, the family she had gained? Things with her brother were finally going the way she wanted them to. Her father was everything she had been hoping for and more. And her teammates, she had never had friends like them, friends that understood her and accepted her. She loved her mother very much and wanted to be with her, but at the same time, she had been lonely, always having to hide who and what she was. She wasn't ready to leave all that behind just yet, not when things were going so well.
But being a superhero meant making lots of sacrifices. She knew that. All the same, couldn't she still do that here? There was no end to the criminal scum in this world. She could still do a service with the Teen Titans.

But to stay would mean leaving her mother, the woman who loved her and raised her all her life. She knew that there were things her mother had to do, and Helena wanted to help, but at the same time, she was finally able to be with the father and brother she had been hoping to meet for so long. She didn't want to leave right now, she couldn't.

She turned back to her mother with sad eyes. "Mom, I don't want to go. I can't, not yet. There's still too much I need to do here. I want to get to know Dad better, I want to get to know Damian and Dick better, and my friends. I finally have real friends. How can I leave just when I've finally found a place I belong?"

She reached up and rubbed her eyes. "I'm sorry, Mom. I love you, and want to be with you, but I also want to stay here. I know you have to go, but must I? Can't I stay here for a while? Just for a little longer?"

Catwoman stared at her, her expression unreadable. She could clearly see how torn her daughter was, and it broke her heart. Truth be told, she had been afraid it would come to this, that a choice would need to be made. And how could she blame her for wanting to be with the father and brother she had wanted to meet for so long?

And, of course, there were the Teen Titans. She had seen the tabs Bruce had been keeping on them while she was here. She had seen how her daughter had bonded with the group, no longer having to hide who and what she was. She'd suspected that she might not want to leave, and she couldn't blame her for that.

With a resigned sigh, Catwoman walked over to her daughter and pulled her into a hug. "I think I knew this would happen all along. How could I expect you to just up and leave?"

She began stroking her daughter's hair again, trying to hold back tears. She knew what she had to do, had known it from the beginning. It was one of the reasons she had come to get her in the manner she did. If she was really planning on simply leaving with her, she would have sent that text hours ago so Helena would be ready to leave by the time she got there.

It was time for her to let go. Her little girl was growing up. She'd made friends and found a team, and was making a way for herself in the world. This wouldn't be goodbye, not indefinitely. She would visit whenever she could, and Helena could visit her too. And when her daughter was ready, she would decide where she would go from there. Come back to her, return to Gotham, stay with the Titans, form her own team; it would be her decision.

"It's ok, sweetheart," she told her. "If this is what you really want, then you can stay. You can come find me when you're ready."

Helena nodded against her. But then she pulled back and looked up. "But what about you?"

Catwoman smiled and bent down to her level. "Don't you worry about me, little lady. I'm a grown woman; I can take care of myself. Besides," she smirked, "I'll have your father, once he manages to catch me."

Confusion scrunched up Helena's face. "Yeah, what's that supposed to mean anyway?"

Catwoman tapped her nose. "I told you, it's a game your father and I play. Kind of like Cat and
Mouse."

Helena chuckled. "I'm guessing you're the cat."

Her mother smirked at that. "Ironically, no, this time I'm the mouse, but I actually like it that way. Basically, I see how long I can avoid him, but I know he'll catch me soon enough."

"Then what happens?"

Her smiled widened. "He gets a prize, and we'll play again under different terms."

Helena looked confused again and shook her head. "I really don't get adults."

"And you won't for several more years." She pulled her daughter into a hug, holding her tightly. "But I'm sure you'll grow into an outstanding woman."

A giggle escaped Helena. "Come on, Mom. It's not like we'll never see each other again. I'll be back with you soon, a few months tops."

Catwoman squeezed her tighter. "I know, but a mother doesn't like to miss a moment of her child's life. You know I'm going to come to visit you often."

"And I'll come visit you too. I know where all your hideouts are." She lowered her voice. "Don't worry, I won't tell Dad where they are."

The older woman smiled. "Good, we wouldn't want to give him an unfair advantage."

Helena smiled, and the two continued to hug. She didn't know how long they stayed like that before she suddenly sensed something and looked towards the door. "Someone's coming."

Catwoman glanced at the door. So their time was over. She needed to leave before anyone saw her. Giving her daughter one last kiss on the forehead, she stood up. "I love you, Helena, my huntress." She slowly began backing away.

Smiling sadly, Helena waved. "I love you too, Mom."

"Be good, and stay out of trouble."

"I always do."

"And don't fight with your brother."

Helena giggled. "No promises there."

Reaching the edge of the Tower, Catwoman held up a hand in farewell. "See you soon, sweetheart."

She back-flipped over the edge. Helena ran to the end of the Tower and looked down to see Catwoman lowering herself to the ground with a cable gun she had fired into the under-part of the T of the Tower. Helena smiled; her mother probably took that from the Batcave.

Upon reaching the ground, Catwoman waved up to her daughter one last time before climbing onto her motorcycle and driving off. Helena felt a deep sadness as she watched her go. She knew this wasn't goodbye. If Damian was allowed to go visit Wayne Manor, she would go visit her mother too, with or without permission. She had more tricks than the one she had used on Dick to sneak out.

Speaking of Damian, it turned out he was the one who was approaching. Opening the door to the
roof, he looked outside to see his sister standing by the edge of the tower. "Helena? What are you doing out here?"

Being as nonchalant as possible, she turned to him, placing her hands behind her head. "I could ask you the same thing."

He held up his phone. "I got a call from father. He wanted to know if your mother had stopped by here."

A smile grazed Helena's face. "Ooh, Dad's cheating at the game."

"What?"

She shook her head. "Nothing."

Damian gave her a confused look. "I went to your room to ask you, but you weren't there."

Helena's mind worked quickly for an excuse, and her gaze landed on the glowing horizon. "Yeah, I woke up and couldn't get back to sleep, so I decided to come watch the sunrise."

He studied her, seemingly suspicious, but eventually decided to let it go. Turning to the sunrise, his face softened. "Yeah, I guess it's nice to watch the sunrise every once in a while."

Helena went to stand beside him. "Mom and I would watch the sun come up together if we were up really late after going out. A small frown grazed her face. "I'm going to miss that."

He looked at her for a few seconds curiously. He may not have heightened senses like her, but he could tell something was bothering her. "You sure you're ok?"

Regaining her composure, she nodded as the morning light shined over them. "I'm fine. Just thinking about what the future will hold."

Damian raised an eyebrow at this, then looked back at the rising sun. "I guess that's something everyone thinks about. But whatever happens, we'll always have each other."

Because we're family. The words were unspoken, but Helena knew they were there, and it brought a smile to her face. It might take some time, but she was certain that, soon enough, they really would become a family. Damian had finally accepted her, and had, at least, become tolerate of her mother. They were on the right track. No matter where they went, no matter what they did, they were family.

Standing together, they watched as the sun rose higher and higher into the sky. Eventually though, Damian seemed to have had enough and glanced at her. "Want to go train? We still need to have a rematch."

Helena beamed. "Alright, but no getting upset when I beat you."

He glared at her, but it was more playful than anything. "We'll see about that."

Helena giggled as she ran inside, Damian following close behind. It was the dawn of a new day.

THE END
(A/N: I am so sad right now, but it had to end. I considered having Helena go with her mother, but thought it worked better this way. Like I said at the beginning, I wanted to keep this as canon as possible so it could actually fit in the continuum. So we can just say it takes place before "The Judas Contract" and say that Helena was visiting her mother during the events so it can still tie in. Same for any future movies that come out, although I think that's going to be the end of the New 52 continuum, but if it's not, same thing, Helena is just away at the time. Don't hold Selena's actions against her too much. You should know what she's like, and she knows Batman will come after her. In fact, that's part of the reason why she took the pearls. I'll let you decide what happens from this brings my story to an end. I had a few sequel requests, but as of now, I've got nothing in mind, but we'll see what the future holds. I hope everyone enjoyed it, and thanks for sticking through with me throughout the whole thing. Here's your last chance to review, so go press that little button down below and tell me what you think.)

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