Two for the Price of One
by TheCreativeCasseroles

Summary

Living the life of a vigilante/hero was bound to have some weird stuff in it. Like cloning! But this was something that Dick didn't exactly sign up for. Neither did the other guy, but he was sort of expecting something strange. Just not this.

Having to keep secrets, doing detective work, and try to learn how to properly 'play nice' on a team is something that is a part of their life now. But the clock is ticking, and they're afraid of what happens when they run out of time.
“-disturbance reported over by-” a deep, gruff, male voice. He was in a vehicle. Everything was black and red.

“-got it b-” a younger, growling male voice. It came from him.

Tall, spiraling buildings, climbing up, up, up into the skies themselves. He wove in between them, not unlike a needle through thread.

The scene shifted into a building. The world around them was a blur. Or as if everything was underwater.

“So we finally-” a younger even still, voice held malice. It distorted towards where it was cut off.

A glimpse of a small child dashing about. His heart stutters in fear.

Flashes of images, going by too fast.

A light?

The kid. It's going to hit him!

His heart beating ever so faster, he jumped over to the child. And as he does so the image is burned into his mind.

A child of roughly nine years, with black hair, disheveled, and impossibly wide, blue eyes are overflowing with fear. His mouth opening up for a scream, his petit hands are slow to rise in order to shield his face. The green shirt is dirtied with mud as well as his pants and black shoes. The child's knees are locked and he knows that he wouldn't run.

As he moves closer and closer, a thought is screeching in his mind.

I got to protect him! I have to keep Matt safe!

And then there was nothing.

Except for a voice. It was faint. It was soft. It was commanding. Something about… fate.


Time runs short. You must awake up. You must awake up, now!

He woke up with a gasp.
Blinking rapidly, he got himself together. Hands twitched. Couldn't move them much. Glass?
Separating him from the world. Cold seeped through to his back. Metal? Most likely.

Okay so he was in some sort of capsule. Pod? Either way works.

The room? The walls were red… and honestly looked organic by the way it was twisting and
turning with all the… ridges it had. Cables snaked through the floor, attaching machine A to
machine B. And in front of him, was a boy, no, a teen wearing a white one piece suit with a capital
red S on a shield.

Superboy.

Then he remembered. He was going to see the Justice League HQ with Kid Flash, Speedy, and
Aqualad. Except it wasn't the real HQ and Speedy left.

There was an alert saying there was a fire over at Cadmus. Batman had said he was suspicious
about them, but then another alert came that was far more important. Robin decided to go and find
out what his mentor was suspicious about, with Kid Flash and Aqualad tagging along. (Okay
maybe there might've been convincing going around, but the three of them went.)

And then they found out that Cadmus had been keeping secrets. Building up bio weapons. Creating
Superman’s son.

His fellow teens were bounded to pods like him. And from what it looked like, he was at the far
end, with Kid Flash in the middle. Which meant Aqualad was at the other end.

“What? Wha-what do you want?!” Kid Flash suddenly demanded, obviously freaking out, and
effectively bringing Robin out of his thoughts.

‘Bad idea,’ a thought that didn't exactly sounded like his own crossed his mind. (It sounded distant.
Like it wasn't entirely there.) Which honestly, wasn't wrong.

Blue eyes just stared harder. Ones that belonged to a clone that they had discovered not that long
before.

Robin turned his head as Kid said, “quit staring, you’re freaking me out!”

“Uh, KF,” Robin called to his friend who turned his head in turn, “how ‘bout we not tick off the
guy who can fry us with a look?”

‘We need to get out of here.’ Robin thought.

“We only sought to help you.” That was Aqualad. Yay, everyone's wake. Not. Maybe. At least he
wouldn't have to carry anyone unconscious.

“Yeah, we free you and you turn on us. How's that for grat-”

“Kid please,” Aqualad quickly interrupted, “be quiet now. I believe our new friend wasn't in full
control of his actions.”

With a flick of his fingers, Robin was getting his lock pick out of his glove.

‘Ahh, always a good thing to be prepared.’ He thought to himself. Now time to try to get himself
out. Trying to find just the right place to put the lock pick in was tricky. However when he found
it, he went straight to work.
“Wha-What if I?” It was Superboy. He stopped for a second, and heaved out a breath before starting over again. “What if I wasn't?”

Kid Flash spoke. “He can talk?”

‘That's a rude thing to say.’ It was that thought again. The boy wonder narrowed his eyes. That thought wasn't his. Not to mention it certainly didn't sound like him.

And Superboy was getting angry.

“Yes, he can.”

Robin looked over to his friend.

‘Way to go KF.’ Now that was definitely a Robin thought. But seriously, sometimes his best friend needs to... chill.

He watched as Kid Flash turned his head to either side before looking away. Or at least it looked like he was looking away. Kinda hard to see much when one is trapped and bound. “Not like I said 'it'.”

“The genomorphs taught you. Telepathically.” Aqualad said, turning his own attention back to the... clone.

‘Telepathically huh?’ Robin thought. That was some good info for the future.

“They taught me much.” Superboy confirmed. “How to read, write. I know the names of things.”

The boy wonder didn't like how this was going. And for a second, he could feel... something else feel the same way. (It was very odd. It was almost like... and echo of his own feelings. But that couldn't be right.)

“But have you seen them?” Robin asked. “Have they actually let you see the sky? Or the sun?”

“Images are implanted in my mind.” He saw Superboy turn his eyes downward. “No, I have not seen them.”

“Do you know who you are? What you are?” Aqualad asked.

Immediately did Superboy began to talk in an almost... robotic way. No, it was like a script, something that has gone over and over and over until it was imbedded into the mind. “I am the Superboy, a genomorph, a clone made from the DNA of the Superman, created to replace him should he perish. To destroy him should he turn from the light.”

Robin’s eyes went wide as he turned to look at Kid Flash. His own expression was being mirrored back at him.

“To be like Superman is a... worthy aspiration, but like Superman, you deserve a life of your own beyond that Solar suit, beyond your pod, beyond Cadmus.” He heard Aqualad tried to convince the other boy.

Unfortunately this made Superboy angry. “I live because of Cadmus! It is my home!”

And that made Robin angrier. How could anyone do this to a person? A clone isn't a thing, they're still people. They deserve to go out to see the world. Not to be locked up and treated like a weapon. Couldn't exactly show off his anger though. Might send the wrong messages. “Your home is a test
tube. We can show you the sun.”

“Uh, pretty sure it's after midnight, but we can show you the moon.” Kid Flash gave his input. Which was actually pretty useful. They've been down there for that long? Not good.

“We can show you, introduce you, to Superman.” Aqualad continued.

Robin hoped that this would be some pretty good bribing in order for Supey to help them out. After all, who wouldn't want to meet the person whose pretty much their role model?

“No. They can't.”

Immediately did the lock picking stopped. (It really didn't help that he was distracted by their conversation. Making him pause for a heartbeat before continuing. And now this.) Robin snapped his head up to the new, male voice that pretty much shot down their escape plan.

It was the main man walking forward who wore a lab coat. He had glasses on, his brown hair looked to be greying, and was long enough to be pulled back in a ponytail. Might've been somewhere in his forties if Robin had to guess. He had an imp like genomorph on his shoulder.

The people flanking him was a woman with darker skin, glasses, a green turtle neck and was wearing a lab coat as well as having another imp on her shoulder. She was obviously younger than the man. Twenties at the youngest, but more likely thirties. If Robin remembered correctly, she was the one to have exited the room that held Superboy in.

The other person was Guardian. Honestly, Robin wasn't sure how the man got into this mess.

‘I bet that those genomorph creatures are what's keeping him from leaving.’ There it was. That voice again. That had to be at least the third time Robin heard it in his head and obviously no one else heard it. Was it one of the genomorphs? The ones that looked like honest to god imps? But either way, Robin couldn't help but agree to it. He never saw the imp like creature leave Guardian's side. And if he remembered correctly it did something to him when they first met up.

Not good.

“They'll be otherwise occupied.” The male scientist turned to the woman. “Activate the cloning process.”

“Pass. The Batcave’s crowded enough.” Robin snarked.

‘You sure about that?’ The voice muttered.


Surprise trickled through from… somewhere. Robin didn't show anything outward, but if he would he would be furrowing his eyebrows. He didn't know where it originated and how it came to be. He just. Felt it. And most importantly it wasn't his own emotions. If they were, he would know.

How very odd to say the least.

The mystery man turned over to Guardian, and said, rather aggressively, “and get the weapon back in its pod!”

Which in turn made the, possibly mind controlled, hero walk over to Superboy.

“Hey. How come he gets to call Supey an it?” He heard Kid Flash complain.
‘Don't think this is the best time for that KF.’ Robin thought to himself.

Guardian got up to Superboy, putting a hand on the... boy's shoulder. (Was Superboy a teen? A child? A baby? The guy is roughly sixteen weeks old, but has the body of a what. Sixteen year old? This could get confusing real fast.)

“Help us.” Aqualad didn't plead. It was a statement. It was almost similar to how Batman would say it. Maybe Batman had been teaching Aqualad some stuff behind his back.

Nah.

Robin watched as Superboy shrugged off Guardian’s hand. He watched as the head honcho came up to Superboy, voice condescending.

“Don't start thinking now.” The imp hopped from the man’s shoulder onto Superboy’s. Robin narrowed his eyes as he saw Superboy’s own pair widen. An almost blank look took over. The man continued around until he faced the boy. “See, you're not a real boy. You're a weapon, and you belong to me! Well, to Cadmus. Same thing. Now get back to your pod!”

An urge to backhand the man rose, and Robin would comply with it if he gets the chance.

He saw Superboy turn around, and walk away.

The door closed.

The two scientists looked at one another. They then nodded, and the woman typed something into the keyboard panel.

Suddenly, two arms with four needles for fingers came out from the sides of the pod.

“Aah!”

And Kid Flash was the first victim.

The sharp needles plunged into his chest. Not only that, but powerful electricity was charged into his body. It was not a good experience.

Robin couldn't do anything but scream, listen to his friends scream, oh and not to mention, try to writhe in pain. Did he also mentioned scream?

“Where's Dubbilex?”

Robin cracked an eye open as he faintly heard the man from before.

“Ooh!” It sounded like someone had an unpleasant surprise. “Lurking as usual. Get the g-gnomes downloading their memories. When that's done and when you're sure the clones are viable, delete the source material.”

‘Not going to happen.’ The other voice growled through Robin’s pain. The boy wonder whole heartedly agree.

Unfortunately there wasn't anything that he could do at the moment. He was too late to undo his locks, and the shocks were too much for him to do anything. Eyes wrenching close to black and flashing white. With a hint of some darkish peach or whatever color was on the inside of eyelids. It was hard to tell. Mainly because of, oh he didn't know, maybe it was the pain of the electric shocks he was receiving.
It felt like ages. Just the pain of the electricity and of the needles. Then he heard it. The sound of twisting metal.

Forcing his eyes to open he saw Superboy rip off the whole entire metal door, lifting it up above him.

Suddenly the pain stopped.

He could see with half lidded eyes, but that was just fine.

Superboy then threw the door off to the side, walking in like nobody's business.

“I told you to get back to your-” Superboy shoved both the man, and Guardian and the woman away without a hint of effort.

“Don't give me orders.” Supey’s voice was gruff. Clearly annoyed.

‘Welp. Time to get back into getting out.’

This time, Robin made sure to work fast.

“You here to help us or fry us?” Kid Flash asked.

Superboy narrowed his eyes for a moment. Quite intensely too. “Huh. I don't seem to have heat vision, so I suppose helping is my only option.”

‘So Superboy has a sense of humor huh?’ The voice asked.

‘Seems like it.’ Robin couldn't help but think back. Whether or not it was heard, he didn't know.

Click

Robin was a free bird.

He let himself drop out of the pod, landing on his feet.

“Ahh. Finally! Lucky Batman isn't here. He'd have my head for taking so long.” He complained, rubbing his wrists.

“Seriously, that's what you're worried about? The whole League will have our heads after tonight.” Kid Flash shot at him.

‘Sounds like he never met the old man. Wouldn't pass something by him to do something like that.’ The voice snarked back.

Robin ignored the voice, instead walking over to the keyboard. He pressed a button, and turned his to see if it worked. A noise went off. The arms retracted from KF and Aqualad’s chests as the doors opened. Good.

“Free Aqualad. I'll get Kid Mouth.” He told Superboy.

“Don't you give me orders either.” The other, possibly, teen still sounded annoyed. Irritated perhaps. But he went over to Aqualad anyways.

As that was happening, Robin made his way up to the top of Kid Flash’s pod, undoing one hand then the other.
When the older teen dropped to the floor, Robin stopped for a moment.

That's right, the urge to backhand. With a grin, Robin flipped down, and ran up to the male scientist. Who was starting to try to at the very least sit up one might add. He brought up his right hand, he then whacked the back of it onto the brunet’s face, knocking off his glasses.

“Agh!” The man screamed.

With a cackle, he ran over to the others. They were already making their way out.

“You-you'll never get out of here! I'll have you back in pods before morning.”

Kid Flash stopped.

Oh yeah, there were giant spheres filled with their blood.

As Robin grabbed his batarangs, the special kind that exploded, he said, “that guy is not whelmed, not whelmed at all.”

“What is it with you and this whelmed thing? Also didn't you just give him a backhand slap?” Kid Flash asked him as they both started to run again.

Behind them, the containers exploded.

Robin cackled again. “Yeah I did. He deserves it though.”

“Okay fair.”

They ran, and they ran, and they ran. Red, large, thick tendrils twisted their way down, down, down the impossibly long hallway. It was much like the architecture from the room they escaped out of. However embedded within the walls, yellow egg sac like objects were there.

If Robin was being honest it looked like disgusting giant pimples filled with pus.

Ew.

Aqualad began to speak, bringing Robin out of his thoughts on the state of the underground facility. “We are still 42 levels below ground, but if we can make the elevator-”

Giant behemoths decided that it was a great time to walk out from halls intersecting their escape route.

Robin stopped. So did everyone else.

Just what they need.

Together, they turned around to see the vile yellow zit like eggs glow red. He witnessed them stretch out, until more, smaller, more agile genomorphs popped out. Almost like they were being born. It was gross and honestly something Robin expected from an Alien movie.

Which was something that they desperately needed. Not.

Behind them, the large… behemoths roared, bringing its giant fists down. Quickly they moved out of the way.

He ran towards the beast, alongside Aqualad and Kid Flash.
“Aah!” And apparently Superboy had other plans. Case and point: punching it in the face.

Robin knew that they weren't going to win this fight. After all, it was better to pick your battles. And their main battle was to escape.

He jumped over the shoulder of a different behemoth. On the other side, he turned to see if Superboy was even trying to follow.

Nope. He was still fighting.

“Superboy, the goal is escape, not to bury ourselves here.” Aqualad pretty much scolded the clone.

“You want escape?” Okay wow that was aggressive. Superboy then grab ahold of a hand of one of the fallen genomorphs, and swung it into the other two, still standing, ones.

That would certainly help keep the rest at bay for a little while.

Robin and Kid Flash rushed over to Aqualad, who had successfully forced open the elevator doors. They looked up, staring into the empty shaft.

The boy wonder grab one of his grapples, after his friend jumping over to his side. He shot it up into the dark not quite abyss. With a push of a button, he was speeding upwards. Once he was at the end of his rope, he stepped down onto a small ledge.

He turned his head to witnesses Superboy bound upwards after them. Then, he saw the momentum slowly stop.

“Aah! I-I'm falling.”

He watched them fall.

(He had sworn to himself that no one was to ever fall again.)

Quickly, he shot out a batarang, one that doesn't explode, over to them. He gave a small sigh of relief as he saw Aqualad grab ahold of it.

“Superman can fly. Why can't I fly?” Superboy sounded… lost.

“Don't know, but it looks like you can leap tall buildings in a single bound. Still cool.” Kid Flash, being the kind of guy that he is, tried to lift the other's spirits.

Helping down Superboy and Aqualad was no problem after that traumatic experience.

“Thank you.” Superboy said. Robin wasn't sure who that was meant for. Except ya know, it wasn't the time for that. Especially since he saw something coming down to them. Rapidly.

“Guys, this will have to be our exit.” He told them urgently.

Both Aqualad and Superboy were kind enough to slam the elevator doors. They rocketed outwards, making an opening for the four of them.

With speed, they got out; Robin doing a roll into the hallway. They all watched the elevator go past. Moving forward down the hall would've been great.

Except there were more genomorphs.
Eyes quickly assessed the area around him. Nearly all of the areas were filled with the creatures.

‘Robin! Go left!’ A voice reminiscent of Batman’s barked an order to him.

Now Robin can be a good little soldier. And when Batman tells him to do something in a certain tone a voice, he does it.

Shooting to the left, Robin ran. His heart pounded. Superboy gained the lead.

“Go left! Left!” Superboy shouted. Apparently had an idea where to go.

“Right!”

Robin ended up getting behind with Aqualad. He watched the other two turn the corner.

“Great directions, Supey. You trying to get us repodded?” He heard Kid Flash say as they caught up.

Except Kid Flash didn't find what Robin found.

“No. I don't understand.”

“Don't apologize. This is perfect!”

It was an air vent.

With a grin, Robin jumped up to the grate. He flicked his finger, getting his special tool out. Unscrewing the screws were child’s play. Just like that, they were in. With Robin in front of course.

“At this rate, we'll never get out.” Kid Mouth complained.

“Shh. Listen.” Superboy stopped them.

It was the genomorphs clicking. Scuttling.

They had to go. Now.

The four of them crawled faster. And when Robin saw an exit, he took it.

He brought out his holo computer, hacking his way through the system.

‘What did you do?’ Hello voice, nice to hear you again. It sounded less urgent than last time.

“I hacked the motion sensors.” Robin spoke aloud, letting everyone know what he did.

KF grinned. “Sweet.”

“Still plenty of them between us and out.” Robin pointed out.

“But I've finally got room to move,” the speedster said as he pulled down his goggles. He turned around, slamming the door open and running up the stairs in a way that only he could.

They had no choice but to follow.

As Kid Flash ran over the gremlins that could only be genetically engineered creatures, Robin pulled up his computer again. He found something he didn't like.
“More behind us.” He informed everyone.

He continued to run, ignoring the sound of destruction behind him. Had to be Superboy.

Honestly he's going to get some great thighs after this.

Alarms were going off. Great. Oh and they came across a fallen Kid Flash. Wonderful.

“We're cut off from the street.” Aqualad said.

“Thanks. My head hadn't noticed.” Robin almost didn't hear Kid Flash’s muttering over the noise.

Didn't matter, Robin had to try hacking. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the two strength-enhanced beings try to pry the doors open. No luck.

“Can't hack this fast enough.” He dismissed the hologram. Giant genomorphs grabbed his attention. As did a door. “This way!” He spun around, kicking the door next to him down.

They run through.

Only to be surrounded.

‘This doesn't look good.' The strange voice growled. Once again, sounding very reminiscent of Batman. Robin minutely nodded, rapidly snatching his weapons from his utility belt.

The imps that were there, their horns lit up red.

Robin felt something, a new presence perhaps, enter his mind. The next thing he knew, everything went dark.

He woke up with a strange sensation. His body felt… smaller than usual. It almost felt like… like… like everything was too tight. And his head. He never had any alcohol in his life, but he was sure this is what it would be like to be hungover. (Yet it was almost like he was too light. Not just his head, but his body. Almost as if he could fly he was so hollow on the inside.)

Although if truth be told, in his short amount of years of fighting crime, he had plenty of time to get some pain in his head.

What was he doing?

He was on patrol. And he was sent to check something out. And then… something to do with Matt?

His heartbeat spiked at the thought of his younger brother. But he forced himself to calm down. He was Batman after all. And something wasn't right. (Bruce would’ve bark into his ear, forcing him to stay calm. Yet Bruce hadn't spoken at all. Was the connection busted?)

But after that?

Eyes opening without his permission. His whole body moving without his permission. And a voice that didn't belong to him spoke from his throat.
Suddenly it hit him like a truck.

He was stuck in a body that didn't belong to him.

And from what he had gathered, it was a different version of Robin (there were many reasons why he could list as to how he knows it's a different version, such as a Kid Flash), one of the original Batman's partners. (It was unsure which one it was.) Not only that, but the boy wonder was in some trouble.

‘Wh-what?’ Batman’s eyes widened. It was Robin's voice. In his head.

Before, Batman heard it a handful of times. And that was, surprisingly, sometimes in response to his own comments. (It was odd. It was almost like when the suit was on lockdown, and when that oh so generous AI took over it. But he was still able to move his mouth those times. He couldn't do that here…) Then it hit him. Batman was able to widen his eyes.

‘Something happened.’ Batman thought. Either to himself or to Robin, he wasn't entirely sure.

‘Wait a- you! You're that voice!’ Robin's voice. It sounded as distant as before, but also surprised.

‘I guess I am.’ Batman replied. ‘I’m surprised that you even heard me.’

‘What are you even doing?’ Robin demanded.

Batman took a breath, which was a thing he needed to do. His lungs burned. (Was it even his lungs?)

“At this point I don't even know.” He murmured, not unlike how he would when he talked to the old man.

He shakily stood up on two legs. Which were shorter than normal. Thinner than normal. Weren't even clad in his usual uniform.

His hair was free and the only thing he could feel on his face was a mask. He could feel a cape clung to his shoulders and brush his back. It wrapped around him almost like a blanket would.

Everything that was dulled before came back, and it came in hard. The senses; the pain. Especially the pain. He had to push it back.

This wasn't his body and he was in control when before he was just an observer.

What the fuck.

“Guardian?” He heard one of the other boys, teens, say. Aqualad, he thinks. Oh yeah. They're trying to escape.

“Go. I'll deal with Desmond.” The man with the golden helmet said. Batman narrowed his eyes. Didn't look like the man, who was probably Guardian, was under the influence of those… genomorphs anymore.

“I think not.” A new voice cut through the air.

The creatures as well as Guardian turned around. And they parted away like the Red Sea to show a
man. The man who wanted to clone Robin and the others. The man who wanted to kill these kids.

“How much do you want to bet that that's Desmond?” Batman asked aloud, voice low.

“Five bucks.” The kid next to him, Kid Flash if he remembered correctly, replied, voice equally low.

“Project Blockbuster will give me the power to restore order to Cadmus.” The man, who Batman was just going to call Desmond at this point, held up a freaking test tube of glowing, electric blue liquid before kicking it back into his mouth.

“Why do I get the feeling that he's going to transform into a monster?” Batman, rhetorically, asked.

“Maybe because of the sounds of his bones cracking?” Kid Flash asked back.

Okay maybe he likes the kid.

‘Wait a sec,’ he thought, narrowing his eyes, ‘he said Cadmus.’ If he thought back on it, the man said the name earlier too. When he was talking to Superboy. He was wondering what that was about.

‘Yeah.’ Robin replied. ‘We’re in the research building, Cadmus.’

Well shit.

Then of course the scientist’s clothes had to rip. And Batman obviously didn't like how the man was transforming, but damn it, he wasn't sure what Robin would do in this situation. He sure as hell wasn’t going to end up getting beat up by the junior league because their friend started to act differently.

Slagg it.

Desmond flexed back, roaring, and was obviously showing off his new, grey skin. With his old skin hanging on like a snake’s old ones that didn't get all the way off.

‘Gross.’ He heard Robin say in his head. Which, of course, was true.

Batman has seen a lot of shit and god this was gross. As per usual. Unfortunately.

“Everyone back!” Guardian commanded before running over to the newly made monster.

Only to be flung away with a backhand slap. “Aah!”

Superboy went in for a punch, getting one in return. The two traded blows.

‘Okay, got any ideas?’ Batman asked as he saw Superboy wipe the floor with his back.

‘Well-’

And then the two busted through the ceiling.

‘We could follow them.’ Robin provided.

‘Sounds like a plan.’

Earlier, while Robin was in control, Batman had felt everything Robin felt, only to a smaller
degree. Almost like... a fog or an opaque window. But it wasn't far enough for him to forget where the grappling hook was.

He aimed up the hole, and shot up. Before he could press the button to zip up, Kid Flash took a hold of his arm.

“You think lab coat planned that?” Kid Flash asked.

As they made their way upwards, Batman could faintly hear Aqualad say, “I doubt he is planning anything anymore.”

When they got up, Superboy was still fighting with Desmond.

The clone broke out of the hold; he was then caught by the legs and thrown over their way.

Batman quickly dogged, and Kid Flash did the same.

Aqualad wasn't so lucky.

‘Aqualad!’

Batman winced at that. Robin had shouted that. And it hurt his head.

Odd, but not unexpected. Tamara was loud too when she contacted him, and it had hurt his head then. So why not now?

The two flew across the room, going way past the giant hole in the floor. Batman rushed after them.

He helped Superboy up while Kid Flash got Aqualad. Once everyone was up, they faced a roaring Desmond.

It was a standoff.

‘Who are you anyway?’ Robin asked.

The mutated Desmond made the first move.

Batman ran forward. ‘Would you believe me if I said I’m Batman?’

He hid behind everyone, waiting for his chance to strike.

He just needed to find some batarangs. Preferably the ones that wouldn't explode. Then he remembered where Robin pulled them.

Aqualad and Superboy went in for a punch together, hitting Desmond smack dab in the face. Kid Flash was behind him, kneeling down so when the mutated man fell, he would trip.

“Learned that one in kindergarten.” Kid Flash sounded proud of himself.

Batman bounded over the teen, throwing the non explosive batarangs. Only for Desmond to swipe them away, as if they were mere toys.

Lame.

Batman ended up staying back to observe. It was obvious that they weren't going to win this fight
on brute strength alone.

Bodies slamming into a pillar. Destroy another. The shock causing one more to crack up near the ceiling.

His eyes narrowed before opening wide.

“That’s it!” He thought at the same time as Robin thought ‘of course!’

‘Okay, I’m going to call you Batman for now, but you need to let Kid Flash, Superboy, and Aqualad know the plan.’ Robin told him.

‘Thanks, but I planned on doing that anyway. Any suggestions on how to do it?’

‘You can use my hologram computer to help show them. Then you can grab some chalk in the lower right pack and draw a large enough X that no one could possibly miss it.’

Batman wouldn’t argue with that.

“Kid Flash, get over here!” Batman called over to the young speedster.

‘Okay, first: don’t try to sound like Batman. They might think I’m trying to copy him.’ Robin ‘said’.

‘Noted.’ Batman growled back.

The Future Knight brought up the computer. As he did so Robin was giving him instructions on how to get the images up.

“We need to destroy the pillars. When that’s done we need blockhead over there to be in the center for when the roof comes down.” He made sure to try to sound… normal during the explanation. He then dismissed the images. “Got it?”

“Got it.”

“Go.”

‘One down, two more to go.’ He thought.

He crept closer to the other two, trying not to get seen while Kid Flash provided a distraction.

“Got your nose.” He heard Kid Flash say. And he most likely meant it literally.

Disgusting.

“Superboy! Aqualad!” He held up his wrist, bring up the image from before.

“I need you two to get the pillars gone. X marks the spot when everything goes down. Make sure Blockhead gets there.” He explained fast.

“Come and get me, you incredible bulk-Oh!” Kid Flash taunted, getting hit in the process.

Okay, time to make it quick.

“Do it fast.” He pointed to two of the remaining pillars.

They went off to fulfill their tasks. As they were doing that, and while Kid Flash was tricking Desmond into destroying the other pillars, Batman grabbed some chalk. It really was in the place
that Robin said it was. It wasn't like Batman didn't believe in Robin, but he wouldn't be lying if he said that sometimes the old man would be able to make him… doubtful about other people. And somehow this was one of those times. He wasn't even there. (Although just living in Gotham would normally give a sense of distrust to one’s fellow Gothamite.)

Maybe that was the problem.

Quickly, Batman drew a large X on the ground before running away. He then went to throw some explosive batarangs. It would be on a timer and they would have to do it fast.

His eyebrow twitched as he saw how the batarangs hit the objects, but not exactly where he wanted it to go.

‘Wow. You need to work on your aim.’ He could hear the deadpan in Robin's voice.

‘Hey it hit, didn't it?’ Batman shot back.

Honestly he doesn't know how this was his life.

The teen went behind Aqualad, watching as the other used the water to help Kid Flash move along.

Once Desmond got to the position, after slipping on the water, Superboy slammed him down with his fists, making the mutated scientist back crash to the ground. Right in the X.

The tattoos on Aqualad’s body glowed blue as he electrified the water trail. It traveled through the water, moving towards its mark. Desmond.

The man was roaring in pain, but couldn't move.

“Move!” Batman commanded. The explosives were going to go off.

They all ran.

The bombs went off.

Mad Stan would be proud.

The world around them came crashing down. They weren't going to make it out.

Batman felt a larger body wrap around him, covering him. He went down, head hitting the ground.

The world around him felt… far. But slowly it came back in. Like having blurred vision going back into focus. And yet, so heavy at the same time.

“Rob? Rob!” It was a voice. It sounded familiar. “Hey Robin!” Oh yeah it was Kid Flash.

“Could you please stop yelling in my ear?” Robin asked. “You're going to destroy my ear drum.”

Quickly, Kid Flash backed off. “Sorry dude. You weren't responding. You okay?”

Robin blinked. Realizing that he's back in control. “Uh, yeah. I am.”
Right. That weird body snatcher experience.

‘Did that really happen?’ He thought to himself.

‘If you’re talking about switching around, then yes. It did.’ Robin tensed up. That voice. The one that claimed to be Batman.

The one that had complete and utter control of his body.

He so isn't whelmed at all.

“See? The moon.” It was Kid Flash again. Always good for bringing him out of his thoughts.

Robin carefully stood up. It was almost as if he weighed more than he was used to. But when he wasn't in control… it was like he was floating.

The building around him was in absolute ruins. Desmond was unconscious and underneath a thick slab of rubble. Superboy was staring up at the moon for the first time.

A dark dot had appeared suddenly, without any warning, in front of the moon. Robin squinted at it, watching it as it grew closer, and thus bigger. It was the Man of Steel himself.

“Oh. And Superman. Do we keep our promises or what?”

Not only that, but members of the Justice League were behind him. All of them.

Batman stepped off of one of the Green Lantern's platforms, walking up to the group.

‘Bruce.’

Robin stiffened. That wasn't his thought. How would the other, who claimed to be Batman but obviously not, know that name? Unless he was telling the truth.

Honestly how was this his life?

Superboy started to walk forward, making his way over to Superman.

He made a movement, probably to show off the insignia on his chest.

Superman… he didn't take this well.

“Is that what I think it is?” Batman said more so than asked.

“He doesn't like being called an it.” Kid Flash muttered in a way that sounded like he was sharing a secret. Way to go Kid.

“I'm Superman's clone.”

Shock rippled through the League.

Batman, as stone faced as ever, said two words. “Start talking.”

‘Welp, better listen up.’ Robin thought over to… the other person.

‘Planed on it.’

“I hacked into the Justice League systems to find out more about the fire that went off here at
Cadmus. Kid Flash and Aqualad and I teamed up. Saved a few scientists from the fire and then found a high speed elevator that isn't meant for a two story building.” Robin started explaining.

“We went down the elevator and into one of the floors and we found some… very unexpected things.” Aqualad continued.

Kid Flash started to wave his hands around, exaggerating. “There were these huge, and I mean huge creatures that nearly squashed us! And they had these little guys sitting on them.”

“We found a room full of them filled in containers. They were generating electricity so the rest of the facility would not be on the grid.”

“Turns out Cadmus was creating at least eight different types of these creatures,” Robin then brought up a screen, having quick screen shot of the images, “they're called genomorphs, and each type has different stats.” He look straight up at Batman. “A whole army's worth.”

“Then we found something very unexpected.”

“Project Kr. That's capital K and lower case r. For Krypton.” Kid Flash stated.

Everyone looked at Superman.

“We found Superboy here in a pod,” Robin continued, “and we let him out.”

‘What about that Guardian guy?’ Batman, the so called one in his head, suddenly asked.

“We also found Guardian there.” Robin quickly added before anyone else said anything. But in a way that wasn't totally suspicious at all. “According to him he was head of security. It's more than likely that the telepathic genomorphs had him under control for…”

‘Desmond.’ The other voice provided for him.

“Desmond. It seems he's out of their control now.”

“Is that all?” It was Flash that asked. He looked just as grim as the other heroes.

“Nope.” Kid Flash popped the P. “We might've gotten into a fight with Supey here, and we might've been captured and encased in some pods.”

“Superboy was the one to break us out.” Aqualad stated. His voice was firm, indicating no room for argument.

“Then we fought our way to the top, Desmond drank some weird ‘Blockbuster serum’, we fought him too, and here we are!” Kid Flash finished off with a grin.

Everyone was silent, taking it all in. Batman nodded, and turned to everyone else. He stopped for a moment, turned his head to the four of them, and said, “we will be discussing about what to do. Stay there.”

And there he goes.

Robin stayed silent.

‘So…’ it was the other Batman. The guy who claimed that was what he was called. ‘You didn't mention me. At all.’
'Seems like it.' Robin replied.

'Why? You know the old man, he would want to know everything that goes down. That includes me. And if he finds this out later he’ll throw a hissy fit.'

Robin only sighed through his nose. Why didn't he tell Batman about this?

Staying silent seemed like a good idea. He needed to think. Not exactly thinking in words, like he as been doing in order to communicate with the other. More like… in pictures so to speak. Objects. Not true words but thoughts nonetheless.

'Well, you could tell me how you know about him first. And how much.' Robin finally decided to say.

It was the other's turn to stay silent.

Superman walked up over to Superboy. “Well, uh-we'll figure something out for you. The League will, I mean. For now,” he sighed, “I-I'd better make sure they get that Blockbuster creature squared away.”

And just like that, he flew away. How disappointing.

“Cadmus will be investigated,” Batman’s voice cut through the awkwardness, making their attention turn to him, “all 52 levels, but let's make one thing clear.”

“You should have called.” Flash quickly gave his input, clearly wanting to scold them like children. Robin was thirteen for crying out loud, not a freaking toddler.

Batman side glared at him.

“End results aside, we are not happy.” Batman continued. “You hacked Justice League systems, disobeyed direct orders, and endangered lives. You will not be doing this again.”

“I am sorry, but we will.” Aqualad said.

“Aqualad, stand down.” Aquaman commanded.

“Apologies, my king,” he put his hand to his chest in respect before putting it down, “but no.”

The king rose an eyebrow at the disobedience.

“We did good work here tonight, the work you trained us to do. Together on our own we forged something powerful, important.”

The Flash spoke. “If this is about your treatment at the hall, the three of you-”

“The four of us, and it's not.” Kid Flash interrupted.

“Batman, we're ready to use what you taught us, or why teach us at all?” Robin finally spoke up.

“Why let them tell us what to do? It's simple. Get on board or get out of the way.” Superboy threw his opinion out there.

They all turned to stare at the Dark Knight himself, waiting for an answer. The man glared at them in turn.

It was a tense minute before he responded with the words, “you’ll have our answer in three days.”
Boy wonder felt his muscles loosen. It was an answer at least. Better than nothing.

“Robin.”

He snapped back into attention.

“We’re heading back.” Batman said.

Oh.

He turned to the other three guys, and nodded to them. “Probably wants to check out any injuries I took up. You should probably check too, just in case.”

Kid Flash nodded. “Make sure he sees how your head’s doing. It looked like you had a nasty fall.”

Robin snorted and waved his hand, as if waving away an unpleasant smell. “Not as bad as it looks.”

Actually he was getting a headache.

‘I can feel the dull throbbing. Go get it checked out.’ The other Batman suddenly said.

Robin paused momentarily. ‘Wait, you can feel that?’

‘Couldn’t you when I was in control?’

Robin thought about it for a second. Yeah. He still felt pain.

A hand was waving in front of his face.

“Hey, Robin, Earth to Robin. You in there?”

The young teen blinked. He smacked his friend’s hand away from his face. “Yeah, yeah. Just fine. Guess it’s just hurting a little more than expected. Now I gotta get going before Batman blows a gasket.”

He then turned away, and headed over to his mentor, his partner… his guardian. “Coming B.”

Once he got closer, Batman began to walk with him. In silence.

‘I’m not the original Batman,’ the other began to speak, causing Robin to minutely perk up, but not enough for the man next to him notice. Maybe. ‘The original Batman retired from crime fighting twenty-one years ago, in the year 2019.’

The two heroes of Gotham went over all the debris. Walking down the street, they headed for the closest Zeta Tube.

Shock ran through Robin. ‘Problem. It’s 2010. Are you implying that you’re from the future?’

‘Yes and no. It should be the year 2040 for me, but with everything I’ve seen so far, I doubt that this is even the same universe.’

Robin blinked. ‘Parallel universe?’ He asked.

‘Parallel universe, alternate universe, alternate dimension, whatever you want to call it, then yes. The Justice League that I learned about, well, there wasn’t a Captain Marvel in it, no two Green
Lanterns, and certainly there wasn't a Flash and a Kid Flash at the same time with the original Batman in the League. There was no Superboy or a Aquaman. And if you just happen to be the first Robin in the year 2010, you shouldn't be a teen, but a adult.'

Everything was quiet. Both externally and internally. Robin needed to absorb all the new information. So much so that he didn't realize that he was back at the cave until Alfred was right in front of him.

“Welcome back, young master Robin.” Alfred nodded to him.

Blinking rapidly, Robin was brought back to the present. “Hey.” He gave the older man a crooked grin.

The butler rose an eyebrow.

Welp he’s doomed.

“I suggest heading over to the med bay.” He nodded his head over to its general direction.

“Yes sir.” He weakly replied. Yeah he's doomed.

’Sof that's Alfred huh?’ The other voice asked, sounding amused.

‘You still need to explain how much you know.’ Robin not so gracefully sidestepped the question. And there was something a bit odd about ‘first Robin.’

For some reason he got the image of a man holding his hands up in mock surrender in his mind. ‘Well, I’m not too sure how much I should tell you. After all, shouldn't you have been given a lecture on what shouldn't be said in case of ‘gone to the past or alternate timeline of some sort as just your mere presence could mess things up’? Got to know what to do in case of emergencies you know.’

Okay he did know. It was one of the many things that were practically pounded into his head. Paradoxes were a huge no no.

Absently he picked at the sheets of the bed. The med bay was sterile. It was a dot of white in the dark ocean known as the cave. A small oasis that isn't much favored from any of the inhabitants.

‘Okay fine. Then explain to the best of your ability alright?’

‘Planned on it.’ Now why could he possibly get the image of a smug smirk in his head, huh?

The other’s voice turned serious the next he ‘spoke’. ‘I actually never had any interaction with the original Batman before that fateful day. I… I had a argument with my dad that day, and went out to a club. Only a gang came by and started to cause some trouble. No one else was doing anything, so I picked a fight with them. Ended up taking a cycle and basically started a car chase. There was a dead end that leaded to… well, where Bruce Wayne lived.’

Robin stiffened at this.

“Well, it wouldn't hurt as much if you hadn't injured yourself that bad.” Alfred sniffed.

He hadn't noticed that Alfred was tending to his injuries. Let alone a gash on his forehead. How hadn't he noticed that?

“Sorry Alfie, sometimes you can't help tripping you know?” He shrugged with a grin.
He was given The Look.

Robin wilted a little. “Okay yeah, I’ll be more careful next time.”

Alfred nodded. “That's all I could ask for. That and healthy meals and for more sleep.”

The boy wonder chuckled. “Where would we be without ya?”

“I wouldn't dare to think of such a thing,” he said, dramatically facing away.

A chuckle resonated within Robin's mind while he was grinning at the performance. Oh yeah, he wasn't the only one in the audience.

“So what happened?’ Robin pressed, wanting to know more.

‘Imagine my surprise to find that the old man had some moves. We fought together and kicked the gang’s butt. I ended up helping him inside his house, and as I was about to call home and leave, I found the strangest thing.’

He leaned forward, invested in the story, but also helping Alfred get a better position to wrap the gauze around his head.

‘What was it?’ He asked.

The image of a smirk returned. ‘A bat stuck in a clock.’

Robin blinked. He certainly wasn't expecting that.

“The bandaging process is done, young master Richard.”

Nor was he expecting that either.

“Thanks Alfred. I’m going to go change and then head off to bed.” He said. He then hopped off, and walked his way over to the changing room.

Only to be held back by a hand.

“Not so fast. I must check to see if you have gained a concussion.” Alfred gently guided Robin back to the bed.

“Awww man! But I feel fine!” Robin so didn't whine.

But a set of stern eyes coupled with pursed lips made him stay.

After getting the ‘all clear’, Robin booked it to the locker room.

‘I tried to get it out, the bat,’ he finally continued, ‘and when I did, well… I found out who he used to be. Before he retired.’

Robin tossed his cape to the ground. It had a huge hole on the shoulder. Most likely either going to be fixed up or scrapped. Honestly it was a toss up. It really depended on Alfred.

‘And then you became Batman?’

Laughter filled his mind. ‘No. After a series of events that involved me stealing the suit, he let me become the new Batman.’
Record scratch. Freeze frame. Roll back, and press play.

His mouth made movements, trying to get words out but only babbling came out.

‘YOU STOLE BATMAN’S SUIT?!’ Robin, finally, finally, managed to think. No, more like shrek.
‘Could you not do that? It actually hurt. Somehow.’

‘YOU STOLE THE SUIT! OF COURSE I’M GOING TO BE LIKE THIS!’

‘Then could you freak out a little quieter? What's the word you used earlier? Whelmed?’

Before he could even give a reply, a hand gently landed on his shoulder. Unfortunately with how…

intense the conversation was, Robin completely blocked out the whole world around him. So he

practically jumped a mile high from the shock of the fact that someone was right behind him

without him knowing and while he was kind of flipping out.

“Dick?” Oh man it was Bruce, he’s using the Bruce voice he doesn't know if this is good or bad.

“Yeah?” Shit his voice cracked. He cleared his throat and tried again. “Yeah B?”

Aaaaand he had his worried face on. Time for the teen to sink into the ground.

“Are-” Bruce stopped himself. He started again. “I know tonight was… not ideal, and you’ve

shown me, us, the League, about how you feel… but…”

Oh thank god he was thinking it was about the whole ‘not being trusted to see the actual League

HQ’.

“Bruce,” he cut his guardian off, “I’m fine. If anything a little mad that you guys didn't actually

trust us to go there. I suppose it's a good thing though since I got to meet Superboy. He certainly

wouldn't get to meet anyone his age.”

He stopped for a second then tilted his head slightly. “Actually, technically people his age would

be babies, but he has the body- and kinda mind?- of a sixteen year old.”

Bruce nodded. “Thank you for that information.”

He shrugged. “Can I get changed now? Kinda half naked here.”

The man hesitated for a moment. “I just want to let you know, that we’ll take more about this

later.” He then turned, and left.

He watched the man go, waiting until he couldn't see him anymore, before he let himself relax a

little. He honestly doesn't want later to happen.

‘We’re so going to have a talk about this when we get to my room.’ He thought to the other.

‘Sure. And do you really go by Dick? I heard about that in old newspapers on the web.’

Dick rolled his eyes, putting his pajama shirt on. He’s just ready to go to his room, lie in bed, talk to

whoever’s in his head, and then go to sleep.

‘Yeah. It's what my parents called me, so what?’

All was quiet. He made his way up the stairs.
‘It’s just unexpected I suppose.’ The other finally said.

‘What’s your name then? You already know mine and Bruce’s.’

‘Guess I have no choice do I?’

‘Well, it would be preferred.’

Inside the manor, out of the study.

‘Look, if we’re really from two different Earths, and you’re from the year 2040, then it’s highly unlikely that we’ll meet the you from here.’

Radio silence.

Dick huffed at this, but he was a man on a mission. He’ll let mystery man think about it. Until then, he’ll be in his room.

Socks padded on the hardwood floor, protecting the feet from the cold. Moonlight streamed in through windows, creating an eerie yet comforting atmosphere. He might’ve not spend all his life in the manor, with Bruce and Alfred, but it became his home. At the moment he couldn’t think of any other place to be. Well, other than Pop’s circus, but if truth be told… he wasn’t sure if he would be allowed.

Okay, realistically Pop and everyone would welcome him back with wide open arms but, well, doubt is very hard to get rid of sometimes.

Just as he reached his door, he heard a soft sigh in his head. He paused, hand reaching the doorknob, and tilted his head slightly to the side.

‘Okay, fine.’ The other growled, voice sounding… sort of defeated. ‘Just don’t blame me when the old man goes after us because we broke, like, a hundred protocols.’

Dick grinned. ‘I can take it,’ he said back, opening the door to his room. He beelined to his bed, plopping down onto it.

‘My name’s Terry McGinnis.’ He said. Dick instantly perked up, noticing the difference in tone of voice. The other, Terry, sounded… kind of like him. A teen. ‘And my father was murdered. He’s the reason why I became Batman.’

The young teen tensed up. Of course. Why wouldn’t there be a murder. ‘And your mom?’ He asked.

‘She’s still alive. She doesn’t know what I do though.’ He, Terry, sounded tired.

Dick laid there, on his bed, thinking.

‘Tell me everything.’

‘…Everything?’

‘Yes. All the details. What happened, who did it, everything.’

A heavy sigh echoed, and for a moment, Dick could almost hear it right next to his ear. He waited. He listened.

‘My parents are- were- divorced. When I was fourteen, they went through the papers. I went with
my dad while my little brother went with our mom. And I... I didn't make things easy. I ended up going with the wrong crowd. We got caught and I went to juvie. It was bad enough that the other guy, since he was eighteen at the time, he went to prison for three years. I was in for three months before my dad managed to bail me out. I realized how awful I had been. I went back to high school, got a girlfriend, and she helped out a lot. A couple of years later I got into a fight at school, came home, and my dad... my dad and I got into a fight.’ He stopped. His voice, it was filled with regret, and near the end he sounded a little choked up.

The curtains by his bed were closed, yet small cracks of silver light trickled through. He tried to make his thought, small. Gentle. ‘Then what happened?’

‘I went off to the club I mentioned earlier. You already know what happened after that. Except that Bruce kicked me out after I found the cave.’

Dick snorted. Of course that man would do that.

‘When I got home... I... I found the police there. And-and mom was there too. She tried to tell me what happened... our home was vandalized and the police was there and dad wasn't... I found my dad dead and the police tried to pull me back but he was dead and I was just so awful to him. The last thing I did with him was fight and now... I can't ever apologize to him.’

Exhale softly. Inhale softly. Yeah his parents died, and he witnessed it, but he didn't get into a fight with them. He didn't know what exactly to say for something so personal that didn't sound... like pity or sympathy. He needed empathy. So he thought what it would be like if that happened to him with his parents, or even Bruce.

‘I-’ Dick stopped, licked his lips, and started again, ‘I can't say anything about your dad. Never met the guy, but... I'd think that he sounds like a pretty good guy. If something like that happened to my parents... I'd think they would've forgave me. And I think your dad forgives you too.’

All was still. Creaks of old floorboards sneaked into the ear. Dust particles danced through the moonlight.

‘Thanks... I'd like to think so too.’

Man he kinda wants to hug the guy now. If he wrapped his arms around himself, would he feel it? He felt the movements... Terry made when he took over his body.

It was weird, when he wasn't in control. He was still there, but he couldn't move. It was like... sleep paralysis? Except all of his senses were dulled as well. And with how his body was moving without him actually making those decisions; it was almost like he was a puppet with invisible strings.

‘After that I moved back in with my mom and brother.’ Terry suddenly said, ripping Dick from his thoughts. ‘And as I was moving things into my new room I found... something odd.’ His voice took a darker, slightly angrier tone.

‘What was it?’

Terry's voice, the next it spoke, it almost sounded like Batman's. Dick’s Batman. ‘It was a disk from work. Something that wouldn't, shouldn't, be made at the company. I went straight to Mr. Wayne, and he confirmed it. The company my dad worked at, was making nerve gas.’ Those last two words were snarled. ‘And the man who was making the nerve gas? He knew my dad had the disk and had him murdered.’
‘What did Bruce do?’ Dick asked, almost nervous.

Terry scoffed. ‘Nothing.’

Wait what. ‘Nothing? But-’

‘All he did was give me back the disk and told me to take it to the authorities. According to him his Batman days were over. I left and as I was walking, my father’s murderer was able to take back the stupid disk. I knew that Wayne wouldn't be able to help me, so I stole the suit.’

Breathe in, breathe out. Process the information. ‘What happened after that? I don't think he wouldn't do anything if he found out you stole his suit.’

‘Well, first of all, I found out my dad’s murderer was planning on selling the gas and the first shipment would be that night, so I planned on stopping them. Second of all, Bruce had some pretty crappy timing and turned off the suit when I was fighting.’

Dick blinked rapidly at that. ‘He turned off the suit? How could you turn off a suit? And while you were fighting?’

‘Yes, while I was fighting. I was getting pummeled. And the suit is high tech. Well, it was still cutting-edge at the time for being roughly twenty years old without an update. So of course the old man would have some sort of failsafe to make sure no one would be able to use it if it got stolen.’

Dick stopped for a moment, not really realizing that he was fiddling with his sleeves. Okay yeah Bruce would totally do that. ‘But seriously? He turned it off while you were fighting?’

Terry huffed. ‘Yeah. He turned it back on and helped me find a way out. After that I managed to convince him to let me stop the shipment. I basically trashed the place and sunk the plane that was trying to get away. I went home, took off the suit, and went to bed.’

The younger one snorted.

‘In my defense that was the first time I did something like that. I was planning on giving the suit back that day but then my mom came in saying that I had a visitor. Turns out it was Bruce and she said he wanted to offer me a job.’

An ebony eyebrow rose up at this.

‘Mr. Wayne said that he wanted me to be his personal assistant. “An ally if you will” he said. I accepted and that’s how I got my cover story for being Batman.’

He shot up and started to wave his hands around. “Wait wait wait a sec here,” he spoke aloud, “he just hired you as a PA? As a cover for being Batman? When he wanted nothing to do with you the night before?”

He could feel the urge to roll his eyes. But it wasn't his.

‘Apparently that night gave him a lot to think about. One of which was letting me be the new Batman. And wouldn’t it look suspicious if I suddenly started to hang out with the recluse, Bruce Wayne?’

He couldn't argue with that. ‘Okay fine, but do you actually do PA stuff?’

‘I drive him around, help him with the house work. I managed to ban him from the kitchen,
though.’ Another urge came about this time, and he allowed the smirk to come through.

‘You finally saw the amazing Bruce Wayne's cooking skills?’

Arms twitched without his consent. ‘I don't know how he managed to stay alive as long as he did! Except for stubbornness, but his soup was cold, and his toast would be burnt! After I heard about Alfred I was starting to see that man as a saint! One of the first things I had to do was get Mr. Wayne new appliances! How do you mess up a toaster or a fridge that bad?!”

Laughter bubbled up, erupting from his chest and out of his mouth. Yep. Sounds like something that would happen to B. ‘You’d be surprised.’ He said, grinning.

‘Don't I know it.’ Terry said, exasperated. ‘On the bright side I can feed myself when I live in my one room apartment.’ He joked.

‘At least you can cook. Alfred won't let me touch the microwave without his permission.’

Terry barked out a laugh. ‘Maybe you should ask him for a cooking class. Who knows, maybe Bruce can make scrambled eggs without somehow burning milk.’

Dick sputtered. ‘How?!”

‘I don’t know! The old man wouldn't tell me!’

It was simply ridiculous. Here Dick was, laying in his bed in the middle of the night, basically talking smack about Bruce Wayne's cooking skills with some guy from another Earth’s future who had just told him his backstory. After freeing Superman’s clone from an underground lab.

The whole situation was just so, well, ridiculous that Dick couldn't help but started to laugh. Echoing within his head, a deep laughter filled the crevices until it joined his own. Together the two laughed and laughed and laughed, until it slowly died off, sleep claiming its victims.

The world wouldn't be able to wake them if it tried.

Chapter End Notes

Well. Here we are! That one story I was talking about, and still haven't fully finished! I'm up to like, uhhh chapter 6 or 7 now? It's still taking longer than I like, but eh, you guys get to read this now! I hope you're enjoying this so far, and get buckled up for a LONG ride!
Consciousness came in waves. A breath here, a twitch there. The weight of a blanket, the cool of a pillow. When the shackles of sleep slowly chipped away, some things began to… feel off.

His bed was too comfy. Cloth wrapped around his arms and legs. Pajamas. With long sleeves and pants. No socks. The room smelt… it smelt different yet the same somehow. Like the bedrooms over at Wayne Manor but he was sort of… blind to it? Like one would be to their own room. (He wasn't entirely sure how that was possible. To be able to smell something but to be blind to it at the same time.)

Eyes cracked open, squinting at the world around them. As his eyes focused, he noticed some things.

One: this is most certainly not his room back at home.

Two: this is most definitely not his room at the manor for when Wayne decides that it's best to have him stay the night.

Three: it very much so has signs that it belongs to someone else.

Four: he felt tiny.

Five: the clock on the dresser said that it was noon.

Shock struck him like lightning. He bolted upwards to see if it was correct. Then, not unlike an uppercut from Superman, the events of last night smashed into his brain.

Terry scrambled out of the bed, Dick’s bed, and nearly tripped on his way over to the full length mirror.

In it was a young teen with pale skin, dark black hair, and pale blue eyes. (But it was the wrong shade whispers something from within.) The teen wore mint colored pajamas. It had long sleeves, long pant legs, with white buttons. Bruises scattered around what skin was shown. A white gauze was taped to the forehead.

A small hand rose up to the mirror.

It was him. Robin. Richard. The kid whose body he was… sharing with.

The hand was shaking.

‘I could've sworn that Alfred wrapped a bandage around my head last night.’ A young voice suddenly cut through, rattling about in his head. It was his voice. His head. Dick.

“Maybe he changed it while we were asleep.” He murmured oh so softly. That wasn't his voice. This wasn't even his body.

Faintly, dark, insane cackles fluttered in the back of his mind.

No. This wasn't like that. It never was nor will it ever be.
How did this even happen?

Ebony eyebrows furrowed in concentration. Pale eyes dimmed with frustration. He was… informed that there was trouble somewhere. A warehouse? Or was it a museum? Maybe a warehouse for a museum? There was… some floating kid?

Terry rubbed his (this wasn't his body he's stealing a Robin's body-) forehead in irritation. Eyes closing to concentrate.

What else? He's forgetting something. Something important. What was it?

A child of roughly nine years, with black hair, disheveled, and impossibly wide, blue eyes are overflowing with fear. His mouth opening up for a scream, his petite hands are slow to rise in order to shield his face. The green shirt is dirtied with mud as well as his pants and black shoes. The child's knees are locked and he knows that he wouldn't run.


(Important, important. This was important. Why didn't he remember till now? How could he not remember till now?)

“Matt!” He nearly shouted. “Oh my god, Matt.”


“Shit. Shit shit shit. Shit.” What was Matt doing there? He wasn't supposed to be there. Where was he supposed to be? Why was his memories so shaky?

(False images of grey pale skin, of popping blue veins as dried brown blood flaked off into the night sky. That wasn't real. It won't be real. What if it just might happen? )

Nails digging into a scalp.

“Remember, you have to stay calm in every situation. If you don't, then it could be a matter of life and death.” The echoing words of an old, wise, bitter man rang bright and true through his mind.

Blue eyes blinked rapidly. That's right. That's what Bruce told him when he started being Batman. He remembered.

“And why's that?” He asked. He was leaning against the chair that Bruce was sitting in. They were in the cave. The original Batman was working something on the computer. Terry didn't remember what it was.

It was cold down there. In the cave. It was filled with... mementos, trophies, of battles long gone. Of fights that were carved into the history of Gotham or wiped from it completely.

A deep, deep part of Terry, down within his mind, his soul, wondered if he too, would start to collect such things. Of future battles that could determine the future of the city.

A wrinkled face, aged by the wear and tear of time, turned to his own.

“Because,” Bruce had said, “there will be moments that you can and will feel overwhelmed. You can not be drowned in your emotions. If you do then it just might be your last night in the world we live in.”
The older man’s voice was darker, grimmer than usual. Perhaps he was remembering something from the past. It was something from experience. Had it happened to him or someone else, Terry didn’t know. He wasn’t sure he would ever know. Bruce Wayne likes to keep his secrets. And Terry bets that most of them would never see the light again when the man kicks the bucket.

The memory faded, and Terry began to calm down.

Pain prickled his head, his hands. Stifining, Terry realized what he had done. He yanked the hands away.

Regular hands. Regular fingers. No blood to be seen. Good.

He let himself sigh in relief.

Slagg it. He shouldn't have freaked out like that. This wasn't his body damn it and he was going to protect it from harm as much as possible if he's the one in control. And it wouldn't be a lot! This wasn't his and he's not going to steal Dick’s life! No way, no how.

All was quiet. And then… ‘who's Matt?’

Terry inhaled, then exhaled.

“My little brother.” He whispered. He ran… his hand down his face. (This wasn't his and it never will be.) “He was there when it happened. Whatever it was.”

“You mean you don't know?’ Robin, Dick, asked.

Sighing through ‘his’ nose, he closed ‘his’ eyes.

“I can't remember. I think it might've been the reason why… we're like this.”

Silence. What a recurring theme huh.

But it was odd. Even though it was quiet, now that Dick was still there, not disappearing, it felt… like, like someone was just. There. With him. Leaning against him. Close.

And last night he took the gamble of telling Dick about him. He really, really, shouldn't have. Terry hadn't truly found out if this was sort of ploy from Spellbinder, or from someone else. Something else. Or if it was all really, truly happening and he was stuck in some sort of alternate universe within the body of the first Robin.

If this was sort of a sign that he was supposed to be a Robin or get a Robin of his own, he didn't like it. He doubted the old man would find any humor in it either if it was all a huge joke.

Actually he wouldn't pass the idea that this was all actually Bruce's idea of a simulator to see what he would do in some sort of outlandish situation. He would probably record everything and then point out Terry's mistakes when all was said and done.

But fuck did everything felt, smelled, looked, and everything all in between too real. Even when he was pushed back into the shotgun seat known as Richard Grayson’s body.

‘You think your body and brother are here too?’ Dick suddenly asked.

Dick’s body jerked to the command of Terry's shock. No. He hadn't thought of that.

Running the small hand through dark hair, Terry thought.
‘What do you think the odds are that they’re here, in Gotham?’ He thought over to Dick. As the son of a talented mathematician, well, scientist really, he already knew how low the percentage was.

‘Minuscule.’ Dick replied, solemn. ‘But it never hurt to check.’

Terry fought the want to bite ‘his’ lip. This wasn't his body damn it.

Dick wasn't wrong though. It didn't hurt to look. But there was always the chance that neither his body or brother were even remotely near Gotham at all, and every moment wasted in Gotham was another moment closer to some probable horrible fate.

Wait a second. Fate.

With furrowed brows, he tilted ‘his’ head in thought.

He could've sworn he heard that word before. Quite recently too. But where? And when? Who even said it?

A gut wrenching growel gurgled up from within. It was then he realized that oh yeah, it was noon. So that means that they hadn't had breakfast. And he wasn't sure if Dick even had dinner.

‘Okay, so, how about some breakfast first then we start searching yeah?’ Dick suggested. It sounded like he was almost snickering.

“Yeah yeah,” he muttered, finally walking away from the… he turned to see what he was leaning against. It was a dresser. “Considering what time it is, it should be at least brunch. Wonder if Alfred would let me eat cereal.”

‘Nah, he probably already made something.’

Well, less work for him he guessed. And he finally gets to try the famous Alfred Pennyworth’s meals.

Sighing through ‘his’ nose, Terry finally decided to walk out of the room.

‘Wait a second.’ He thought, slightly panicked. ‘What I’m going to say?’

‘Calm down. Just act passive aggressive to Bruce who’ll think it's about last night and shower Alfred with compliments.’

Terry rubbed his forehead, careful of the large bandage.

“Yeah okay. Whatever. Slagg it.”

Glancing around, Terry tried to assess where he was in the manor. Just because it was another Wayne Manor doesn't mean that the building wasn't built differently. Already could Terry tell the difference between the two. For one thing there wasn't as much dust. Another was the decor. Different paintings, curtains, you name it. Only a few were somewhat the same.

Honestly he wasn't sure if he was in the West Wing or the East. However the faint scent of home cooked food wafted to his noise, alerting him that a meal was, in fact, being made. If not it was already made. So, without any prompting from Dick, Terry followed ‘his’ nose.

‘How are we even switching?’ Terry asked. He did not want to have any questions asked if he continued to speak aloud. ‘Is it every time we... go unconscious? Can we switch around when awake?’
He got the vague feeling of a shrug enter his mind. ‘Not sure. We should probably experiment with that later.’

Terry frowned. He’d rather just let go and let Dick stay in control. It must feel jarring and intrusive for Dick. Just being there wasn't great at all. And somehow the younger teen was acting pretty cool with it all. The only time he actually freaked out was when he found out Terry stole his universe’s Bruce Wayne’s last Batsuit. And when Terry took control for the first time. (He actually calmed down once Terry told his story, so. Uh. Yay?)

How was Dick taking it? And why didn't he tell Bruce about him? Won't he tell the older man about him in the future?

What would Bruce do when he finds out?

Terry froze in his tracks at that. What would Bruce do? His Bruce would probably go through a thousand and one tests and even then probably wouldn't believe him completely. And being with a Bruce Wayne that doesn't trust him?

Terrifying.

‘Do you plan on telling Bruce any of this?’ He ended up finally asking, turning a corner.

‘... maybe.’

An eyebrow twitched. ‘Maybe?’

‘Okay, how about we try to find your them first ourselves and then we ask Bruce whenever we feel like it.’

Terry stopped, lips thinning as they were being pushed together, and just stared into the nearest reflective surface. He was summoning The Look. The one look that Bruce would give him at any moment where he was suggesting something for an ulterior motive. Or something along those lines.

He learned from the best after all.

Instantly Dick broke. ‘Okay, okay. I'm still bitter about the fact that he didn't take me to the Justice League’s real HQ! And after what they've did when we got out with Superboy.’

It was super effective. Honestly Terry was kinda surprised that Dick relented.

‘Thank you. That wasn't so hard was it?’ Blue eyes rolled. ‘Do you want to feed me anything to say and or do to make sure ‘the greatest detective in the world’ doesn't suspect that maybe I’m not you?’

‘Just act like a moody teenager. You can do that right?’

Terry snorted. ‘Yep.’

Without a glance, the vigilante walked away.

Hallways gave way to a grand staircase. Which was good because that meant he was obviously getting closer to food. Well, that and the stronger scent of what could be soup. It was certainly a possibility for what meal it was.

Tall windows embedded themselves into the walls. Bright light filtered through, illuminating the
world within. Terry had to stop for a moment. Outside was a world filled to the brim with green. So much so that he couldn't see Gotham at all.

It almost felt like someone was being cheated.

But to who, of what, and why, well, Terry didn't know. He wasn't sure if he ever will. Yet the sun kept on shining down from the big blue sky; the big puffy clouds, that looked like they should've been in a painting, drifted along.

Maybe, just maybe, this was something that his Bruce could've had. Used to have, once upon a time.

Sometimes the Gotham Terry knew was too dark to have nice days like that.

Another gurgle from Dick’s stomach reminded him of what needed to be done. Eat lunch.

Sighing through the nose, he turned to walk away.

Immediately a black wall blocked his way.

Light blue eyes, thinning grey hair. A mustache. Wrinkled skin. The person who held these facial features was wearing a three piece suit, with a maroon shirt.

It was Alfred Pennyworth, the saint himself.

“I would say ‘good morning’ to you young master Richard, however it seems to be more so ‘good afternoon’. Wouldn't you say?” His eyes twinkled and his voice was dry yet held a hint of good humor within. A faint smile was trying to twitch into place but held back quite firmly.

Heat rose up. A blush dusted upon cheeks. Honestly this wasn't what Terry wanted as a first impression.

If truth be told, Terry never expected to meet the man. Let alone a version of said man. Alfred was long gone before his time.

‘Dude, say something.’ Dick hissed in the back of his mind.

Oh yeah. He should totally do that.

“Uh, yeah.” Terry coughed. “Something smells good. What is it?”

And the man looked even more amused. Great.

“I imagined a classic chicken noodle soup would suffice.”

He nodded at this. “Sounds great.” He then gave the man a smile. “Is there any left for me?”

The old man sniffed his nose. “You wound me, master Richard.”

‘Remind him to call you Dick.’

The smile turned into a grin. “Come on, it's Dick.”

“If you say so, master Richard.”

Blue eyes rolled in good fun at the poke.
Tall man walked away. Short teen followed soon after, not unlike a shadow.

As they walked, the second Batman was creating a mental map. Doorways were noted, windows were jotted down. Any and all hiding places were very much so highlighted.

Sharp eyes landed on a long table. Bowls of soup were seated together. Most chairs were empty, including one that was paired with a bowl. However there was one seat that had been taken.

At the head of the long, familiar, table, sat one young Bruce Wayne.

(He looked so… well, young. No crevices for wrinkles, no aching bones setting in. Not even a hint of his heart about to give. He was far too young for that, and Terry knew that Mr. Wayne was a healthy man. The life of a vigilante and a hero was going to make that health decline.)

Someone had to have punched him right then. It could only explain the sheer amount of pain he was feeling in ‘his’ chest and stomach. That or the hunger was getting to him.

‘Okay, time to act like a angsty teen.’ Dick informed.

‘I think I can work with that.’ He inwardly snorted.

He set ‘his’ face into a scowl, clicked ‘his’ tongue, and then sat down in a huff, not looking at Bruce directly.

“Good morning Dick.” Bruce said in a pleasant enough voice. Except that Terry has heard that voice before. When the old man was pretending to be nice for the sake of politeness and the want for information.

Terry set the scowl further.

It might’ve helped with the fact that he was called ‘Dick’. Which wouldn't be such a good thing to be called in normal circumstances.

Blue eyes focused down onto the soup. Silver spoon over to the right. Instantly Terry recognized it as the soup spoon.

“Are we seriously doing this?” Terry turned his head over to look at the old man. Maybe the famous Bruce Wayne truly was going senile.

They were in the main dining room. The one where all the guests would go to have their meals during parties.

And Bruce Wayne was standing behind a cart full of dishware and cutlery.

“Yes. We are.” Bruce stared right into Terry's eyes, daring him to say otherwise. “You're lucky that Alfred isn't here for this. Or else he would've made you go throughout the whole table.”

Terry raised an eyebrow at this. “And you're not?”

At this, the old man smirked.

“Trust me, once you hear how I was taught this, you'll be thanking me on doing it this way.”

Scoffing at the memory, Terry picked up the spoon. At least he’d be good for formal events.

Immediately he could feel a stare drill into the side of ‘his’ head. He glanced to the side.
It was Bruce. While taking a bite of his meal. How lovely.

Rolling blue eyes. Silverware dipping into broth. Out comes the noodles, meat, and vegetables.

It smelt *heavenly.*

Terry popped the spoon into ‘his’ mouth. Letting everything run over the tongue made him want to just melt. It was simply delicious and he honestly wanted to eat it forever. If the truth were to be told, he wanted to try some of Alfred's other home made meals, except for the fact that he felt crushing guilt over the fact that he's having it in a body that wasn't his.

But slag him if he wouldn't help keep the body healthy and not injured.

So bottoms up.

Although he's going to keep side eyeing the young Bruce Wayne like he murdered his cat or something. Not dog though. There's no way Ace would go down without a fight.

Even if it was Bruce.

And wow he's not going to think that while eating soup.

Speaking of, he's going to need the exact recipe for this (and possibly any other food because hoo boy if everything is as good as this if not better) for back home. Maybe Mr. Wayne would like it and he just might have to make it if his mom or little brother gets sick.

Wait was this sick soup?

Terry stole a glance over at the older man. The one who made the meal. Alfred Pennyworth was standing at attention, but paid no mind to Terry. Or Dick he supposed.

Another glance at Bruce.

Ugh, fine. He supposed he should make some conversation.

“What.” He didn't exactly snap. He made sure he sounded irritated at best.

“How did you sleep last night?” Bruce, mildly, asked. The spoon was down.

“Like a baby.” Terry made it sound like sarcasm. Or what some people might think as sarcasm while others think he might've been serious.

Did Dick sleep well last night? Terry didn't know. But did he? Well, he didn't have any dreams now did he. So then that might've counted as a good night's sleep. Especially when one didn't remember how exactly they fell asleep.

He faintly thinks it was at Bruce Wayne’s expense.

Bruce frowned. “About last night—”

Immediately did Terry cut him off. “What about last night?” He challenged.

Shoulders slumped down. Handsome features fell. A sigh escaped from the man. “I know that you're feeling… angry about what happened—”

“Alright. So then there's nothing to discuss.” He interrupted again. He's going to *try* to eat the soup
in peace.

The billionaire pursed his lips.

It's obvious that he isn't going to eat the dang soup in peace.

“Dick.”

Terry froze.

He watched as the younger version of his boss rub his closed eyes. He watched as the man inhaled, exhaled, and mentally prepared himself for such a difficult teenager.

“Look, Dick,” he tried again, “you just can't do what you did yesterday. Last night. There's only so many variables to account for. Especially for something so unknown.”

“Like Superboy?” Terry couldn't help but say. “He seems like a pretty okay guy to me.”

And then something odd happened. He noticed Bruce’s eyes soften. Weird.

“I’m sure he's a perfectly fine young man, but we have to account of what he has learned in his time… over at Cadmus.”

Reflexively, a snort graced the air space. “Like what? The good guys are actually the bad guys? False memories of things that didn't actually happened? Oh what about the classic having a trigger word to do the bad guy's bidding?”

Everything stopped. Then, Bruce had the audacity to tilt his head and gained that special look. The one that Terry had seen multiple times over.

Immediately did Terry get the connection.

Face twisting up, Terry began to shake his head. “No. No. There is no way that you're actually thinking about it.” Of course, the old man would think that could happen. He could never give anyone the benefit of the doubt. Never.

“But it is possible.” Bruce made a bad attempt to throw him a bone. “It never hurt to give it a check. Just in case.”

He crossed his arms. “Just in case.” He repeated, deadpan. His boss just needs to make sure if he's right or wrong.

(After all the difference between right or wrong could be the life of none, one, or many if not all.)

“Just in case.” Bruce confirmed. He then stood up, and turned to face Alfred. “Alfred, you can store the rest for later. I’m going to see J’onn and have him check for anything.”

Terry began to stand up, “Bruce-”

“Stay here.” Apparently it was his turn to interrupt. “And I mean it Richard.”

It was that same tone of voice whenever the old man would call him Terrance.

Yet Bruce Wayne used the name Richard. Not Terrance.

He sat back down. “Fine.” He spit out.
With a nod, Bruce left the room.

Blue eyes glared hard into the sort of touched soup. He was now genuinely angry at the man. Maybe it was when they had to actually start the conversation.

It was odd. It was weird. Strange. Whatever one wanted to call it. He didn't like it.

(This Bruce reminded him of his Bruce already. There were stark differences too that made it all the more jarring. It didn't help that the man… was almost acting like a father. Like he was supposed to be his father. But Bruce wasn't. Or perhaps it was the way he forgot that he was trapped in the body of the first Robin. Who was thirteen years old. Not seventeen.)

He didn't like it.

He began to eat his colder soup.

(It didn't taste as good after that bitter taste Bruce put in his mouth.)

‘Well. That could've gone better.’ Oh hey it's Dick.

‘You think?’ He thought back, a tad salty.

‘At least we don’t have to really talk to him for a little while longer?’ Dick would probably be shrugging if he were in control of his own body right then.

Terry just continued to eat the soup.

A cough sliced through the silence.

Snapping upward, blue eyes locked onto blue.

“If I may, young master Richard,” Alfred began, “master Bruce is only being cautious.”

The scowl upgraded to a plain frown. “Doesn't mean that he has to be a jerk about it.”

Grey eyebrow rose.

“Oh okay fine,” he threw up ‘his’ arms. “He could've reacted worse, but come on! Everything turned okay in the end! If anything Superboy is a victim in this! Did you even see Superman’s face when Superboy told him who, or what, he was? No!”

Robin did. Batman did. And Batman is still bitter about what happened over in the icy fortress in the arctic.

“Okay, yeah, I get it that you suddenly get a clone outta nowhere so obviously that means someone went out of their way to get some of your DNA. But that doesn’t mean you gotta be… so bad about it to the kid in question!”

And what if you had a clone made without your permission?” Alfred asked calmly.

“Well I’d be furious! Not at the clone because he certainly didn't asked to be made! It would be at the people who made him! Like seriously? But now Superboy's here and he's got feelings and he doesn't deserve any of this.”

“And I agree with you that the poor lad doesn't deserve this,” Alfred nodded.
Blue eyes blinked, body jerking back. He… certainly wasn't expecting that. (He wasn't sure what he was expecting if he were telling the truth.)

“Both Superman and Superboy are both victims in this situation. However Superman needs time to process this information, and Superboy is in need to make sure that nothing from his old residence keep such a hold on him if he is to become a fine young man in the future.” The older man’s voice was calm, and soothing. Almost like a balm upon an agitated wound. So much so that Terry began to settle down.

Did Alfred truly had that effect on people? If so, then he was sorely needed over at the manor that Terry knew.

His Bruce would certainly benefit from it.

(And maybe he would too.)

“Yeah.” He turn his gaze downwards. “Okay.”

He was almost done with his soup.

He wasn't exactly hungry anymore.

He had to finish it.

He couldn't get himself to.

“Thank you for the meal, Alfred,” he said, pushing himself away from the table. “I think I’ll be in my room or something.”

Before the butler could say anything, Terry sped away.

‘Yeah that definitely could've been handled better.’ Dick muttered.

‘And you wouldn't have acted the same?’ Terry bit back.

Silence.

Shit.

Zeroing in the closest couch or lounge or whatever they were calling it, Terry went to go sit down. Once he did, he began to try to calm himself.

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

'Yeah.' A voice whispered in his mind. ‘I probably would've acted the same way.’

Thunk, went the sound of Dick’s head softly hitting the wall. No noise was made when blue eyes fluttered closed.

‘‘M sorry.” Terry whispered, adolescent voice curling this way and that in the air. “Shouldn't have
lashed out on you.”

He felt something like reassurance drape around ‘his’ shoulders. Kind of like a blanket.

‘It's alright.’ The soft voice echoed faintly.

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

‘Do you want to explore Gotham?’ Dick suddenly asked.

One pale blue eye cracked open a sliver. Terry hummed.

“Maybe.”

‘I got some clothes that Dick Grayson wouldn't really wear, and some that Robin hasn't really touched yet.’

What a clear offer.

“Yeah okay.” He muttered.

Cracking both eyes open, Terry decided it was time to get up.

Observing the surrounding area, the teen brought up the mental map from earlier. When ‘his’ eyes landed on a particularly gloomy painting of a stormy night over some sort of village, he knew where he was.

It helped that that particular painting was in the same place back on his Earth.

And so, off he went.

Getting back to Dick’s room was easier than trying to find the dining room. It might've been because of how he had a better idea on where to go. Or it could've been because Dick thought it would be helpful to give him directions to his room when he could've done that when they were going to lunch. Like seriously that would've been so nice but no. He just had to let him wander around. Although maybe the younger teen was just trying to delay seeing Bruce.

It was something he would do.

A sigh escaped ‘his’ mouth at finally reaching the room.

'Uh, this isn't my room.’ Dick pointed out.

Terry blinked. A guest room greeted them.

“You're right.”

Backing out, Terry looked around. He had actually overshot by at least seven doors. Shooting looks around him, he came to a realization.

He actually stopped in front of his room back at his Earth’s manor.

“Wait why are you giving me a room?” The teen kept on swerving his gaze between the room and the cane wielding man.
Bruce grunted. “This is for if you can’t get back home. Too injured, a bad storm and you’re stuck here. Things of that sort.”

He tilted his head slightly, ignoring his black hair falling into his eyes. “You’re serious.”

“Hn.”

He’s always serious.

Shrugging, Terry gave the man a smile. “Well, as long as I get to decorate it however I want.”

A grunt.

That's as close as he's going to get to a ‘yes’.

Blinking away that memory, Terry backed away from… the guest room.


(He’s a stranger here. An interloper. He doesn't belong and he should leave. He can’t.)

While the wrong room was practically empty save the essentials for some rich guest, Dick’s room was very much lived in. Posters were up on the wall, clothes slightly peeking out of their hiding places, nicknacks scattered around.

An original Flying Grayson’s poster was smack dab in the middle of the closet door.

Terry… never saw one of those before. He knew about Dick Grayson. Everyone in Gotham knew about Dick Grayson, even years later. The little boy who parents flew until they fell. The little boy who, amongst countless others, saw them fall, fall, fall, down to their demise. And one man who saw took the boy under his wing.

Not long after a bat gained a bird.

This bat was determined to never have a bird. Not after what happened to the last one.

Steady hands turned brass doorknob. Retro clothes met his view.

“You said that they're in the back?” Terry asked aloud.

‘Yeah. Way back.’

A grin grew. “Schway.” He began to dig around.

‘What’s ‘schway’?’

“It’s like cool.”

A hum buzzed in his mind.


A regular black t-shirt? Yes.

An actual real brown leather jacket? Sign him up. He quickly checked the pockets of the jacket.
One had a wad of cash while the other…

A wide grin stretched across ‘his’ face. Actual bonafide real black leather gloves. The awesome kind.

Now to find some shoes.

Lo and behold, there was some steel toe boots. He could wear that.

It didn’t take much time to put everything together. But when he took a look of… himself in the mirror did he froze.

The outfit was very close to the one he would normally wear. And if he were to change the hair, Dick would… look scarly close to him.

Flashes of grey to green, of dark blue eyes turning red. Of skin bleaching itself.

Terry felt sick.

‘Ooo bad boy look. I like it.’ Snickers stabbed into him. Sawing the bad thoughts away.

“You think?” Terry hummed. He ran ‘his’ fingers through ‘his’ hair. “And why do you have a random amount of cash in the jacket?”

‘Why not? Besides, who knows when I want to run away back to the circus?’ The joke weaves in and out of ‘his’ ears, trapped within the middle.

The jacket, jeans, and gloves fit all snug on him. It was most likely tailored for Dick, to fit him perfectly. As for the jeans? Most likely store bought.

‘You can do whatever you want with my hair dude.’

Blue eyes stared into their glass counterparts.

‘It helps make me look less ‘Richard Grayson’.’ He elaborated.

Yeah. Sure. He can do that.

Grabbing a comb from the nearby dresser, he tried to brush it to how he normally has his hair be. Key word: tried.

With a huff, he went for some hair gel.

Hair gel could make or break a person depending on the day. And hopefully the hair gel gods would take pity on him.

Which apparently they did when he got it just right.

Yay.

As for the final touch, Terry carefully took off the gauze. He didn’t think it was needed anymore as the wound was more than likely to have already healed. Ish.

‘That doesn’t look bad.’ Terry thought.

‘Eh, Alfred tends to make the wrappings larger so the injury is exaggerated. Apparently it’s some
sort of thing that tries to ‘deter’ us from gaining any.’ Dick explained.

There was a scab already grown. And it wasn't really that bad. It was more like a scrape or something. Except neither really saw how much blood came out. Probably not a lot if Kid Flash didn't freak out about blood getting everywhere.

The speedster was just concerned that Robin was knocked out.

“Right.” He huffed, “so do I need any sunglasses to complete the disguise?”

‘Yep!’ Dick chirped. ‘I have like, two different sunglasses for this. I suggest using the bulkier ones.’

Ebony brows rose.

“Alright. Okay. Are they in the closet again?”

‘Nah. In the bottom drawer of my dresser.’

Lo and behold it was there. Underneath many pairs of underwear.

While trying to keep a neutral face, Terry looked at the glasses. The lenses were large and tinted dark. The arms were thicker and it would hide ‘his’ eyes from the side.

No one would be able to read him. And when he put them on and saw how the world around him went unchanged, he realized that he would be able to read them.

“Schway.”

He could practically feel the grin grow from within. ‘Let's blow this joint.’

He let the grin come into existence. “Sounds good to me.”

Terry went to open the bedroom door-

‘But first we gotta let Alfred know.’

Only to nearly trip out of it.

There, standing in the hallway was the man himself. Speak of the devil and he shall appear.

“Heeeeeeeey Alfred.”

Alfred rose an eyebrow. “And what, perchance, do you think you're doing?”

“Uhhhhhh.” He replied rather unintelligently.

‘Way to go.’ Dick nearly snickered. Except he sounded nervous at the same time.

“I’m going into the city? With a motorbike?” Oh god his voice did not squeak at the end.

“Is that so.” His voice was rather deadpan.

Was he sweating bullets? He felt like he was sweating bullets. Was Alfred always like this? Maybe it is best that the man is no longer amongst them back at home. Terry didn't want to know what would happen if the man caught him.
“Well, I’d imagine that if you were to do such a thing, you would be awfully careful and not do anything that would cause harm to yourself. And that you wouldn't go out to cause any grief for the common citizen.”

“Uhhhh.”

‘Dude, he’s saying yes!’

Snapping out of his stupor Terry gave the old man a grin. “Thanks Alfred!”

Going around the butler, Terry made his great escape.

Chapter End Notes

Here we are again! With chapter two! Now remember July 5th is split into three parts, so after the next chapter we’re going to have a short chapter on July 6th. Speaking of July, I'll be gone for a good chunk of the beginning of July so don't expect any updates for a little while. Either way, I hope you've enjoyed this chapter and are interested in this story even more!
Getting the cycle was easy, the only thing that was hard was actually trying to figure out how to drive it. The result was to never be spoken again.

However, what was important was that Terry was driving it, and going around Gotham. At best it looked like a kid just riding around. At worst it looked like a kid taking a joy ride.

Really, he just needed to map out this new Gotham.

At least he doesn't have to deal with multiple levels like his. Well, if anything Dick’s Gotham had three levels: rooftops, streets, and the swears. His Gotham had expanded upwards and sideways. Dick’s Gotham was pretty contained.

The buildings looked old yet new. Some were being demolished, others being built. Some shouldn't have existed; some were brighter versions of their broken down counterparts.

Old Gotham wasn't quite old yet.

As he drove, he noticed that the buildings began to… deteriorate. Become more run down.

‘This looks like…’

‘We’re nearing Crime Alley.’ Dick finished that thought for him.

He had to stop. He heard about how Crime Alley was, back in the day. And he wasn't sure how the residents would take it with a motorcycle running through it.

Most likely they wouldn't take to it well.

Finding a parking space wasn't the hardest as there wasn't a lot of vehicles parked in the area. However there was a space that was hidden well enough that was calling Terry’s name.

As he was getting off of the ride he began to hear something. Something familiar.

Sticking close to the shadows, the Tomorrow Knight crept closer. Down an alleyway, the tall buildings blocked out light, making the area darker than the world outside. Mold clung to corners, dead rats scattered around overturned trash cans, splatters of unknown liquids stained walls and floors alike. The foul stench of rotting food and unknowns combined with the acid bite of cigarette smoke clinging desperately, choking the nose. The sounds of jeers and malicious laughter came closer as Batman narrowed in on the unfortunate souls.

Behind dark sunglasses, the creature of the night glared as he recognized the sound of punches and kicks. As well as the sound of a child in pain.

Ever so closer he began to break down his victims. Three of them, all supposedly male due to their god awful choice of clothing. Backward baseball hats, off white wife beaters, low hanging pants that showed off their boxers, fake chains. Classic retro white trash. However they were taller than him and held more muscles. But Batman fought against Jackson Chappell, a doctor filled to the brim with venom, and he fought against Big Time. And won. This wouldn't be too different. They
were surrounding a child, kicking them into submission.

Those dregs weren't going to know what hit them.

If there was one thing that was drilled into him, it was stealth. Every move was calculated to be as quiet as possible. Leather didn't make a squeak, shoes didn't make a click. There was hardly even a breath heaved.

And when the dregs were too preoccupied with the “game”, they never even thought that they were going to be ambushed. And then, he struck. Yanking dreg number one away drew a scream of fright.

(It wasn't night, but Batman was in his element.)

Batman then chucked him over and into an open dumpster. The ‘gangster’ hit it hard enough for the lid to slowly close shut with its rusty hinges.

“What the fuck?!” Dreg number two had yelped out, turning his head over to where his friend disappeared.

“Shit, Gold Rush!” Dreg number three called out.

He didn't let them react more than that. Running forward, he straight up tackled into dreg number two into the wall. And from the smell of it, into some day old vomit.

“Who the fuck are you?” Dreg number three sounded like he was pissed, and possibly going to piss himself.

His response? A punch in the face.

Not one ounce of sympathy was felt when he saw that he left a broken nose and blood spurting out.

Quickly, not wanting to continue the fight in case any reinforcements or even officers to come by, Batman turned to the child, and gently threw them over onto his shoulder.

The kid was his priority right then.

A small fist suddenly (weakly) slamming into his back stated otherwise. “Lemme… lemme go!”

Oh god the voice sounded so small and was slurring.

Batman grunted, not daring himself to speak at the moment.

As they got closer to the bike, Batman began to hear yells from behind. Sounded like backup arrived.

Willing himself to go faster, he jumped over another overturned garbage can. Eyes narrowing in determination, he saw that the bike was still well hidden.

Quickly, he plopped down onto it. He then maneuvered the kid to sit down behind him. Small arms automatically wrapped around him and held tight. Smart kid.

Practically slamming the helmet onto his head, Batman started up the cycle. Just as more gangsters came into view, Batman was already speeding away.

Driving around Gotham with a fragile package was as it was expected. Zipping around, weaving
around cars. All around not too different from what he normally does. With more traffic.

Except he needs to find a place to stop. To help heal.

Slowing down, Terry began to notice that he was in a restaurant area. Then something caught his eye. It looked like a family diner. There weren't many cars in the parking lot, but that was good for them.

Practicing good driving skills, he turned on his blinker and turned into the parking lot. Taking a spot, he turned off the bike. He set the kickstand to hold it up.

Pulling the helmet off brought a gust of fresh, yet forever gross city scented, air into his face, cooling off the sweat. He then turned around to look at his little cargo. The kid was peeling away from the jacket slowly.

Dirtied black hair, splotches of bruises, scrapes and cuts faint and very much scattered. Burning anger filled blue eyes. Black eye. Busted lip. Muddied T-shirt that looked like it had better days. Kid needed some food.

Time to fake an accent.

"Want something to eat?" He fell back to his Brooklyn accent. It was a classic.

The kid just glared.

Alrighty time for plan b.

Terry put the helmet under one arm, and then proceeded to pick up the kid with the other.

“Hey!” The kid shouted.

“Come on kid, we’re eating at,” Terry paused to look at the name of the restaurant, “Ihop.”

‘Weird name, but okay.’ He thought to himself as he started to walk into the building. He was also ignoring a struggling kid.

As he stepped inside, he noticed the sheer amount of tables and booths. Some music that was probably the hits of the summer were being played softly in the background.

And while he was debating on if he would rather sit at a table or a booth, a little birdie finally decided to speak up.

‘Wait what do you mean Ihop is a weird name?’ Dick asked.

Terry tilted his head. It felt oddly like a rhetorical question. He also decided that a booth would be decent.

‘It just is,’ he replied, ‘Cheesy Dan’s is simple. It’s named after its mascot. But Ihop? What’s that supposed to mean? What new restaurant wants that for a name?’

The booth furthest from the entrance would be a good one.

‘Terry. Are you telling me IHOP doesn't exist where you're from?’ Terry… didn't like that tone of voice.

‘No? Never heard of it, so I guess it doesn't exist. We got Charley’s.’
Terry set the kid, who had stopped squirming, onto one side. He then slipped into the seat across from the kid, and sat the helmet next to the wall.

‘Okay so like, two things. No, three. One: what in the world is Cheesy Dan’s? Two: what the fuck-’

‘Language,’ Terry automatically interrupted. Living with a nine year old means no swearing. So if he can't swear then no one else could either. Okay he can totally swear in his head, but apparently he can't anymore if Dickie was going to hear it.

‘Okay fine, what the heck,’ Dick amended, ‘is Charley's? And number three: oh my god you're serious you don’t have IHOP.’

Huffing, he grabbed a menu.

‘Cheesy Dan’s is a pizza place where kids go play arcade games, get prizes, and get pink eye from the ball pit. Their pizzas aren't even that good. Charley's a diner where you can go fight strangers in the parking lot at three am. They make decent enough eggs.’ He explained.

The waffles looked good.

‘So basically Chuck E Cheese and Denny's ripoffs, got it.’

Okay, that was getting a scoff. ‘No, it sounds like those places are the ripoffs. Seriously? Chuck E Cheese?’

‘Hey, don't diss Charles Entertainment Cheese.’

Okay what the fuck.

Turning his attention away from Dick, and putting the menu down, Terry caught a nearly escaping kid.

“If you want to go wash up in the bathroom you coulda always says so.” Terry drawled out with the fake accent.

The kid froze. They weren't even halfway out of the booth.

Rolling ‘his’ eyes, Terry got out of the booth, and grabbed the kid again. “Let's get ya cleaned up kid.”

“My name isn't kid.” They snapped.

That had to be the most Terry heard from ‘em. Sounded boyish, but Terry could be wrong.

“Well, until we introduce ourselves you’ll be Kid.” Ah might as well throw out his real name. Not like they're going to meet again when he gets back to his body. “Name’s Terry.”

Searching the area, he locked down on the male’s restroom. Inwardly nodding to himself, he set out on a mission.

“Well, Terry, if that's even your real name, I ain't gunna tell ya.” The kid sounded real snarky.

The teen shrugged. “Okay then Kid.”

Opening the door to find no one was a nice sight to see. Setting the kiddo down, Terry went to go grab some random amount of paper towels. First he got them wet from the sink, then he put some
of the foamy soap onto them. He turned back to the kid, who was just standing there, arms crossed.

Oh goody, the kid had jeans that had holes in them and had duck tape wrapped around the shoes. Not to mention they were favoring their left foot.

Terry had to stuff down the urge to go back and pummel those punks down into the dirt.

Trying to keep his face neutral, he got to work. First to be cleaned was the kid’s face. Grime and blood were gently wiped away as soap went in to kill off any bacteria as best as it could. Underneath all the dirt was pale skin, turning red with each wipe. No one tried to wiggled off and away. (No one tried to make it as painful as possible.)

Every so slowly did a pile of dirty paper towels began to fill the trash.

Washing an area with soap, wipe off area with water and towel, dry area with dry towel.

The black eye was something he wasn't sure to touch. He hadn't had any proper materials to clean that up. The restaurant soap would probably make things worse. So he left it alone.

But once the face was cleaned, Terry wasn't sure if he were to clean anywhere else. He didn't know the kid’s boundaries. So far he was able to clean the face, but the torso? Most likely not.

Arms it is.

Grabbing some more towels, Terry lathered, rinsed, and repeated. However he didn't bother with the kid's hands. They could do that themselves.

Which when given the opportunity they certainly did.

“Feelin’ better?” He asked, looking at the semi clean kid.

For some odd reason the scowl that was set onto the kid's face looked familiar. But Terry couldn't put 'his' finger on it.

"Growl gurgle gurgle"

A deep blush began to set within the kid’s face. Terry couldn't help but smirk.

“Guess that means it's meal time.” And then he went to pick up the kid again.

“You don't have to do that every time you know.” The kid grumbled.

At this Terry snorted. “Yeah, and you don't have a limp.”

He felt the kid stiffened. “How could you tell?” The words were whispered. They held a tint of fright.

“I got into a fight or two when I was young and dumb.”

“I am not dumb.” They snapped.

By that time they got to the booth. He gently sat the kid back down. There was a couple eating at a booth by the entrance and a young person sitting alone at a table.

“Not saying you are. I’m saying that I was,” he said as he sat down on his seat.
The kid scoffed. “And why's that?”

He gave the kid a rueful grin. “For one thing my dad should've hit me for all the trouble I made.”

He then handed over a menu. “Take a look. I’m paying.”

One blue eye was staring at him distrustfully. The other eye was currently swelling shut. After a moment or two, the kid finally opened the menu to take a look.

Going over the menu was something that sort of brought a sense of normalcy in his otherwise chaotic life. Especially more so lately.

Who else gets to say that they're Batman at the ripe young age of seventeen and was currently in the body of an alternative world’s first Robin? Certainly no one. Unless of course this was somehow a common occurrence across the multiverse or whatever is going on.

Real freaky that.

‘They got all day breakfast.’ Dick chirped up from somewhere in their shared head.

‘I can see that.’ Terry thought back. And there it was in bold letters. ‘All day breakfast’.

Good to know.

Maybe he’ll take the Split Decision Breakfast.

Out of the corner of ‘his’ eye, he saw a waitress walked towards them. She looked a bit nervous. It could be due to the fact of how Terry was handling the kid, or perhaps of how said kid was dirty earlier and took ages to come out of the restroom semi clean.

Or she could have had a crummy day and some punk kid came waltzing in what looked like a drowned cat.

“Hi! Welcome to IHop! What would you like to drink?” Her voice was held with fake cheer. Terry felt bad for her.

Her red hair was a mess. It was in a bun, but it was a mess. Her green eyes looked like there were dimming, and her smile was as plastic as a Barbie doll.

She did not want to be there.

He wanted to try to make things easier for her.

“Thanks doll, I’ll have a Sprite.” He said, giving her a charming smile.

She blinked at him, rather owlishly, and looked… a tad uncomfortable.

‘Wait did you just call her doll? What is this? The 40’s? No one says that anymore.’ Dick snarked from the peanut gallery.

“Ah, sorry ‘bout that,” he glanced at her name tag, “Beverly, but back at my ol’ town my friends and I ended up picking up the word. Kinda became a thing between us. Won't say it again if it makes you uncomfortable.” He apologized.

Shock colored her features. Then she softened into understanding. “No, it's okay. Although I do appreciate the offer.” She turned to the kid. “And what would you like to drink?”
The kid frowned harder. “Orange Juice.”

Scribbling the orders down, she said, “Alrighty I’ll get that for you and then I’ll get your orders.”

And with that, she left.

Hidden blue eyes watched as she walked away, seemingly okay with the… situation.

“Seriously? Doll? Literally no one calls people that anymore.” And so the kid pipes up.

Terry smirked at this. The kid must’ve been on the same wavelength as Dick. “Well kiddo, didn’t you just hear my story? Friends managed to get me to say it and now it’s a habit.”

Red rimmed blue eye rolled. “Yeah right.” They then put an arm on the table. “How old are you anyways? Don’t think a twelve year old is allowed to ride a motorcycle and call older girls ‘doll’.”

A black eyebrow rose up. “Twelve? I know I look young, but not that young. Would ya believe me if I said that I was seventeen?”

‘Wait you're seventeen?’

“I call bullshit.”

Terry clicked ‘his’ tongue. “I’d say language but I don’t think you think that's not a good word to say. And I am seventeen thank you very much.” He answered to Dick’s benefit.

Silence reigned king after that.

He and the kid kept staring at each other, but in reality he was keeping an eye at the window. Had to make sure none of those ‘hooligans’ managed to find them. It was unlikely, but still. Never could be too careful.

Especially in his line of work.

“You’re not really from Brooklyn, your name isn’t actually Terry, and you’re not actually seventeen.” And so the kid was so set into denial that he was unaware that he was given two truths and a lie.

Although to be fair he’s in the body of one Richard Grayson and the guy’s actually thirteen or something.

‘Wait how old are you?’ Terry asked over to the boy wonder.

‘…Thirteen.’ He sounded like if he could he would be pouting.

Wow he was right on the dot on that one. He was just guessing this whole time.

Terry shrugged. “Whether or not you believe me, that's on you.”

A heartbeat moment later he noticed Beverly walking her way from the kitchen area with two drinks. Upon her face was a smile, and he saw how much more genuine it was compared to the other one. It was nice.

“Here you go,” she said as she set down the two drinks, “one Sprite and one orange juice.” Beverly then straightened up and held out a pen and notebook. “Have you decided anything to eat?”
He gave her a smile, “I’ll take the Split Decision Breakfast.”

She jotted it down. Turning to the kid she asked them, “and what would you like?”

“T-Bone Steak and Eggs.” They replied, still as angry as a kitten as ever.

Beverly seemed a tad off put by that, but nodded and wrote that down as well. She paused for a moment. “How would you like that steak?”

“Medium rare.”

Nodding, she added that little note.

“Alrighty! We’ll get it to you as soon as possible!” With a glance at the duo, she walked away.

A familiar song popped on. The tune was nagging at the back of his mind while the lyrics were too soft to be fully heard. Probably one of those classics that his mom liked to listen to every once in a while. He wouldn't be surprised. Although with everything that he's finding out, he wouldn't be surprised if the song wasn't the same either.

But then he heard it. The one line that brought out a flood of memories.

“Ah, so that's what song it is.” He muttered to himself.

“And what’s that?” The kid immediately asked.

Ohh, so that's how it's going to be huh?

“Oh ya know. The Only Exception by that one band. What's it called again?” He then began to snap in false remembrance. “Oh yeah, Paramore. Been awhile since I heard it.”

A dark eyebrow rose. “Really? It's been playing everywhere.”

“Not for me it isn't.” He replied.

Memories of his mother singing that song to his father and him swirled around. Just remembering her singing it to all three of her boys once Matt was brought into the mix sent nostalgia down ‘his’ spine.

It was a happier time.

But once their parents got a divorce well… the song became rather ironic. Or at least, in his opinion.

“Jason.” The kid suddenly said.

Terry actually blinked in surprise. He hadn't been expecting that.

“Name’s Jason.” The kid, Jason, repeated.

The teen smirked. “Well nice to meet ya Jason. As I said before, I'm Terry.” He then held his hand out to shake.

Hesitantly, Jason reached out. They shook hands and faintly something felt like approval fluttered around.
“So Jason,” Terry began, taking his hand away, “think you wanna tell me what that was about?”

Aaaand back to the arms crossing.

“Why are you so interested?” Jason countered.

Terry shrugged, leaning back. “Need to know if those guys need to be avoided if they're going around picking fights I suppose.” He even scratched his chin.

Jason sure was doing quite a bit of scoffing. “Yeah, they do nothing but look for random people. A bunch of muggers is what they are. And if you don't got anything they beat you like a dog.”

That… did not sound good.

He frowned. “S that all?”

“Nope.” The kid popped the p. “Heard rumors that they don't take kindly to newcomers, so I suggest you don't do anything, ‘Terry’.”

Ooo mocking his name now huh?

He nodded. “Thanks for letting me know.”

Then came Beverly. In one hand was a large black tray, holding their food, and in the other was a foldable table. He watched as she set the table down first, then put the tray on top of it.

“Here we go, one Split Decision Breakfast,” she sat it in front of Terry, “and one T-Bone Steak with Eggs.” She sat the plate in front of Jason. Two plates of pancakes were set off to the side of their own. With a smile she said, “I hope you enjoy it all!” And so, Beverly left them to their meal.

Terry had what looked like two slices of French toast with butter on it, two eggs sunny side up, two sausages, two pieces of bacon, and two pieces of pancakes with maple syrup and butter on top.

Jason on the other hand had T-bone steak, three sunny side up eggs, and three pieces of pancakes with maple syrup and butter on top.

The two began to eat, and another familiar song popped up. However unlike the last song he couldn't remember it.

They were in relative silence. The only noises they really made was eating and drinking. Terry was secretly glad that Jason was eating everything. His mom would've probably tutted at the fact that he looked so thin.

Probably would've wanted to feed the poor kid too.

As Terry ate his meal, he thought that it was decent. It was something and maybe would make Alfred proud that he was consuming some food.

He might've made Alfred worried.

Terry stole a glance at Jason. The kid was drinking his juice and it was getting close to the bottom.

“If you want,” he started, “you could have more juice.”

A lone blue eye stared into dark sunglasses. “What if I want milk?” His voice even, and somehow challenging.
“I’d buy that too.” He matched the tone.

A new waiter slid in. “Everything okay over here?” He asked.

Terry didn’t pay attention to the new waiter.

“One glass of whole milk.” Jason stated, not tearing his gaze from Terry.

“I-I’ll see if we have any.” Awkwardness emitted from the waiter.

It was the two of them again.

And Terry’s not going to look away because even if Jason couldn’t tell whether or not he’s actually looking, he’s going to assert his dominance. He is going to buy the kid some milk. And no one is going to stop him.

“So.” Jason was the first to break the ice. “Ya new in Gotham?”

He could argue that he’s both new and simultaneously a resident for his whole life. He was born in raised in Gotham. Just not this one. Know what? He’ll go with it.

“Well,” he began, “I was from Gotham, but I ended up going somewhere else. But here I am. In Gotham.”

Yeah that sounded good.

He could feel someone being very unimpressed. And it wasn’t Jason.

‘Really?’ Dick’s voice was rather deadpan.

“Are you serious?” Jason asked in the same tone.

‘It's not exactly wrong you know.’ Terry thought to Dick at the same time he said, “yep.”

‘Well yeah, but you could think up a better cover story! It's not like you're being interrogated by some guy who's a living lie detector.’

‘That's true, but it's better this way. Don't want to mix any stories up you know? If, of course, I have to say anything over and over again. I don't feel like testing my luck.’

“Okay so let’s say I believe you,” the younger boy began to wave a piece of steak around from the tip of his fork, “why are you here? Why leave wherever you were to come back to Gotham? Of all places?”

He actually had to stop and think about that one.

‘Well,’ Dick prompted, ‘what are you going to say?’

What was he going to say?

So, instead of saying anything, he hummed and tapped his fingers on the table. “A bit personal, don’t you think?”

Jason jabbed the piece of food into his mouth. “I’d think it's a fair trade for the info I gave ya.”

Smart kid.
“Your milk,” the waiter that no one really cared about said as he set the glass down.

Terry absentmindedly thanked the man.

The man walked away, knowing that he wasn't wanted.

“Alright. Ya got me. I’m not really supposed to be here. Was a accident an’ all ya know?” He drawled out. “Now I’m stuck here.”

One good eye narrowed. It was clear that the kid was debating on whether or not he was being truthful. And he was.

He hadn't exactly lied. Except for the doll bit. He lied about that.

Although he was starting to hear some retro slang being picked up again. Having bat hearing had its benefits. Wouldn't be surprised if people started saying 'tubular'.

“Okay.” He finally said.

Terry perked up at this. “Okay? That's it? Just okay?”

Jason rolled his eye. “Don't push it.”

He couldn't help but grin. He thinks he likes the kid. And as he watched the younger boy drink his milk, he slowly came to realize something. Something rather startling.

Jason acted an awful lot like he did. Back when he was fighting thugs for his gang.

And in a moment Terry came to realize that he didn't want Jason to end up like he did. In juvie. A rotten kid that would've been better off in a ditch rather than breaking their parents’ hearts.

But there was the question of if Jason had parents. And if he did then were they good to him. ('If he had any siblings to take care of and protect,' something as hazy as smoke whispered into ‘his’ head. It was Dick. No, it was something from Terry.)

Terry was having some thoughts, and he wasn't sure if he liked them or not. If he would go through with them or not.

Dick was probably going to kill him somehow for this.

“So Jason,” he took a bite out of his sausage, “do you know how to protect yourself?”

Snapping his head up from his plate, Jason stared at him. He moved so fast, Terry feared that he was going to get whiplash.

“I know how to protect myself.” Teeth bared, anger rolling up. It was almost like seeing a small kitten trying to puff up enough to scare away a predator.

Good thing bats ate fruit and insects. Not kittens.

He tried to give The Look, even though it was hampered by the sunglasses.

It seemed that Jason was able to sense The Look.

“They just managed to snuck up on me, that's all.”
Throwing up his arms into the air, Jason cried, “okay fine! Not as much as I’d like!”

The Look was rolled back into the vault. Never to be seen unless summoned once more.

“What if,” Terry began, slowly, “I teach you how to not only protect yourself, but get away.”

Everything paused. Something from within him was holding its breath. Was it Dick?

“… why… why would you do that?” Jason finally asked. He was tensed, but seemed to be… intrigued by the idea.

“Because you remind me of me.” Because he doesn't want history to repeat itself. “And knowing Gotham, it's best to know how to save your skin.”

He could see Jason toy with the idea.

“We could do it on the seventh.” Terry offered.

“You mean the day after tomorrow?”

He nodded. “You can tell me a time and a place if you want.”

This seemed to make it all the more appealing.

“How about…” Jason stopped for a moment, and began to chew on the idea and a piece of one of his pancakes. “Central Park at seven am.”

He can do that. “Where exactly in Central Park?”

“West end. By the fountain.”

Seems reasonable.

“Alrighty. Sounds like a deal.” He then held out a hand.

A lone blue eye stared at the hand. Debating. And then… “yeah.”

A smile grew upon ‘his’ face. “You won't regret it, Jason,” he said, giving a firm shake.

The black haired boy took his hand back. “I hope not.”

“Why are you giving me twenty dollars?” Jason was completely and utterly baffled.

The duo (trio technically) had just exited the diner. After making that deal, Dick decided to (not exactly) yell about what had transpired.

He was right when he said that Terry should've talked to him about it first.

(Why didn't he actually went and talk to Dick about it? It would've been so easy to think up the words and ask how he thought of it. But he didn't.)
The teen shrugged. “Why not?”

He then took one more look at the young boy. Jason was standing in the parking lot, favoriting that one particular foot still. A twenty dollar bill was in his clean hands, slowly getting closer to his dirty shirt. Egg yolk was smeared close to his lips, but it wasn't all that noticeable. His one good eye had a small twinkle to it. Something that might've been akin to hope.

The teen felt like he shouldn't leave him alone.

“You want a ride home?” Terry asked.

Jason’s head snapped over to him for the second time that day. He looked…guarded.

“No.” He stuffed the money into his pocket. “I can get back by myself.”

He didn't want to believe him, but… “Okay.”

Making Jason let him take him home wouldn't be a good choice. Dick would make him regret it. Maybe. Terry was already doing things he shouldn't do. Making promises that he probably couldn't keep for one thing.

So he walked back to the bike.

Glancing over it showed no signs of abuse. Obviously no one even touched it. Not even a single fingerprint. Good to know.

Putting the helmet back on was easy. So was getting back on the bike. Waving goodbye to the kid? Well, maybe Bruce was starting to rub off of him when it came to the kids. He kind of hopes not. His allowance wouldn't allow it. And his mom. She would probably say that he needs his own house.

Wonder if Mr. Wayne would be kind enough to share his house 24/7. God knows how much room the old man has.

Once they were a couple of blocks away Dick began to talk about the history of the building's they passed by. It wasn't long until they both noticed the position of the sun.

Somehow Terry got back into Dick’s room without any confrontation. Thirty minutes until supper was served, as Dick informed him, and he had plenty of time to take a quick shower. He had to get the gel out of his hair after all.

It was a real shame that the nearest bathroom wasn't connected to the bedroom.

‘Okay, just grab some random clothes and that should do it.’ Dick talked to Terry as the teen did just that.

“Yep.” Gathering what was necessary was easy.

‘So go to the left, and like, ten doors down to the left there ya go.’
And so when he opened the door, Terry was impressed. While the bathroom that Terry was more so associated with was a tad more… dark, this one was brighter.

They both had the Victorian aesthetic going on, but while his Bruce’s bathroom was a dark gothic, this one had golden accents. The fixtures itself were sleek, silver contrasting well with the gold. A dark Victorian vanity was a pop of darkness within all the light. Tiles and wallpaper were embedded with elegant designs. A long wall to floor mirror, which was a lot more fancy than the one in Dick’s room, sat across from the entrance.

(If Terry were to be honest, he wouldn't be sure how to feel at the mere sight of the bathroom. It was in the same place as the one he was used to, and yet… and yet it still wasn't what he expected. What he was used to. He knows this whole building wasn't the same as the one he came to know. He just needs to accept the fact that it isn't the same.)

Ignoring the mirror, he got himself ready.

Finishing with the blow dryer, he put it away. Just in time too.

“Master Richard,” the voice of the one and only Alfred Pennyworth filtered through the closed oak door, “I have come to inform you that supper is ready.”

“Just a sec Alf,” he called back, making sure that everything was where it should be. A quick glance in the mirror showed that Richard Greyson looked just fine.

Adapting a sheepish grin, ‘Dick’ opened the door. “Sorry.”

“It is rather alright. Although do try to take a shower earlier.” He gave a pointed look.

Yeah, Terry got what he was implying.

Laughing a bit nervously, and a “will do”, Terry slipped out into the hallway. Once Alfred began to walk towards the dining area, he followed.

The walk seemingly took ages, and yet the next thing Terry knew they had arrived.

Bruce was kind enough to wait for him.

‘Did he wait long for us?’ Terry asked Dick.

‘Not sure. Knowing him it could be for a while or just a minute. Kinda hard to keep him waiting when your mad at him and you don’t actually know if he came early or not.’ Dick replied. Which, honestly wasn’t all that surprising.

Old Man Bruce Wayne was a bit more punctual, as he didn't have the playboy excuse anymore. But he would play the “traffic was terrible”, or the “I’m not as young as I used to be” card when he needs to.

Blue eyes darted to the plate filled with food. Paired with an empty chair. Next to Bruce.

Oh and not to mention that he's still, if anything slightly, mad at Bruce. Not too hard to fake that.
Silently, Terry sat down.

It was meatloaf, asparagus, green beans, and roasted red potatoes for supper. It smelt delicious. Except he had to wait for Bruce to start eating. Or make the first move.

“How was your shower?” Bruce asked, reaching for a fork. He poked at a potato.

‘Of course he would know.’ He thought a tad bitterly to himself.

“It was nice.” Terry went to eat a random component of his meal. It didn't matter, as long as he kept eye contact with Bruce. “How was the Justice League.”

Bruce didn't even twitch. Or maybe he had, but was an expert at hiding it. Terry might never know.

The man exhaled through his nose. “Well, we found out that there were some trigger words hidden within Superboy.”

Everything froze. The fork was set down. Food was swallowed. Terry didn't hide any shock. No, he let his eyes grow wide. “Are you serious?” He asked.

The billionaire nodded, quite serious. “Yes, and we managed to disable them. It came as a shock to Superboy.”

“Well yeah!” He couldn't help but say. “Wouldn't you be if someone went into your brain and found the same thing?”

“Yes.” Bruce nodded.

That was… a bit surprising.

“But that isn't all.” Bruce's voice grew grim. He sat his fork down, and put his hands together. “We also took a look at Guardian’s mind, to make sure there weren't any lingering effects from the gnomes. As it turns out that most of his memories are actually… false. Not real.”

He choked on his own spit. “What do you mean?”

“I mean,” Bruce began, “that Jim Harper isn't the real Jim Harper. If Jim Harper even existed at all.”

Shock that didn't belong to him crawled up his spine.

‘Does Roy know?’ The voice of Dick Grayson rattled within his mind.

“Does Roy know?” He repeated. ‘His’ voice was quaking. He couldn't control it.

At this Bruce looked… unsettled. “We haven't been able to contact him.”


“Why not?” He blurted out. He almost… felt like he was losing his grip on reality.

“It seems as if he doesn't want to be found.” Was the words that managed to filter through.

He needs process this… Dick needs to process this.
So Terry starts to eat again. Keep the mouth moving. Preventing the need to continue conversation.

Maybe he shouldn't have bought the food at IHop.

“Dick.” Bruce's voice was oh so ever soft. So gentle. It hurt him to hear it. “Alfred and I have decided it's best if you don't go to patrol today or tomorrow.”

He nearly choked. Bruce never tells him not to go out on patrol. The only times he actually does that if there's something very much wrong or he was fired from being Batman.

But Bruce isn't talking to Terry. He's talking to Dick. And Bruce doesn't want his Robin to fly.

Gulping down water helped clear ‘his’ passageway. “Why?!” He demanded after taking a deep breath.

“Dick, you have to understand. You had disobeyed orders-”

“So this is my punishment?” He interrupted, doing his best not to growl.

“Yes and no.” Bruce pressed his lips together. “You got hurt, and not only will this give you time to heal, but to think about what happened.” Icy blue eyes softened. “This will also give you more time to be just Dick Grayson.”

Terry turned away. He wasn't hungry anymore.

“Thanks for the meal Alfred. I’ll heat it up later.” Terry said, pushing away from the table.

“Dick-”

“I’m not leaving the manor okay?” Terry spat out.

He needs to make sure he can get around the place without getting lost. He just wish he didn't hurt Alfred's feelings in the process. After all, it was rather rude of him to not finish his meal. But he just couldn't stay there with Bruce.

It was getting all too much.

The golden light of the setting sun sent this new world ablaze.

Darken wooden floors and walls, grew lighter with this new light flooding in. White curtains stained with yellows and oranges. Any metal objects reflected this light, as crystals magnified it's brilliance.

Any colors that were there were warped, twisted into something almost unrecognizable.

Armor, cases containing valuables, vases standing proud on top of pedestals, pictures and paintings. Different places, same style. Different looks, same spaces.

Nothing was covered up, hidden away within sheets. It was free to show its glory to someone who did not belong.

It was almost like… he was a ghost. Wandering around in a whole new world that he did not belong in. It never was and never will be.

Martha and Thomas Wayne, however will always look the same. Same smiles, same clothes, same pearl necklace. Same warmth while together with their son. The two who unwilling started it all.
It was rather funny, a stray thought came by to say, that they were like his grandparents. They were the parents of the first Batman, and there he was. The second Batman.

He always wondered what they would be like, if they were alive. If he ever met them.

Time travel seems to be the only option. Because even in this whole new universe, they were dead.

And he hasn't even been born yet.

Turning away from their gaze above the fireplace would be a good thing to do. Except he couldn't stop staring.

They looked so kind. So understanding. They reminded him of his own parents. And then he began to wonder if they were born yet, here, in this new world.

Longing of gentle kisses on foreheads, of rough hands ruffling hair, ran through him. Of little annoying brothers trying to get a rise out of him.

He missed them all.

‘Terry.’ Whispers fluttered softly like butterfly wings down onto him.

He pulled himself away from the painting. He had to go exploring.

And if it gets to late, he could always go to bed…

Chapter End Notes

Finally! We get to meet our little Jaybird. And things are already diverging from canon even more so. Wonder how this will effect everything. ;(
July 6th

Chapter Notes

So this is just a short chapter. A little filler if you will. Since it's so short I'm putting it up now rather than later. Enjoy!

It was always the sunlight that gets him. Somehow it always reaches his eyes, and Dick just wants it to stop waking him up.

So he curled himself into a ball.

But unfortunately a nagging feeling just wouldn't stop poking at him.

‘Dick you need to wake up!’ A voice that was very much not his own rang throughout his head.

Snapping his eyes wide open, Dick practically jumped out of his bed.

Then it hit him. He jumped out of his bed.

Except it wasn't his bed. It was the guest room that Terry accidentally walked into the day before.

And he remembered getting a faint feeling of… loss and longing.

Dick thinks that this room might've been Terry's. But Terry doesn't live at the Manor over on his Earth. Right?

He’ll have to ask.

But first…

“So… yesterday definitely happened.” Dick spoke aloud.

‘Yep. It was a thing that most certainly did happen.’ Terry replied.

Memories of swirling emotions of grief and the want to belong. The want of family. Dick knew these emotions well, but they didn't belong to him.

“Are you okay?” He asked, rather softly.

‘… yeah. What about you?’

Oh yeah. Roy.

Groaning, Dick rubbed his face every which way. There is a lot going on in his life right now and he's unsure how to process it. And poor Superboy. And Jim.

Did they even tell Jim? He doubts it.

And what do they mean they can't find Roy? He just didn't up and disappear. Okay, sure he up and left, but that didn't mean he's just gone from the face of the Earth.
Gurgle

But first. Breakfast.

Standing up from the floor, he noticed something. The messed up bed sheets.

Okay scratch that, make the bed first, and then breakfast. He doesn't need a disappointed Alfred this early in the morning.

Glancing around showed that there wasn't anyone around. Good. Not a single squeak was heard as Dick closed the door. Honestly, such an old house, manor really, was a great place to practice one's stealth.

A glance downwards showed that he was still in yesterday's clothes. He should probably change into pajamas so it looked like he actually went to his room.

After, not only getting into some good ol’ pjs but messing up his bed a little to look like he actually slept in it, Dick finally walked to the dining area.

It was… interesting to… watch Terry interact with Bruce. Relatively speaking, Bruce probably doesn't suspect a thing. Alfred, on the other hand, is a man of mystery. Dick bets one of his hats that Alfred has already noticed something if he hasn't seen right through Terry at all.

But the way Terry reacted to Bruce? Somehow Dick could feel some genuine frustration. Just like the feeling of being all alone…

Absently, Dick wondered what an older Bruce Wayne would be like. Definitely not like Alfred, that's for sure.

‘Got any ideas for breakfast?’ Terry cut through his thoughts.

Glancing into a passing mirror, Dick hummed. “Maybe Pancakes. Or waffles.”

A sigh.

Mouth twitching, Dick tried not to smile.

‘Didn't we have pancakes yesterday?’ The older teen just had to ask.

“Yeah but Alfred doesn't know that.”

He could just feel the groan Terry was making in sheer annoyance. In turn, this would've made Dick grin like the little troll that he was.

“Alfred doesn't know what exactly I might ask?” If not for the fact that the man himself spontaneously appeared out of thin air behind him.

If there truly was a god, please have mercy on his poor, young soul.

With a twirl on his heel, he faced the old man. “Hiiiiiiii Alfred!” He tried to make himself casual. “What are you doing here?”
'I don't know who was worse, me or you.' He could feel the want to face palm.

'No one asked you, Peanut Gallery.' Dick shot back.

A singular grey eyebrow rose. “I was merely going off to fetch you, young master Dick.” The eyebrow went back down. “It has come to my attention that you haven't answered my question.”

Inwardly, Dick was the one to groan. “Ah ya know. Just talking to myself, that's all.” He tried to wave it away.

Flat stare.

‘Why do I get the feeling you're making it worse for yourself?’ Terry asked.

He wasn't wrong. At all.

The one and only, the man behind it all, the truly amazing, and magnificent Alfred Pennyworth dryly sniffed his nose.

“I truly hope you're not thinking of one of your ‘pranks’ to play on me.” He finally said.

Horror dawned on Dick. “No! Alfie why would you think that?”

He was given a pointed look.

The last time he pranked Alfred was something that never should be remembered.

“As long as nothing breaks or gets tarnished, I’d rather not hear your true answer.” Without so much as a glance at the young acrobat, Alfred walked away. “And perhaps if that is the case, then no desserts for a month or so.”

His blue eyes widen at the threat. “Alfie no!” He reached out, running after the butler.

Grand was the dining room as ever. Curtain pulled back on long windows, allowing the morning light to peak in. The chandelier above twinkled softly as this new, gentle light caressed the surroundings. Almost as it were thanking the Manor for letting it in.

But that was much to poetic for the reality of the situation. For as much as the light tried to be inviting, the table held a single, lone plate.

As Dick slowed down to approach his meal (which was indeed pancakes as well as sausages) his eyes searched around the room. Trying to find something that was hidden to him.

“Where's Bruce?” He asked Alfred as he sat down.

“The master has business to attend to.”

Dick paused. “Day or...?”

He was giving a Look. It was different from ‘you are in trouble young man,’ and from ‘did you really thought this through?’ This was a ‘do you have to ask?’ or it was more like ‘what do you think?’

It wasn't unkind, the look, but it still made Dick shrink a little.

Gloved hands rest upon his shoulders. “Perhaps, has it occurred to you that master Bruce wanted to
give you time alone to think?”

His blue eyes blinked rather owlishly. That was, until it hit him.

Yesterday. Terry.

“Right.” Dick turned away from his grandfather figure and focused on his meal.

It was delicious as usual, and yet…

‘…Sorry.’

Fork stopped short from mouth. Maple syrup dripped down onto his plate. He went back to eating.

‘About what?’ He asked.

‘Yesterday.’

Dick hummed. He could feel the guilt. It was there. But at the same time it wasn't. It was kind of like Terry was trying to keep his emotions under control.

His mind wandered back to the day before, when Terry was trying to swallow down his fear and anger.

He had an idea on what Terry's fear was. It was understandable. Dick would be afraid too if his little brother was somewhere in an unknown world. With no one to know who to trust or not. And stuck in a body that wasn't his. Terry had no idea if his body or little brother were even…

Nope. Bad thoughts. Dick needs to show Terry the town. Properly.

But first he needs to finish his breakfast or else Alfred will click his tongue at him because he already didn't really eat any of his meals yesterday and he doesn't want to disappoint Alfred. Not today.

‘It's okay,’ he finally thought back to Terry, ‘don't worry about it.’

(A part of him wonders how he can feel Terry’s emotions. Almost like secondhand embarrassment, but not quite. They feel like they don't originate from him and yet it's almost as if they could be his. It was confusing and Dick wonders if an empath had to deal with that sort of thing constantly. If so, does that mean Dick was an empath now? Even if it’s only Terry's emotions that he's in tune with? Dick might never know.)

The first thing Dick did was actually show where the park was and where Jason wanted to meet the next day.

It was still recuperating after Freeze’s attack, but there were a few people here and there. Including him.

‘So how old exactly is this Gotham?’ Terry asked as Dick walked underneath a tree.

‘Old as dirt.’ Dick immediately replied.
He could feel how unimpressed Terry was. ‘No, that's my Gotham.’

Light laughter bubbled up at the thought. But he supposes that Terry’s Gotham was around longer if he truly was from the future.

‘Probably a few hundred or so years. I’m not entirely sure. I don’t think there was an official date when Gotham became a settlement. I think one day people just began to gather around this area and then bam! You suddenly have Gotham.’

Even if Dick doesn't know, Bruce might. After all, it was Bruce’s family that had lived in the city for literal generations. If not Alfred might simply because he's Alfred.

‘Okay. How about you show me where all the old ‘haunts’ are.’

Dick actually stopped to think about Terry's request.

‘Well…’ he began, ‘as long as we don't meet any of the bad guys sure. As much as I would like to take them down, I don't feel like getting in trouble with Bruce when he finds out.’

‘Deal.’

‘So, do you have an idea where you want to start first?’

‘Well how about the ones with the most fun.’

Passing by arcades, the harbor, a long dead carnival, and much more as he wove information to the future bat was… nice. Ice cream stands, hot dog stands, office buildings and everything galore. He showed what he could more so than the day before. And yet they couldn't go too deep. Not yet.

But even barely scratching the surface wasn't enough. It was hard for Dick though. He didn't know what Matt or Terry's body even looked like. Let alone the new batsuit.

And as Terry tried to hide his frustration, Dick tried to lock away his hurt. For Roy. For Jim. For Superboy.

To keep both of their minds off of these things, Dick would do what he's always best at. Humor.

And if dinner was a silent and slightly cold affair that night, no one made a comment on it.

(Dick ran away before Bruce could say anything before he left for patrol. He doesn't think he could deal with the man right then. Or for a while.)
Terry waking up in control again was something that he did not want. But obviously he doesn't have a choice. He didn't like it, but he was in control now and he made a promise to be at the park at 7:00am. It was only 6:00am.

Not to mention he didn't really want to think about yesterday. Or even the day before.

(Part of him cannot believe how much has happened in a span of what? Two days? And of how much nothing actually happened at all. They didn't even get a hint of Matt or his body. Not to mention the interactions with Bruce. Or the lack of.)

‘So…’ Dick started as Terry began to dress. ‘There's obviously a pattern going on.’

Terry furrowed ‘his’ eyebrows for a moment, before realizing what the younger teen was talking about.

The switching. Right.

Robin wakes up in a Cadmus facility. Batman finds himself a passenger of a car that he was very unfamiliar with. Robin gets knocked out, and Batman wakes up behind the wheel. Robin becomes a passenger. Batman gets knocked out, and Robin wakes up. Go to sleep, wake up in charge. Rinse, lather, and repeat.

But the question is how is this happening?

Another's great question was where in the world was Matt and his body?

Dick was kind enough to actually search Gotham in the sunlight, as he was essentially grounded from being Robin. Ultimately they came up with nothing.

Logically, Terry knew that it wouldn't be that easy, especially if they have to basically comb search the whole city, but a part of him was hoping that perhaps they could find... them in the next alleyway they pass or the warehouse that surely no one was using.

(It was weird to think about his body as a separate thing now. And if they don't find it, and Matt, quick, then Terry would have to start getting used to it. Fast.)

But he couldn't think about that right then. Jason would be expecting him.

The easy part was getting away from the Manor and getting to the park. It only took a forty-seven minute drive after a quick five minute shower. The hard part was trying to see if Jason was already there or not. If he wasn't then they had to wait for him.

‘Think he’ll show up?’ Dick asked.
'Not sure.' Terry replied. ‘Honestly I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't.’

‘Then why ask him to do it?’

Technically he already said the reason why. Back at the diner. But did he want to say it (not quite) aloud? Not really. Or well, maybe he just didn't want to admit it. He wasn't exactly sure.

Another glance around rewarded him with a familiar figure. Jason.

The kid looked better, but his clothes were worn enough. Frayed edges, faded colors. If there was anything printed on the shirt, it was long gone by then. An urge to buy the kid new clothes, ones that would fit, arose. Maybe a jean jacket would be beneficial. (Leather would be a bit more ideal, but he doesn't know how the kid would take it. Let alone if anyone around Jason would take it.)

Without any fanfare, he had seemed to have caught Jason's eye as the kid was making his way over. The limp was seemingly better, but Terry didn't exactly like the fact that it was still there. And as the younger boy came closer Terry noticed that someone was sloppy when it comes to bandaging up an injured person.

(He should teach the kid how to properly dress wounds. Not to mention provide him with the equipment to do so.)

“I’m surprised that you’re actually here.” Jason grumbled out.

So of course Terry had to smirk in reply with a, “I could say the same.” Of course his fake Brooklyn accent was in place as if it never left.

The kid scoffed. “So we going to do this or what?”

That took his smirk away as he started to hum in thought. “How about we find a place a little more comfortable. Don't want to get stabbed by a stick ya know?”

For some reason the kid's scowl just so happened to have reminded him of a pout.

Blue eyes searched their general vicinity until he found a decent enough spot. Walking towards it, he saw how it was a little… less cared for than the rest of the park. Probably from all the attacks by Poison Ivy. It was just a bunch of trees and bushes that outlined a clearing. The grass wasn't that tall, but it would be good for practicing footwork and cushioning fallen children. Looking closer, he began to pick up any sticks or stones that would make an otherwise comfy landing hurt.

To his surprise, Jason squatted down. Grubby, scarred, spider spindles with knobs for joints snatched twigs up. He hated how callouses padded each finger and how he can just see new marks from the short amount of time they last met.

But of course he didn't get to see ‘the whole picture’ last time. It infuriated him.

“Where do you want me to throw ‘em?” A snappish voice stole away his attention.

He jerked his head over to a random bush. “Go wild.”

It went on like that for a little while. Picking up sticks then tossing them to the side. If anything it might've helped release some stress. One could never be sure though. Especially with someone they hardly even know.

Jason stood up, crossing his arms, “okay now what?”
Terry stretched, rolling ‘his’ joints around. “First,” he began as he looked back to the child, “we see how your form is.”

He’ll go easy on the kiddo.

As Jason got into his stance, Terry immediately zeroed in on anything that was right, and everything that was wrong. It helped that the stance was a very familiar one on the streets of Gotham.

(Even thirty years later, and a universe away, Gotham’s street fighting was mainly the same. If anything either it was this universe’s, time, or even the person, showed that the style was a bit sloppier than what Terry was used to.)

Thump, went the body. Groans filled the air as irritation built up in the child. Terry could see it begin to roll off. The teen was quick to bring him down.

“Okay,” Jason gave, voice gruff, “now I really see what you meant by ‘soft ground’.”

Terry, in turn, smirked. “Thanks, kid.”

Holding a hand out, he said, “if you don't want to fall down, I’d suggest that we fix where you put your feet and your weight.”

A lone blue eye glared at him as the other was a nasty shiner. Cogs and gears turned and tick around in the dark haired head. Finally, with a huff, he grabbed ‘Terry’s’ hand to be pulled up.

“As long as you actually show me how to do it.” He had said.

And Terry? Why, he couldn't help but bring out one of the old man’s sharp shark grin when it came to training.

Jason was right to gulp at the sight.

‘Wow. I'm impressed.’ Dick simply said. If it was to how well Jason did, or just how Terry did the lesson, it was unsure.

“I swear… to fucking god… that you're trying to kill me.” Jason managed to spat out as he tried to get ‘fresh’ Gotham air into his lungs. Although the park air was probably the freshest air to be found in Gotham period.

Terry hummed at the panting boy sprawled down on emerald grass. “Nope.” He popped out in his fake drawl.

The sun was higher in the sky, and Terry had to admit it. Jason was a good learner. If they keep this up, he just might survive on his own. But if he had a younger sibling to take care of…

“You’re doing good.” Terry praised. “I think we’ve managed to shape up how you hold yourself. Next time, we can focus on blocking hits if ya want.”

Stepping closer, he saw how the dark hair stuck to the skin. It was obvious that Jason needed a shower. However it wasn't a good idea to take a nice steaming one if one’s stomach was empty. A
person could faint easily by doing that. Terry was doubting that Jason actually ate something. He could see too thin of a torso through the shirt. Jason needed more food.

(His mother wouldn't let the kid out of her sight until she knew he was of proper weight, if they had met. Probably would've let him play with some of Matt's or Terry's old vid games to help keep him from being bored. That or give him some books. Maybe she would try to bond with him with her favorite stories when she was a kid, much like she did with him. He remembers her reading a story about a young girl who came from a rich family, but was orphaned and was forced to work for the school she used to attend. He also remembers Matt crying at how sad it was. Terry had cried too.)

“Got a place you wanna eat at?”

It was a simple question, and yet it startled Jason. “What?”

“You heard me. Where do ya wanna eat?”

Jason thought for a moment before deciding. “Sushi. I knew a guy who worked at a sushi place and he told me about it. Never gave me any.”

An eyebrow rose, but the teen didn't comment.

‘I know this one place with good sushi with a decent price.’ Dick piped up. ‘If you want I can give you directions.’

Shrugging, he said aloud, “yeah sure. I know a place.”

‘They also have noodles and hibachi.’

“It also has noodles and hibachi if it turns out sushi ain't your style,” Terry threw out as he began to walk away.

Ruffling of cloth, the crunch of grass, and the sounds of footsteps. It was good to know that Jason was accepting the offer.

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So as they entered the place, Terry gently herded Jason over to the bathrooms. He made sure they both wash their hands. After all, they were just in a dirty park.

(Terry could practically hear his dad drone on about germs and how important it was to wash your hands before a meal. To be fair, even if Warren McGinnis was a scientist, Terry was a squirmy kid who didn't like to be lectured. Especially after playing ‘mudball fights’ with other kids during rainy days. But he washed his hands anyway, and when Matt was old enough they did it together with their dad.)

Glad to have that taken care of, they went to go up to the counter.

The place was small; business was slow, but that was fine by him. Less people to worry about.

“Hello!” Said the cashier rather cheerfully. They had a name tag with the name *Robin* on it. They had clear dark skin, and their hair was in multiple braids. A white shirt with a Japanese word on it must've been their uniform. They took a minuscule glance at Jason. “Just grab a menu and sit down anywhere you like! Come back up whenever you're ready to order! Oh and just to let you know,
you can take your drink from that cooler. I would suggest the strawberry marble soda though.”

Terry nodded with a smile. Grabbing two menus, he walked over to a booth. Sitting down he began to look through the options.

The chicken and steak hibachi would probably be a good backup plan in case it turns out no one liked the sushi provided. Eyes landed on different rolls. They ranged from simple to complex. And of course there was the chef’s choice.

“Wanna share?” Terry asked, glancing up from the menu.

Jason's eye shot up to meet ‘his’ own through ‘his’ sunglasses. “What exactly? Sushi?”

Terry shrugged. “Why not?”

The lone eye glared at him. But if Terry was honest it looked like the kid was just squinting. “I’ll be the one to decide that.”

He shrugged again. “Fair enough.”

“I’d suggest having the Gotham Roll.” Dick chimed in.

Terry minutely raised an eyebrow. ‘His’ eyes caught the words ‘Gotham Roll’ and he saw the description beneath. It was a tuna roll with cucumber, avocado, and eel on top. Apparently it was also deep fried with spicy mayo and masago on top.

“It’s super good and you should totally get it.” He continued.

“So what I’m hearing is get the Gotham Roll and a chicken and steak hibachi?” Terry asked.

‘Yep!’ Dick chirped. The Robin really did sound like a bird.

He had to keep down his chuckle. Glancing up he saw Jason set down his menu. “You ready to order?”

“Yeah sure.” Jason slid out of the booth, menu in hand.

Terry followed. He went up to the cooler to see his options. One of which was the marble soda the cashier mentioned. There were other fizz options, like Sprite, and Mt Dew, but he wasn't in the mood for those.

“Give me the strawberry.” Jason grumbled.

(It reminded him of whenever he tried to make up to Matt about something, but his brother was being too stubborn and wanted to stay mad. It usually took Matt’s favorite flavor of ice cream to make amends. Although there were times where Matt would just try to get more ice cream rather than actually being mad. He remembered trying the same thing, when he was younger. It only worked a couple of times.)

Stealing a look at Robin, the cashier, he saw them smile. Smiling himself, Terry opened the door and grabbed two of the pink glass bottles. Of course there were clear, blue, and green, but with how much less there was of the pink one, it was obvious which one was the most popular.

Setting the bottles down onto the counter with a clank. Jason was kind enough to take his menu and sat both back onto their little pile.
“Alrighty so two marble sodas for your drinks,” Robin started as they began to tap away onto a screen, “anything you would like to eat?”

“Yeah, I’ll have the Gotham Roll, and a chicken and steak hibachi.” Terry ordered.

“Okay, how would you like that steak?”

“Medium rare.”

“Alrighty, anything else?” They asked.

Terry stepped aside for Jason.

“I’ll have a seaweed salad, a spicy tuna roll, and fried calamari.” He ordered.

Nodding, they tapped that in. “Okay, so I have two marble sodas, a Gotham Roll, a chicken and steak hibachi, medium rare, seaweed salad, a spicy tuna roll, and fried calamari.”

‘Yeah that sounds right.’ Dick thought.

“Yep.” Terry smiled at them.

“Sweet! It’ll be-” Terry cut them off, by handing over three twenty dollar bills. “Oh! Thank you! Let me go grab your change.”

“Keep the change.” He had said with a smile.

At first the look they gave him was that of astonishment. For a moment it was morphed into one of suspicion. But finally they gave the duo one last smile as the two walked back to their seats.

As Terry sat down, he remembered what he wanted to do. And as he remembered what he wanted to do, he remembered what had happened two days ago.

‘I want to buy the kid some proper training clothes.’ He started to Dick. ‘And maybe some medical supplies. Thoughts?’

The world around him grew silent as music softly twinkled in the background.

He felt the hum just as much as he heard it.

‘Yes.’

‘That all?’

‘You plan on teaching him how to properly dress wounds?’

‘Unless you want to do it, yep.’ Terry almost immediately felt regret once he was done with that thought as something that felt like… mischief, if that could even be an emotion, began to arise from Dick.

‘You know what?’ Dick started, ‘that sounds like a swell idea. I think I’ll do it!’

That… might complicate things. ‘Wait you’re serious?’

‘Heck yeah! Besides, I’ve always wanted a little brother.’

Terry actually blinked rapidly at this. ‘Okay, hold on a second here. What do you mean by that?’

‘I mean,’ he actually started to sound a little serious, ‘I could feel some ‘brotherly protection’
vibes coming off of you. Look, I totally wanted you to admit it first, but whatever. So, if he's going to be your new little brother, I want him to be mine too.’

The teen had to repress the urge to sigh. ‘I do not have ‘brotherly protection’ going on.’

‘Oh yeah? Dude, I was there when you saved the kid, patched him up, and fed him. Not to mention earlier during training.’

‘Of course you were there, Dick. We're literally in the same body.’

‘My point exactly! Also you didn't deny about Jason being your new little brother.’

Oh lord why was this boy so frustrating. Terry did not have some ‘brotherly protection’ feelings or whatever. He’s literally trying to keep the kid out of juvie and alive! Dick was just looking, or feeling in this case, stuff that wasn't there. That and Jason wasn't his new little brother. That would be weird. Also, they hardly knew each other.

(Okay so yeah, there are things called adoption, and Terry knows that there are siblings who hardly know each other but become siblings anyway. Terry knows this was a thing. However, this whole situation was totally different.)

“Here's your calamari and seaweed salad!” Robin came to the rescue with the appetizers. Thank God.

Smiling, Terry looked at them and said, “thank you so much.”

They smiled back. “You're welcome! Hope you'll enjoy it! I’ll be back a little later with the rest of your meal.”

And with that, they went.

Immediately Jason snatched up one of the pieces of squid meat. Chewing on it, he made a face.

“Don't like it?” Terry asked.

Jason glared at him. “I’m gunna eat it.”

Terry held up ‘his’ hands. “Whoa there. You don't have to if you don't want to. Especially if you don’t like it. Look, if it turns out that there's anything here you don't like, I can eat it so it doesn't go to waste, yeah?” He offered.

Somehow, Jason glared harder. “‘M still gunna eat it.”

“Alrighty then.”

They both grew silent once more, and Dick didn't pipe up again. Pop music that was from Ihop was playing. Songs that sounded not quite right dance around in the air.

The kid took a glance at his soda, still unopened.

As was Terry's.

Taking a look at the instructions on the side, Terry popped out a plastic piece that was on the top of the fizz. Seeing how it was in a T shape, and that the bottom was a cylinder, he put the bottom on the marble. He put the heel of his palm on the top of the plastic piece, and pushed down. With a pop, the marble clanked to the part of the glass that went inwards. (The design of the fizz bottle
made it so it was easier to grip it, and to stop the marble from hitting the bottom.)

Seeing how Terry did it, Jason did the same thing. Only his soda over flowed.

“Shit,” he cursed as he pushed the soda away.

Grabbing a bunch of napkins from the end of the booth, Terry wiped the mess up.

Noticing the difference in the level of soda, Terry offered, “we could switch sodas if you want.”

The younger of the two glared at him. He then went to take a swig of the lower soda, still glaring. “I don't mind.” Jason said after setting the glass bottle down.

He then went back to eating his appetizers. Jason was gobbling up not only the calamari, but the seaweed salad as well.

(Jason had decided to use a fork from a ceramic cup instead of the chopsticks. Which, to be fair, is quite understandable as using chopsticks could be hard for a beginner. Matt still couldn't use chopsticks for the life of him.)

“So,” Terry began, “if we want to continue, I’d think we should have proper training clothes.”

Jason's head shot up, cheeks puffing out like a chipmunk. A strip of seaweed fell. He narrowed his one good eye, swallowed his food, and asked, “what's that supposed ta mean?”

The teen held ‘his’ hands up in mock surrender. Again. “Jus’ sayin’. Something like yoga pants and a light t-shirt should do the trick. Just something to feel comfortable in ya know?”

Jason pursed his lips.

“We can go find some after we eat if you like.” Terry offered. “And you can pick any that you’ll like.”

“I’ll think about it.” Was all he said. But then Jason paused, a look of thought on his face. “Is there anything else you would want to do today?”

Surprise flickered through Terry. “What do you mean?”

“Well, we had our ‘training session’,” he used his fingers as quotation marks, “and then you want to go somewhere to eat. We come here and then you said you want to go shopping for clothes. Is there anything else you want to do?”

Terry hummed. “Well, now that you mentioned it…”

Hearing this, Jason actually growled. It was so unexpected that Terry ended up snorting a laugh.

“What?” The kid snarled.

“No, no,” he shook ‘his’ head, “I just didn't expect you to growl ‘s all.”

Jason huffed, and took another bite of his seaweed. “So? What is it?”

“Well, my twin was thinking of going and teach you how to be a medic.” He slightly joked.

‘Wait I’m a twin now? Sweet!’ Dick cheered. ‘Wait why are we twins again?’
“You have a twin?” Jason was obviously skeptical about that.

‘How else are we going to explain how similar we look? After all we are literally sharing your body.’

‘Fair.’

“Yep. He wanted to meet you and he figured this would be good ‘bonding’ time.” Terry used ‘his’ fingers as quotation marks.

Jason raised an eyebrow. “Bonding time? Really?” He snorted. “Also, medie?”

He saw Jason's eye twinkle a little in curiosity.

Terry shrugged. “How to properly clean yourself up if you end up getting into a nasty fight.”

“And how does he know this exactly?” He rose a brow.

It was Terry's turn to raise an eyebrow. “What do you think?”

Robin came swooping in before Jason could say a word. Truly, Robin must be a hero of some sort. They set down Terry's hibachi first, then set down Jason's and Terry's sushi.

If Terry was being honest, he was a bit impressed with the Gotham Roll. The slices were placed to make the shape of a G, and there was eel sauce that was drawn to make the shape of a bat on the plate. Small dollops of spicy mayo were on top of each roll while the red masago was sprinkled on top. Ginger and wasabi were on the side.

Jason's, on the other hand, was more on the plain side as it was a simpler roll.

Grabbing a pair of chopsticks, Terry went in for a roll. To his surprise it was good.

‘See! What did I tell ya?’ He could feel the smug.

Looking up from his plate, he saw how the kid was doing. A small smile emerged. Jason seemed to be enjoying it. Which was good.

“Want to try?” Terry asked, pointing to one of the rolls.

Jason started at him for a moment. Shrugging, he went and stabbed at a roll. Terry watched as the kid ate it. And then make a face.

“I'm torn between liking it and hating it with a passion.” He had said.

Which made Dick make a noise as if he was very personally offended. So much so that Terry bursted out laughing. “I suppose it's an acquired taste.”

“Yeah well whatever.”

Terry just laughed some more and decided to, essentially, ‘fuck it’ and ate some of his hibachi. Specifically the chicken. He found that quite enjoyable. He also took a sip of his strawberry soda and found that it was pretty good.

And so that was how brunch went. Of course Terry went ahead and plopped half of the rice, chicken, steak, and vegetables onto Jason's small plate. It was obvious that Jason was totally impressed, complemented his skills and wanted to know everything there was to learn about just
about everything.

(Okay no, Jason was only slightly impressed, if slightly more suspicious, about how much food was being dumped on him. When he not so subtly asked why, Terry had replied that he couldn't possibly finish all the food himself after that giant Gotham Roll he had had. Both Jason and Dick did not believe him.)

Before they knew it, they were done. Not a speck of food was left on their plates. Well, except for some sushi ginger and wasabi. As it turned out neither of them quite liked the two with their sushi. Nonetheless Terry felt accomplished for knowing that Jason had a hearty meal.

Although now that he thought about it, it would probably be best to slowly have Jason consume more food. If he remembers correctly, it would do more harm than good to practically have a feast after being starved. Yet that brings in the question of how much food Jason is actually eating.

Slag it. This was getting a bit complicated.

Looping an arm around Jason's (bony) shoulders, Terry walked him out of the restaurant.

Turning ‘his’ head to glance back at their cashier/waiter, he called out, “thanks for the meal!”

Not really looking back, he guided the kiddo over to the bike. The city around them busseled like usual. The new cars that were parked on either side of the motorcycle weren't over the yellow lines. Just how he likes it.

“Next stop, clothing stores. Got any specific places?” Terry asked as they got onto the bike.

“Just Goodwill would be fine.” Jason grumbled.

Tilting ‘his’ head a little, Terry thought.

‘Okay, where’s that?’ He internationally asked Dick.

‘Please tell me you have Goodwill in your universe.’

Not quite snorting, Terry began to exit the parking stall. ‘Of course. But just because they exist doesn’t mean that they’ll be in the same place.’

‘I know that! I just want to make sure you actually know what it is first.’

‘Suuuure.’

With a grumpy teen giving directions, Terry drove a grumpy kid to get some clothes. And with a relatively short amount of time, they stood in front of Goodwill in all of its glory.

“I choose what I wanna get okay?” Jason shot Terry a look as he walked inside.

Holding up ‘his’ hands Terry said, “I’m not going to buy you a tight fitting suit if that's what ya suggesting.”

“I don’t expect you to.” He shot back.

Rolling with it, Terry followed the child through the racks. Together they looked at shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, jackets, and much more. Although Terry most certainly persuaded Jason when he caught sight of a jean jacket. And a raincoat. When they got to the shoe section, some rain boots. And a new pair of shoes that still had some good grip on the bottom. Not to mention many
different types of pants that most certainly could be worn to bed. As well as socks, and any undergarments.

Okay, so Terry might've gotten carried away and basically bought the kid a new wardrobe, but Jason needs it.

Eventually they went to wonder around. It was a decent sized store. Held a decent amount of stuff. There was a section for things like games, movies, and shows. A section for nick nacks, and even changing rooms.

Stealing a glance at Jason, Terry didn't miss the look of longing at the book section. So, he made a beeline over to see what they got.

“Wha-” Jason sounded startled at Terry's sudden change of pace.

There, the very first book to catch his eye, was A Little Princess. The cover art was different, and the title was off by the fact that the word petite was exchanged for little. However that didn't matter.

Picking up the book with gentle hands, Terry opened the first page. Soft memories of his mother's voice spoke as blue eyes glided across the page. It was the same book.

“Looks kind of short.” A voice from the outside broke the spell.

Meeting Jason’s eyes, he could see the tiny amount of longing. Especially for a book with the title of Les Misérables across it.

Humming, a memory of his father came to mind.

“Just to let you know, you just might have to read this one day.” Warren sat down beside Terry as they watched a baby Matt play in his little area.

Terry scrunched up his whole face. “What do ya mean by that?”

His father gave a warm smile behind his mustache, “what I mean is that when I was in high school we had to read this for my English class.” He then ruffled Terry's hair.

“Oh.” Terry simply said. “Doesn't look long.”

“Well that's because it's a shortened version. The original is much, much longer than this. The author really liked to talk about the history of France since he wrote this a long time ago. It helped that he saw history be made before he wrote it.”

Terry tilted his head in confusion. “How long ago?”

“Very.” He then made a show of looking around. Leaning closer, Warren whispered as if sharing a secret. “It was made back in 1862.”

The red haired man was obviously holding back chuckle from seeing the awe that was showing off of Terry's face.

“Really?” He had asked his father.

“Really.” He confirmed. “Now, the man who wrote this book, Victor Hugo, would go and write things about France that might help the reader understand what was going on for the story, but never actually bring the story forward. Unfortunately I have only read this one so I don't know if
Eyes growing wide, Terry realized that the name sounded very familiar. “Like the Disney movie?”

Warren's smile widened. “Well, not quite. Did you know that the Disney movie was based off of that book? It did come first after all.”

Mouth agape, Terry shook his head. “No I didn't know that.”

“Well, I suppose we just might have to read that one together, if we find it.”

“If you make good voices like mom does, yeah!”

Outright laughing, Warren agreed.

Fading out of the memory, Terry began to look for the original version of Les Misérables.

(His father got in trouble for reading that book to him, as his mother didn't think it was suitable for children. Even more so when she found out he promised to read The Hunchback of Notre-Dam. Apparently it wasn't child friendly either and unlike the movie, it didn't have a happy ending. But his father was right when he said that Terry would have to read it in high school. They never got around to finishing Les Mis or even starting The Hunchback after that.)

“Well, it's short because the original was very long.” Terry finally said. “The author liked to go off on rants basically about France and morals. But it did help the reader get an idea of what in the world was going on in the early to mid 1800’s.”

To his great surprise, there was an original, unabridged and completely translated with every single passageway that Victor Hugo had written, copy in between a copy of Dracula and Frankenstein.

Taking another look at Jason, a deep hunger was evident. Not for food, no. For knowledge. For stories that are known as classics.

‘Do you think…?’ Dick whispered from inside.

‘This kid is going to get four books Dick.’

‘Wait four?’

“If I get you those three books, you have to read this one,” Terry startled Jason, holding up A Little Princess.

Baffled, Jason stared at Terry. “Why?”

“Because this is a good book, and you should totally read it.” Deadpanned delivery with a hint of ‘duh’ was quite successful.

“No,” he shook his head, “I mean why buy all this?”

Raising an eyebrow Terry said, “because they're good books and you need to read them?”

“But we're only here for clothes that are obviously more than I need.” Jason growled out. He was pouting again. And was shaking in what was probably rage.

“So? Just because clothing is number one priority doesn't mean we can't buy something nice. Like books.”
Clenching his teeth, Jason gritted out, “you're not buying me no books.”

Giving the kid a smirk, Terry snatched up the books. “Just watch me.”

Immediately the smirk upgraded to a grin as Jason chased after him. Right to the cashiers.

“Hi I’d like to buy all of these things please.” Terry drawled out with a charming grin just before Jason tackled him to the floor.

Ignoring the concerned workers, Terry managed to wiggle himself out of Jason's hold. Getting the wad of twenties out, he slapped down a random amount of bills down.

Essentially wrestling with the kid was a nice little thing to do while waiting for everything to be checked out, and bagged up. It also was a bit like training for Jason. Except more playful.

“Ummm. Here's your change?” They, the cashier, sounded so confused. Possibly a bit scared.

“I hate you so much!” Jason screamed before attempting to bite ‘his’ leg.

Calmly, Terry turned to Jason. “No you don't.” Turning back to the cashier, he took the change and the items. “Thanks! Have a great day!”

Managing to get Jason standing upright was a decent enough feat. Probably would've been easier in his own body, but whatever.

Giving some of the bags to Jason, Terry made them walk out of the store.

“I fucking hate you so fucking much.” Jason grumbled.

The teen only hummed in response.

‘Okay so. Shopping is done.’ Terry started.

‘Yep.’ Dick somehow made the ‘p’ pop.

‘When do you want to go get some first aid stuff with Jason?’

‘Hmmm. Sometime tomorrow if our little switcharoo keeps at the pace it's going.’

Terry furrowed his eyebrows at this. A nagging feeling was poking at him. As he thought about the nagging feeling, he started to tie the bags close. (He didn't want them to start tumbling out.) Finally it hit him after the last knot.

‘Isn't the Justice League's answer to you and your friends’ demands due tomorrow or something?’

It was silent on Dick’s end for a moment. Then, Dick cursed.

‘Language.’ Terry automatically replied.

‘Whatever. Okay so, Bats likes to do things early so maybe we get the final verdict at like seven or something. So um. Maybe tomorrow at one or two in the afternoon?’

Furrowing ‘his’ eyebrows, Terry thought at that.

‘Would 10:30am be good?’

‘No. Noon.’
Pursing ‘his’ lips, Terry shot back, ‘okay sure. Let's just see if Jason would be down with that.’

Looking over to Jason, he saw how the kid was getting impatient. He had his arms crossed, a scowl adorned his face, and not to mention he was tapping his foot on the ground.

“Finally done daydreaming?” He sarcastically asked.

“I was actually thinking.” Terry corrected.

A dark eyebrow rose. “About what?”

“If you and my twin want to meet up tomorrow around noon.”

The eyebrow’s brother joined its height.

“Already?” Pure surprise filled the boy’s tone.

The teen hummed in confirmation.

“At the same place today?” Jason tentatively asked.

Tilting ‘his’ head, Terry thought, ‘what do you think?’

‘Huh? Oh uh, yeah sure.’ Dick then gave what must’ve been the equivalent of a mental thumbs up.

“Yep.” Terry spoke aloud.

Hesitantly, Jason nodded.

An awkward silence soon followed.

“So, uh,” Jason began. “Are you going to give me my stuff or what?”

After giving Jason his new things, and money for the bus as he still didn't want Terry to drive him home, Terry drove back to the Manor.

It had been decided that they would try to… switch in a place that would be safe for them to do so. With a unanimous two votes, the conclusion was Dick’s bedroom was the best place to actually try this.

So with a change of clothing, and a shower, Terry sat in front of the mirror.

‘So, uh, how do we do this?’ Dick asked him.

‘Not sure.’ Terry, a bit bitterly, said.

‘Okay cool. Because I don't think just staring into the mirror would help.’

Terry had a feeling it was going to be a long day. ‘Think meditation would work?’ He eventually asked.

‘Do you even know how to meditate?’
‘Wow Dick, I can feel your trust in me so much.’

‘Well? Do you?’

Sighing through ‘his’ nose, Terry admitted with a, ‘no.’

‘Wow Terry. Wow.’

‘Okay look. It wasn’t exactly easy when I was taught it because of how many distractions there were and I never went back to learning it because I had like, a billion other things to do. Do you even know how to meditate?’

‘… maybe.’

“You hypocrite!” Terry shouted, jumping up from the floor.

Chapter End Notes

Eyyyy so we are almost to the end of Episode 2. Technically. Gotta love it when episodes have time skips am I right? But yeah no seriously, it’s neat because there's so much I can do in the time in between cannon screen time. And then some.
Flopping backwards onto the floor, Terry huffed. He closed ‘his’ eyes.

‘Okay so that didn't work.’ Dick would probably be putting his head in his hands if he were in control.

But he wasn't so Terry put ‘his’ arms over his face.

‘Gee, you think?’ He was getting quite bitter over the fact that it was almost dinner time and they still haven't managed to find a way to switch around.

‘Woah there, calm down.’

With a frown, Terry sighed. ‘Look, I’m sorry but I’m already tired of this. It's unnatural for me to here, like this. I’m not going to stay here, living your life, literally every other day. Doing things like school, patro-’

Suddenly remembering, Terry snap open ‘his’ eyes and screamed, “OH SHIT I HAVE TO DO PATROL!”

‘Crap!’ Dick was right with him, panicking. ‘Okay! Don't panic!’

‘I’m not panicking! You're panicking!’

‘Shut up! Let's agree that we're both either panicking or we're both not panicking!’

‘Okay!’

‘Fine!’

‘Good!’

‘Shut up!’

‘What the hell?!’

Taking a very deep breath to calm, both of them down, Terry tried to smush down the panic. ‘Okay, fuck. What are we going to do.’

‘You said fuck.’

‘Shut up! So did you!’

‘But I thought we weren't supposed to say it!’

‘Okay fine! We can only say “fuck” like this!’

‘Thank you!’
‘Okay, look. We're pissy over the fact that Bruce took us off of patrol right? So we can't look like we wanna back out of it.’ Dick logically said, with only a hint of the panic from before.

‘Yeah, but I don't know your routine! I only used a grappling hook, once.’ Terry rubbed, ‘his’ face.

‘Wait really?’ Disbelief colored his tone and their… connection.

‘Okay look. My suit basically has a jetpack only the fire is combing out of the bottom of my boots. Alright? And my suit got stolen by an AI so I had to rely on Bruce’s old utility belt.’

‘Wait you have to deal with villain AIs?’

‘Only the one.’

‘Okay cool. I honestly hope we won’t have to deal with that.’

‘I guess we’ll have to wait and see. I don't think the dregs that created it thought that locking it up immediately would be a good idea.’ Terry bitterly thought. He had asked the man the AI had been based off of grandson exactly what was up with the AI. Apparently only ‘waking’ up to give advice once in a blue moon could do things to an AI.

‘Wait. What’s a dreg?’ Dick suddenly asked.

‘It's a insult. Like loser, only with more weight. So. Dreg.’ Terry explained.

‘Huh. What other slang do you use? Besides doll,’ Dick snickered at the end.

Rolling ‘his’ eyes, Terry began to list the ones off of the top of his head. ‘There’s slag, twip, rip, spliced, fizz, and peg it.’

‘… okay you gotta explain those things to me.’

‘Slag is like… if I say “I’m slagged” it's like I’m feeling tired. If I say, “slag it” it's basically like I’m saying “damn it.” If someone says “slag them” it's basically kill them.’

‘Wow.’

‘Yep. Twip is an insult. Basically imagine twirp and twit mixed into one.’

Dick snorted. ‘Nice. I might actually use that.’

‘It is one of the more popular slang terms so yeah. Rip is like, schway, but not when you're responding to something. You use it when you're calling a person cool. Like, “Alfred rips”.’

At that last one, Dick actually snickered again. ‘Okay as cool as Alfred is, you probably shouldn’t
say that. Sounds like Alfred ripped one.’

Terry blinked at that. ‘Ripped what?’

‘… you know. Farted?’

Heat rose up, and Terry groaned. Great. Some conflicting slang.

‘Welp. Now we know even more differences between our universes!’ Dick tried with mirth.

‘Anyway,’ Terry went on, ‘spliced is actually more like… it was made by The Chimera Institute. There was this guy who sent off a trend of “splicers”, a bunch of people who get their DNA spliced, or altered, with animal DNA.’

‘Really? That becomes a thing?’

‘Yeah. It's illegal now.’

‘… huh.’

‘Yep.’

‘Okay, so then what’s “fizz”.’

‘It's soda.’

‘Ya know, that actually makes sense.’

‘And all the others don’t?’

‘Rip.’

‘Good point. And then “peg it” basically means check it out.’

‘Honestly I would expect it to be like, “we gotta get out of here!”’

‘Okay I see where you're coming from, but it's not.’

‘Alrighty then.’

Knock knock

Whipping ‘his’ neck over to the door, Terry's heart began to race.

“Young master Richard is everything alright in there?” Alfred’s muffled voice carried through the door.

‘Slag it!’ Terry thought. “Yeah! Just fine!” He ignored how ‘his’ voice slightly cracked.

It was silent for a moment before… “well, if you are ‘just fine’ I would suggest that you should get ready for dinner quite soon.”

A tongue quickly shot out, wetting dry lips. “Yeah okay! I’ll be down in a minute!” He called out.

Heart pounding, he strained ‘his’ ears to hear quiet footsteps walk away from the door. Great.

Taking a breath in, Terry steeled himself. It was time to face the music. Giving a huff, the teen
stood up, and looked ‘himself’ over. The clothing was decent enough for dinner.

One glance to the darkened grey sky was all it took before Terry left for dinner.

Dinner was, once again, a silent affair. This time, however, Terry was extra determined to eat the whole meal. He will make sure of it.

“Are you ready for tonight?” Bruce asked. Like, legitimately used the questioning tilt in his voice.

Terry felt a little off putting due to that, as it sounded genuinely curious. “Sure.” He had said.

Dinner continued in silence. It was awkward, to say the least.

After eating their meal, everyone had headed down to the cave to get ready. As Bruce started the searching program of the computer, Terry gathered his courage.

What was that old saying again? Oh yes, "fake it until you make it". That night, Terry would desperately need to fake it when it came to being Robin. Of course, having said Robin singing in 'his' head helped.

"Look B, I just want to patrol by myself, and if I find anything, I'll tell you about it." Terry ended up saying.

After the initial totally-not-a-freakout both he and Dick had, they both agreed that it would be best for Terry to go out alone. Without Bruce to witness anything 'strange' going on with Robin, it would also be the best time to actually try to practice getting around Gotham without all those fancy tech Terry was used to. It would also be a good way to continue their search from a different view. Unfortunately with their luck so far they might not get anywhere. True, it had only been two days or so, but there had been previous cases that had taken less time. (Although those cases had at least a little more lead than they did at the moment.)

Bruce frowned as he turned away from the large monitor. Knowing him he probably would want to keep Robin on a tight leash during patrol, as a way to keep the punishment going if only a little bit longer. But then Bruce took a glance at Alfred.

The duo did some weird eye conversation, something that Terry didn't understand as he never witnessed such a thing with Bruce before. It was probably a thing between Bruce and Alfred and it would make sense if Terry had never seen it. That is, if such a thing had existed in his universe in the first place.

Looking back at 'Robin', Bruce said one word. "Alright."

Blinking, both teens felt a mutual feeling of shock shoot through between them. Neither had actually expected the man to relent that easily.

"Uh, thanks!" Terry ended up giving a somewhat crooked smile, as he wasn't quite sure if there
were to be a catch or not. He left to go put the suit on.

With Robin instructing him how to put the suit on properly, they went over where exactly they should go. Robin had told him that the East side of Gotham could be laid back in terms of crime, so his Batman would probably want him to go there. It was a good idea, and when they went to the older Batman, he once again agreed to the idea.

The old man was very surprising that night.

And so, the bat in bird clothing drove away on Robin’s motorcycle, getting ready to learn, and subsequently, fail.

When he got to his destination, he hid the bike. Searching for a way up, without the grappling hook, he found a fire escape ladder. With a determined grin, he climbed his way up.

Hefting himself onto the roof, he landed on concrete. He stopped, and just stood. There, in front of him, and down below, was a whole new Gotham. It was different from the Gotham during the day, in the streets. It was a Gotham that he was familiar with during simulators while fighting robot versions of Bruce’s Rogues Gallery.

And yet… it wasn't all at the same time. Old buildings were gone, and new ones took their places. Or there were some that still stood but looked… slightly off. None grew as tall as his Gotham. Not yet.

It was breathtaking. It was heart pounding. A whole new city.

A place where it still needs its Robin.

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’*Just a little bit faster… JUMP NOW!*’ Robin yelled. Following his instructions, Batman jumped to the next building. Flying over a narrow alleyway, he nearly stumbled once he landed over on the other side.

Landing after flying and landing after jumping without an enhanced suit were two different things. Similar enough that Batman didn't hurt anything. Unfortunately it was different just enough that if he made one wrong move, injury would be highly likely.

’*Okay that was better. Still need to work on that landing though.*’

’*I know.*’ Batman was close to growling it out, but sometimes he just tended to get frustrated easily. Especially if it felt like hours since they first started patrol. Mainly because it was.

Just having a few limited cases, back in his universe, where he had to go without the suit weren't good enough experience. Such as breaking into a fake teenage rehabilitation center and fighting an AI that stole control of said suit. But Batman was getting there.

’*Well, to be fair, I was raised to do this sort of stuff. You weren't.*’ Robin just had to point it out.

’*True, but I still should be able to do this. But don't tell Boss. I really don't want to go through any of his training if he finds out I want to learn how to go about Gotham without the boots and glider.*’

’*Glider?*’
'Instead of a cape, there's a built in glider. Great when I want to make a getaway, fly around without the car, or make criminals wet their pants.'

'Okay first of all, that's cool. Second of all, gross.'

'Hey, I don't like the smell, but it's kind of funny to see exactly how scared they get by "the big bad bat".'

'Fair.'

Gotham seemed to be quieter in this other universe.

'Okay now get ready to jump over to the next building! Get the grappling hook ready in case you might need it!'

It was perhaps almost ten O'clock to the six O’clock they started at. According to Agent A over the comms, just as they arrived in the city, there was a high chance of thunderstorms. It certainly explained how it got so dark so early, but would it actually start to downpour? With Gotham it was always hard to tell. But after sunset started, the clouds drifted away, as if it was never there.

During this four hour process, Robin had been teaching Batman the does and don'ts of proper ‘old Gotham’ parkour. In addition to this there wasn't even a hint of crime so far. So that was the greatest bonus one could have when one was a vigilante/hero.

That was, until they heard a scream. Looking down below, they saw what looked like a mugging in progress.

Without any thought to call the older Batman, even if they did it would be too long, the Future Knight dropped down, aiming to land on the mugger. And just like that, a boot to the face, the mugger was down and out for the count.

"Thank you…” A voice wobbled out. It was the person being mugged. They took back their purse, quickly running away.

‘Sweet, now we just gotta tie this bad guy up!’ Robin cheered.

Nodding, Batman pulled out some generic zip ties, and tied the hands and legs together.

Clink

Snapping his head around to the source of the sound, Batman stared intensely at the dark depths of the alleyway. A small gasp was heard immediately after he moved.

Smoothly, Batman rose from his crouch, leaving the criminal behind. They wouldn't be going anywhere anytime soon. Straining his ears he listened for any sound. As he listened, he started to walk towards the origin of the first noise. Even though he could not turn on his limited time invisibility, as he no longer had his suit, he let the shadows consume him.

Soft sounds of shuffling. Like someone trying to move away. Zeroing in, Batman found himself with a shaking child, staring wide eyed at him.

As if a switch had been flipped, Batman began to relax. But not much.

‘Why is this kid here?’ Robin thought.

‘Did they see the mugging?’ Batman thought back.
There was something familiar about that little kid with the camera around their neck. Batman just couldn't quite put 'his' finger on it.

'Remember, don't try to act like Batman.' Robin whispered, as if the kid could hear him.

"I really don't think you should be up this late." Batman tried to keep 'his' voice light. It was a contrast to the usual dark he was used to when these situations. Of course this wasn't exactly a usual situation.

Coming back from their shock, the kid gasped out a small, "Robin!" It was so soft that he wasn't quite sure if the kid actually said it at all.

The kid then looked to be around Matt's age. But they also looked maybe a little shorter than Matt himself, and that was saying something. He always thought his little brother was short for his age.

Although maybe the kid was actually younger or something, since it feels like everything's size was off ever since he woke up like this. Or maybe both this kid and Matt were actually decent enough size for their age. He never actually paid any attention to what size should be for what age kids are at during Home Economics for kids. Apparently their school wanted to prepare them for if a) they actually have kids, and b) when their hypothetical kids actually grew up.

Smirking, Batman lied, "yep! That's me!" Getting a little closer, Batman went down to the kids' height. "But seriously, you shouldn't be out so late."

Frowning the kid moved to clutch their camera. What were they doing with that anyway? It looked like some high quality retro artifact. (Honestly the technology in this universe confused him sometimes. It was like a mix match of what should and shouldn't be in that timeframe, but whatever. He would just have to get used to it. Hopefully not for long though.)

"If you don't mind me asking, what's up with the camera?" He asked.

Immediately the kid flinched. They looked like they hoped he wouldn't ask that question. It took a moment for them to answer. Probably to think up an excuse or something.

Both Batman and Robin hoped that the kid wasn't either planning to use it to take pictures for blackmail or was being blackmailed to take pictures. Kids shouldn't be in those types of situations. Or worse. (They didn't even need to say anything to be on the same page right then.)

"I like to take pictures," the kid finally decided to say, fidgeting with the strap of their camera, "and I wanted to take pictures of Gotham at night."

Batman blinked. That was a good explanation. Yet he needs to know if this was an explanation or an excuse.

"Really? Can I see?" He asked. Half of him wants to see how this would go. Another half was genuinely curious to see what type of pictures he would see if the kid was legit.

A deep blush bloomed from their neck to their face at this. Someone was embarrassed.

"Y-you sure?" They began to stutter. "It's-it's not all that-that good, b-but um… you can-you can take a look!" That last part was nearly shouted. The deep blush grew darker.

"I mean!" They squeaked. Clearing their throat they tried again. "I mean you don't have to if you don't want to but… yeah you can look if you want to…" They trailed off.
Either this kid was a great actor or they were very genuine about all this.

"Yeah! I want to see your pictures!" He even smiled to try to calm the kid down.

Seemingly gone mute, the kid nodded and began to show the images on the screen.

"This is a new camera. My dad gave it to me and I wanted to see how well it does. It takes pictures and shows them on the screen, but I can also develop the negatives. Apparently the company wanted to make a fusion of the two." They managed to mumble out.

Going through the pictures showed not only that the images were of that night, due to the time stamps in the upper corner of the pictures, but that the kid could be a professional right then and there if they so desired. Honestly both Batman and Robin were insanely impressed with how well done the pictures were. Literally, Batman could feel that not all of that one emotion was his.

Batman could easily imagine Bruce being skeptical of the kids' skills. And because of that, a tiny seed of doubt was planted.

The pictures painted Gotham in a dark, beautiful light. It was haunting, with the light of buildings illuminating the small portion of the world in a snapshot. Smoke from chimney stacks created the illusion of white clouds in the not quite dead of night. Stars of the night sky being smudged out by light pollution and tall buildings, blocking out everything else. (He wondered if they laid down on the ground for that one.)

Last but not least, was the image of the silhouette Robin dropping down to stop a mugging. The light source was from the entrance of the alleyway, and from the position of where the photo was taken, alongside the angle, it was clear that it was, in fact the kid who took it. With the way that one photo looked, along with the fact that it seemed to capture how it almost looked like Robin was a guardian angel coming down to protect, it was very likely that the kid did took the other pictures as well.

Okay so the kid was legit. Yay! Now they needed to go home.

"These are amazing!" Batman praised, the humming of Robin agreeing came in not even a second later. "You seriously took all these?"

Okay if the kid was going to blush even harder Batman might have to take them to get checked. It shouldn't be normal for anyone to get that red.

Apparently they didn't trust their voice so they only nodded.

"How old are you?" He couldn't help but ask.

"Nine." They whispered out.

Holy shit they were the same age as Matt.

"Really?" His eyebrows shot up. "You're nine and you took all these amazing pictures? Kid, you'll go places with these skills!"

'I bet Geographic would kill to have him!' Robin finally exclaimed.

Thankfully Geographic existed in his universe too. Good ol' animals from around the world. And places.
"Geographic would simply love to hire you!" Batman smiled at the child. Then he sent a thought to Robin. 'Why do you think they're a boy?'

He felt confusion from their bond thing. They don't know exactly what to call it. 'He looks and sounds like a boy?' If Robin could he probably would tilt his head.

It looked like the kid wanted to bury their face into their hands, but was clearly holding back.

'Not everyone who looks like a boy is actually a boy. Especially kids.' Batman pointed out.

'Good point.'

'Besides, who knows if the kid uses they/them pronouns.'

'What?' Robin sounded even more confused.

Taking pity on how the kid was looking like a boiled lobster, Batman thought back, 'I'll tell you later.'

Then, he said, "as cool as these are, you really, really shouldn't be out this late. Nine years old or not."

Snapping their head up, all that red drained down, leaving only deadly pale skin behind. That… wasn't good. “But-!” They cut themselves off.

Gently, Batman pushed. “But what?”

The child looked down, in what could be embarrassment or shame.

Slowly, he put a hand on their head, ruffling their hair. “Hey, it's okay. You can tell me.”

They looked back up from the ground hesitantly. This caused Batman to see the glimmering of tears. A part of him ached and as he stared into those blue eyes, he couldn't help but be reminded of Matt at their father's funeral.

“Come here kid.” Batman said. He then pulled the child into a hug, rubbing their back. “You saw what happened back there yeah? Gotham isn't safe at night, especially for little kids. Unfortunately there’s people who need to go out at night, and it's mine and Batman’s job to make sure they get home safely. Promise me that you get home before dark and stay there?”

Sniffling filled the air as a tiny nod rubbed against his shoulder.

Moving away from the child, Batman held out a hand. He watched as the child became hesitant. As the child gulped, and ultimately held his hand.

Batman smiled down on the kid as he led them away from the darkness, and into the light.

“I can get home by myself,” the child whispered as they slipped their hand away from Batman’s.

Eyebrows furrowing in concern, Batman turned to look at the kid. “Are you sure?”

They nodded. “Besides, there are other people out there who need more help than me.”

Minutely Batman tilted his head at this declaration.

'I don't exactly feel right letting... them go home alone.' A voice cut through.
Right. It was Robin. Batman was pretending to be Robin. (He couldn't believe that for a moment there he had forgotten where he was. Who he was to this child. Yet he still kept up the pretense of being lighter than he was. More like he normally would be outside of the suit.)

‘I feel the same way,’ was the only thing Batman said back.

“Even if that's true, I’d make me feel better knowing you got home safe.” Batman then flashed a smile at the child.

They shuffled their feet. “I know what I’m going to say probably sounds really bad but… Please trust me when I say that I can get home safely by myself.” They then turned to stare up into the white lenses of the mask.

Wow they were doing a great job with the puppy eye look. So good in fact…

‘Oh god I don't know if I should let them go or keep them closer.’ Robin moaned in distress. ‘I mean, just look at 'em! They look like a baby!’

Internationally Batman scoffed. ‘If they heard you say that they would probably chew your ear off saying that they’re practically a adult and almost to their double digits.’

‘Why do you sound so sure?’

‘I did it, my little brother still does it, and you probably did it at that age.’

It felt like Robin would pout if he could. Honestly Batman wasn't sure how he could feel these things other than he felt a slight urge to do the same thing. Maybe those were weak attempts to gain control? He’ll have to go over it with Robin later.

Outwardly Batman hummed. “How about this, I walk you over to the part of the city that’s less likely to get any trouble okay?”

The kid puppy eyes dimmed as a pout graced their features. “Can we do the outskirts?” They tentatively asked.

“I think we can do that.”

They walked and walked and walked until they made it to their destination. And just as he promised, Batman let go of the little kid's hand.

Before the child could even turn around to face him, he disappeared into the nearby shadows. Blue eyes and black hair moved back and forth, looking. Searching. For a moment it was as if they had found him, but their eyes slid by so easily. A natural look settled on their face, as if accepting the fact that ‘Robin’ had faded away that fast. Nodding, seemingly to themself, they walked away.

Front flip for style-! And he stuck the landing!

‘Nine points since this was your first try at flipping and landing.’ Robin mentality applauded. ‘You didn’t reach a ten because I said so.’

‘Everyone's a critic.’ Batman grumbled.
It was nearing the end of their patrol, and Batman was on route back to the motorcycle. Well, not the Batman that was currently wearing the cowl with a cape.

Batman felt like he should get used to having another person be called Batman now. Sure his Bruce apparently still calls himself ‘Batman’ in his mind, but he sure as heck doesn't call Bruce that. He supposed it would have to be like that one time in fourth grade when there was another Terry in his class and he had to get used to sharing a name. Both of their last names even stated with a ‘m’ so the two came to an agreement where they would put their middle initial on their work. The main difference between the two Terrys was that the other Terry was a girl and had red hair with green eyes. After that year they didn't have a class together again. He thinks she actually had moved away during middle school. She was a decent person though, as far as nine year olds go while one is also nine years old.

‘Oh yeah, do you know how to report back to B?’ Robin suddenly asked, bringing him out of his thoughts.

Which made him groan once the sentence actually processed. Because he did not want to do a report. At all.

Cackles echoed to one person as a motorcycle zoomed through the night.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, this is the last chapter before the end of episode two I promise. Up next is July 8th! Now, since the chapter is already written, and since I’m now working on the next chapter, I’m letting you know that it is what it is. If it looks like I’m not giving the Team a lot of screen time, I want y’all to remember that a.) this is still a work in progress, so it might take a while, b.) since the story is of Dick and Terry’s POV we’ll see everything from their eyes, and c.) team time will come when I’m not focusing on having bonding time with other characters.

Or at least that’s the plan. Still, like I said, this is still a work in progress so if something comes as a surprise to you, it might’ve been a surprise to me. As the author of this story I get to choose the general plot but things get out of hand when the story just sorta. Does whatever. It might be small things, it might be big things. Who knows? But I promise you, I do not plan on having anyone die for shock value. Absolutely hate that. Anyway, I hope you’ve enjoyed this chapter!
Slapping his alarm off, Dick remembered it was his turn to run his body

Someone knocked on his door. “Master Richard, it's time to get up.”

Groaning, he turned his head over towards the door. “In a minute Alfred!” He yelled.

“So should we meet the old man in the cave?” Terry asked as Dick rolled out of bed.

“Yeah…” Dick mumbled. “Lemme grab some clothes first.”

Yesterday had been a bust when it came to trying to switch. Neither boy really wanted to talk about it. That kid they found, that wasn't Matt, might spark up a conversation later. Seriously, the kid was awesome with that camera… maybe they saw Matt while they were sneaking around taking pictures? If the two can find them maybe some questions could be asked.

And then Terry actually explained gender to him. (Dick may be a detective in training, but his school didn't actually teach him these things. Truth be told, Dick speculated that humans were actually capable of these things, but he never actually got around to research. Maybe one day he'll go and see what his identity is, but he does not feel like doing that while Terry was inhabiting his body. It would be too weird.)

The small teen grabbed a random shirt, a red/orange hoodie, a brown jacket, black jeans and sneakers. Putting on his usual sunglasses was no big deal. As was changing his hair to his usual ‘undercover Robin’ style. Starting at himself in the mirror, he couldn't help but notice the change of look from Terry's. From the way he holds himself to the hair. If Dick was honest with himself, he thinks that going down the ‘twin’ route with Jason would work. Not to say that he didn't before.

Just noticing the differences in appearance wise helps bring the illusion. After all, don't some twins try to make themselves look different to keep a sense of individual identity?

Dick wasn't going to use the accent though.

“Master Richard?” Alfred’s muffled voice broke Dick from his thoughts.

“Coming!” He called out.

Taking one last glance at the mirror, he grinned and thought, ‘are you ready?’

Terry snorted. ‘Only if you are.’

Walking to the door, the grin transformed into a smirk. ‘You bet I am.’

Entering whatever was on the other side of the tube, Robin saw that they were the first ones. Well, except for the Green Lanterns fixing up the place with Hawkman, Red Tornado, Captain Marvel,
and Black Canary.

“Mind telling me where we are again B?” Robin glanced at his mentor.

“A cave within Mount Justice.” He replied curtly.

Memories of researching Mount Justice came to mind. Robin began to wonder what they would do with a compromised cave.

But then a snort rattled his head. ‘Seriously? “Mount Justice”? That has to be the most ridiculous name I ever heard.’ The other Batman laughed.

Honestly? He wasn’t wrong. ‘Okay yeah, dunno why exactly they would name this place Mount Justice. Especially since they used to have their HQ here.’

‘Wait seriously? They had an HQ inside of a mountain called Mount Justice? The Justice League? Are you serious?’

Robin was trying very hard not to start cackling. ‘Sounds like we found another difference between our universes.’

Scoffing, Terry thought back, ‘no kidding.’

Evidently, talking to Terry was great while waiting as surprisingly enough, Flash and Kid Flash walked in next.

“Yo Rob!” Kid Flash, or Wally as he was in his civvies, called out. It wasn't all that surprising that Wally was wearing his white long sleeved shirt with the blue button up shirt on top. Nor was it surprising to see him wear dark brown pants and black sneakers. Wally tended to wear baggy shirts, or multiple layers depending on the time of year, in order to hide his body type. Speedsters tend to show off a little bit and what better way to blend in than to hide what you got.

Raising a hand, Robin waved. “Yo.”

Walking faster, Wally caught up to him. “Guess who I brought with.”

Coming from behind The Flash, was Superboy. Who was wearing proper shoes, jeans, and a black t-shirt with a red Superman symbol on it.

‘He certainly looks…’ Terry started, noticing Superboy’s demeanor at the same time as Robin.

Superboy looked… kind of depressed.

‘Probably has to do with what B told us the other day.’ Robin thought back.

‘I think I would be too, if I were him. Think he’ll let us cheer him up?’

‘Hey, he’s got no choice in the matter. We’re going to be his friends no matter what.’

“Hey there Sups!” Robin called out with a grin.

A grunt was given in return.

“He was staying over at my place,” Wally overtook the attention, “and I’m pretty sure he slept inside the closet.”
He raised an eyebrow at this. “Wait really?”

“Yeah, but whatever. We don't have a guest room and our couch isn't exactly comfy.”

Robin hummed.

“Oh! That reminds me!” The red head rummaged around his pocket. He then slapped a dollar to the boy wonder’s face.

“Dude, what the heck?” He took the money, slightly rubbing his cheek, and saw it was a five dollar bill. “What's this for?”

“The bet from Cadmus.” His best friend said as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

Robin just stared at him.

‘I had said “how much you want to bet that's Desmond” back when I first got control.’ Terry filled in.

“Wally. I was joking.”

“Whatever. You’re five bucks richer.”

Shrugging away the transaction, Robin put the money in his pocket. Deciding to observe more of the area while they wait for Aqualad, Robin subtly tuned Wally out.

It was big, and since it was a freaking cave inside a mountain, that was saying something. Ultimately Robin would have to actually explore it in order to see if it's larger or smaller than the Batcave. However since it was pretty much empty, it gave the illusion that it went on forever. That would change quickly if it gets filled in.

“-and I had to introduce him to toast!” Wally’s voice finally broke through.

“Huh.” Robin simply said to, hopefully, indicate that he was indeed listening.

Hearing the foot falls of someone else, Robin turned to see that Aqualad with Aquaman had arrived without his knowing.

Aqualad himself was wearing a long sleeved blue and black jacket and if Robin was being honest, it looked a little warm to be in. True it was good to hide his tattoos, but it had to be uncomfortable. It even went up to his neck. At least his pants looked comfy.

“Everyone here then?” Batman questioned in his way that really was a statement.

“Yes.” Aquaman confirmed.

Together, the teens formed a line, ready for the final verdict. And the other heroes moved accordingly.

‘Well, let's get this over with huh.’ Terry murmured.

“This cave was the original secret sanctuary of the Justice League.” Batman said. He walked down the line, not looking exactly at them. “Since you four are determined to stay together and fight the good fight, you'll do it on League terms.”

Red Tornado and Black Canary walked forward, away from Hawkman and Aquaman, towards the
group. Batman spoke once again. “Red Tornado volunteered to live here and be your supervisor. Black Canary's in charge of training.” He paused for a moment to stare at the young heroes. “She is also the one you go to if you feel the need to talk.”

At this Black Canary took another step forward. “I am technically both your trainer and counselor, and I want to make this clear: anything you want, or need, to say to me will be confidential. This means that I won't tell anyone unless you want me to. It's up to you.” She looked over to Batman and nodded before stepping back.

The Dark Knight nodded back. He then turned to stare back at Robin. “I will deploy you on missions.”

“Real missions?” Robin couldn't help but ask.

“Yes, but covert.” There was always a ‘but’.

The Flash took that as his cue. “The League will still handle the obvious stuff. There's a reason we have these big targets on our chests.” He then tapped his chest.

“But Cadmus proves the bad guys are getting smarter. Batman needs a team that can operate on the sly.” Aquaman turned to Batman as if to confirm this.

And the man did. “The five of you will be that team.”

‘Did he just…?’ Terry whispered.

Elation filled Robin. “Cool!” Then he realized something, catching on to Terry's suspicion. “Wait. Five?”

Batman looked up, behind them to the tube. Robin, and the others, turned around to see what he was waiting for. There was no light. From the darkness came the Martian Manhunter and someone else. A younger looking, green skinned, red haired girl.

“This is the Martian Manhunter's niece Miss Martian.” Batman introduced.

“Hi.” She waved, smiling. Her voice wavered a little, most likely nervous.

“Liking this gig more every minute.” Wally muttered over to Robin. He then walked forward towards Miss Martian. “Welcome aboard. I'm Kid Flash. That's Robin,” Robin quickly waved, “Aqualad. It's cool if you forget their names.”

‘Wait isn't that ‘I love you’ in sign language?’ Terry whispered, sounding like he was going to laugh.

Robin’s mind zipped around, remembering that yes having the pinky, pointer finger, and the thumb out was the American Sign for ‘I love you’. Embarrassment flooded his face.

‘Oh my god I hate you so much Ter.’ He mumbled with venom as he quickly put his hand down. Oh, and not to mention try not to suddenly blush as red as his suit.

Terry was full on laughing.

“I'm honored to be included.” Miss Martian clapped her gloved hands together.

Really wanting not to be super embarrassed, and really hoping that no one would try to read his mind at that moment, Robin grabbed Superboy’s hand as he made his way over.
"Come on, Superboy." He said, turning his head to the teen. "Come meet Miss M."

Almost as if coming out of a daze, Superboy followed.

Robin watched as Miss Martian changed her clothes, making the cape recede and black overtake the white of her shirt the moment Superboy had come into the vicinity.

"I like your t-shirt." She said, a bit shyly.

There was no way Robin, or even Terry, missed the smile Superboy gave her. So Robin did what anyone does when someone doesn't say anything. Elbow them in the chest. Superboy really needed to remember how to say 'thank you.'

Of course Wally then zipped over to Superboy, and put an arm around his shoulder. Together, the boys looked over at Aqualad.

Aqualad looked back at them, smiling. "Today is the day." He said.

And then they really began to mingle.

"So what's life like on Mars?" Robin asked, giving his attention back to Miss Martian.

She gave a nervous laugh. "Oh, not as colorful as it is here when it comes to plants. From what I've seen your planet has us beat."

It wasn't quite the answer to the question, but it was still interesting.

Wally made some lame 'ahem' like noise, trying to look cool. "I can show you some more of the prettier plants we have. Such as flowers if you want."

'Wow, that was a bad move.' Terry sniggered. Robin rolled his eyes and then flicked Wally's arm with a smirk.

"But, I uh, have seen quite a few Earth shows, and Mars doesn't exactly have school like you do."

Aqualad smiled at that. "I'm sure you haven't seen anything about Antlantis, and I assure you that we don't quite have schools like humans do either."

This seemed to make her relax a little. "Oh really? What's it like then?"

It went on like that, Miss M and Aqualad talking about their cultures while Wally interrupted trying to make a move. Conner watched.

"Well, I hope you'll like your time here on Earth!" Robin grinned at her, speaking up after what seemed like a while.

A more confident smile grew on Miss M's face compared to the shy one from earlier. "I will! Thank you Robin."

They all talked for what felt like hours yet no time at all.

Checking the time, Robin knew he had to leave. He had a meeting to keep after all. Sure he had like an hour to spare, but he still would like to have time to get ready.
Not to mention, but time to think of nicknames that could possibly get on Jason's nerves. After all, isn't giving your younger siblings embarrassing nicknames is what being a big brother all about?

Although it would probably be suspicious if he suddenly left without an explanation…

‘Ter, help me out. I need a excuse.’ Robin sort of demanded.

‘What?’ Terry asked before it clicked. ‘I don’t know. Say you’re going to miss a show or something.’

Robin furrowed his eyebrows at that. What show could he possibly miss? He had to think of something- wait a moment.

“Oh shit!” Robin yelled out loud, panicked. “I missed Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood’s last episode!”

Possibly everyone in the cave turned to stare at him in bewilderment. But then Wally heaved a long and heavy sigh.

“Dude, isn't it in Japanese?” Wally pointed out, knowing that said point was moot.

“Wally, my buddy ol’ pal. It's instantly better due to the fact it's in Japanese. I watched the first Fullmetal in Japanese with English subtitles. So you can understand how weird it is to become intimate with characters that their voices are so ingrained into your mind and then you listen to them in another language and hear different voices that you do not associate with them?” Robin even went in and held his friend, doing a weird slap on the older teen’s chest for emphasis during his spiel.

Wally just groaned. “Rob. I doubt there's even English subtitles when it aired.”

Robin smirked. “I have a program for that.”

The speedster rolled his green eyes. “God you're such a weeb.”

He mockingly gasped, putting a hand onto his own chest. “Wally, you wound me. I am totally not a weebaboo. Also I’m kind of surprised you know that word.”

Wally said, voice fully deadpanned, “I’m your friend and have to listen to you rant about anime all the time.”

Robin smirked at this. “Then you know how important it is for me to leave.”

He then turned to the Dark Knight, who was watching the whole exchange in silence, and said, “B we need to go! Or at least me. I need to go.”

‘To the bathroom?’ Terry immediately asked.

Embarrassment filled Robin. ‘Oh my god shut up.’ Out loud he said, “my show is waiting for me!”

‘Hey, when you live with a nine year old, and when they say something you automatically go in for the kill.’ Terry defended himself.

‘Well, I’m not a nine year old!’

Batman grunted. Robin’s plea was accepted.
‘You sound like a nine year old.’ Terry retaliated.

Inwardly Robin gasped. From that moment on, he knew he had to have his revenge.

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To keep up appearances, and genuinely wanting to watch the last episode, Dick ran straight to Alfred.

“ALFRED DID YOU RECORD FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST?” Dick yelled, still running to Alfred.

“No running please young master.” Alfred simply said. He didn't even look away from the vase he was cleaning.

Slowing down, Dick did what was asked. He then started to bounce a little, on his feet since Alfred didn’t like it when he bounced on his hands, once he stopped in front of the butler. “But did you get it?” He asked.

“Yes. Unfortunately there were no subtitles provided.” Alfred glanced to the side over to the teen. “However I do believe you would enjoy it otherwise.” A small smirk even adowned the man’s face.

Dick wasn't disappointed that his program seemed to have failed, because he can totally do that later, but was excited by what Alfred said about the episode.

He then began to wonder if Terry ever actually watched the show before, if his universe even had it, but then realized that he could introduce Terry to the wonderful world of Fullmetal Alchemist! Just the thought made him giddy.

And the feeling of unease from Terry was not justified at all.

“Alfie!” Dick exclaimed. “What I wanna do is have a marathon of the first Fullmetal Alchemist anime, and then the movie, and then the second anime and then I can have a refreshed memory of the story and can see how it ends!”

A single grey eyebrow rose higher and higher as Dick spoke his run on sentence. “Do you wish to use your DVD version?” Alfred simply asked.

“Yes!” Dick chirped. He then remembered the reason why he remembered the anime. “Also I’m going out into the city for a while. Dunno when I’ll be back.”

The other grey eyebrow met its match high on the forehead. “I appreciate the warning. Do you plan on eating at a restaurant? I do hope this doesn't become a habit as it is rather unhealthy to go and consume fast foods all the time”

At this Dick became sheepish. “I don't eat at fast food chains. I’m just helping the local economy is all.” He gave the man a grin to help appeal to the man.

He was given a stare down.

Dick gulped.
“I shall inform master Bruce that you will not be joining him for lunch then.”

Dick cheered.

He was a ninja. So sneaky that Bruce didn't notice him leave. And did Dick leave. He went straight to the park, not caring how early he was compared to the appointed time. But as he looked around, he saw that he wasn't the early one as well.

Zeroing in on Jason, Dick ran up to him.

"Jaaaaaaaaayyyyyyyyybiiiiiiiiiiirrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrd!" Dick yelled out, slamming right into Jason.

"JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!" Jason screamed out. Together they fell, Dick, with his arms around Jason. Jason, trying to wriggle his way out of Dick's grasp.

"What the fuck Terry?!" Jason cried out, finally getting out of the death hold.

'Jason, language.' Terry automatically thought. 'Dick, seriously, what the fuck.'

'Oh shut up.' He playfully shot back.

Both boys stood up. Taking notice that Jason was in fact wearing the clothes that Terry bought, a wide smile was brought upon his face.

"Sorry, Terry isn't available to answer right now, I can take a message if you want." He joked. If Terry could he would probably scowl. It certainly felt like Terry would be scowling right then.

Jason just stared at him for a full on minute, not really believing what was in front of him and what had just happened. Then, it clicked. "YOU'RE Terry's twin?!" He shouted, pointing a finger, almost accusingly, at Dick.

"Yep!" He chirped.

"Holy fuck." The younger boy was seemingly in shock.

'Language.' Terry said, again.

Welp. It seemed like he'll have to be on Jason's case. Or else Terry would drive him insane.

"Language." Dick repeated.

That seemed to shake Jason out of his shock. A fierce scowl adorned his face, and he said, "okay. I can see how you're twins."

Dick just grinned.

"Wait a sec." Jason narrowed his eyes before realization hit. "I KNEW HIS ACCENT WAS FAKE AS HELL!"

At that, Dick started to cackle like there was no tomorrow.

“Come on Jaybird, big brother Rob is gonna teach you all the things you need to know when it
"Some bandaids… do you want Batman or Superman?" Rob turned to Jason.

"I'm not a baby!" Jason snarled at him. Someone was cranky.

'Do not go with Superman.' Was all Terry said.

"Wonder Woman it is." Rob nodded, but still took the Batman bandaids as well. He also took dinosaur ones because dinosaurs are cool. They'll never not be cool. "Oooo a giant first aid kit."

He disregarded the grumbling behind him and studied what was supposed to be inside the giant first aid kit. It was highly unlikely that Jason would even need a giant thing like that, but Terry would probably go into a tizzy if Jason didn't have the proper materials.

Honestly it was kinda cute that Terry was getting some weird brother/paternal instincts things or whatever going on. He was so denying the fact that he wanted to take care of Jason, but it was clear that he so wanted to take care of Jason. It might be because his little brother isn't exactly there so he was projecting or something onto Jason.

But even if Terry wasn't there, Rob would want Jason to be okay. And if that meant getting medical supplies and teaching him how to take care of himself then he'll do it.

So he grabbed the large first aid kit, a first aid box that was meant for ‘sports’, and a regular first aid box for the home. He was starting to be glad that they grabbed a cart.

As they walked down the aisles, he put in bandages, medical tape, disinfectant, and so on and so forth. Soon the cart was filled to the brim and Rob was thinking that he might not have enough cash on him to buy all of this. He could use his discreet debit card, or he could withdraw money.

He honestly didn't want Bruce to see what he had bought, but he had to see if there was an ATM around. Sure he might be questioned as to why he withdrew some money but ehhhhhh.

So Rob had Jason go do cart watching duty while he claimed to go quick check something. Which wasn't wrong exactly. He withdrew another three hundred dollars to add onto his original three hundred. Gotta keep the emergency stash full. (Except at this point it wasn't an emergency stash and he was seriously thinking about naming it the Jason stash. Because really, now it's more so being used for Jason. On the bright side, not to say that this whole situation was a bad thing except for the fact that in a perfect world Jason wouldn't need Terry or Dick to buy him stuff, Dick and
Terry are helping the local economy a bit by buying stuff for Jason.)

(Also truth be told, even with living with Bruce for what, four years still didn't make the feeling of having three hundred dollars let alone six hundred dollars was a lot of money go away. Dick knows by now that that amount wasn't really a lot in the grand scheme of things, but still. Living a life traveling with a circus made someone rich with experience. Not money. Though there were really good days where they made more money than expected. But still.)

As they were checking out, Rob took a glance at the clock behind the cashier. It said it was one o’clock. Well, either way, time passed enough that it didn't really matter which person was right when it came to what time it was when they met. Although maybe Rob should buy a clock, or a watch, for the both of them so they could be consistent on what time to meet and not accidentally stood the other up.

Overall the medical supplies cost less than he expected, but he noticed how Jason still frowned even harder when he heard the end price. (Dick even used coupons! He was actually a bit surprised that there were coupons for medical supplies.)

They had walked out into the parking lot when Jason finally spoke after a long time.

"Don't buy me food. At all." Jason snapped.

Rob turned to the younger boy, frowning. He really looked at the younger boy.

Jason may be looking better with new clothes and shoes, but something dark was starting to grow underneath his eyes. He hadn't been sleeping much. And the clothes he chose to wear were the shabbiest of the bunch Terry had picked out the day before. And that included the shoes.

"Why?" Rob finally asked after that long stretched silence.

"Just don't." Jason replied with cold rage.

Rob was wondering what the change was. He wasn't like this with Terry the day before. Did something happen afterwards?

He watched as Jason began to tremble. He watched as the one clear eye grew red and shimmer.

Instinct took over. With a few steps to close the space between them, Dick gathered a breaking kid into his arms. Someone who was trying to stay strong when they couldn't. He could understand that.

"Stop." Jason's voice muffled into his red hoodie. "Just fucking stop. Why the hell are you here?"

Dick stayed silent. (Bruce would do this with him when he first started living with him. When he was still grieving and hurt and had no idea if he could heal.)

"You and your stupid ass brother come swooping in, acting like you're some fucking heroes. And what? You start… some shit by constantly taking me places to eat. Try to teach me stuff. Fucking buying me clothes. Fucking medical supplies. God damn it." Jason was shaking now.

"WHAT THE HELL. WHY ME? WHY NOT… why not… why not the kids who actually need the help. The little kids who can't defend themselves. Who get beat up for breathing wrong. Who get kicked out into the streets because their parents got murdered or were just stopped by their own parents from going home and can't go into social services or else they'll end up right were they started? Why the fucking punk ass kid who's dad is an abusive prick and mom might fly so high
she might never come back down again. The kid who gets into fights so he might not see the way his mom doesn't see him. So he wouldn't fucking see his disgusting eyes look back at him whenever his dad was home. Why me?"

Dick held on tighter, finally understanding as Jason finally let the sobs break free.

Together, Dick and Terry knew that Jason should not go back home. But they don't know where to take him. Maybe with a bit of string pulling, Dick might be able to take Jason's mom to rehab, and hopefully Jason's dad to prison. But what would be left of Jason?

Maybe they should invest in a safe house…

"Listen… Terry and me… we're the kind of guys that can't stand to watch someone get hurt. Just can't stand it. And when Terry came and fought off those gangsters or whatever, it was to protect whoever got hurt. Maybe in a different world it would be someone else. I don't know. But the fact is that he helped you and now he's still helping you and now I'm helping you. And if you need help giving others help, you tell us. And we'll do it." Dick went to pet Jason's head, the same way his mom did to him when he was younger.

Back when he got scared of his own shadow, but not of heights.

"I gave most of the clothes Terry bought me away." Jason finally admitted.

"Most?" Dick asked.

"I'm wearing a new outfit ain't I?" Jason spat out bitterly. "Felt like if I didn't keep at least one outfit then…"

Dick could feel the same emotions he was feeling coming from Terry. Only he wasn't sure who was more furious. Or saddened.

"Then what?" Dick couldn't help but prod softly.

He got a shiver in response.

A wave of protectiveness both his own and not swallowed him whole.

"Jason." Dick slowly pried himself away from the eleven year old. (Eleven. Dick had almost forgotten how old Jason was. Only two years younger than him. Fucking eleven.) "Believe me when I say that Terry and me, we won't do that. And we'll never do that. Any of that stuff that you might be thinking."

Jason was silent. Jason looked like a mess.

"Come on," Dick ended up saying, "let's get you cleaned up. Okay?"

Quickly, they put their stuff in the special basket of his bike. The cycle itself was a special one that Dick hardly used. Mainly for the fact that he didn't really go around lugging stuff, but he had got it just for that purpose. In the famous words of 'just in case.'

Then, Dick took Jason to the restaurant next door. It was honestly very convenient, but there were some people who didn't like the fact that a restaurant decided to move in next to a pharmacy.

Once inside, Dick herded Jason over to the bathroom. The teen wonder had been there before, so he knew that the bathroom had those hand dryers as well as the paper towels.
Jason just needed to be clean.

"Normally I wouldn't suggest using the hand soap to clean hair, but I don't exactly have shampoo with me." Dick slightly joked. A bit more serious, he said, “I heard washing your face helps.”

Jason just nodded. They stood there for a moment longer. A step. The younger boy put his hair underneath a spray of water.

The teen let him do his thing, as he stood as watch. It would be awkward for someone to come in while another person was washing their hair and face in the sink.

And yet, unfortunately, it probably wouldn't be as awkward as it could be as this was Gotham. Always has been, and always will be.

"This place is known for its comfort food." Dick suddenly said to break the silence.

A monotone yay was heard over the stream of water.

Dick smirked a little at that.

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"I suggest the chicken fried steak with mashed potatoes and gravy with fried apples." Dick glanced up from his menu.

"This is all southern foods." Jason looked up from his own. "I thought you said this was comfort food."

Jason looked better, with his freshly fluffed hair, and cleaned face. He even washed his hands and arms while he was cleaning up. Both Dick and Terry hoped he felt better too. If not he had a decent mask.

"Apparently a lot of southern food is comfort food." He glanced down back to the menu, looking at an item on it. "Actually I don't know if pepper steak is southern or not."

"I don't think so?"

Dick ended up shrugging. "Whatever. It's good food either way. But seriously eat the fried apples. The cinnamon and the caramelization of the sugar makes it scrumptious."

'Scrumptious?' Terry finally pipes up.

'It's true!'

Jason shrugged.

“They also have vegetarian and vegan options in case you want to try any of that.”

Jason shrugged again.

The waiter came. They both ordered a white soda. The waiter left.

‘So.’ Terry started. ‘He gave away his clothes.’
‘That he did.’ Dick agreed. ‘What are you going to do about it.’

‘Me? You’re the one he’s with right now. What are you going to do.’

Dick sighed through his nose. “I think I’ll go with some pepper steak. Haven’t had that in a while.” He spoke aloud to Jason.

Jason grunted. “I think… I think I’ll go with that chicken fried steak thing you suggested earlier.”

The teen smiled at that.

‘I’m going to ask him.’ Dick decided.

“So. Wanna buy more clothes?” It was awful but it addressed an elephant in the room.

Jason's head snapped up. He didn't speak.

“Look, you still need some proper training clothes. I promise I won't get as carried away as Terry did.”

‘Hey!’

‘Dude, you did went a little overboard. Maybe that's why Jason’s feeling like this.’

He felt the realization and guilt slowly ebb its way towards him.

‘Shit.’ Terry cursed.

“And if you say stop, I’ll stop. Okay? But you should totally keep the medical supplies and learn how to use it. Ya know, if any of those kids need help.” Dick tried. He kind of didn't want to get dirty, but it was necessary in order for Jason not to ignore his health.

When Jason winced at that, though, guilt pained his heart.

“Not going to lie that it’s a lot.” Dick amended. “So if you want, we can go through it together and see what you would want to give away.”

The younger boy was hesitant for a moment and then… “okay.”

Relief washed over both Dick and Terry, mingling together as a collective smile was given to Jason in response.

After their meal, Dick and Jason sat down in the parking lot as they went through the medical supplies.

“I really don't need all these bandaids,” said Jason as he eyed the Wonder Woman band aids that were various sizes. “And I don't need two different disinfectants.”

Dick nodded. “Okay, so what we can do is take one of the disinfectants, and the more colorful band aids.” He looked around and found one of the less filled bags. “We can put them in here.”
The black haired boy nodded.

“Okay so with that, what else?” Dick asked. He then watched Jason’s one blue eye switch between the larger first aid kit and the smaller ones. He thinks it's officially a travel one for like, camping since it was more so a bag than a box compared to the other two. It was also waterproof so that was neat.

“Do I really need this big thing?” He asked, finally settling on the larger one.

“It does have a lot more stuff in it.” Dick pointed out. “And you never know what you're going to need.”

“But wouldn't I need the sports one more since I’m more likely to get bruises and sprains?” Jason furrowed his eyebrows.

“Yes, but you also might get cuts if it turns out there's like, a piece of glass lying around or something.”

At this Jason pursed his lips. “Yeah no. I think I’ll take the sports one.”

Now, Dick really wanted to start haggling so Jason would have the most supplies for just in case, yet he didn't want to push. He really didn't want Jason to start drifting away already because of something like this.

(They had only just officially met, but Dick really wants to take care of him as much as Terry does. This, he is sure of.)

“Okay.” He relented. “I don't think the huge one would fit in the bag so we would have to carry it anyway. You alright with that?”

The mess of black hair nodded.

Slowly but surely they were making progress. He could feel the small amount of joy from both himself and Terry. And when they were done sorting what Jason wanted to keep with what he wanted to give away, Jason would have more than enough to help his fellow children of Gotham.

They went to a different store from the Goodwill before. It was still Goodwill, just in a different location. Everyone had agreed that it would save any embarrassment if they were seen at the same store for two days in a row.

Of course Jason didn't know that Terry had agreed to this.

Even though the atmosphere was a little somber between them, Dick was having a genuinely fun time. He teased Jason, who would bite back in his own way. And then there were little sweet things that made the imp in him grin with glee.

“So you're Terry's twin right?” Jason asked in a way that was supposed to be nonchalant. It was obvious he was very curious. He was even fiddling with the shirt rack, pretending to be busy.

“Pretty sure we established that, yeah,” Dick, or Rob as he had to remind himself, held back a snicker as he looked through the same shirt rack. “Why?”
Jason shrugged.

“Well…” Rob stretched the word out. “If you want embarrassing stories I just might have some.”

‘Wait what.’ Terry suddenly inserted himself. ‘No you don’t.’

Rob grinned at that as he saw Jason perk up. ‘You're right. I don't.’

He nearly started cackling at the feeling of dread seeping over. He was going to make one of the most ridiculous stories ever.

“Okay so, when we were like, five Terry decided that he could go to the bathroom all by himself without telling anyone. Unfortunately for him, the doorknob on the inside was completely gone so he had basically locked himself in the bathroom. So, imagine little me, minding my own business when I hear Terry start wailing about how he was going to die in there out of starvation. I had to get our parents to open the door. Mom and dad joked that there wouldn't be any accidents since he was already in the bathroom, and Terry, he didn't like that. So he pouted for like, a month, and had to have someone go with him to the bathroom for three months.”

At the end of his false story, Rob was grinning like a maniac, Terry was full on embarrassed, and Jason was staring at him with his jaw dropped.

Then finally Jason spoke. “Holy fucking shit that's amazing.”

Rob was full on laughing at that.

Eventually they had bought whatever Jason had wanted, while Terry just stewed in his embarrassment. When they went back to the cycle, Rob was a little afraid that the clothing was the last thing that the basket could handle. And that was saying something since it could handle all the supplies Rob had put in it.

“Do you want me to properly take care of your injuries?” Rob had asked, taking a glance at Jason. It was something that he sort of wanted to avoid, but the whole reason why Rob was there was to teach him how to properly take care of himself.

Jason… was hesitant. “I…”

“I can tell you what I’m doing so you have a better understanding the next time you do it yourself.” He tried.

Jason looked at him. He looked back at Jason.

It was quiet. No one moved… and then…

With the tiniest of movements, Jason nodded.

'Come on Terry, let's go find some prime real estate.' Dick thought as he got onto his motorcycle. Jason was taken care of, and it was time to go.

'Are you sure? Wouldn't Bruce notice?'
Here Dick grinned. 'He won't if we're careful.'

With sarcasm, Terry said, 'and we're careful.'

'Hey, he hasn't discovered you yet.'

'Yet.' Terry stressed. 'The man is literally known as the “world's greatest detective”.'

'Okay fair. But you gotta admit, he might think that I'm just going through whatever teenagers normally go through.'

'And what's that? Juvie?' Terry, once again with sarcasm, asked.

'No!'

'Face it Dick, between you, me, and Bruce, none of us probably had a proper “whatever teenagers go through”. And you just started your teen years. I'm getting close to the end of mine.'

At this Dick really thought about it. According to Terry, he went to Juvie when he was a year older than Dick, and then started his career as Batman at sixteen posing as an older Bruce Wayne's Personal Assistant. Bruce had to deal with being a rich orphan and probably stated training to be Batman in his later teen years. While Dick started crime fighting earlier than they had to, deal with being an orphan from the circus who got taken in by Bruce. And now both Dick and Terry are sharing a body.

So yeah. Literally none of them probably know what a proper teenager is supposed to go through. Terry might have a better idea as he was from a middle class area, but he's also literally from the future in another universe.

One might argue that Bruce might've known, but at this point Dick has to speculate what exactly the man went through since Dick doesn't trust anything from the media around that time frame. Hell, he doesn't really trust the media currently all that much.

So. Yeah.

'Okay fair.' Dick, once again, said.

Driving around, they searched, physically, for a place that was for sale. Or wouldn't be paid too much attention if it was bought. Then they found… what was certainly a place that's for sure.

"This place looks decent enough." Dick seemingly muttered to himself. Just in case anyone heard. Which honestly was unlikely, but who knows.

'How is this place not condemned?'

'Because it's Gotham.' Dick replied.

'Right. How could I forget.' So much sarcasm.

'So,' Dick went back on track, 'we're going to definitely fix this place up. Think we should add a garden?'

'Why a garden? Wouldn't that be bad if Poison Ivy decided she wanted to come out and play?' He could feel Terry's concern about the whole thing.

'True. But Jason might like it if he could go and harvest his food rather than go and buy it.'
'Hmm. I can see that. I don't trust the soil here though.'

'Understandable, but I'm pretty sure some pots or something would take care of that.'

'Does Alfred take care of the garden?' Terry suddenly asked.

Dick blinked at that. 'Yeah. Why?'

'Maybe we could ask him for some help. If he asks we could say something about Poison Ivy and he might understand. Maybe.'

The younger teen mulled this over in his head. 'That could work. And if Bruce catches us doing research he'll buy it as well. Maybe we could try to appeal to some stuff or something and maybe that would keep Poison Ivy content for a little bit. Like I don't know. Plant flowers for the birds and the bees? Three birds with one stone?'

'Pretty sure it's "two birds one stone", but yeah. That just might work.'

Sweet. They had a plan. Now how to fix the mess that would be the new safe house.

'Maybe some cookbooks might help too.' Terry thought as Dick looked over what might've used to be the kitchen.

'Agreed.'

He then turned on a faucet to see if it still even worked. A deep groan came from the pipes. Dark, smelly liquid came out in a spray. Dick frowned.

'Let me guess. They haven't done anything to clean the pipes.'

The younger teen sighed. 'This definitely needs to be fixed.'

'Listen, not to seem rude to the city, but do we even want city water?' Terry asked.

Dick pursed his lips. No. They did not want city water. At least, not right now. Some heavy duty filters would be great in general though.

There was a lot more planning to do.

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That night Robin flew next to Batman, and all was calm.

Chapter End Notes

And this concludes episode 2 of the Young Justice timeline. Get ready for more days of filler and maybe episode 3 soon. Don’t you just love it when you cut parts of a story up in order to fit things in it? Anyway, I hope you’ve enjoyed this chapter!
“Look Ter, I go with B tonight, you observe, and get into the swing of things! We can ask to go alone again tomorrow for you to get a better hold of yourself right? We can do this for however long you feel you need to before you can patrol with B,” Dick had softly spoken while he was getting ready for dinner in his room.

Terry grunted.

“Are you even listening to me?” Dick had asked, a little irritated.

Okay, yes Terry was, but his thoughts were somewhere else.

As he felt the motions of arms crossing at the chest, almost as if he was underwater, he was thinking about Jason. His injuries were worse than they had originally thought, but it wasn’t dire. But it was enough that Dick had to go through some of the supplies they had bought or else they would have to go into the first aid kits. Dick made sure he tried to use only the stuff that Jason wanted, but unfortunately for Jason, Dick had to dip into the ‘away’ pile.

Terry made sure Dick made Jason take those supplies. “For sanitation you know.” Dick had explained to the younger boy.

It made his blood boil that Jason went through that. Including the things at home. Jason might not think he deserves kindness, but he does. Same as all of the children who aren’t shown any.

Maybe if Dick was okay with it, when they fix up the new ‘safehouse’, they’ll be able to house those kids who don’t have a home. Or shouldn’t be at theirs.

Maybe they could do a series of those houses around Gotham? Try to make them all look the same so if a child goes to a different one for various reasons, they wouldn’t have to rememorize the layout. Maybe Matt might find one if word gets around about it…

‘TERRY!’ Dick screamed in their bond.

If Terry could, he would jump. ‘Holy crap! Jesus, Dick did you have to be that loud?’ He asked.

‘Well you weren’t listening!’

‘I was thinking okay! It sounds like a okay plan, let’s do it! Slag it, if I had a ear right now I swear, it would be ringing right now.’ He really wanted to rub his head, but there were two problems with that.

One, it wasn’t his head.

Two, he wasn’t even in control right then.

‘Then what, pray tell, were you thinking about?’ Dick sounded like he really wanted to know.

Terry made an audible sigh. ‘You know that idea of a safehouse for Jason?’

He watched as Dick squinted his eyes in the mirror. ‘Yeeaaaaah.’
‘Well, I was thinking that maybe we could have them around Gotham. In case anyone needs it. Or maybe Matt might find it and have a safe place to stay… if he’s even here.’

Now here was when Dick sighed with his whole body. ‘Terry, I know you’re getting antsy with not finding Matt but—’

_Terry did not want to listen to that._ ‘I KNOW!’ He exploded. ‘I know that Matt is either here or not! It’s as simple as that! Either he is or he isn’t! I just-! I just…’

Emotions overwhelmed him. _Feelings of rage, worry, sorrow, and regret were swirling around him, trying to drown him. Everything that he was trying to keep under the surface erupted into a storm. He wasn’t like Bruce, who could hold down his emotions for ages. Terry could keep them at bay for only so long._

‘Matt’s my little brother. It’s my job as his older brother to protect him and keep him safe. **And he was not safe. I don’t know… I don’t know what I do if I found out that he… he’s…**’ _Terry couldn’t even finish that thought_. ‘So if there’s even the smallest chance of making something that he might find, in order to be at least a little safe, then I want to do it.’

Everything was quiet. For some reason the world was shaking.

‘And seeing Jason like that?’ _He continued_. ‘I don’t think Matt could take it, if that was him. They’re hurt, Dick. They’re hurt, and lost, and scared, and I’m powerless to do anything to stop it.’

_It felt like he was rambling now but he didn’t care. If he was talking about Jason or Matt, or all the children, or everyone, he didn’t know. Terry was supposed to be Batman. But how could Batman save the day if he couldn’t even save his brother? He doesn’t know what happened and that was probably the scariest part. The unknown._

_The world was still trembling. Arms began to wrap around their body. “We’ll find them.”_

_It was Dick. Voice soft, and soothing. He was trying to comfort Terry. “I promise you, we’ll find your brother and your body. It might not be right away, but we’ll find them.”_

‘…but what if by then it’s too late?’ _Terry couldn’t help but voice that horrible fear._

_“It won’t be. I’m sure of it.”_

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Terry opened his eyes from the dream. Or it was more so a memory from the day before. He… kind of didn’t want to think about it.

Time to suppress his feelings!

And time to go to Jason. Maybe he should make Jason breakfast or something. Or just bring granola bars for now.

Yeah that sounded good.

“Let’s get ready.” Terry mumbled to Dick.
After getting what is probably going to be his ‘Terry’ clothes on, he snuck down into the kitchen. Hopefully it was early enough that Alfred wouldn’t catch him, but he wasn’t sure. Honestly he shouldn’t be surprised if Alfred did catch him in whatever act he’s doing.

Which was grabbing granola bars, apples, and two large water bottles. Jason had been drinking quite a bit of soda lately, but he needs some proper water. Terry then proceeded to fill the metal water bottles with ice and, well, water. Quickly, he glanced around.

‘We should probably write a note.’ Dick whispered. Really, they’re the only ones to hear each other. But he could understand the need to keep quiet.

Terry nodded. He turned to find a pad and paper only to find the legend himself. Alfred Pennyworth was staring at him.

He totally didn’t make some sort of ‘eeping’ noise. No way no how.

“Young master, may I ask where you are going?” Alfred asked, a singler eyebrow raised.

“Uhhhhh, Gotham?” Terry tried not to make it sound like a question, but ultimately failed.

The one eyebrow was still up high. “As much as I appreciate you going ‘out and about,’ I do hope you partake in regular, healthy meals.” He then glanced at the snack food gathered in the teen’s arms.

“Uh, of course! Pfft of course I do Alfred! These are just, snacks!” Terry nodded ‘his’ head. “I’m a growing kid, and I might get a little uh hungry so uh. Yeah.”

‘Wow that was terrible.’ Dick groaned.

‘Shut up!’ Terry gritted back.

That eyebrow did not go down, even an inch.

“I promise to eat a healthy breakfast and lunch?” He tried.

With a suffering sigh, Alfred seemed to relent. “I’ll inform master Bruce that you do not plan on having breakfast or lunch with him. Again.”

Terry gulped. “Um, thanks.” He began to walk away from the butler.

“I do hope you’ll spend a full day with us. Some ‘bonding time’ would be rather nice.”

Oh god was Alfred guilt tripping him?

“Maybe tomorrow!” Terry yelled, before dashing away.

He didn’t need to look back to know that Alfred more than likely had a disapproving look on his face.

‘We’re so going to regret this aren’t we?’ Terry thought.

‘Yep.’ Dick confirmed.
The park in the morning was always so nice. Usually younger kids and their parents go for the playground or to enjoy the few natural spaces Gotham had to offer. Still, there was some ice left about, however with the heat of Gotham and the amount of days that had passed, there was hardly an iceberg left. On the bright side, the park was watered.

Even more on the bright side, he easily found his target. Which was pretty lucky due to the confusion on time the day before.

Brooklyn accent in place, Terry threw a granola bar, yelling, “quick catch!”

Jason barely had enough time to actually catch it. But catch it he did. Perhaps he fumbled a little, but once it was firmly in his hands, he glared a little at Terry.

Terry just smiled at him. Said smile grew wider when he saw that Jason was wearing the training clothes he and Dick had picked out the day before.

“Looking sharp, kid.” His smile turned into a smirk.

Jason just scoffed. He certainly looked a little awkward. More than likely due to the clothing.

Terry’s smirk fell a little, remembering what had transpired the day before.

“Hey,” he started, taking Jason’s attention away from the bar, “I’m sorry for the other day. For being too pushy about the clothes.”

The younger boy shrugged. “Yeah you were kind of a dick.”

Terry blinked at the last word Jason had said. It had taken a moment to remember that he wasn’t being addressed as Dick, but was insulted. So what did he do?

Chuckled.

“Hey!” Jason looked like he took offense at that.

“Sorry, just thinking about someone I know.”

‘Hey!’ Dick definitely took offense to that.

Terry just grinned while Jason scowled.

“Anyway, after you eat that, I’m thinking of showing you some stretches in order to warm up.” Terry began. He then went to eat his bar.

“Why not go straight to it like last time?” Jason asked, genuinely curious.

“Because last time was to see where you were at, and how much you can learn in a certain amount of time.” He answered. For a moment he thought. “Maybe we’ll set up a schedule. One day you train with me, and the next you go learn with my twin. This would give you a break to let your body rest. There might be times where there’s a cancellation scheduled ahead of time or on short notice. Does that sound good?”

Jason just stared back at him. So Terry stared back. He noticed that with the help of Dick’s medical knowledge, after so long with Alfred, Jason was looking better. If only a little. And the food hopefully was helping too, but Jason was going to need more calories if he’s going to exercise, and
whatever else he’s doing at home.

Hopefully it wasn’t anything bad.

But the black eye was starting to… look bad. Yes it looked bad when it was forming, and yes, it looked bad the day before. Yet perhaps it looked especially bad right then was due to Terry seeing how Jason looked better vs the stark contrast of the black eye. Both Terry and Dick had a feeling that maybe it would take longer than ten days for it to heal. And there were signs of lack of sleep underneath the other eye.

Overall, Jason looked cleaner. It was obvious that he still needed a long way to go.

With a mouth full of food, Jason spoke. “Yeah sure. Why not.”

Now this… this made Terry grin.

“Great!” He exclaimed. He then took a hold of one of the water bottles, and handed it over to Jason. “Here, have this. Gotta properly hydrate yourself.”

The younger boy reluctantly took the bottle. Tentatively, he took a sip of the water.

He just smiled. “I also have some apples if you want one.”

One blue eye side eyed him. “Fine. But only because I like apples.”

And with that, they enjoyed a cool morning in the park. It most certainly helped that no criminals tried to do anything shady right then. Sure most of the illegal activity tends to happen once the sun goes down, but that doesn’t mean there aren’t those who tend to do things in broad daylight. Those times aren’t exactly the greatest for Batman due to the fact that darkness is Batman’s best friend.

Maybe they should get a hero for daylight hours.

Once done with their breakfast, they threw the remains away in the nearest trash can. Wouldn’t do any good to be a litterer. Making sure both he and Jason took one last great gulp of water, Terry started to show how to properly stretch.

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Terry would never have thought to admit it, but he thought that he might like teaching others how to defend themselves. Not to fight, but defend. There was a difference, and while Terry fought, Jason would have to defend.

It was nice, doing some step by step on how to properly block, get out of holds, and the like. Unfortunately as time went on he noticed how Jason grew tired. Due to this, it got them to sit down on the grass, drinking their water once more.

What had seemed to be silence to the younger boy was actually Terry and Dick discussing where to eat. Again.

‘Okay so we went to iHop, that little Japanese restaurant, and country food.’ Terry listed off.

‘Where else is there?’

‘Well we could have Mexican or Chinese.’ Dick offered.
'Which one’s closer?'

'Chinese.'

'Well then there you go.'

Nodding, Terry stood up. He looked over to the young boy and asked, “feeling like having some Chinese today?”

Jason snapped his head from where it sat on his knees. “I want egg drop soup.”

This made the teen grin. “Egg drop soup it is.”

He watched as Jason stood up. Truth be told he was a bit nervous, not knowing if the eleven year old would be a bit wobbly on the legs. He wonders if he could make Jason take a nap. It was unlikely, and despite how much he wishes it not to be so, their relationship wasn’t strong, as it was still too new.

He and Dick really need to get their collective ass in gear and get that safehouse in working order.

Grass were stepped on and sprung back with each foot fall. He took the lead, yet walked the same pace as Jason. They were silent… and then he remembered.

“Did you kept the books?” Terry asked.

He watched as the smaller boy jerked. Startled by the question.

He hesitated to answer for a moment. With a nod he said, “yeah. I did.”

Pleased with this knowledge, he asked, “did you start reading any of them yet?”

“… I got through the first two chapters of Dracula.”

Terry smiled. “Yeah? And do you like it so far?”

Jason turned to give him a deadpan stare. “I literally just started I can’t say anything much about it.”

He chuckled at this. “Okay yeah. That’s fair.”

Once they got to the bike, Terry tossed Jason his helmet.

“Come on kid, safety first.”

In return he was given a frown while he gave back a laugh. Soon enough wind was going to try it’s hardest to tear them away from their seats.

And when they would go to their destination, Terry and Jason would try something new.

‘Okay so I think we can cover the costs of buying this place and remodeling it.’ Dick thought over. ‘Not sure if we should make the outside look the same as much as possible or just. Change it.’
After having a proper brunch with Jason, Terry and Dick agreed to go back to the… honestly it was a poor excuse of a house, but it was going to be one anyway. They also agreed to let Jason go after that meal and tried to get him to promise that he’ll get some proper rest.

Terry had even said, “go home, take the biggest nap ever if you need to. Just go sleep okay kid?” Jason only grumbled in reply, but agreed.

But before they could part ways, Terry remembered what Alfred had said and told Jason, “Rob and I are going to do some brotherly bonding or whatever us twins do tomorrow. You can stay home and rest up some more.”

The kid had looked a little taken aback. Hesitantly he agreed though.

So they went to the, what was hopefully going to be structurally sound once they’re through with it, building. Now that they had more time, they would take notes.

“Okay, so we already want new pipes…” Terry muttered. “A garden… maybe a greenhouse outside? Or attached to the building?”

‘Honestly I’m a bit hesitant to have a greenhouse outside. It might draw attention.’ Dick admitted.

“That’s true.” Terry nodded. “Keep everything in doors then. Got it.”

The whole building was just in such a sorry state. Terry honestly wasn’t sure where to start. Well, actually he did. It smelled of mold and mildew that suffocated the whole place.

‘We’ll definitely need to get new roofing.’ Dick managed to point out. It seemed that he had found the slight leak coming from the ceiling.

This brought pause to the duo.

Dick had found something out of the corner of ‘his’ eye while Terry’s attention was elsewhere. Terry wasn’t too sure if he had done that or not while Dick was in control.

So much to figure out. So little time.

Slag it all.

He had to remember to breathe. Everything he’s doing could be a step closer to Matt. To finding him. To make sure he’ll be safe.

(Everything he’s doing could be a step further from Matt. To losing him. To find out that he’ll be hurt or worse.)

Leather gloves ran through black hair. He didn’t need any gel today. (It was almost as if Dick’s body was changing in accordance to Terry’s influence. He hopes not. Just the thought of something like that happening would make Terry sick.)

Windows needed to be replaced. Probably the same could be said for any insulation and just the floors and walls. Definitely needed new doors. The basement… the basement was probably a whole different beast.

Could he and Dick really fix this up on their own?

“I think we need a proper team for this.” Terry muttered to Dick.
‘We’ll look into any remodeling companies that are going for the ‘eco friendly’ look later.’ Dick offered.

Terry rose a brow to this.

‘Hey, I head eco friendly stuff is better for us in the long run.’ Dick mentally shrugged.

Terry was not going to argue with that at all. His universe could certainly take a note or two. Yeah carbon went down quite a bit because of Poison Ivy and any other plant incidents the Earth had, but they really needed to pick up the slack. He then wondered what Mr. Wayne thought about going green. After all, Derek Powers made a bunch of changes when he became the head of the company.

“Oh so, what. Rain water that’s been filtered for everything? From watering the plants, drinking water, to washing clothes? I know bamboo grows a lot faster than trees and there’s places that use bamboo for things like flooring and stuff.” Terry began to throw things out there. “Use old junk to fix this place up?”

‘Hmm. I think we already agreed on the rain water thing. We’ll have to think of a place to put the giant container that would hold the water. Maybe the basement so it wouldn’t be seen? We’ll have to make a system that collects the water. For the bamboo that actually sounds like a great idea! We can replace the wood with bamboo for everything. Well, maybe not the main doors. As for the old junk, maybe we can get it treated and see if it’s still good for something.’

A nod.

“Honestly I don’t know what to do with the grass. Once again I can’t believe we found this place that actually has a yard.”

‘Eh, if we want to keep Poison Ivy we can just turn it all into flowers. Maybe plants that are native here? Also I want a tree.’

“A tree.” Terry deadpanned.

‘Look, it doesn’t have to be a fruit tree. Because come on. The soil. But trees are nature’s monkey bars.’

Terry sighed. ‘You do realize that it probably won’t grow fully until we’re both old men right?’

‘I’m just thinking for the future!’

He decided it would be best if he didn’t argue.

“Okay,” he muttered, “we need to figure out how to designate the rooms.”

It had three floors and a basement. There were definitely going to be enough room for more than two bedrooms.

“Should we just. Have a floor that’s nothing but the garden?” He asked.

‘Not sure. How ‘bout this. We actually look around and then go from there!’

He just heavily sighed at this. “You do realize that we could fall through the floor if it’s too rotten right?”

‘Oh don’t be such a baby. I’m sure we’ll be perfectly fine!’
Terry rolled ‘his’ eyes. “Alright. Fine. But don’t come crying to me when we get hurt okay?”

‘Yeah yeah. Now get exploring!’

Once again, Terry huffed.

Truly, the building was a surprise if there ever was one. It was in an area that no one, hopefully, would pay any attention to it, there was actually a lawn, and not to mention space within the building itself. It looked like it was once a house, in the style of the Victorian era at that, but time had not been all that kind to it. As Terry said before, he was surprised that it wasn’t condemned and thus, torn down.

Certainly, it was great that Terry and Dick came along and found it. It would finally get some use again.

Over all, as Terry weaved in and out of rooms, it looked like their plan could work. They would have to make sure there wouldn’t be any lead left, as super old houses like the one he was in tend to have, and they would have to find places to put security. There was no way in hell they would leave Jason defenseless in a place like this. Strong windows that were hard to break, great locks, and an alarm that would alert them if there was an intruder. Sure there would be more things, but it was a start.

Now if only they actually know where to put stuff.

Although considering how the top floor, not the attic as that was a different beast Terry didn’t want to confront, was completely spacious, that might be where the inside garden might be…

Would they put everything in pots? Don’t they need compost bins in order to make new, fresh soil?

Terry then came face to face with a clearly broken bathtub.

“… found the bathroom.” He spoke aloud.

‘… I can see that.’

“At least now we actually have an official designated room. Could be a bit bigger though.” The room would definitely be cramped. A shower stall instead of a bathtub would probably be better space wise. “Oh and look. The toilet is still intact.”

It… didn’t look that great.

‘It looks disgusting. Let’s get a new one Terry.’

“Oh definitely.”

‘But you gotta admit that this isn’t as bad as what you originally thought.’

He sighed. “No,” he gave in, “it’s not as bad… still surprised that literally no one has done anything with it.”

‘Their loss our gain!’

“Yeah…” he breathed as he took a long look at the room he was in. “Our gain.”

Shaking ‘his’ head, he continued on his mission.
As he walked around any rotten floorboards, he thought of how many bedrooms there would be. Four would be nice, and even more would be better as that could house more people. But the question was could the building handle that? Having two bathrooms with a tub or shower would be nice as well for the minimum.

‘Hey Ter?’

“Yeah?”

‘Let’s just get a crew to do this.’

He smirked at that. “Good idea.”

Stepping out of the bathroom, after taking his shower, Terry nearly ran right into Bruce. It felt so weird to see the man up close. It was one thing to see him up close while Dick was in charge, as it was like… watching through a screen, but it was another to be in control and experiencing Bruce Wayne. That man was truly in a league of his own. He probably learned everything he knew from Alfred considering how the older man was. Although being stuck in a short body made the man all the more intimidating. Back in his proper body, and when Wayne took that dip in the Pit, Terry was only a little shorter than him.

(So many differences. So many… changes. But he was Batman, and Batman was supposed to adapt to anything thrown at him.)

Truth be told, he wasn’t expecting to interact with Bruce until dinner time.

“Bruce!” He exclaimed, surprised. “What-?” He cut himself off, realizing saying ‘what are you doing here?’ wouldn’t exactly be a good question.

The billionaire managed to attempt to look sheepish. “I was actually looking for you.”

It was unexpected, to say the least. But it was expected considering the man was looking for Dick.

It also occurred to him that he should speak. “Oh, um. Why?”

‘Holy fuck that was terrible.’ Dick groaned.

‘How about you shut up okay? It’s not like I normally work with Bruce while he’s being… weird.’

‘How is he being weird?’

“Well, I was wondering if you wanted to go see a band tomorrow.”

‘… why the fuck does he sound like a school girl asking for a date?’ Terry thought, completely baffled.

‘I DON’T CARE JUST SAY YES!’ Dick yelled. Again.

Blinking rapidly, Terry said, “sure!”

The smile he got was awkward, but even he could tell it was genuine.
Then it hit Terry. “Wait when did you get the tickets.”

‘You know what? That’s a good question.’

Bruce actually looked sheepish. None of it was faked whatsoever. Man, it was throwing Terry for a loop.

“I actually had them for a while now.”

Terry just stared at his not exactly boss. “And you just asked me now?”

“I wanted it to be a surprise.” He defended himself.

“It was a surprise that’s for sure.” Terry reassured.

God this was just painfully awkward.

“When are we leaving?” He asked.

Bruce relaxed at this. “Well, since it’s an all day event I was thinking we leave around say… seven thirty.”

The teen nodded. “Sounds like a plan.”

Bruce nodded.

And then they just stood there.

Oh god it got awkward again.

“Okay so… I’m just… going to go back to my room…” Terry said, slowly inching over towards Dick’s room.

This seemed to bring Bruce back. “Yes, yes. Right. I’ll- I’ll see you at dinner.”

“Yep!” Terry agreed before making his escape.

‘Okay what the fuck was that?!’ Terry thought as he was not quite running away.

‘I’ll be honest, I have no clue.’ Dick replied.

‘So you’re saying that this isn’t normal with Bruce?’

‘And it is with yours?’ Dick shot back.

‘Not really? Not as much as what just happened right then. The old man would be more gruff about it.’

Whipping the door open and slamming it closed, Terry took a calming breath.

But then he decided that that wasn’t really appropriate for the situation so instead he fell ‘his’ face into ‘his’ hands and groaned.

“God just what the hell is my life.” He moaned.

He was not looking forward to dinner.
But… maybe it wouldn’t be so bad as long as Terry stayed on ‘his’ toes.

Chapter End Notes

Eyyyy sorry for the long wait, but I’m trying to write as much as possible and then be able to post more chapters closer together. Currently I’m trying to work on the next chapter. As for this one that you just read, I literally ran out of ideas to write without making this feel even more choppy. But also because of this I decided to go ‘fuck it’ and post it up. So I hope you’ve enjoyed it! Until next time!
He didn’t care if Alfred was going to look at him disapprovingly and click his tongue at the mess he was making, but Dick was on a mission. He had to find the right outfit in order to go to the band.

The band which Bruce forgot to give him the name.

Which was pretty lame, but the day before was pretty weird and awkward between Bruce and Terry. One of which was trying to pretend to be him.

Dick paused for a moment once that thought registered before going back at it.

God how did this become his life now?

Whatever Bruce was going to take him to see a band.

Which they haven’t done in… Dick squinted his eyes in concentration as he stared at a shirt. When Dick was ten? So like it’s been three years.

Also that shirt wouldn’t do.

‘God Dick, just pick one.’ Terry groaned. ‘You’re worse than Matt.’

Dick stopped as he picked up another shirt. “What do you mean?”

‘He spent what-an hour?-searching for a outfit to wear for his birthday party but ended up wearing the. Same. Thing. He always wears.’

“Oh my god.” Dick spoke in a small voice, both amused and a bit not quite believing it. And yet, it sounds something like a kid would do. “Also it hasn’t been an hour.”

‘Yet.’ Terry deadpanned.

Just to prove the older teen wrong, Dick threw the next shirt he picked up on. Turning around to the mirror he could feel the irritation and grumbling at the sight of Superman’s icon on his chest.

He cackled, making Terry’s irritation grow deeper.

‘I hate you so much right now. I hope you know that.’

“No you don’t.” Dick grinned with mirth.

If this was what it was like having an older sibling then Dick loves it. Maybe he could get Bruce to-

Knock Knock

“Are you ready?” Bruce’s voice called from the other side of his door.

With a wide grin, Dick answered, “yeah B! Let’s do this thing!”
Quickly the door opened. An amused smile greeted him. One of Bruce’s eyebrows were quirked up once he laid eyes on the type of shirt.

Oh right. The anger at Superman.

“I’m starting to give the guy the benefit of the doubt.” Was all he said.

And Bruce? This seemed to have pacified him.

‘Wait is he seriously wearing a t-shirt and jeans?’ Terry suddenly asked, completely befuddled. It sounded like this was something that wasn’t possible. Or at least it sounded like he thought so.

Pure excitement filling him, Dick grabbed his guardian’s hand in order to get him moving.

‘Yeah!’ He thought over to Terry. ‘It’s a band concert! Like the mosh pit kind! You don’t look fancy at that sort of thing.’

The absolute most a person could look fancy at a concert is to wear business casual. But since they were going in with t-shirts and jeans it was all good.

Together, they went down the grand staircase, through the foyer, and out into the bright world. Bruce has slipped his hand away, grabbing his inconspicuous car keys.

Clicking of familiar shoes alerted them of another presence.

“I do hope you’ll make good choices sirs.” Alfred said. He stopped in front of the front passenger door, ready to open it for Dick whenever Bruce actually unlock the thing.

“Oh we’ll be fine Alfred,” Bruce said as he went ahead and press the unlock button of his keys, “and sorry for not getting a ticket for you.”

Alfred sniffed. “I meant food wise. I heard that they don’t serve… the healthiest choices. As for the ticket, I’m afraid I’m not much of a ‘rock and roll’ sort of person.”

“Come on Alfie,” Dick interjected, moving in as the man opened the door, “the food’s just fine. And besides, you can listen to your own music here! It’ll be like you’re with us in spirit.”

His grin only made a grey eyebrow rise. Man Alfred’s been doing that a lot lately.

But then the older, British gentlemen only sighed in the way that he does when he knows he’s in a losing battle. Dick and Bruce were going to eat something or another over at the concert and there was nothing Alfred could do about it.

“Do be careful then.”

Both guardian and ward slip into the car with a smoothness that only they know. A wide smile and a tamer one showed themselves to the man.

“We will.” Bruce, once again, reassured.

Here, Alfred leaned in, and gave a smile of his own. A genuine Alfred smile. “Oh, and do have a fun time will you?”

Dick’s grin somehow grew even wider. “We will!”

Nodding, Alfred closed the door. The duo buckled up, and Bruce began to drive away.
Glass separated him from the city as the vehicle moved around the streets. It felt like ages since Dick actually went around Gotham like this. In a normal car, doing something that lucky teens get to do with their families. Now if only they had a pet.

Time felt odd, in the car, as they pass by houses, trees, tall skyscrapers filled with businessmen and women and short stores filled with goods. People walking by on the sidewalk from infants to the elderly. Anyone could be innocent or guilty. A civilian turn to a life of crime, or victimhood, or even heroism. And possibly, the very rare civilian that never got caught in a villain’s plot.

But also children who are hurt. Who’s future that are unsure. Like Jason. Like Matt.

One who he has met, another he’s only been told about.

One, who’s brother he’s been bonded too, is searching for. It was July tenth; day five of being together like so. Day five of not getting any clues of Matt.

And he could feel the soft anxiety that was going to consume Terry alive eventually. Somehow, and he wasn’t quite sure when, but Dick detected it. It was small, like a speck. Something Terry was hiding away. Shoving it down behind closed doors, underneath carpets, steel bolts, iron boxes, and obsidian chests. Something that wormed its way through.

Terry didn’t want it to show. Terry didn’t want it to be known. Terry didn’t want to be here. Terry wanted to be out there.

Neither Dick nor Terry have any choice in the matter.

But now they had other duties. Helping Jason out. Patrolling with Br-Batman. Fixing up buildings and houses for those who don’t have one, or need a new one.

Going… to see a band play.

Guilt instantly sunk its fangs into his heart. Its claws were wanting to tear into, or out of, his chest. A mighty beast that declared him its next victim as his thoughts spiraled ever downward.

Maybe they should’ve told Bruce.

But then what if Bruce doesn’t believe them? What if he thinks they’re some sort of…

‘Hey.’ A familiar voice gently poked his mind.

Suddenly Dick could breathe again.

‘What’s up?’ He asked, silently thankful for Terry’s interruption.

‘You don’t… feel excited.’

Internally, he winced. How much of that did Terry felt? Was it loud or soft? Could their emotions be loud or soft? Or would it be more like… overwhelming or just… whelming?

‘What do you mean? I’m totally excited.’ Dick lied badly, like a bad liar.

He could feel the deadpan stare. If Terry could deadpan stare at him, that is.

‘No you’re not. You did, earlier, but not so much now. It’s like… I’m not really sure what to call it other than “a jumbled mess of negative emotions.”’
That… sounds about right.

‘Look, Ter, don’t worry about it. My mind kind of went and did its own thing. That’s all.’

He doesn’t think Terry bought it.

‘Dick.’ Terry’s voice was firm, yet held a certain amount of gentleness to it. Sort of like Bruce’s, sometimes.

‘Terry.’ He said back, not really feeling like actually talking about it.

Honestly if both boys were in their own bodies, they probably would be having a stare off. But since they didn’t, the next best thing was to have a stare off with his reflection in the window.

Tired blue eyes stared back at him. Seeing this startled him. Blinking rapidly, refocusing on his eyes and the image was gone.

“Everything alright?” A voice asked. It took a second for him to realize that it came from the outside, rather than in his head.

Turning to the source, Dick saw Bruce watching him with a worried gaze. The car had stopped in a line for a red light.

He stealthily swallowed as he thought of an answer. “Yeah I’m fine. Just thought I saw something that’s all.” He tried to give a reassuring smile.

Bruce… didn’t look exactly convinced. Fortunately for Dick, the traffic light turned green, and cars started to move. Of course this forced Bruce to continue driving. He didn’t want to be That Guy who just sat at a green light, wasting not only his but others opportunities to continue forward.

Honestly, was it a Batman thing for them to notice that something was on Dick’s mind? Well, Bruce is a detective and Terry can literally feel his emotions and vice versa.

As they continued their drive, Dick’s mind went back to the earlier train of thought. Maybe they should just let Bruce figure their situation out on their own? He doesn’t quite know if he could tell Bruce. He… wasn’t quite sure how the man would react. Best case scenario was that Bruce would understand, believe them, and help Terry out. Worse case scenario…

Dick didn’t want to think about it, but he’ll have to.

But… maybe another time.

Also, when was Bruce planning on telling him the name of the band they’re seeing? He wasn’t going to keep it a secret was he? Dick wanted to know right then and there!

“We’re here.”

Blinking rapidly, Dick found himself in the position where Bruce was giving him an amused smile. The car was sitting still in a parking spot within a parking lot.

With a wide grin in place, Dick cheered, scrambling to get out of the car.

“Dibs on the greasiest funnel cake they got!” He shouted as he managed to step out into the sunlight.

Bruce, getting out of the car as well, chuckled. “Aren’t funnel cakes for festivals or carnivals?”
Turning on his heel, Dick went to face the man. “You don’t know the true amazement that is funnel cakes.” A cheeky grin grew on his face. “Also you forgot to mention circuses.”

Hands held up in mock surrender. “So I did.” He was clearly still amused.

“Yeah, and that means you owe me a funnel cake!” And with the exclamation, Dick started to run.

Not even a second later did Bruce yell after him, saying, “you’re going the wrong way!”

‘Is there literally no signs anywhere saying what band is playing?’ Terry asked as Dick waited for Bruce to come back with the funnel cake.

Literally the moment Bruce and Dick reached the vending area Dick smelled the sweet, delicious aroma of funnel cake. He then sent Bruce to go grab him one. Then he tried to go find any band merch to buy.

‘I honestly can’t believe I found nothing.’ Dick replied, still searching high and low for at least a t-shirt or two.

Although there was a bunch of people around wearing punk band merch. Unfortunately for Dick, there were too many band names and logos too look at that he couldn’t actually pinpoint which ones they were. Actually now that he thought about it, a lot of people looked like they were wearing punk clothes in general. Maybe it was a punk band?

He wasn’t going to lie, it would be kind of hilarious if it was actually a pop band or pop star playing.

An image of a crowd of punks with mohawks, leather jackets, skulls and crossbones and so much more screaming like school kids at someone like Taylor Swift popped into his head. He couldn’t help but snort back a laugh at that.

But then two girls wearing gothic lolita and sweet lolita dresses walked by, giggling. They were looking over by him. It took a moment but he realized they were giggling at him.

‘Ooo looks like someone’s catching people’s eyes already.’ Terry just had to tease him.

Burning blood rose up to cast his face aflame. ‘Shut up.’ He grumbled.

He just wanted to know what was playing.

“Just how big is this place?” He mumbled to himself, irritated.

And the longer he searched, the longer it took for him to realize that Bruce wasn’t back yet.

Actually it was Terry that brought that detail to his attention.

‘Shouldn’t Bruce be back with your funnel cake by now?’ He had asked, as Dick stared intensely at a group of people wearing Three Days Grace shirts. Dick was thinking about maybe getting one too if that’s what they were seeing and the merch was nearby. But when Terry said this, like a switch Dick’s mind swapped over to Bruce.
Back and forth his head swiveled around. No sight of the man.

Maybe… he shouldn’t have gone to find merch.

Nothing but a sea of punks greated his eyes. No scent of Bruce’s cologne was wafting through the air. (Although now that he thought about it was Bruce even wearing it today?)

Instead something familiar came by his nose. Something sweet. Something greasy. Something like…

With wide eyes, and an empty stomach, Dick yelled, “FUNNEL CAKE!”

Deep chuckles alerted him of the source of the smell.

Turning his head, the young teen found…

“Bruce!” His eyes landed on the man. In one hand was bags filled with stuff he couldn’t see and the other- “MY FUNNEL CAKE!”

Snatching the warm goodness from the man’s hands, Dick began to chow down.

Giggling, that was obviously not from Bruce’s was heard once more.

‘No.’ He thought, shocked still. Slowly, Dick turned to see the same lolita dress duo giggling at him.

WHILE HE WAS STUFFING HIS FACE WITH FUNNEL CAKE.

‘Funnel cake how could you betray me so?!’ He wailed internally.

Bruce patted his shoulder, and led him away from the girls, saying something or another about finding their seats.

Dick just sulkingly ate his funnel cake the whole way.

As they got to their seats, Dick had finished his sweet. Honestly he wished those girls weren’t giggling at him.

‘Maybe you shouldn’t have gone absolutely wild on that cake.’ Terry snickered, knowing what Dick was thinking.

‘Shut up dude. Funnel cake is the bomb and I haven’t had it in literal ages. Let me live.’

Deciding to ignore any other teasing from Terry, Dick decided to take a look at their surroundings. Balcony seats. Sweet.

“Where were you?” Bruce suddenly asked from his own seat.

Dick turned his head to look at Bruce. Confusion was clear on his face as he said, “uh, looking for merchandise? Apparently this place is huge enough for me not to find like, any of it. At all.”

“Dick.” Bruce started, face completely deadpan. “I had told you to wait by the stairs. You weren’t at the stairs like I told you.”

Dick did not remember this. At all.
“Wait really? You sure?” He asked, as if Bruce was remembering wrong. He probably wasn’t.

“I’m sure.” Yeah. Bruce didn’t remember wrong.

A small amount of irritation bubbled up. He furrowed his eyebrows and said, “look, I’m sorry for wandering off, but I’m fine. Honestly all I wanted to know what band is playing.”

It was then that confusion showed itself on Bruce’s face. “You don’t know what band is playing?”

He scoffed. “Uh, yeah. You never told me.”

Slowly, Bruce blinked. “And you… never thought to ask someone?”

Dick opened his mouth… only to close it.

A look something akin to worry appeared on Bruce’s face while Dick felt his own heat up. “You really never thought to ask someone huh.”

He let his head fall into his hands. He so didn’t want to deal with that right then.

Too embarrassed to continue conversation, Dick stayed silent as everyone was getting ready for the concert to start.

It grew dark inside the building. They wait.

He watched as stagehands do last minute adjustments as anticipation began to flow throughout the crowd. The stagehands leave… and in their place, the band stands.

The pure excitement that was running in the crowd was almost tangible. Dick’s heart began to pound. He really wanted to know who was playing… and then… he knew it when those first few notes were played. Plucked straight from a piano.

“When I was… a young boy…” Gerard Way sings.

And the crowd goes wild.

“OH MY GOD IT’S MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE!” Dick screams, whipping his head over to Bruce.

Bruce was smiling.

“Yeah. I thought you would like it.”

“My father took me into the city… to see a marching band…” Gerard continued once the cheers went down.

Whipping his head back, Dick watched the show. The crowd began to sing along. Automatically he sang too.

“He said, ‘son, when you grow up, would you be, the savior of the broken… the beaten and the damned?’ He said, ‘will you defeat them? Your demons, and all the nonbelievers, the plans that they have made? Because one day, I’ll leave you, a phantom, to lead you in the summer. To join the black parade.’”

Once again everyone went nuts.
As Gerard sang, it felt as if something connected. He wasn’t sure if it was because he was seeing them live, or it was the sheer surprise of getting to see them.

Or maybe it was because he was experiencing it with Bruce. With Terry.

No matter what though, he continued to sing.

“We’ll carry on! We’ll carry on! And though you’re dead and gone, believe me, you’re memory will carry on! We’ll carry on! And though you’re broken and defeated, your weary widow marches on!”

And it was then that the band broke into parts, and the crowd along with it. Some following Gerard, others in the background. And Dick? He went along with Gerard.

It was beautiful.

When that last boom of the drum faded, the crowd broke into a mass of screams and cheers.

“Hello Gotham!” Gerard spoke, gaining even more whistles. “Now as you all know… Gotham can be a scary place during the night. You’ve got plants, clowns, penguins… and teenagers.”

The crowd loved it.

“This next song is dedicated to all those teenagers that don’t scare me.”

“They’re gonna clean up your looks, with all the lies in the books, to make a citizen out of you. Because they sleep with a gun, and keep an eye on you, son, so they can watch all the things you do. Because the drugs never work, they’re gonna give you a smirk, cause they’ve got methods of keeping you clean. They’re gonna rip off your heads, your aspirations to shreds, another cog in the murder machine.”

People began to jump up and down to the beat.

“They said all teenagers scare the living shit out of me, they could care less, as long as someone’ll bleed. So darken your clothes, and strike a violent pose, maybe they’ll leave you alone, but not me!”

And it continued like that. The pure energy of singing along and dancing and swaying was simply amazing. It became more somber when Helena and The Ghost Of You came up, but went back into it with Famous Last Words.

But to actually hear the words “remember when you were a madman, thought you was Batman, and hit the party with a gas can” was amazing in Na Na Na. They so definitely had to have put that song in because they’re in Gotham.

And when SING came up? Well, Dick just had to sing along.

“This here’s going to be our last song guys.” Gerard said after taking a sip from a water bottle.

The crowd was clearly disappointed.

“I know, I know, but it’s a good one. Something sweet to end on. Here’s Summertime.”

First came the drums. Then the guitar. Then the synths.

“When the lights go out, will you take me with you?”
It was a good song, but Dick was sad to see it end. He thought it was over.

Bruce, however, liked to prove him wrong by keeping him in his seat with, dare he even say it, a mischievous grin.

And then Green Day started to play American Idiot.

“BRUCE!” He nearly squeaked, “WHO ELSE IS PLAYING?! OH MY GOD”

So of course Bruce laughed at him.

After American Idiot came, Holiday. After that was Know Your Enemy. And after that was Basket Case.

It was so fucking awesome!

Then 21 Guns began to play and honestly Dick shouldn’t be surprised. After all, My Chemical Romance played some of their sadder songs too. Boulevard Of Broken Dreams came up next. When Wake Me Up When September Ends started playing, Dick felt… sad. It just really connected to him. When I Come Around was their last song, and it was good.

And then Panic! At The Disco started playing with But It’s Better If You Do which transitioned to I Write Sins, Not Tragedies and it was so awesome.

Each song that they played was simply great!

But to top it all off?

Fall Out Boy was the last band. The first song was the classic Our Lawyer Made Us Change The Name Of This Song So We Wouldn’t Get Sued while the last was I Don’t Care.

It was so… so…

‘Schway?’ Terry offered, amusement coloring his tone. It was the first time he talked since the concert started.

“Yes!” Dick couldn’t help but yell aloud. Quickly noticing Bruce’s own amused look, he quickly added, “I can’t believe we actually saw them! Bruce why didn’t you tell me?”

His guardian gave him a half shrug. “Well, evidently it wouldn’t be much of a surprise if I told you. Right?”

Rapidly nodding, Dick vibrated with pure excitement. “Okay yeah whatever you say B! Can I have my merch now?”

He chuckled. “How about we wait until we get back. For now, you can hold onto this.”

Dick blinked at the pamphlet. There in dark red letters was the name of the bands and the songs they played.

My Chemical Romance
Welcome To The Black Parade
Teenagers
Helena
The Ghost Of You
Famous Last Words
Na Na Na
SING
Summertime

Green Day
American Idiot
Holiday
Know Your Enemy
Basket Case
21 Guns
Boulevard Of Broken Dreams
Wake Me Up When September Ends
When I Come Around

Panic! At The Disco
But It’s Better If You Do
I Write Sins Not Tragedies
9 In The Afternoon
Behind The Sea
She Had The World
The Only Difference Between Martyrdom And Suicide Is Press Coverage
Lying Is The Most Fun A Girl Can Have Without Taking Her Clothes Off
Time To Dance

Fall Out Boy
Our Lawyer Made Us Change The Name Of This Song So We Wouldn’t Get Sued
Dance, Dance
Sugar, We’re Going Down
Thanks For The Memories
G.I.N.A.S.F.S: Gay Is Not A Synonym For Shitty
(Coffees For Closers)
This Ain’t A Scene It’s An Arms Race
I Don’t Care

Okay yeah Dick wanted the merch more, but it was still cool that he had a reminder of what songs were played.


Leaning back on his bed, Dick turned on his laptop. Light flooded his face as it booted up. He cracked his knuckles. A grin adorned his face.

“Let’s get to it.”

Having updated his computer, he made his search for local companies who would do the job, and get it done. Going local helps the economy of one’s area after all.

It took a while, ignoring any quips coming from Terry (even if he did agree on some bad name choices), but he finally found a relatively new website. With a little elbow grease and research
(read: hacking), he found that Kimberly’s Home Repair and Renovation was too new and hardly had any business. It would surely go out of business since it was providing designs that no one in Gotham would want. At least, not right now.

If Dick played his cards right, not only would he be able to get what he wanted, give them what they want, and end up giving Gotham a brighter future.

Well, hopefully one that Poison Ivy wouldn’t want to exploit.

Contacting them through email, he told them of the old Victorian house, what he wishes to do with it, and the opportunity to experiment a little with house that sorely needed a do over. He even offered to help pay for expenses.

If truth be told, Dick knew this would be a gamble. After all, he didn’t know if they would take the job. And if they did he didn’t know what the end result would be like.

He did know that Kimberly and her staff were good people. His research (read: hacking) showed that they were, indeed, good folk. He found it a bit admirable that they all had such diverse backgrounds. And if they all worked together well enough then clearly Kimberly had an eye for talent.

But with Kimberly’s situation, it was more than likely she would take the job.

When everything was all said and done, such as getting the bank accounts ready and things of that sort, Dick went back to his day.

As he went to go search for a board game to play with Bruce, since it was still a bonding day, the songs from the concert rang around his head. His smile grew wider when Terry absentmindedly sang along.

That night, criminals felt shivers go down their spines as Robin sang.

Chapter End Notes

I’m back y’all! Truth be told I wanted to wait a bit longer to get some more chapter’s down, but with the news of MCR getting back together on Halloween, I realized that huh. I should probably at least get this chapter out. Now, I’m not quite the happiest with this chapter, but I wasn’t quite sure how else to write some parts. Maybe later down the road I’ll rewrite it a bit and reupload the new version but who knows. Either way, I hope you’ve enjoyed this chapter!
July 11th

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Taking a critical look at Jason, Terry began his internal assessment. Jason looked a little greasy, but that was probably due to not having a proper shower. Or forgetting to take one. It happens sometimes, so Terry let it slide. The dark bags look only a tad lighter. But it showed that he actually got more sleep than expected. He was wearing another pair of clothes that Dick had bought him, but was still wearing the same pair of shoes from the other day.

“If you’re all rested up,” he finally spoke, “we can start with our warm ups and work on stances again.”

Jason sighed, muttering under his breath.

“What was that?” Terry asked, genuinely curious.

“Nothing,” he groaned. “Let’s just do this okay?”

Terry momentarily frowned, but relented. Walking in front of the younger teen, he had Jason mirror him.

Soon enough they were done and ready for the lesson. Except… the more Terry went on, the more he noticed that Jason… wasn’t exactly entirely there.

Even going slow he was a bit sloppier, compared to the last time they practiced, and his eyes weren’t that focused.

Concern grew within him and he knew that Dick had caught on. So he stopped.

Jason blinked. “… are we going to continue?”

Terry hummed. “Maybe if you tell me what’s up.”

He wasn’t surprised to see Jason tense up.

“What’s up. Let’s just continue this thing okay?” He asked, a bit irritated.

‘His’ lips twitched downwards to a frown. Then, he pursued them, an idea in his mind.

“Nope.” Terry popped the ‘p’, and flopped down. Butt hitting grass, Terry watched as Jason gaped at him.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Jason nearly yelled, confusion clear as day.

“Well, you’re obviously distracted by something. And we’re not going to get any progress until you sort whatever funk you’re in.” He said. Patting the ground next to him, he invited the younger boy to sit down.

A look of frustration adorned Jason’s face. He clearly didn’t like the turn of events. Too bad. Terry was going to try to help him out.

“Maybe I don’t wanna talk about it.” Jason retorted.
Grinning, Terry spoke, “so you admit that there is something.”

The look of ‘god damn it’ crossed Jason’s face before the kid sighed. “You know what? I’m going to sit down, but I’m not talkin’.”

Terry hummed.

And so Jason sat down.

It was quiet. No one spoke. Terry knew that with enough time, Jason would say something. But until then they listened to the birds sing and children play in the distance. Once again, the day was surprisingly bright, but cool enough in the shade that Terry didn’t feel like he was melting.

‘I wonder what’s up.’ Dick thought to him.

‘Not sure. Anything could happen from when he left the other day to today.’ Terry thought back. ‘Whatever it is, it’s enough for him to be like this.’

‘Yeah… you don’t think he’s hurt do you?’

Internally, Terry hummed. He didn’t think so, but it wasn’t a bad thing to take another look. Glancing over to the younger teen, he went for a deeper observation.

No new bruises, scratches, or even cuts were visible. Any prior injuries were currently healing. Jason didn’t show the usual tell of any sprains. There could’ve been a concussion, but outside of the practice, he was alert.

It was then that he realized that Jason didn’t bring the water bottle with him. Part of him wondered if he gave it away. Another wondered if he just forgot it.

Although if he thought about it, he forgot Dick’s water bottle as well as some healthy snacks. Too wrapped up on getting to Jason, he didn’t even go to the kitchen. Instead he went straight to the motorcycle.

Maybe, if Jason was up to it, they would go out for breakfast.

‘Jason doesn’t look… physically hurt.’ He finally replied.

Dick noticed his wording. ‘But emotionally?’ He then asked.

‘Not too sure. He needs to actually talk to us you know?’

Terry then could’ve sworn he heard Dick whine.

Or it could’ve been Jason as he let his head fall into his hands. He rubbed his face and he groaned. Jason looked like he lost an internal fight.

“Okay you know what? Fuck it.” Jason muttered to himself. Turning to Terry, Jason gave him a good hard glare.

Fully turning to Jason, Terry spoke. “What?”

“I’ll finally tell you what,” Jason said, slightly curling in on himself, “that I think it’s utter bullshit what I told your brother.”

An eyebrow rose. “What… you told my brother?” He asked.
‘Is he talking about… the other day?’ Dick provided.

Blood rushed up to the younger boy’s face. He was either embarrassed or was quickly getting frustrated.

Hands flying up in outrage, he hissed, “about my life! It’s utter bullshit that I told him that! I shouldn’t have!” His voice rose towards the end until he covered his face, giving a muffled shout of “FUCK!”

Terry frowned. Right. Jason breaking down about his home life. And how Dick and Terry were helping him.

He needed to tread lightly.

But how could he do that when he wasn’t quite sure how?

Inhale. Exhale.

“Jason…” Terry started, watching as Jason didn’t react. “It’s okay to tell people about these things, so then you don’t have to bear the weight of it all. Yeah, it sucks to tell it to someone you don’t know well—“

“I only knew him for a fucking day!” Jason snapped at him, teeth bared. “Hell, I knew you longer! By barely a fucking week! And then I tried to stop fucking thinking about it, and it worked! But for only two fucking days! Some fucking reason my mind just won’t leave it alone!”

Terry nodded. “I can’t argue with that.”

Jason snorted.

“But,” he continued, “I like to think this means how much you trust us. As for being there for you? Jason, I guess it was the right place and right time to help you. And sometimes, when we try to bottle things up, push them away, it just gets worse.”

Here, Terry began to hesitate. “I… I would do anything in my power to help you, and all of the kids out there who are hurting. If I could, I would find safe places for you all to stay, where no one could get hurt. But it’s not that easy.”

Tears were welling up in Jason’s eyes. Some even fell already from his black eye. Jason turned away.

“Jason, we want to help you. Whether or not you told Rob about your life. Whether or not you think you don’t deserve it. Just as much as those kids deserve to be cared about, so do you. You’re still a kid yourself.”

A hand reached out, but he hesitated. Gathering courage, hoping that Jason wouldn’t turn away, Terry gently touched Jason’s shoulder.

Jason tensed up, if only for a moment.

“Maybe you needed to tell someone, maybe not. And from now on, we don’t have to talk about it, if you don’t want to. You can always try to find healthy ways to vent out.” He paused for a second. “Okay?”

It was soft. It was muffled. It was the word ‘okay’ being repeated.
And so they continued to sit there. Terry, with a hand on Jason’s shoulder. Jason, letting Terry in his space.

The world around them was still bright, but somehow, it seemed quieter.

“Do…” Jason mumbled. “Do you think we can try blocking again?”

With a smile, Terry said, “of course.”

This time around, Jason was more focused, and blocked all of Terry’s moves.

Grinning, Terry informed him that after they did their finishing stretches, they were celebrating with brunch.

“But we always go out to eat.” Jason pointed out, face completely deadpanned.

“Yep.” Terry popped the ‘p’. “Gotta help the local economy after all.”

Jason only rolled his eyes, but he couldn’t fool Terry. He saw the tiny smile on his face.

Jason got to choose the place. Some sort of Waffle House.

The adrenaline was kicking in. Flip. Aim. Shoot. Zip.

Batman was getting better with the grappling hook.

When he gets back home, he thinks he should have an emergency hook just in case. Now that he’s getting the hang of it, he rather likes it.

It was kind of nice. The rhythm of shooting and pulling. It was a different type of flying than the one he was used to.

Normally he wouldn’t even do flips in midair, while he was flying through the air, but that was part of the Robin brand. And Batman had to admit it. He thinks he likes the flips too.

Of course he kept an eye on the ground. He was on patrol. He was Batman. He had a duty.

And as he flipped away, he made sure to keep an eye out for any child that needed a hero.

‘So. Think they’ll be able to fix it up in a timely manner?’ Robin asked.

Just before dinner the day before, Dick had checked the email he had used for their little project. Kimberly had responded that they would take the job and would do it as soon as possible by the request of the client. (Which was them.) Dick had written back that he was excited to see the results.

(It was more than just that if truth were to be told. And Dick had pretended to be much more serious and business like he had during the first contact.)

‘Not sure. It’s quite the fixer upper. It could use a whole village, it feels like, in order to get it up to code.’ Batman responded.
Personally he didn’t like the fact that they were told the time to fix it all up would roughly take two
to three months. Batman didn’t plan on staying that long. (Hopefully he would have found Matt
before that even gets finished. He was sure that Robin would be able to finish things up. Who
knows, maybe he’ll be able to convince the old man to take Jason in if push comes to shove.)
However, he knows that these things take time. After all, there was no way they would be able to
get such a building back into a proper living space in the span of, say, a week.

‘I wouldn’t be surprised if they did get a village if I’m being one hundred percent honest with you.’
Robin admitted. ‘But their team looks like a decent enough size for it.’

Aloud, Batman grunted.

Huh, he guess he was turning into the old man. Maybe it had something to do with being in such
close proximity with a Robin.

They went silent after that. It was probably a good ten more minutes before Robin spoke again.

‘Do you think,’ he slowly started to say, ‘you’ll be able to patrol with B soon?’

Batman stopped short of firing the grappling hook again. The cape felt heavy as it settled down
around him. (A cape wasn’t part of his usual uniform. He wasn’t used to that sort of weight on his
shoulders, settling down on his back.)

Him? Work with the original Batman? While pretending to be his partner who he knows like the
back of his hand when it comes to being the dynamic duo?

Not a chance.

They were lucky enough not to get noticed while outside the mask. But inside? Nope. If they were
committed to not have the old man notice anything, they would have to keep this up. Whatever
‘this’ was.

And even if he didn’t want to admit it, Terry was scared. Of what, he wasn’t quite sure himself.
Perhaps it was the idea that… that Bruce wouldn’t, couldn’t, recognize him. After all, Terry didn’t
exist in the world yet, if at all.

Terry was a stranger.

Minutely, Batman shook ‘his’ head. He was going to address Robin’s question when he heard a
scream.

‘We’ll talk about it later.’ Batman said back, his voice, even in thought form, rough. ‘But for now,
we got some business to take care of.’

Chapter End Notes

So yeah. Turns out I’m a bit impatient when it comes to waiting to put out the next
chapter. July 12th is still under works, and as I’m writing, I’m debating on if I want to
actually write July 13th and 14th. I might end up either combining those chapters or
make any scenes I do make into flashbacks for later chapters. Who knows. But I’m
telling you guys so you wouldn’t get surprised if I end up doing those things.
Dick woke up in a sweat.

“We forgot to buy the house.” He whispered.

Feelings of grogginess and the heart pounding of sudden alertness filled him. ‘…what?’ Terry said, his own mind probably not fully functioning.

A little louder, Dick hissed, “we forgot to buy the house.”

It took a minute before Terry could respond. ‘That… is a problem.’

“Yeah! No kidding!” He practically flew out of the bed, and basically turned into a living tornado. His room became an absolute mess. It was worth it, however, when he managed to find his laptop.

“Okay, new plan, since we probably don’t have enough time to actually go through proper things and stuff, I’m just going to… do things.” Dick explained aloud. Plopping himself on the floor, his fingers tapped against his leg as he waited for the machine to start up.

‘What do you mean?’ Terry asked. Dick could feel the apprehension that was growing in the other.

“Don’t worry about it.” He muttered as the computer finally turned on. Immediately he went to work.

‘You do realize saying that would do the opposite of calming me down right?’

‘Just trust me okay?’ Dick thought back.

‘I feel a sudden sense of foreboding.’ Terry only said. His voice sounded rather deadpanned, but Dick couldn’t really tell as his focus was on the screen and all of its letters, numbers, and symbols. ‘Wait a sec. Are you… hacking? Are you hacking something?’

Dick only hummed in reply.

‘Dick!’ Terry’s voice rose in pitch. ‘Are you doing something illegal!?’

‘Nah. I’m just making things faster for us. Everything will get paid, it’s just going to look like the systems glitched is all.’ He absentmindedly told the older teen.

Oh wait. Shit. He wasn’t supposed to tell him that.

‘RICHARD!’

Dick winced. Oh wow that hurts. Like a headache but not quite? Note to self, no more yelling in head.

‘Don’t worry about it!’ Dick thought back. ‘Just let me do this okay?’

Apparently in their mindspace, when the other mumbles, it’s incomprehensible.
That fact could be filed away for later. He just really needs to focus on, not all that legal, house purchasing. He made so many false leads just in case someone became suspicious. But overall it *would* look like the system glitched bad enough that not only did the money not go through, but any other possible ‘important documents’ involving said purchasing disappeared.

Would it look suspicious if he made any more dummies to take the fall if the banks and such find out about this? Maybe. It shouldn’t be so bad once all the money properly transferred right?

He wasn’t sure. Yes, Dick knew how to hack, having found the wonders of the computer world early into his career as Robin, but it wasn’t always a success once he was done. People weren’t the same as computers after all.

For a brief moment he thought about stealing money from say, Lex Luther, but immediately shook that thought away. If he did that then Lex would make heads roll trying to find out who stole from him. He didn’t need that right now. *Terry* didn’t need that right now, nor did Jason.

Hopefully Dick wouldn’t be late after everything’s all said and done. But nonetheless, it felt like ages before he finished doing what he had to do. Apparently hacking into the Pentagon and leaving without a trace was easier than *buying a house* through not so legal means.

Man, Dick really should brush up on his hacking skills.

With a final click of one of the keys, the deed was done. Now it was time to check up on emails! Then get ready for Jason.

His morning was certainly turning out to be… certainly something that’s for sure.

Absentmindedly he noticed his heartbeat was slowing down. Going through his emails was a calming endeavor. Most of his personal email was junk mail and nothing of importance. Switching emails, he found one notifying him that his system was done with giving Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood English subtitles. Making a mental note to himself to watch that later, he clicked the star for the email and then went to search for any other new emails.

Multiple junk mail later, he went to the last email.

Kimberly sent him one.

Dick stared at it for a moment.

*State of the house* was the title of the email.

He swallowed nothing. His mouth was dry.

Clicking on it he was greeted with a good evening and a report on the house itself. Looking through the list of, well, everything, he wasn’t surprised by it all. Nor was he surprised when it was said that the finish date might be pushed back.

“*We don’t think we will be able to create a greenhouse like floor within the house itself. We can build a greenhouse with the same fashion sense as the house proper, if you wish, in the backyard. We can even make a new door or possibly a corridor to connect the two so you wouldn’t have to deal with the weather.*” Kimberly had written. “*We also would like to know what you wish to do with the fireplace. Do you want to use gas or wood to heat up the house.*”

Dick hummed at all this.
‘What do you think?’ He asked Terry.

‘Might as well make the greenhouse out in the back. For the fireplace, can they do both?’

‘I can ask them.’ And with that, Dick went to give Kimberly his reply.

Making sure that all of the healthy snacks (since he didn’t want to be on the receiving end of Alfred’s disappointment) were secure in the bag, as well as the two water bottles, Dick nodded to himself. As nice as it was to go out to eat for almost every meal and almost every day, Jason did not need that.

Silently, Dick wished he could cook. He wasn’t as bad as Bruce. Which in itself was a good thing, however, it was a skill that he needs later in life. Dick knew for a fact that he wasn’t going to live with Bruce forever. But especially right at that moment he wished that he could at least make scrambled eggs that weren’t burnt so he could feed Jason. Because he seriously doubts going out to eat would benefit Jason in the long run.

If push comes to shove, when they figure out how to actually switch around when conscious, Terry could take over and teach the kid how to cook. (He also wonders if Terry calling Jason kid influenced him to call Jason kid. Probably.) Actually, he doesn’t know if Jason knows how to cook. It felt like a 50/50 about it. But Terry should probably be the one to do it. But the question would be where would they be able to do that?

The house clearly wasn’t ready yet. And it wouldn’t be for quite some time. Dick wasn’t sure how long Terry would be here. It really depends on how fast they’ll find Matt. And Terry’s body.

‘And remember-’ Terry began again, bringing Dick out of his thoughts.

‘Don’t talk about it, okay yeah I got it. Geeze Ter, you’re acting worse than Bruce.’ Dick interrupted.

He enjoyed how Terry sputtered at that.

Silently he wonders if Terry’s just stressed out about earlier that morning mixed with worry from the day before. With the park in his sights, however, he began to ignore anything else Terry had to say. And a certain young man was there, waiting for him.

“Jason!” Rob called out, jogging closer to the kid.

Jason grunted in reply. Instantly he looked better than the day before, and was wearing another set of clothes that they picked out. He even looked like he had gotten a decent night’s sleep! Not only that, but in his hand was the sports first aid kit.

“Okay Jaybird! Let’s focus on how to take care of any current injuries you got and make sure they don’t get any worse!” Rob chirped as he set down his goods.

Another groan. “Fine.”

Rob smiled. This was going to go great.
“Oh but first! Breakfast!” He said, showing off the fruit.

At this, Jason looked a bit more attentive. Rob had brought different types of apples, bananas, oranges, blueberries, grapes, and cherries. Not to mention he also snagged some raspberries and blackberries. All the good stuff. Unfortunately there wasn’t any pears back at the Manor. Alfred should totally get some pears.

Jason nodded approvingly at the fruit.

Smiling, Rob shared said food.

Rob frowned. This was not going great.

“Jason.” He said. “We need to check your injuries.”

He watched as the younger boy gritted his teeth. “Yeah I know! You already said that!”

“Then why aren’t you showing me?” He asked, tilting his head a little.

“I did show you!” Jason argued.

“Yeah, you showed me your eye and your ankle. Both of which are healing nicely. Actually I’m glad that Ter didn’t have you practicing on a sprained ankle.”

“Okay first of all, those are my injuries. Second of all, yeah my ankle was never sprained!”

Rob hummed. Yes it wasn’t sprained. Instead, he somehow got a bruise on it. It looked old enough anyway.

Silently they stared at each other.

Both Dick and Terry knew that Jason had gained more injuries the day they had met than they were shown, but now that Dick was teaching Jason how to take care of himself, Dick needed to know these things. And that included Jason taking off his shirt.

(Sure Jason had allowed him to patch him up when he met ‘Rob’, but he didn’t get as far as checking out Jason’s torso. Well, until now.)

“You’re not going to let up,” Jason narrowed his eyes, “are you?”

“Nope!” Rob chirped.

A groan reached his ears as the younger boy resigned himself to his fate. And as he began to take his shirt off, Rob’s face became closed off. Already catching a glimpse, neither he nor Terry liked what they saw.

Underneath Jason’s shirt was an array of bruises. From the looks of it, he probably acquired them the previous night. But most of them were old. Some probably from the day Terry saved him. Looking closer he saw some scars. They ranged from blades to cigarette burns. They were few and far in between, but they were there, nonetheless.
He really wanted to ask what happened but…

“How bad is it? The pain.” Rob instead said.

Jason averted his eyes. “It’s not that bad.”

In the grand scheme of things? It wasn’t that bad. At least, the bruises weren’t. But they were still bruises. They weren’t big so it wasn’t an adult that caused them. Maybe another kid? The older ones looked more aligned to that small gang that, well, ganged up on him. The blade marks and even the cigarette burns could come from being out and about, coming across the wrong people…

He mentally shook his head. Right, don’t pry. If Jason wanted to talk, then the guy would talk.

None of Jason’s injuries showed signs of splitting open and bleeding out. Neither did it look like they were internally bleeding, but that wasn’t something Dick could actually tell. He wasn’t a doctor.

Rob hummed. “Well, if it starts to smarts real bad, I suggest something like Advil.” There wasn’t much he could do, after all.

He watched as Jason nodded. As he put his shirt back on to hide away his injuries.

Time to have a chat while the kid relaxes.

‘Hey Ter?’ He thought over.

‘Yeah?’ Terry thought back.

‘Tell me what you’re thinking.’

‘Only if you tell me what you’re thinking.’

Internally, Dick huffed. ‘I’m thinking that Jason should rest. If he insists on training, go for some easy stuff.’

‘Funny,’ it sounded like Terry almost gave a small huff of laughter, ‘I was going to suggest the same thing.’

Dick’s lips twitched, wanting to show off a bittersweet smile. ‘Great minds think alike, huh?’

“Okay so!” Rob said, clapping his hands together. “No practicing blocking and the whatnot. Stretches only if you really want.”

Jason jolted as if he wasn’t expecting this turn of events. He probably actually wasn’t expecting these turn of events. Rob wasn’t exactly expecting these turns of events either.

“What! Why?” Jason demanded. His eyebrows furrowed together and one of his hands clenched into a fist.

Did Jason actually want to continue to train? (To be fair, he could have said no in the first place. But with what he said days before, maybe he was afraid of what could happen if he said no?)

“Well…” Rob said, stretching out the word. “If we’re being all technical, you probably shouldn’t even be training until you’re fully healed. I’m getting the feeling that that isn’t going to happen though. I mean, you’re still banged up and yet Ter’s been teaching you how to block. Although I gotta admit, it’s kind of good to know how to block when you’re injured. But still.”
A scowl was directed at Rob. Rob sent him a shrug in return.

“What if I want to do more than stretches?” Jason said, scowl still there.

Once again, Rob shrugged. “Then Terry and I would have to talk about what you *can* do.”

Pausing, Rob began to think… he honestly didn’t know if Jason knew about it, but… it was worth a try.

“If any of your injuries get worse,” he said, “you should probably go to the free clinic that Leslie Thompkins runs. She takes care of just about everyone there. I can even give you the address if you want.”

Jason’s scowl lessened as a look of confusion took over. “Why?”

“Because I’m not a professional doctor?” Rob gave him a look. He wasn’t sure if Jason could totally see it, but still. “There’s only so much I can teach you, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t go look for a legitimate doctor to give you a proper look over.”

Jason just stared at him for a good minute. Then he just sighed. “Okay, fuck it. Fine.”

He smiled. He won this round.

“Awesome!” Then an idea popped into his head. “Wanna learn yoga?”

Blinking rapidly, Jason processed his words. “Why,” he began, “would I want to learn yoga.”

A smile turned into a grin as he shrugged. “It’s relaxing *and* it helps you become more flexible. Gotta be a fluid when you dodge around yeah?”

He snickered a bit at the deadpanned ‘no’ that was sent his way. “Well, let’s do some of the easy stuff. And after a while we can have some lunch.”

And that was that.

Robin was sure tonight was a slow night. Even Batman, the one who was standing next to him, had said something along the lines of it being a slow night. Only in the language of Batman. Honestly Robin was surprised by how relatively tame the nights were. It’s like ever since Freeze did his thing, everyone decided to lie low.

A sharp scream pierced the air.

Well, not everyone.

Together, working like a well oiled unit, the dynamic duo flew over to the sound.

And when they got there they met with a legitimate cat burglar.

Watching as the cat attacked the would be robber, Robin couldn’t help but think that Catwoman would be proud of the cat fighting back.
'That reminds me,' he thought as his partner tied up the scratched up man, ‘you should meet Catwoman sometime.’

He felt the suppressed confusion float over. ‘Why?’

It was a short and sweet question. This was clearly the Batman of the future he was dealing with.

‘Well, don’t you wanna see what my universe’s Catwoman is like?’

‘… I’ll think about it.’

It wasn’t a no. So Robin would take it.

“Robin.” He was being called.

Grin in place, Robin followed his Batman to the rooftops.

Chapter End Notes

Hey, hi. Sorry for the long wait, but it’s here! It’s not that long, all things considered, but it’s something and I hope you’ve enjoyed it. After writing this chapter I realized that I should probably continue with writing July 13th, however I may combine it with July 14th to idk make things go faster I guess? And as much as I would love to write the whole entire day, in order to make the story more… idk meaty? I’m not really doing that. Wether or not I go back and add things later down the road is another story, however. So yeah.
July 15th

Chapter Notes

Surprise Beach, here’s a new chapter… and it’s a time skip. But yeah no, like I said before, as much as I want to write everything down, there’s only so much I could write and not make things a bit tedious for the reader. I know this chapter isn’t a lot, but sometimes you just gotta go and say “fuck it” and post a fic. Or in this case, a chapter.

But yeah no I definitely need to work on the next chapter (chapter 13) and figure out how much time I should skip and whatnot. Anyway, I hope you like this chapter!

Terry knew for a fact that he came to the park too early. He and Jason agreed to meet at a later time than usual, but at this point it’s basically a habit. He was over in a more secluded area, but he was positive Jason could find him if he went and searched.

(As much as he likes helping Jason out, he hates the fact that his stay in this Gotham was long enough that he has a routine. Just how much longer was he going to stay here? When will he find Matt? Or even his body? He doesn’t know.

But it’s hard to search for so long without Bruce or Alfred getting suspicious. He wouldn’t be surprised if they were suspicious already. At least Terry’s lone patrols gave him more of a chance than not searching at all.)

Two days ago, Terry had broken the news and told Jason while they were doing yoga. Sure, Terry didn’t know much other than the basics, but Dick promised he would teach him more of the acrobatic stretches that would go under ‘yoga’ to help Jason out. Then yesterday Dick went on a whole spiel about treating a cut or cut like wound.

“We gotta make sure nothing gets infected!” He had said. And then he had Jason practice sewing on a cloth doll. Terry had a feeling that he himself would soon be subjected to the same cloth doll.

Honestly Terry guessed he just wanted to see how the park was doing before he met Jason though; since he was probably a good hour or so early. All the ice left by Mr. Freeze was officially gone. So there were a lot more families around. It was nice to see them having a good time. If there was one thing he was expecting, it was the sight of far away smiles and the sound of faint laughter.

If there was one thing that Terry wasn't expecting, however, it was the camera kid. Said kid was true to their word and hadn't gone out at night like he told them. Or at least to his and Dick's knowledge. But they haven't seen them on patrol so the duo only hoped that the kid actually did what they were told.

But here they were. Making a beeline over to him. In the daytime. They wore a different set of clothes yet it looked nearly the same as the last one. Not to mention the same camera was around their neck. It didn’t take even a second for Terry to recognize them. They didn’t even bother to hide themself!

They walked right up to him, and just stood there. In their expression was the same nervousness as before. However this time Terry saw something like determination hidden within.
"Uhh, hi?" Terry said, confused, and falling back on that fake accent of his. (The one Jason had deemed 'fake as hell'. Terry, however, thinks it was quite the convincing Boston accent.)

Instantly the kid drowned their nerves and a steel determination took its place. "I need to talk to you."

That… didn't really bode well.

"I know who you are."

That definitely didn’t bode well at all.

Quickly, he held up ‘his’ hands. He then thickened his accent, silently hoping it would help. “Look kid, I dunno what ya talking about-"

“You’re Robin.” They interrupted. “Or at least you’re using Robin’s body.”

There must’ve been a record scratching. Because everything stopped. His mind froze. Because… because what?

‘Hoooooly shit.’ He didn’t know who thought that. His mind was too caught up in the fact that a nine year old knows that he’s practically possessing Robin’s body.

What the fuck?!?!?!

HOW????????

“I-“

“I know I’m right.”

Terry heavily sighed. Because seriously. What?? He needs to process this, but there’s hardly time for that.

‘This kid can’t be serious? Are they?’ Dick asked, worriedly.

“Listen, kid, I don’t know what you’re talking about. If this is a game, I sure as heck would like to know all about it.” Terry tried. Because seriously. Why the fuck- scratch that, how the fuck did a nine year old find out about… all this?

“I have proof.” They had to be bluffing.

Terry scoffed. “Sure kid.”

But then the craziest thing happened. The kid pulls out an envelope. He opens it to show pictures. Of Robin.

What the absolute fuck?!?!?!?

“Robin was last sighted in Gotham on July 4th, helping Batman fight against Mr. Freeze who was wreaking havoc on this park. Later that day he was seen going into the Hall of Justice with fellow young heroes such as Speedy, Kid Flash, and Aqualad with their mentors. Even later that day it was said that Robin, along with only Kid Flash and Aqualad as Speedy had left earlier in a fury, responded to a call about a fire. Robin hadn’t been seen until July 7th, on patrol by himself.”

The child was showing said pictures as they talked. Some looked like they were pulled from the
internet. Around the time they pulled out a photo for July 7th, the photos looked more… close, somehow. They were from a distance, but they were clear. Crisp. The one taking these knew what they were doing.

It looked like the same quality Terry saw when the child let him look at their photos, when they had first crossed paths. And in those set of photos was a very familiar one.

One where Robin was dropping down onto a criminal.

“Robin’s movements during this time were… different. The way he would flip and land during and between jumps were clunky, as if he hadn’t practiced in a while. If at all. And the way he would fight was less about dogging and more hitting.” The child continued. “Then the next day Robin was patrolling with Batman, and his movements were normal. But then the next he was alone again. However it was showing that he was getting better. A pattern came to show that every other day Robin would switch between going alone or with Batman. Whenever he’s alone, Robin isn’t really Robin…”

He couldn’t move. Heart was pounding. Sweat was dripping. He didn’t even know if he was breathing or not.

“Either Robin got replaced, or somehow, you’re switching places with him.”

If a child figured this out, does this mean Bruce…?

‘Terry.’ A whisper filled his mind. ‘You’re panicking.’

He absolutely has every right to be panicking right then and there.

“Why are you telling me this? You have no proof that I’m Robin.” He felt like he wasn’t even there. It was… it was almost like he wasn’t in control again. He couldn’t tell if he kept up the accent, but he knew he was still ‘behind the wheel’.

“Because I know who Robin is. I know who you are.”

The child’s voice seemed to pop whatever strange bubble he was in. ‘His’ head jumped up from the pictures. The fires of determination was still strong, in the child’s eyes, but he could see something else. Worry.

“What happened between July 4th and July 7th Dick?” They asked, the worry truly shining through. “I want to help.”

What…?

“What?” The word just slipped out.

A blush appeared on their face. “Well, I mean. You’re not Dick since today marks one of the days with the other person is out and stuff. But like… if you’re good I wanna help figure out why you’re here… and stuff.” Any conference they had dwindled by the time they finished.

Terry very much didn’t know what to do. Actually he did know what he needed to do. Breathe.

Inhale.

Exhale.

That… felt better.
“Okay.” He started. Then he rubbed the bridge of ‘his’ nose, moving the sunglasses a bit. “How did you come to the conclusion about the… whole… identity thing.”

He wasn’t even looking at the kid when they said, “there were only three people in the whole world who could do a quadruple flip. Robin can do a quadruple flip.”

Something within him froze.

‘My family…’ Dick breathed.

This whole thing was a mess.

‘What should we do?’ Terry asked. Because seriously. What the fuck.

‘I don’t know!’

They were both panicking.

So Terry just. Let ‘his’ face fall into ‘his’ hands. He didn’t actually care if the slagging sunglasses were getting smudge. He just held everything in place.

And he breathed.

“Why.” He finally said.

He could hear the child startle. “…why what?”

Terry looked back up. “Why were you taking pictures? If what you’re saying is right, then why bother going out at night to take pictures? You’re a child, you can get seriously hurt. Not to mention that your pictures can get into the wrong hands.”

How was it possible for the kid to simultaneously pale and blush? He was pretty sure that was physically impossible.

“I know and I’m sorry!” They shouted, face all scrunched up with guilt, eyes squeezed shut. “At first it was just to make sure it was all real! And it just sort of spiraled from there! I develop all my pictures at home, and no one knows about them. I hide them away in a place I know no one would find them. I just…”

Terry could see tears trying to leak out of those closed eyes. This… was getting complicated.

“Do you parents know where you’re going out at night?” He had to know. He could feel the same nagging worry from Dick.

The child froze. “No one knows what I do. Well, other than you.”

Well. Hm.

At least neither he or Dick were panicking anymore. Terry… needed to think.

‘… okay so.’ Dick said.

‘So.’ Terry repeated.

‘What do we do?!’
Terry internally winced at that. ‘First of all we gotta stop screaming since that hurts. Second of all... keep an eye on the kid I guess.’

‘And what? Tell ‘em what we’re doing?’

Outwardly, he huffed a sigh. ‘I think I technically already told them that they’re right.’

Terry... Terry sat down. The grass cushioned him. It tried to tickle and scratch at ‘his’ hands. He plucked a single strand to fiddle with.

‘Is that a good idea?’

‘Dick, I don’t know. We were planning on asking them if they saw Matt or my body if we met them again.’

‘... ask them if they know who Batman is.’

He rubbed ‘his’ forehead. “Okay. Fine. But tell me. Do you know who Batman is?” Terry asked, looking up to the child’s face.

A hesitant, but determined, gleam shine in their blue eyes. “Yes.” They said.

Terry groaned.

“Kid,” he began, “you do realize that there is a chance that if I’m not Robin, but possibly a bad gu, you could possibly be in huge trouble. Like, kidnapped and possibly tortured kind of trouble.”

He could not afford to feel guilty about what he had said. A literal nine year old could be in serious danger with such knowledge. But this did not stop the sting when the child’s skin tone settled on being pale.

“I know this. I took that risk.” The child spoke up. That hidden determination grew tenfold, appearing on their face. “And you’re not a bad guy.”

They spoke with such certainty. Such conviction.

God Terry was going to regret this, if he wasn’t already.

“Yeah.” He said, ignoring how Dick’s voice was cracking with his emotions. But he finally realized that the fake accent wasn’t even there anymore. He didn’t know when he lost it. “I’m just trying to find my way back home.”

Everyone was silent. A small breeze caressed both parties' hair, as well as the trees, bushes, and the grass itself.

“Where is home?” The child whispered.

“Would you believe me if I said it’s in another universe?”

He watched as those bright eyes slowly widened at the easily given knowledge.

“This isn’t even my body,” Terry continued to say, “and no, I don’t know where it is either. I don’t even remember how we got like this.”

The child gulped. “We?”
“You were right. Robin’s sharing his body with me. He’s still here. He can see what I can see, hear what I can hear. He can even feel and taste.”

The child began to tremble. A red blush rose to their face.

Terry sighed. “Kid, please sit down. You look like you’re about to faint.”

They did as they were told.

It was quiet, as they sat in the grass. There was the background noise of families playing together, having quality time together… birds were singing as the wind made the plant life rustle.

Suddenly the child spoke up. “Did you come here all by yourself?” They asked.

The teen paused. Should he tell them? He felt like he should think it through. Even though he reminded Dick of their conversation about it… He was having second thoughts. He might as well, since he already admitted to the fact that he’s a stranger in Robin’s body.

He thought about it for a moment longer and then… “It’s more than likely that a young civilian boy around your age came with me. I don’t know if he’s in the same situation as I am. I also don’t know if he and my body are even together.”

He hopes Matt’s not in the same boat he’s in. He hopes that Matt was with his body, and that maybe his body still has something in it that recognizes Matt as someone to protect. If that’s even possible.

The child nodded. They were quiet for another moment. And then suddenly, “Tim.”

Furrowing ‘his’ eyebrows, Terry perked up curiously at the name.

“My name’s Tim.” The child, Tim, explained.

That… was also familiar. Familiar face, and now familiar name. But it was something that was just out of reach. Something he just can’t grasp. He’ll figure it out later, he supposes, but he knew it was going to bug him.

“All right Tim. Call me Terry.” With nothing better to do, he held ‘his’ hand out to shake.

Tim hesitated for a moment. But in the end took it, and shook it. After letting go, it became awkward again.

“Is there anything I can do to help?” Tim asked, hesitantly.

Terry blew out some air. “Well, given your history of going out at night, I want to know if you had seen that civilian boy I was talking about. He’s roughly the same height as you, has black hair and blue eyes, and the clothing he was last seen in were a green shirt, black pants, and black shoes. He probably has mud and dirt on him, as that’s what I was able to see the last time I saw him.”

Tim was quiet for a moment, thinking. “I’m sorry, but I don’t think I saw anyone with that description.”

Inwardly, Terry wilted. “I understand.”

“But maybe I could-”

“You’re not going out at night anymore.” Terry interrupted. He already knew what Tim was
thinking of, and he had to put an end to it. “Listen Tim, it’s dangerous out there at night, and I will not let you get hurt. I appreciate the offer to help, but no. Due to your previous history of going out, I just wanted to see if you managed to see him before.”

“But-”

“No, Tim.” Terry sternly told the child. “And that’s final.”

They stared at each other for probably a good two minutes. Within that time frame, something awfully familiar began to grow within those blue eyes. Rebellion.

Sounds of footsteps alerted the two to a newcomer. Whipping their heads over, Terry saw that Jason was walking over to them and oh shit he forgot about Jason.

Jason froze at the sudden attention. “Uhhh, am I interrupting something?” He asked, eyes shifting between the teen and the child.

“Nope!” Terry said, Boston accent in place as if it never left, as he swiftly stood up. “Tim here is just leaving!”

Jason gave him a look. “You know this kid?”

“Not really, just met ‘em today.” Terry shrugged before turning back to Tim. “And you’re almost late for something right? Better leave before you’ll get scolded or something.”

Tim stood up. Walked over to Jason, and said, “hello, my name is Tim. I notice that Terry’s been teaching you how to fight and I wanna learn too.”

OH HELL NO!

Jason was rightly bewildered. But before anyone can butt in, Tim continued.

“I can be your opponent, and it would be a great opportunity for us to learn how to fight people of different sizes.” Tim then turned to Terry and looked straight at him. “After all, Gotham is a dangerous place to live in, so I might as well learn how to defend myself.”

They just stared at each other. ‘That little twip.’ Terry thought.

“Holy shit Terry, what did you do to piss him off?” Jason asked, impressed with the situation Terry buried himself in.

“Nothing!” Terry was an innocent man.

‘Well…’ Dick just had to butt in. ‘Wouldn’t this be a good way to keep an eye on him? Better to know what he’s doing rather than have him go out without us knowing?’

‘We have no way of knowing whether or not he’s going out at night. Unless, ya know, we stalk him and set up a bunch of cameras.’ Terry pointed out.

‘Yeah, but only some part of the day is better than no part of the day.’

Slagg it all. Slagg his life and slagg him.

Throwing up ‘his’ arms into the air Terry exclaimed, “fine! Okay fine I can train ya!”

He did not miss the not-so-subtle smirk.
The little twip.

Jason just snorted. “If I had known you were such a pushover, I would have learned to keep that puppy eye look.”

Terry sputtered at that. “I am not!” He yelled.

“Psh, yeah you are.” Jason then turned back to Tim. “I like you, kid.”

He watched as Tim blushed. “Oh. Um. Thank you?”

‘I can’t believe that we’re in this situation.’ Dick thought over to him. ‘How did we get into this situation?’

‘I have no clue.’ Terry thought back, fighting the urge to rub ‘his’ temples. “Let’s just get this over and done with.” Terry muttered to himself.
Okay so. This chapter isn’t the longest, nor is it really the meat of episode 3. But TECHNICALLY it’s part of episode 3. The opening of it. And already we’re getting tiny changes. Anyway, this morning I told myself I’m going to try to update at least 3 stories, so the updates might not be long and I might end up going back and edit to add some stuff. I might not. Who knows? Anyway, hope you’ll like it!

Oh! And spoilers for Batman Beyond episodes The Call part one and two.

“Are you sure there’s still no signs of Speedy?” Terry asked for Dick.

Sitting on Bruce’s desk, he fiddled with a pen. The one Bruce was using actually.

Was he interrupting any important paperwork? Probably. But from the looks of it, the old man wasn’t doing much anyway.

Blue eyes locked onto blue eyes. Bruce had that calculating look in them. That look of thinking. Of debating. Terry knew this deep within his soul. He guessed that this is what most Bruces do.

“Well,” the man started as he pluck the pen from smaller fingers, “we might have a lead.”

Now that grabbed both boy’s attention.

“What do you mean by ‘might’?”

Again, that calculating look in his eyes. Was the information he had something that Dick wouldn’t like? Terry probably wouldn’t like it either.

“We think he’s still working, as there have been reports of criminals being taken down by ‘Speedy without Green Arrow’, but we haven’t fully tracked him down to any specific place.”

“Did he take anything of his when he left?” Dick had filled Terry in that Roy was living with Oliver. “Any personal items besides ya know.” He then mimed the bow and arrow.

Bruce just sighed. “No.”

Man, did the old man look tired.

‘Remind me to force Bruce to take a nap.’ Terry thought to Dick. Absentmindedly he began to tap a random tune on the desk.

‘Only if we get Alfred to help us.’ Dick thought back with exasperation. ‘Trust me when I say that doing it all alone is pretty much a losing battle.’

Mentally Terry snorted. ‘Don’t I know it.’

Old man Bruce Wayne is cranky Bruce Wayne. And tired Bruce Wayne is hell.
“But,” the subject of the secret conversation broke the train of thought, “we think we might have an idea where he would be tonight.”

If the sentence from earlier grabbed the boy’s attention, *this* certainly yanked it.

“Really? Where?”

“That,” Bruce said with that tone of voice Terry never quite liked, “is classified.”

Some sort of weird scoff snort mangled itself out of ‘his’ throat.

“Bruce!” He cried out, hands being thrown into the air. He narrowly missed the desk lamp in his haste. “Come on! You gotta tell me where he is!”

Frustration from two boys mingled as they watched the richest man in Gotham lean back. Slightly scarred fingers steepled just beneath the nose. They stared down each other for a mere moment.

“No.”

“Gah!” Terry shouted, jumping off the desk, “why not!”

He quickly turned around to face the man. Who in turn still had that look in his eyes.

Bruce was hiding something. Terry just didn’t know what. “We’re debating on if we should contact him or not.” The man finally settled on.

Furrowing ‘his’ eyebrows, Terry tilted ‘his’ head. “What do you mean?”

“We’re not sure how exactly he would react to the news.” Bruce spoke slowly. Deliberately. “And we’re not sure what he would do as a result. I understand that Roy felt… betrayed, and is angry as a result of what had happened on July fourth.”

Terry scoffed freely at that. “Yeah no kidding.” He then ran fingers through ‘his’ hair. “His world would be rocked. If we managed to give him the news.” He added that last bit.

‘To find out your uncle has been living a life with fake memories…’ Terry thought, shaking ‘his’ head.

‘Kinda makes you wonder how long Jim and Roy actually knew each other.’ Dick thought back. ‘I mean, if Jim knew Roy since he was a kid-’

‘Wait.’ Terry interrupted. He put a hand to ‘his’ chin. ‘You said Jim knew Roy since he was a kid?’

He could feel Dick’s hesitation. ‘Yeah… why?’

‘If Jim’s memories, practically all of them, were fake, then wouldn’t that mean the memories of when he knew Roy as a kid were fake too?’

A moment of silence… was realization a feeling? Was it something like horror?

‘Then if Roy said he knew Jim as a kid, then how would the memories match up.’ Something like denial bubbled up between their connection. ‘Wait wait wait. Bruce said that our Jim might not be the real Jim. So maybe they gave him the real Jim’s memories?’

Oh he was going to hate having to entertain this thought. ‘Or,’ Terry began slowly, ‘like Bruce said, there never was a Jim Harper.’
Shock rippled through.

‘But-‘

‘That means someone tampered with Roy’s memories too.’ Terry had to say it. He had to. He hated it.

‘But why would they do that?’ Dick asked.

That. He didn’t know. The only thing that was anything like this was…

Terry sharply inhaled.

‘Did I ever tell you how I met Superman and became a member of the Justice League?’ He suddenly asked, inner voice automatically going down to his usual Batman register. He knew he didn’t tell the younger boy. But it needed to be asked.

‘No?’

‘Superman approached me to join the league. Later he told me he wanted me to investigate the members of the league. Joining it was just a guise.’

‘Why?’

‘Because it was suspected that there was a traitor in the league. Micron, a member, got attacked and was in critical condition. Nearly got killed. More attempts on the others lives confirmed the suspicions. Later on we even thought Warhawk was really dead.’

‘But you said thought. Warhawk’s still alive?’

‘Yes. And when Bruce and I went to investigate…’

‘What? What was it?’

‘We found out that it was Superman that did it.’

‘WHAT?!’

Terry winced at the shout.

“Dick?”

Startled, Terry glanced up to Bruce. The man was staring at him. His hands were in a more lax clasped state while his, very minute facial expressions, showed a bit of curiosity.

“Uh,” ‘his’ voice cracked. Heat rose up as he cleared ‘his’ throat. “Yeah Bruce?”

The man stared at him a little longer. Thinking. Always thinking.

“What are you thinking about?” He asked. It surprised Terry how soft it sounded.

Should he tell him?

Terry was an outsider with an outsider’s perspective…

“I’m… wondering if any memories of Roy’s match up with Jim’s…” Terry began slowly. “And if… if somehow they, whoever they are, Cadmus or whatever, we’re able to do this with Jim… if
they were able to do it to Roy. Mind control him or something. Memory alteration. That stuff.”

‘Terry…’ Dick’s voice sounded desperate.

Terry stared at Bruce straight in the eyes. “If Jim was able to be like this for years, who knows how long they were able to do something similar with Roy.”

Ever so slightly, almost gravely, did Bruce nod. “Then you understand why we have to be careful when contacting him?”

‘His’ shoulders drooped down. “In case any of ‘them’ are still in contact with Roy.”

“Yes.”

It felt terribly cold in Bruce’s office.

“It’s best that we take care of it. Okay Dick?”

All was silent… and then… “okay.”

‘Why?’ Dick thought. He didn’t need to elaborate for Terry to understand.

‘Because we found out that Superman was being controlled. By an alien named Starro for five years Dick. Five years. And nobody noticed until we went to confront him on being the traitor.’

Bruce stood up from his chair. He made his way close to Terry, and set a hand onto ‘his’ shoulder. “We’ll find a way to get everything sorted. And when that’s done we can help Roy in any way we can.”

Sincerity was written all over the man’s face. It was so… so… open.

Leaning into the touch, Terry said, softly, “Okay.”

Then the man gave him a small smile. So much like and unlike the ones Terry has come to know from another time. Another universe.

Slowly, over the past few days, Bruce had been doing quite a bit to… hang out? Bond with? Something like that, with Dick. Going to the concert the week prior had seemingly broke the ice. During his days in charge of the body, Terry was learning how to act around Bruce.

But he doesn’t think he could ever, ever, get used to seeing Bruce this… open.

He obviously haven’t gone through what his Bruce has gone through… not with Tim and-

Wait.

Tim. Tim, Tim, Tim Tim Tim Tim Tim. Tim.

TIM.

It had to be a coincidence.

But the Tim here… no. Definitely a coincidence. There’s no way little stalker kid Tim was little street orphan Tim Drake. The Robin who got his wings clipped.

He… was not going to think about that now. He needed to sort of focus on Roy. And if on the
slight chance that little Tim was in fact the same Tim Drake then Terry would have to do his damn best to make sure the Joker never gets his grubby hands on the kid.

Although it didn’t help that Tim didn’t really talk about himself yesterday when Dick made the boys try putting on gauzes on each other. In fact Tim was only focused on the lesson and doing it right. If anything they learned that Jason has a bit of brotherly instincts himself.

“Dick?” Bruce asked again.

“Hm?” He focused back over to that youthful face. “Yeah. I’m just still thinking. Can’t help but be worried you know?”

Bruce… smiled a wider smile at him and nodded.

Now Terry knows that Bruce Wayne smiles. He was given all sorts of smiles since he first met the man. Well, the man he worked under. This Bruce Wayne’s smiles we’re more frequent. And usually they happened when Dick was in charge. Mainly due to Terry not really interacting with Bruce.

But god it felt weird. And the man still had his hand on ‘his’ shoulder.

“So.” Terry said, suddenly. “Since you guys are doing that, I’m going to-“

“Interact with your team tomorrow.” Bruce interrupted.

“I-“ Terry blinked rapidly. “What?”

Bruce smirked. “Don’t think I haven’t noticed that you haven’t gone to them since we gave you our answer.”

Blood rushed up. Heat flared.

Whoops.

‘Aw man!’ Dick moaned. ‘I knew we were forgetting something!’

He managed to bring out a sheepish smile. “If I said I forgot would you believe me?”

Amusement was apparent as Bruce hummed. “I suppose I could.”

Relief flooded both boys at that. “So tomorrow?” He asked.

Bruce nodded. “I thought I might as well give you the heads up. Now run along, I need to do some paperwork.”

Bruce? Actually doing paperwork? Terry laughed out loud at that. “Sure, don’t have too much fun without me.”

Slipping out of Bruce’s hold, Terry escaped the office. As he ran he couldn’t help but remember when he first found Mr. Wayne actually doing his role as CEO.

*Holding a freshly brewed cup of tea, Terry knocked on the rich dark doors.*

*“Come in.” The grumble came through, muffled by the thickness of the doors itself.*

*The teen smiled. Opening the door, he peeked in.*
There, in the middle of an organized mess, with glasses on his face, was Bruce Wayne in all his glory.

Whistling, he fully let himself in. “Do my eyes deceive me? The all mighty Bruce Wayne using a pair of readers? Or do you call them cheaters?”

The old man just looked at him.

Ignoring the look, as he can tell how much he was annoying his boss, Terry walked closer to the desk. He quickly looked around for a coaster.

Heaven forbid that there would be any staining on the wood.

Finding one, he set the mug down.

Looking up from the cup, he saw Bruce look at him with a single raised eyebrow.

“Tea?” The man asked.

“Thought you can use a break.” Terry smirked, gesturing his head to the huge pile of paper Bruce has yet to get to. He didn’t even bother with the mountain that Bruce managed to get through before Terry even knew what was happening.

It took awhile for him to get to the Manor. Possibly even longer to find Bruce. The man hadn’t responded much other than to play with Ace.

Terry made tea.

“Hn.”

He just snickered.

“I’ll have to finish this as soon as I can.” Bruce suddenly said. “Now that Paxton is in prison, I have my company back.”

“And lemme guess. This paperwork is needed for you to get back on your throne. Right?”

That infamous shark sharp smirk was thrown his way. “Not exactly.”

He watched as Bruce slowly sank down into his plush chair. It was… surprising to see the man do this. How he let his bones wind down. Let his shoulders sag. A familiar look crossed over Bruce’s face. Something that looked vulnerable.

Something that made him look his age.

“Some of this is actually paperwork that I haven’t touched in years. Things that deserve to finally be read and be decided if they’re still relevant or not.”

Mr. Wayne took his glasses off. It was incredible to watch the old man rub his eyes. It was a very humanizing thing to see.

Terry knew Bruce was human just like everyone else.

It just felt like the man was larger than life sometimes.

These rare moments help him remember that Bruce was no spring chicken anymore.
“Sounds fun.” Terry said, not really knowing what else to say.

“Not really.” Bruce said as he put the glasses back on. “Now you said you made tea?”

He smiled at this. “Yep!” A quick gesture to the mug. “First time I made this blend. Lemme know what you think.”

Again, an eyebrow rose.

A moment passed.

Bruce finally took the cup. He stared at its contents for another moment before he sniffed it.

Terry’s confidence sure was growing.

Sip.

“Where did you get this?” Bruce sharply turned his gaze to his assistant. Terry wasn’t surprised by the scowl that appeared.

Time to come clean. “A recipe I found. Bruce, you know I’ve been finding Alfred’s recipes to try out.”

“This is the first time you actually gave me anything of his.”

It was true.

“Well,” he began, “there’s only so many people who I can try the recipes on. I’d figured I’d make you my guinea pig this time ’round.”

The scowl never left.

“So?” Terry prompted. “What do you think.”

Time really liked to crawl around the two.

“I think,” Bruce said before taking another sip, “that Alfred would think this would be adequate.”

Score!

Terry beamed at that.

“Although I appreciate the break, Alfred would probably scold you for trying to take me away from my paperwork.” Bruce said, setting the mug back down.

“Oh?” Terry smirked. “Did you try to procrastinate your paperwork a lot?”

Bruce smirked back. “I suppose you could say that.”

Shaking his head from the memory, Terry skidded to Dick’s room.

He needed to get ready for the kids.
Tim fell down to the ground with an ‘oof.’ His chest rose and fell quickly. He looked flushed.

“Damn, you lasted longer than I thought.” Jason spoke Terry’s and Dick’s thoughts.

Today was all about endurance. Well, for Tim it was. Jason was memorizing a book Terry had found about self defense.

The plan was that as Tim ran around the park, Jason would read what the book had. And depending how far he got when Tim came back, he would read all that aloud to Tim. It would be something good and informative for Tim to listen to as he cooled down from the run.

The book was rather thick. Tim came back at the end of chapter five.

They expected him to be back at chapter two.

‘I think we underestimated him.’ Dick thought. ‘Although you’d think we shouldn’t since he’s ya know, a little stalker kid.’

Terry visibly frowned. Reaching down, he grabbed Tim’s water bottle. It wasn’t as ice cold as it used to be. If Tim kept this up they might have to start bringing energy drinks.

‘Or maybe he’s pushing himself.’ Terry thought back. ‘I know I did that plenty of times. I’m sure you did too.’

‘Ya know,’ Dick told him as he squatted down next to the kid, ‘I’m wondering if you can genuinely read my mind.’

Mentally Terry snorted. Arms reached for Tim’s head and back. God he looked so tiny ‘Considering we can feel each other’s emotions and this how we talk to each other, I wouldn’t be surprised.’

“Open your mouth.” He instructed.

Tim cracked his eyes open. Fatigue was evident, but those blue eyes were as sharp and focused as ever.

Quick glance to the bottle and Tim immediately went to reach for it-

Terry quickly yanked it out of Tim’s range. “Ah, but don’t drink it too fast.”

Tim goaned.

“You didn’t let me finish-“

‘More like you didn’t even start in the first place-‘

“I don’t want you to drink it all. Gotta save some for later. Savor it ya know?”

“Basically he doesn’t want you to drink too much water and then puke because it’s too much for your stomach.” Jason supplied.

It wouldn’t be all that surprising if Jason was rolling his eyes.

Tim nodded as Terry brought the bottle back to him. With his help, Tim sat up to drink properly. He flipped the lid.
Small sips.

Good.

When he was done, Terry took the water bottle away. It felt pretty heavy still. It was nice to know that Tim had listened to him about being careful, but at the same time he worried.

Keeping a hold of the water bottle, Terry picked Tim up. “Okay kid, story time.”

Tim, of course, sputtered.

“I-I can walk!” He argued.

“I know.” Terry cheerily replied.

Only a few steps were needed to bring Tim over to where Jason sat underneath a tree. It wasn’t much trouble. Kid felt lighter than the water bottle.

Which wasn’t good for various reasons.

Okay maybe Terry was exaggerating, but the point still stood.

‘We are so going to feed him.’ Terry thought. Tim, somehow, subtly pouted as Jason patted him on the head once he was seated down onto the grass.

The teen sat Tim’s bottle down next to the tiny boy. “I want you to sip on it while Jason reads to you okay?”

‘I’m pretty sure nine year olds are supposed be heavier than however he weighs.’ Dick mumbled.

“Yeah okay.” Tim mumbled.

Soft snickers filled the air. Even though Jason was teasing the boy, Terry could see he was worried. It was comforting to see.

‘Nine year olds are supposed to be around what? Sixty four pounds?’ Thought Terry, recalling how Matt boasted how much he weighed on the scale they (for some odd reason) had in their bathroom. Slowly he walked a little bit away, leaning on another tree. Watching the two interact. ‘Tim could be forty five pounds wet.’

‘Are we sure Tim’s nine?’ Dick asked incredibly.

‘If he is then either he’s just tiny for his age or something isn’t right at his home. If he isn’t then he’s probably thinks lying about his age might help him somehow.’

The mental scoff alone was enough for him to want to make one physically. ‘Is it bad for me to hope it’s the first option?’

‘Nope.’ Terry popped his ‘p.’

Although, he wondered if the house could be fixed faster.

But for now, Terry let himself watch the two boys get along swimmingly.
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