halfway to heaven, mile out of hell

by themadmaenad

Summary

After the event of Court of Owls, Jason 'kidnaps' a distraught Dick for a road trip away from the gloom of Gotham. On the way, the two find out more about themselves and each other then they bargained for.
Written for the Jaydick Summer 2018 exchange.

Notes

So this is the fastest I've ever written something this long. I planned on maybe 5000 words, and here we are. Jaydick is the ultimate brainworm, apparently. So here you go, element78! I hope I did justice to your prompt. I took a few liberties with the beginning, but nothing too drastic. Just enough that I could more easily work with it. I hope you enjoy! I'm weak for road trip fics, so I was happy to get that prompt! Also at 2am I had a vision of Jason in flip flops and decided I Needed it. So please keep in mind he is wearing flip flops. I decided to make it post Court of Owls, as that felt like one of the most vulnerable moments for Dick. However you don't need super detailed knowledge of that arc to read this.
There is indulgent headcanon and some shoehorned Damian, because he and Dick are such adorable brothers. The songs referenced are Born to Run and Better Days (title from Better Days) by Bruce Springsteen and Fast Car by Tracy Chapman. I'm a newbie fan, so there will definitely be mistakes. But hey, if DC can ignore canon, so can I! This was also my first time writing smut so, uh... be gentle? Initially I was going to make this longer (Jay was going top wrestle gators in Florida) but time just ran out. Plus the plot was kind of meandering. Also, I have never been to America or the East Coast so don't expect
accuracy.
Big shoutout to pentapoda and paperempires for being such lovely mods! The sprints were a blessing. Thanks modsquad! Also a thank you to the awesome LuthienLuinwe for betaing the first half of this fic. Anything wrong in the second half is mistakes I missed, not them!
Finally, thanks to my jaydick discord pals for all the love and support, you are all the best! Please enjoy~

See the end of the work for more notes

Every fool’s got a reason to feel sorry for himself,

And turning his heart to stone

Tonight this fool's halfway to heaven and just a mile outta hell

And I feel like I'm comin' home

-Better Days, Bruce Springsteen

Sometimes Dick would forget why he had left Gotham.

Sometimes he would be back at the manor, eating Alfred’s cooking and laughing at Tim and Damian’s antics, planning mission with Bruce and poking fun at Jason, and he would forget. He would wonder why he didn’t just come back to Gotham, with her never sleeping streets and endless supply of adventure and his family.

Then Bruce would do something like this, and he would remember.

Bruce’s tendency to keep secrets was one of his most infuriating qualities. It would have been fine if it had just been small things, but it never was. He hadn’t told them everything that had happened with the Joker. He had waited months to tell Dick when Jason had died. Even if Bruce had known about Damian earlier, Dick wasn’t sure he would have told any of them.

And now he thought he had the right to hide things about Dick’s own family from him.

Sure, there was no easy way to tell someone “Hey, the circus you grew up in and thought of as home? Yeah, the people there were all just training you to be given over to a super secret assassin organization, and your parents probably knew about it.’ That was bound to be an awkward conversation.

But it was one they should have been had when Bruce discovered what he had about the connection between the Court and Haly’s. He would have much preferred to hear it from Bruce instead of his zombie great-grandfather (or whatever he was).

Dick didn’t know what hurt more.

Now, sitting in the cave waiting for the debriefing about the Court to be over and Alfred to finish stitching up his forearm, he found himself irritably tapping on the table with the two non-broken fingers on his right hand. His pinky and ring finger had fallen victim to his creepy relative’s boot
and were both wrapped and in splints. His left foot was in a walking cast, ankle badly sprained thanks to a jump he really should have used a line for. His right knee was wrapped in athletic tape for the same reason. He still had a bruise on his jaw in the shape of Bruce’s fist, aching to remind him about his mentor’s latest betrayal.

The others weren’t as bad off. Nothing too unusual for a fight with a Big Bad. Some stitches and bruising, but no concussions or broken limbs. He suspected the Talons had gone especially hard on him; punishment for not fulfilling his role, no doubt.

He absentmindedly picked at the dried blood on his temple from a gash there, then winced as he accidentally poked his sensitive black eye on his right side.

Bruce was still intoning, and Dick sighed in frustration.

He just wanted to go to bed and not have to think about owls, assassins, or dead relatives for a little while.

His sigh had caught Jason’s attention. The other man was making one of his rare appearances in the cave, having been involved in the fight. He usually took anything involving Gotham personally, so Dick wasn’t too surprised to see him there.

Jason raised an eyebrow, sending a silent ‘what’s your deal’?

Dick looked away. He glanced at the others. Tim and Damian weren’t as observant of other people’s moods as Jason was, and neither boy seemed to be paying attention. Tim was tapping away at a tablet, probably doing damage control for the company. Damian was wearing his ‘I don’t care about what you are saying, but I am too well trained to say so in the aftermath of a battle’.

Bruce was saying something about the importance of unity.

Then Alfred, making one of his perfectly timed interruptions. “Master Bruce, perhaps this can wait until the morning? I am certain everyone is rather tired after such a lengthy battle.”

Bruce looked surprised but nodded. “Of course. Everyone should rest.”

Not even Batman could say no to an authoritative Alfred. That was why Alfred was everyone’s favorite.

Dick gingerly got up from the chair and shot Alfred a grateful smile. The old man smiled back and nodded.

The others got up and stretched their sore muscles, and Dick made his way toward the elevator. He had no urge to drive back to Bludhaven tonight. On his way, Bruce stopped him with a hand on his shoulder.

“Dick, are you alright?”

He looked at Bruce. He could see the concern in his eyes. He knew that in Bruce’s own (severely fucked up) way, he thought he had been doing the right thing by keeping Dick’s past a secret from him.

In some ways, that just made it worse.

He shrugged the hand off his shoulder. He wasn’t in the mood to play nice tonight. “I’m great, Bruce. Just peachy.”
He could feel his mentor’s eyes on his back as he stalked away.

After having what was possibly the best shower of his life (excluding the one after he had gotten covered in alien goo), Dick pulled on a pair of sweatpants and started towards the kitchen. Knowing Alfred, there would be a mountain of sandwiches waiting there.

Upon arrival, he found the room empty except for Jason, who was sitting at the island with a half-eaten cheese sandwich in his hand.

“Yo,” he greeted, raising his free hand in mock salute.

“Hey,” Dick replied, “I didn’t think you were sticking around.”

Jason shrugged. “Alfie tempted me with food. Plus, I figured I’d make sure everything was settled before I take off.”

“Hm.” Dick replied. He took a seat at the other side of the island, claiming a sandwich from the pile.

They sat in silence for a moment before Jason spoke again. “Things seem even more tense then usual with you and Bruce. Not that I’m one to talk, but…”

Dick laughed. “Yeah, I’m not his biggest fan at the moment.”

“You know I’m always up for shit talking Bruce. What’d he do this time?”

Dick sighed and rubbed a hand across his face. “It’s a long story.”

Jason raised an eyebrow. “I’m not going anywhere yet. And you know I’m always looking for excuses to get pissed at Bruce.”

Dick smiled sadly. “I know. There’s good reason this time, though.”

Jason looked at him expectantly.

The two of them had never excelled at communication. They hadn’t spoken much before Jason had died, and afterwards there was little other then snarled threats and pleading shouts.

Dick could feel the story sitting heavy on his tongue. It occurred to him there was no one else to tell. He wasn’t going to burden Damian with it, and the boy might not totally understand. He and Tim weren’t as close as they had once been, and his brother was more pragmatic than empathetic. He hadn’t had a real conversation with Barbara in a long time, Cass and Steph were with her. Alfred had enough on his plate as it was.

Jason was the only person around he could talk to.

“The Court. It turns out that their attack on us- or, me at least, wasn’t just about controlling Gotham.”

“What do you mean?”

Dick took a deep breathe and told Jason about what had happened. The revelations about his family. Haly’s being a front for training a new Talon for every generation. How he had been
meant to be a new Talon, would have been if his parents hadn’t been killed and Bruce taken him in. He told him about Bruce finding out and hiding the truth from him for weeks.

When he finished, Jason just stared at him for a moment before speaking. “Well, shit.”

Dick huffed a laugh. “Pretty much.”

“So, what, he just didn’t think you deserved to know?” Jason asked, anger clear.

“Apparently not.”

Jason snorted indignantly. “Typical. Fucking typical. Just when you think maybe he’s gotten his shit together, he goes and does something like this. Even to you.”

Dick frowned. “I’ve never been an exception, trust me.”

Jason shook his head. “Yeah, I know, just... fuck.”

“Eloquent.”

“Shut up, Dickface. I’m being sympathetic.”

“You’re so good at it.”

“Yeah, well, you know me. I’m just a touchy-feely kind of guy.”

“Oh yeah. So sensitive. Like a delicate flower.”

“That’s me. I’m so in touch with my feelings.”

“Everyone here is. We’re the picture of emotional health.”

That got a laugh out of Jason, and Dick revelled in seeing the rare sight of his genuine smile. When it stopped suddenly, and Jason was directing a glare behind him, Dick didn’t have to guess who was there.

“Jason. I wasn’t expecting you to stay.” Bruce said, voice as blank as ever.

“Yeah, well. I live to shock.” Jason replied.

“I’ll ask Alfred to ready your old room.” Bruce started, but Jason shook his head.

“It’s fine. I’m leaving soon.”

Bruce frowned. “You know you’re always welcome to stay.”

Jason smirked coldly. “Sure, B.”

Dick could feel Bruce’s gaze on his back but didn’t turn around. This was part of the old cycle between them. Screaming matches followed by periods of silent treatment. Tonight was going to be no different.

The only change was that Dick wasn’t in any kind of childish snit; he knew he had reason to be angry.

“Goodnight then, boys.” Bruce said, leaving the room.
Jason whistled. “Is it chilly in here, or is it just me?”

Dick sighed. “If I wasn’t so tired, I’d get out of here before he tries to tell me why he’s right again.”

“Yeah, I get that.” Jason paused. “I’m headed back to my bunker.” He said, getting up from the table. When he reached the door to the kitchen, he turned slightly. “Dick, do you… have anyone to talk to about this?”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s just…” Jason sighed. “Look, you take care of Damian, probably more than Bruce does. You’re there for Tim. You always show up for Bruce, no matter how much of an ass he is. I know you won’t want to burden Al. I have Kory and Roy to keep me on track, right? Even if I don’t want them to.” He paused. “You shouldn’t bottle this shit up. It just comes back to fuck you over. I would know.”

Dick blinked. “Have you been reading self help books or something? That advice was surprisingly nonviolent.”

Jason rolled his eyes. “Someone in this fucking family has to deal with their issues. And you know I live to surprise.”


Jason nodded sharply and left the room, not looking back.

Dick looked out the window of his old bedroom. It had gone virtually unchanged since he had left the manor as a teenager, the only things missing being a few belongings he kept in his apartment- the Flying Graysons poster, Zitka, and some photos.

He could remember how strange it had been to live somewhere as huge as the manor- or somewhere without wheels, really. When Bruce had given him this room, he remembered commenting that it was bigger than his family’s whole trailer.

In some ways he had never gotten used to it. He had always opted for the smallest room with the Titans, and his loft in Bludhaven was on the smaller end of average.

Bruce had never entirely understood his (and later, Jason’s) discomfort with the luxurious nature of their new lifestyles.

Bruce didn’t understand a lot of things.

However, Dick reasoned as he fell back onto his bed, luxury mattresses were one thing he couldn’t object to. Especially after a long night of getting the shit beat out of him. He felt himself nodding off when there was a light knock at the door.

With a sigh, he answered. “Yeah?”

The door opened, and Damian stepped inside. Dick sat up. It was rare that Damian knocked on the door; usually only when something was wrong.

Dick sat up. “Hey, Dami. What’s up?” He was exhausted, but not so exhausted that he wasn’t
going to give him little brother his full attention.

“Grayson, I wish to speak with you.” Damian said. Titus was by his side, leaning into his leg.

“‘Course, any time, you know that.” Dick patted the space on the bed next to him.

Damian made his customary annoyed expression but conceded to sit on the bed and allowed Dick to hold him in a one-armed hug. Titus squeaked until Dick pat the other side of the bed, and the dog happy jumped up and draped himself over their legs.

“So, what’s up?” Dick asked.

His relationship with Damian was a funny thing. It had occurred to him before that he was performing the role of a father more so than a brother. It had started when Bruce was gone, but even now he was most likely to be the one at school events, and he had a sneaking suspicion he spent more non-patrol time with Damian then Bruce did.

“Drake was reviewing the footage of the Cave from the time of the attacks by the Court. I assisted him,” Dick translated this to mean he had hovered over Tim’s shoulder trying to pick a fight, “And some of the footage was of yourself and father. You fought.”

“We fight all the time, Dami.” Dick replied.

“I am aware. But he struck you. When we were partnered during your time as Batman, I asked you why you did not physically reprimand me. You said that a teacher or guardian should not hit their charge. You told me it violates the trust of that relationship. Does the same rule not apply to father?”

Dick sighed. He should have known Tim would indulge his obsession with security; he had been around long enough to be used to Dick and Bruce’s all out brawls. He probably didn’t even find them odd. Love Tim though he did, his idea of a healthy family dynamic was only marginally better then Damian’s.

“You’re right. I did say that. And with you and me, that’s true. Or with you and Bruce, or Jason even. But Bruce and I are different.”

“I don’t see how.” Damian replied

“Look, Bruce and I have been partners a along time. Things between us are complicated.”

“What caused him to hit you?” Damian asked.

Dick bit his lip. He didn’t want to get into his history with the Court with Damian. The boy was protective. He didn’t know that the Court’s actions had been semi-personal, and Dick thought it was best if he didn’t know until things had blown over a little. Dick wouldn’t put it past him to try and punish any straggling Court members.

“Don’t worry about it, okay? Bruce and I just fight a lot. It’s how we are.” He said.

Damian huffed. “I am not worried. Merely considering the impact of any internal conflict on your efficiency.”

Dick laughed and ruffled his hair, causing Damian to squawk in protest. “Of course. Don’t worry, I’m at peak efficiency.”

Damian shot a pointed look to his walking cast.
“Okay, maybe more like 75 percent. But still. It’s fine, really.”

Damian looked at him for a long moment. “You have not improved in your skill at lying Grayson.” He said. “You are clearly troubled.” Damian turned onto his side, into Dick’s chest. “Titus is asleep. Therefore, I will be staying and allowing you to hug me, as it seems to cheer you.”

Dick grinned, wide and real. “Thanks, little D. I appreciate it.”

“Tt.”

Dick woke up the next morning to Damian’s hushed whispering.

“Titus! I have told you repeatedly not to wake Grayson. He is injured and requires rest. Come here at once.”

In response, Titus licked a stripe up Dick’s face. Dick reached up and scratched the dog behind the ear, earning several more licks.

“Titus, now you’ve woken him!”

“It’s okay. There’s worse way to get woken up. Besides, I’m going to head back to Bludhaven.”

Damian made a vague sound of disapproval.

With a groan, Dick sat up. Everything ached, and his eye had swollen overnight, limiting his vision. “Alright. I’m gonna grab a bite then head down to the cave. You coming? I bet Alfred made Injury Waffles.”

Damian nodded his assent, and they began the trek downstairs. Tim was sitting sat the counter, being cajoled by Alfred into having something other than coffee for breakfast. Everyone mocked Dick for his dietary habits, but at least cereal and takeout were solid food, which was better than the coffee and energy shakes that Tim and Bruce seemed to live off of.

“Morning, guys.” Dick said, grabbing a plate and stacking it with waffles. “These smell great, Al. Thanks.”

“It is my pleasure.”

Dick ruffled Tim’s hair as he walked by. “Eat you waffles, Timmy. Coffee isn’t a food group.”

Tim responded with a vague sound, tapping away from his phone. Dick gave it about two minutes until Alfred took it out of his hands and admonished him for breaking his no phones at the table rule.

He was proven right when Alfred snatched the device out of Tim’s hands and pushed his plate towards him with a meaningful look. Tim mumbled in protest, but quickly dug into the food.

Breakfast was quiet, with the three vigilantes nursing their injuries and their stomachs as Alfred dutifully kept up the pile of waffles.

Dick scarfed down several waffles before harassing his brothers and Alfred into hugs. He hobbled down to the cave and threw his tattered suit in the incinerator. He would have to use a replacement
when he finally got back to patrol.

He had just zipped up his bag when he heard familiar footsteps behind him.

It was a mark of how bizarre the past few days had been that Jason was back in the cave twice in 24 hours. He had left some compartments of his utility belt in the cave, discarded in the rush between depositing a limping Dick onto a cot and getting stitches done on his left arm.

He didn’t want to go back to the cave, but he also didn’t want to buy a new belt. That one had been worn just enough to sit on his hip comfortably.

He went through the front door for a change, just to say hello to Alfred and receive a disapproving look for not taking any breakfast, despite assuring him he had eaten already.

As he descended the stairs to the cave, he heard raised voices that he quickly identified as Dick and Bruce. He wasn’t surprised; the two butted heads enough on normal days, never mind post-assassin-related-familial-drama days. With a sigh, he headed into the cave. There was no point trying to outlast the fight; the two had been known to go at it for hours, and Jason had no intention of sticking around that long. He walked in as Dick practically screamed at Bruce:

“-used me!”

“My priority was dismantling the Court, I didn’t have time to-”

“Right, of course. No time to tell me about my own family. God, do you ever listen to yourself Bruce?”

“This kind of reaction only proves that you wouldn’t have been able to stay focused if I’d told you.”

“That wasn’t your call!” Dick shouted, stepping towards Bruce and jabbing an accusatory finger towards him.

“Dick, step back.” Bruce replied. He wasn’t shouting; he had reverted to his quiet, cold anger that Jason was so well acquainted with.

“Why? What? Are you going to punch me again? Go on, I’m sure you can even hit the same spot. After all, your past must be protected right? Unlike any of ours.”

That threw Jason for a loop. He’d seen Dick and Bruce scream at each other countless times. It used to practically be a weekly occurrence.

Emerging through the entrance, he finally spoke up. “Well this is quite the domestic, even for you two.” Both Dick and Bruce’s heads whipped around to face him. “And I thought we weren’t supposed to hit each other outside training, B. Or is that one of those ‘do as I say’ rules?”

“Jason-”

He threw his hands up. “For once I’m not interested in fighting with you, B. Just here for my shit. And Dickie,” He said, turning to him. He hadn’t been entirely sure what he was going to say when he had walked into the cave, but one look at Dick’s red face and tearstained eyes made the choice for him. “I’m headed out of town for a few days. You can’t take your bike home. I brought my car. Let’s go.” He asked, cocking an eyebrow.
An hour later they were on the road

“So, uh, Jay?”

“Mm?”

“Where exactly are we going?”

Jason ran a hand through his hair and let out a breath. “Don’t know.”

“I thought you had a planned trip?”

“Not really. Just felt like getting out of Gotham for a few days. And I figured Bruce could deal with his own shit for once. I mean- they weren’t in the Alley. They weren’t in Bludhaven. And fuck knows neither of us owe him anything.” Jason replied.

Dick didn’t reply, just gnawed on his bottom lip. Jason forced himself to keep his eyes on the road and not on Dick’s lips.

“I’ll be honest; we always joke that one day one of you is going to kill the other, but I wasn’t expecting him to up and deck you. I thought I was special.”

Dick laughed dryly. “In his defense, you were trying to kill him. This is a recent development.”

“What’d he punch you for anyway? You try to tackle him in revenge or something? Because the whole vengeance schtick is my thing; don’t steal it.”

Another snort. “No, I didn’t. Just… things were said. I may have brought up his parents.”

“Yikes. Rookie mistake, Goldie.”

“I know, I know. I was just angry is all.”

“Hey, I know the feeling. Angry with Bruce is kind of my default relationship with the guy.”

“Well, that’s true.” Dick smiled. “You still haven’t said where we’re going.”

Jason thought about it. Where were they going? He thought for a minute, and eventually settled on a destination born out of childhood memory. “Summer in Gotham is always shit. It smells, and everyone’s in a bad mood in the heat. When I was a kid I never had A/C, and I used to think about going to the ocean. Not the harbour, somewhere with blue water and no hypodermic needles and green sludge washing up.”

Dick looked at him for a long moment, expression inscrutable.

“Anyway,” Jason continued “I always thought about the little vacation towns, like on TV. But I never convinced Bruce to go, and then I ran out of time. The team and I were always too busy after.”

“So, you’re taking me to the beach?” Dick asked, smiling slightly.

Jason coughed and hoped that he wasn’t blushing. “Look, I just- I know what it’s like to feel betrayed by Bruce. We both do. And when you were in the cowl, things went south. I know that.
But now that I’ve got my head a little more squarely on my shoulders, I just feel like it would do us both to get out for a while. Kory and Roy can handle things on their own for a while, and you’d be out of commission even if you went back to Bludhaven. Besides, I still owe you for that trip to Aspen.”

Dick laughed in surprise. “I wasn’t sure you remembered that. How long ago was it, six years? Eight?”

“Something like that. I mostly remember falling down a lot. And your mullet; I don’t think any amount of head trauma could wipe that from my memory.”

“Hey, it was fashionable!”

“It really wasn’t. Neither was the gold fringe, by the way.” Jason answered. The V-neck down to your navel, on the other hand… Jason’s mind supplied. “If it wasn’t for Alfred picking your formal outfits, I’m not sure you’d have any idea what fashion even meant.”

“Says the guy whose idea of formal wear is a leather jacket without blood on it.” Dick replied.

“Hey, I can be fashionable when I want to be. There’s just not much call for it in Crime Alley. Besides, I’d mess up those monkey suits at Wayne functions on purpose, just to piss off the old rich people who looked at me like I’d just crawled out of a dumpster.”

“Ugh, I always hated those functions.” Dick said, rolling his eyes.

“Really? I seem to remember you charming to crowd out of most of their wallets at quite a few fundraisers.” Jason said. He also had a distinct memory of a 14-year-old him staring in awe at how Dick’s bespoke suit sat on his shoulders.

“Doesn’t mean I liked it. I treated it like a mission to prove to them that the ‘gyppo’ could be civil. That one Bulgarian family, what was their name…. anyway, I always made sure to put on a show for them after the wife asked me if I’d stolen any silverware.”

Jason whistled low. “Damn, you really were better at that shit then me. I would’ve just decked her.”

“Oh, it was tempting, believe me. Sometimes I’d wear an earpiece just so Babs could shit-talk them all in my ear the whole night.”

“I used to just hide in the kitchen and talk to the caterers. Alfred usually took pity on me and pretended not to notice.” Jason said. That had been the one thing he had enjoyed about those nights; talking to real, normal working people was a relief after spending all his time either in a cape or around Bruce’s elite contacts.

Jason turned south onto the freeway. “We may as well go south, enjoy the nice weather. It’s only May, so it won’t be too crowded.”

Dick nodded. “The circus used to stop in boardwalk towns,” he said. “Once, I think it was when we were wintering in Alabama, we performed right beside the ocean. The animals hated it, and there was salt in everything. But I loved it. I would swim every day for the month we were there. I’d perform in town for pocket change and walk along the boardwalk.” He paused, rubbing at the back of his neck. “Like you said, not much swimming in Gotham harbour. Bludhaven, neither.”

Jason looked over at him again. Dick’s face was turned away from him, gazing out the window. The air blowing in the window had blown his hair back and it gently caressed the curve of his neck. Jason could just barely see the sunlight filtering through his long eyelashes, casting shadows
down his cheeks. The bruises and cuts on his face sat on him like spilled paint on a canvas, illuminating what he had endured.

“Did you want to go back?” Jason finally asked after what he realized was too long a moment watching Dick.

Dick shook his head. “No. It’s just a good memory.”

They lapsed into silence after that.

Dick looked over at Jason. He had to admit, he was surprised by the sudden camaraderie between himself and Jason He and Jason had patched things up, sure, but they hadn’t gotten that close. The animosity between them had died down; Dick had learned to stop shifting his issues with Bruce onto others, and Jason had stopped trying to kill members of the family.

He couldn’t say he didn’t appreciate this little kidnapping, though. He knew he would have to either face Bruce or let his actions go eventually, but he had no desire to do so at the moment. For now, he was content to breath in the clean, salty air that began a few miles outside Gotham.

The sun was setting low on the horizon, and his eyes followed the rolling hills and houses that passed them by.

Even after so long, Dick still felt most at home on the road. He had never really adjusted to setting down roots, to unchanging scenery and a home that wasn’t on wheels. He remembered his mother had once told him it was a family trait.

*Itchy feet, chavi.*

“My mother used to say that we have been on the road so long we don’t know how to stay still. When she was a child we could move more freely, but the war hindered us. Her parents were in camps as kids, so they were always terrified of crossing border patrols.”

All his memories of his mother were now clouded with anger and doubt. Had she known? When she came to America and married his father, did he tell her? Had she known about it before Dick was born? When did she find out? She had to have known. Didn’t she? If she did, was she going to let it happen? Or would she have taken him away, stopped him from being taken? Or would she have stood by, let him be turned into one of the Talon creatures? She had always told him she had left behind her camp and family in France so that she could build a better life. Hadn’t she also wanted a better life for him?

In the midst of his thoughts, something caught his eye.

“Hold on,” he said, “what is *that*?”

Jason looked in the direction he was pointing. “It looks… like a giant elephant?”

“It looks like a giant elephant!” Dick exclaimed. “We totally have to go.”

“Dude. You grew up around elephants, why are you so impressed by a fake one?”

“Jason, it’s huge!” Dick said. “C’mon, turn around. Let’s go see it!”

Jason sighed, but he did turn around in the direction of the elephant.
There were times it was easy to forget Dick was a deadly vigilante and not, say, a kindergarten teacher.

He had practically trotted towards the giant fake elephant, despite his limited mobility. Apparently, Grayson Joy was the most powerful pain reliever. Jason strolled up beside him as he engaged the young woman in the ticket booth in conversation.

“-saw it, and we just had to stop. Right, Jay?” Dick asked, turning to him and grinning.

Damn if that grin couldn’t still convince Jason to do anything. “You had to stop, apparently.”

Dick just laughed at him and began asking the booth attendant about the structure. Apparently, the Elephant was called Lucy, which Dick thought was just great (and of course launched into elephant stories of his own; Jason shot the teenage attendant a look of apology. Once Dick got going on stories, there was no saving yourself). Finally, he bought two tickets to climb what was apparently the largest fake elephant in the world, which also seemed to impress Dick immensely.

Jason resignedly followed him up the rickety stairs in the elephant- he knew that if this was going to become a road trip of any length, he was going to have to deal with Dick’s excitement and whims. (Which were not, in any way, cute. Absolutely fucking not.)

Though he may at some point, he decided, have to point out that climbing huge flights of stairs wasn’t going to do Dick’s ankle any favours.

Emerging from the top of the elephant, Dick let out a breathy “wow.”

Jason had to admit, it was a beautiful view. The clear day allowed them to see for miles around. He was used to looking out over Gotham, with her deep dark alleys and gothic structures. This low lying, quiet place felt strange. He was a Gothamite, born and bred. All this space and fresh air was never going to feel natural for him.

It certainly seemed natural to Dick, though. Jason watched him take a deep breath of the fresh air and smile at he gazed out at the ocean off in the distance.

There were some things that Jason had left behind in his grave. Memories hammered out of Him by the Joker’s crowbar, dreams realized as Robin. Even the Pit couldn’t bring back all of him, and parts of the 15-year-old who had died in Ethiopia were never going to come back.

But one thing that had stuck around was his damned crush on Dick fucking Grayson.

Because Jason, for all his bravado, had a tender heart. There was no one who knew it except Alfred and his 10th grade English teacher, but buried underneath all of Jason’s issues and damage and angst, there was a romantic. Not that he would admit it with a gun pointed at his head, of course, but it was there. It was why Alfred had given him his boyhood copy of the complete Shakespeare plays. It was why Ms. Khan had asked him if he wanted to do an extra credit project on Wuthering Heights. That romantic heart hiding deep inside of him had taken a look at Dick Grayson, at Nightwing, and fallen head over heels. No matter how much Dick had disliked him in the early days, no matter how often he tried to talk himself out of it, the feelings had stayed.

That V-neck on the disco suit hadn’t exactly helped matters.

Now, as a grown ass man, he still had to tell himself that he didn’t get butterflies in his stomach whenever Dick smiled or put a hand on his shoulder.
It was a trap he fell into again and again. He distanced himself as far as possible from those emotions, from all the drama that being allied with the Bats entailed, but inevitably he would end up back with them, with Dick, and unsuccessfully combating a crush that was going on ten years old.

He had a vague memory of Talia saying that sentimentality was his greatest weakness, which… she may have been batshit insane, but she was probably right on that front. And now those very same emotions had led him into dragging Dick along with him on a quest to be away from Bruce’s shit.

*What the fuck are you trying to achieve here, Todd?* He thought to himself.

He didn’t have a good answer for that.

But right now, he Jason next to Dick, watching him smile out at the ocean and the town surrounding them, grinning like an idiot with joy and having climbed a giant fake elephant.

So maybe, that traitorous romantic in his heart suggested, things just might work out for the best.

Dick’s excitement only increased when they reached the bottom of the elephant and he found out there was a gift shop.

When Dick was finally satisfied with his purchases of a t-shirt and two plushie elephants (“I have to add them to my collection! Oooh, maybe I’ll give one to Damian!”), they got back on the road. The sun hung low on the horizon, and the interior of the car was lit up in a gentle orange glow. Jason let one arm hang out the window as he drove, the warm evening air running through his fingers.

“What did you always spend winters in the south?” Jason found himself asking. For all the anecdotes and tall tales Dick had spun about the circus over the years, Jason didn’t actually know all that much about it.

“Usually, yeah. Most years it was Florida. Once and a while California, but there was always a lot of competition out there. Once, Raya and Bryan and I—” Dick cut off, and the smile fell from his face. “Anyway, there was lots of competition, so we stuck to the east and south coasts most of the time. Summers were usually in the Midwest.”

Jason furrowed his eyebrows at Dick’s abrupt stop. Usually getting him to stop talking was an exercise in futility.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Dick follow the New Jersey state sign as it came and went. “Careful,” Jason commented, “If you blink you’ll miss Delaware.”

Dick hummed in response, clearly occupied by whatever thought had cut him off earlier. Dick reached over and turned on the radio. In an uncharacteristic stroke of appropriate timing, Bruce Springsteen’s voice filtered out of the speakers.

*Tramps like us,*
Baby, we were born to run.

Jason hummed along to the song, quietly singing to words he knew by heart. A few songs later the album came to an end and switched over to an indie band Roy had left in his car. Delaware unfolded around them, and the sun had dipped low enough it barely peaked above the horizon.

“Have you ever been to New Orleans?” Dick asked, breaking his sudden silence.

Jason shook his head.

“It’s one of my favorite cities. It’s a little like Bludhaven, only with culture and not as ugly.”

Jason snorted; Bludhaven was truly an ugly city; a monstrous combination of neon and decay.

“The year before my parents died, we wintered there. Daj and I spent lots of time in city busking. She made friends with some of the older performers, and we spoke French with them. It’s funny, not many people there speak French anymore. One of the strong men wrestled a gator. We made a good earning off the drunk tourists without doing much. If people are drunk enough they are really impressed by juggling. One guy gave me fifty bucks for doing a backflip. Still the best tip I ever got. We left early that year, and it was early spring when we got to Gotham again.”

The glowing lights of a ‘vacancy’ sign caught Jason’s attention, and he pulled into the lot of the motel.

Words were on the tip of his tongue, desperate to escape.

I’d go there with you.

I’m glad you had a good life, at least for a while.

I’m sorry you lost them.

Instead, he just rolled up the window. “Let’s crash here.”

Dick had argued that they could just pull the car into a field and sleep there, but Jason argued that two fully grown men were not going to sleep comfortably in a hatchback.

The motel they had pulled into bore a flickering neon sign proclaiming it was The Oceanview, even though ocean was invisible past the highway and trees. It also boasted air conditioning and satellite tv.

All in all, not the worst place a ex circus performer and a street kid had stayed in between them.

The room had the typical cheesy, ‘untouched since the 80’s’ look of most cheap motels, but at least it hadn’t charged by the hour.

What it did have was only one bed.

"Want me to go talk to the front desk?” Jason asked, eyeing the king-sized bed in the centre of the room.

"I guess so. I mean, there are two of us.

Good job, Grayson. Astute observation.
Yeah, I mean." Jason started, "It's probably big enough though. And it's cheaper than the double, right?"

Dick nodded. Money was something to consider, now that he had spent (and lost) everything in his gamble to keep the circus open. That had gone well.

"Yeah. And I could do without spending too much right now."

Jason raised an eyebrow. "Since when are you short on cash, Dickie? Bruce cut you off?" Jason asked.

"I haven't taken Bruce's money in a long time." Dick replied, snappish. Jason raised his hands in surrender.

"Sure, sure. You get fired, then? Shady business finally too much even for Bludhaven?"

"No, I didn't get fired. I quit. I quit my job and spent all my trust fund and savings on that fucking amusement park and a circus full of people who apparently wanted me dead the whole time. So now I'm completely broke, and the people I thought I could always rely on, the only part of my family I had left, want nothing to do with me."

Jason blinked. "Uh, that's new."

Dick laughed harshly. "C'mon, I know the tabloids have gotten a hold of the story. My favorite title was "rags to riches to rags." So creative."

"When you say they wanted you dead...."

"Oh yeah, that's a whole other deal then the court. My friends- or ex friends, I guess, put together a plot to kill me after Mr. Hay left the circus to me. Or maybe they were going to do it anyway, who knows? Apparently not me. I sure wouldn't have predicted them trying to kill me during a tribute show to my parents."

Jason stared at him, unsure what to say. He wasn't used to seeing Dick so distraught. Angry, sure. Frustrated, violent, irritated- all those were familiar. He'd caused those emotions in Dick many times before himself. But this kind of helpless, hopeless sadness in his eyes? Jason didn't know what to do about that.

"So, you've had a great few months, in other words." Jason joked weakly. Dick's lip twitched into a slight smile.

"You could say that, yeah."

Jason nodded. Usually he was pretty good at dealing with other people's rough emotions, provided he wasn't already pissed off. But Dick wasn't people. He wasn't someone Jason was used to being anything other then the Golden Boy. Even in his screaming matches with Bruce, there had always been a kind of righteousness about him.

Jason stood awkwardly for a moment before speaking. "You want first shower?"

Dick shook his head. "You go ahead. It'll take me a bit to get this cast off, and I have to put some plastic on my others. Plus I'll be awhile checking and redressing everything."

Jason nodded again and dropped his bag on the bed, then headed for the bathroom.
Dick took a deep breath and sat on the bed.

He didn’t know why he was spilling his guts to Jason.

Because he doesn’t expect you to be perfect, his mind answered. You’ve seen his rock-bottom and he isn’t likely to judge yours.

At least Dick’s own rock-bottom hadn’t involved any heads in duffle bags so far. No murder at all, really.

Dick had to admit that he was breathing easier away from Gotham. However much he loved the city, it was tainted by ears of blood and pain. His parents had died there, and he was meant to have stayed there as a brainwashed zombie assassin.

He wasn't sure he was ever going to be there again without feeling the tingle of eyes on the back of his head, phantom threads pulling him towards a fate he didn't even want to consider.

Jason sighed in relief as the hot water of the shower hit him. In his opinion, no place was too terrible if it had running water, and anywhere with a hot shower was premium real estate in his book.

Away from Dick's pained eyes, he allowed himself to consider the mistake he had just made.

He was going to share a bed with Dick.

They had slept in close quarters before, of course. It was inevitable on missions and stakeouts. But this was a bed, in a motel, that they were intentionally going to be sharing.

Jason was man enough to admit that Dick had featured in any number of his dreams, nightmares and sexy ones alike. The latter didn't happen too often, but the former happened regularly, and both posed separate problems.

Good job Todd, he thought. Your romance novel loving gay-ass just put yourself in this awkward situation.

A traitorous part of his mind reminded him that running off and sharing a room with Dick Grayson fulfilled a very specific fantasy of 15-year-old Jason, though that fantasy had more sex and less crying. One of those he had made detailed plans for multiple times in his head, the other he was not prepared to deal with in the slightest.

But now he was here, and he had to try and do something. God only knew Dick had tried, in his way, to do right by Jason.

It was so easy to forget that Dick wasn’t the perfect face he put on. He hid his true feelings so well, it was like he wore two masks. Even without his domino, you didn’t know if you were getting the real Dick or the projection of perfection he wanted you to see.

Jason hid his true feelings behind anger and forced apathy, and Dick hid his behind a genial smile and fake laughter. ‘Richie Wayne’, as the tabloids called him, was never far away.

But Richie Wayne wasn’t who Jason had been in love with since he was a damn teenager.

There were some things Jason had learned to simply accept about himself. He could only sleep
with a light source present, he genuinely enjoyed the taste of Alfred’s 'blood loss recovery' shakes, he was going to dream about the Joker for the rest of his life, and he was in love with Dick Grayson.

That love stayed at the back of his mind for the most part. It was a quiet, festering presence. Usually, he didn’t even need to think about it, as long as Dick wasn’t around. It wasn’t as though he walked around all the time thinking about the guy; but if they were in the same place, unbidden thoughts and longing would flood his mind until he had to go hit something or read a book to take his mind off it. Roy had accused him of just having blue balls, which- ok, fair, but not the point.

The thing was, he had thought his feelings were under control. That was, until he had gone and kidnapped Dick for a road trip with no stated destination or purpose, thereby willingly confining himself to small spaces and shared beds with the Boy Wonder. Suddenly his feelings were not as under control as he had initially thought. Hence taking first shower.

If he was going to be sharing a bed with Dick, he was going to at least take some preventative measures, because he didn’t need dormant fantasies rearing their heads when he was in close quarters with Dick's body (which had only gotten better with time, unfairly only accentuated by scars and years of use.

He had seen Dick shirtless plenty of times. There was one scar on his side, looping from just above his belly button to halfway across his back. An unlucky toe to toe with Shiva when he had been younger. The sight of it filled Jason with fear at the thought of Dick being gutted, but also turned him on in unfortunate way, because- well, few people could boast surviving getting gutted by Shiva.

Jason had imagined running his hands, his tongue over that scar, and all the others. He had thought about learning all of the scars and marks Dick had, running his mouth over what he couldn't heal.

He gripped himself with a gasp, easily falling into a fantasy that had only grown more complex as he got older. He bit his lip to ensure he stayed quiet, mindful of the thin walls of the old motel. He worked at himself quickly, not taking long to spill over into the shower water, leaning into the wall and breathing heavily.

With a sigh he soaped himself off and ensured everything was clean. Stepping out of the shower, he caught sight of himself in the mid sized mirror on the wall.

However detailed his fantasies, they were also as one sided as anything could be. Normal scars littered his body, of course. But he bore other marks that he didn't expect anyone to be able to find desirable. The white streak in his hair that he had gained after the pit had never faded, standing out for all to see who and what he was.

The pit had restored his mind and most of his memories, but all his scars remained. Jagged diamonds littered him from leg to temple, marks of the crowbar the Joker had used to beat him to death. His torso was taken up by a huge, y-shaped scar from his throat to just above his pelvis.

He had never asked Bruce what the autopsy had been for. How he had died was no secret. He assumed it was just another cover for the death of Bruce Wayne's 'son', ensuring the public that any foul play had been investigated.

Investigated, but not avenged.

He threw his shirt back on with a sigh.

Yeah, fantasy alright. As far removed from possibility as the stack of fantasy novels he had left in
his safe house on the north side.

Another fact that he had accepted about his life was that Dick Grayson was never going to desire Jason Todd.

Dick showered after him, steadfastly declaring he didn't need help with his bandages, which Jason was grateful for, as he wasn't in the headspace to handle laying hands on Dick at that moment.

Jason pulled a book out of is bag and was flipping through it when Dick emerged. There was less talking then usual from the older man, just a few quips that Jason didn't respond to as he climbed into bed.

Dick fell asleep quickly, seemingly not a victim of the insomnia that plagued the rest of the Bats. Jason listened as his breathing evened out, and he could hear very faint snoring.

Which was absolutely not cute. He refused to call anything Dick did cute, unless he was alone, drunk, or Kori was around to sympathize (or at least pretend to).

A few hours later he was half way through his book and finally turned off the light on his side. He could only hope that his dreams would remain tame that night.

When Dick awoke, it was to a heavy weight on his chest. He blinked awake blearily, then blinked again at the black and white blur in his peripheral vision that was very close to him. After a moment, he looked down and realized the source of the warm weight.

Jason.

Jason was cuddling him in his sleep.

Slowly, a grin spread across his face. Attempting to get any of the Bat clan to cuddle with him was usually like pulling teeth (unless he was grievously injured or actually crying). It was why he had gotten so good at attack hugs (which were usually evaded, except by Tim, who was usually absorbed in his phone and didn't see it coming.)

But here was Jason, the big bad Red Hood, with his arm draped across Dick's chest.

While there was a great deal of amusement factor in the situation, Dick also couldn't deny the warm feeling that spread through his chest at the sight. Things between him and Jason had been difficult for a long time, and this impromptu road trip was a major deviation from their norm. He had honestly expected Jason to go demand a new room the night before, because bonding session or not, he didn't strike Dick as someone who would be willing to share a bed on a whim.

But here he was. Cuddling.

In the midst of his thoughts, he felt Jason stir. The other man pressed his face into Dick's chest and shifted into him, obviously unconsciously seeking warmth. As he blearily blinked awake, Dick greeted him.

"Good morning, sleepyhead."
Jason's first thought upon waking was that he was very warm. He was pressed against a warm thing. And it smelled nice, like soap. Sandalwood, and a musky scent he couldn't place. He shifted closer.

It was so warm. He had sought out warmth naturally ever since his revival, anything to stave off the memory of the cold soil he had awoken in. He slowly opened his eyes.

"Good morning, sleepyhead." A voice said, syncing with vibrations he felt in his cheek.

Jason’s eyes snapped open. All at once he took in where he was and what he was doing. He scrambled up into a sitting position.

“Fuck- shitting fuck, I-“

Dick raised an eyebrow at him.

"I'm sorry, I, uh-" Sorry what? That he'd been cuddling Dick in the middle of the night? What had he thought was going to happen? The unconscious mind didn't regulate desires. It was his own stupid fault for suggesting they just share the bed in the first place.

"Jason, it's fine. I just didn't know you were a cuddler. Damian pretends I'm the only one, but I know for a fact he finds excuses to hug me. It's normal, I don't mind." Dick smiled. "It's cute that you're all flustered about it though."

Aaaand Dick had just called him cute. That was officially too much for his morning brain to handle.

"Right. I'm going to the bathroom. You want breakfast? I could do with bacon. Bacon is great."

(Or sausage, a helpful voice in his mind replied, which- not going there.)

With that Jason swung up out of bed and promptly ran away from the situation.

About an hour later they found a greasy spoon near the motel, what Jason was certain would be the first of many. Dick was stuffing a stack of pancakes into his face, covered in syrup and whipped cream. Dick had opted for the marginally healthier omelette with a side of bacon.

After some debate they decide to keep heading south. They still have no real destination in mind, except the open road leading them to either a decision or the Gulf.

Dick makes small talk with a few patrons while Jason bays with bills and coins split between the two of them. Then they return to the road.

Through silent agreement of some kind, they stick to quieter stretches of highway along the ocean. About an hour in they began to see signs for Ocean City, and it rose and fell before them. The casinos and crowds reminded Jason of Bludhaven, and he was sure they did the same to Dick.

They didn’t stop.

They were halfway to Virginia when Dick suggested they find a town somewhere. Jason obligingly pulled onto an exit for somewhere called Cedartown, slowing as they drove through the town and closer to the water.

"This should be far enough away from big cities to be a decent beach experience", Dick said to
him, smiling.

Jason nodded, and they began heading due east. Dick found reasons to stop and ask for directions at several places, which led them to a gift shop that had just opened its doors for the summer season. It had occurred to them both at some point that they hadn't really brought any appropriate beach wear, and they picked up a few things. Jason tried and failed, to convince Dick not to buy pink polka dot shorts. With a glance down at his combat boots, Jason resignedly put two pairs of flip flops on the counters, as well as a cheesy t-shirt with airbrushed starfish on it. He wasn't about to go shirtless and scare the children, thanks very much. Dick, of course, had about as much body shyness as an Olympic athlete, a fact that had been endlessly frustrating to Jason as a pent-up teen. Though in all honesty it was just as frustrating now as an adult.

It took a solid ten minutes for them to get through the store, as Dick kept getting distracted by various items and people, and Jason found a section of pulpy paperbacks. They then realized it was past time for lunch, and the shopkeeper directed them to a fish and chips stand on the boardwalk.

The drive down was short, and they were outfitted in their new beach gear. When Jason climbed out of the car, Dick started laughing at him.

"What?" He frowned. 'What, something on my face?"

"No, it's just," Dick giggled, "the big bad Red Hood wearing flip flops. I'm just picturing you wearing them on patrol. Tripping during a chase. Do you think the blood would get on your toes?"

"Shut up." Jason mumbled, shoving Dick in the shoulder.

After lunch, Jason managed to convince Dick that taking off his walking cast to walk in the sand was a bad idea, though he couldn't stop Dick from prancing around in a way no 25-year-old man should have been able to, let alone one with an ankle injury. They made their way down to the water, and Jason breathed deeply as the smell of salt and brine grew stronger as they drew closer to the ocean. At the edge of the water, he closed his eyes and tilted his head back as he filled his lungs with salty ocean air. He reminded himself that he was here, was alive in this moment.

When he opened his eyes, he noticed Dick was staring at him, a slight smile on his face.

"What now?"

Dick shook his head. "Nothing, just- you look peaceful."

Jason felt his face heat and rubbed a hand over the back of his neck. "Whatever. It's just nice here. It's quiet."

"Mm." Dick agreed. "Sometimes to city- or, I guess everything we do there, it gets to be a lot. It never stops moving, never stops demanding our attention. No matter how much we might want it to sometimes."

Jason glanced at him, unsure how to respond. He never really thought about Dick not wanting to do his duties as Nightwing, or Batman on occasion. It had always just seemed natural to him. Dick had always been a larger than life figure. Swinging above his head at the circus, making headlines as Robin, taking ownership of Bludhaven and leading the Titans as Nightwing, and working against Jason as Batman.

But he couldn't deny the weariness he saw in Dick's face. He looked stretched thin, like every responsibility he bore was weighing down on him at once, crushing him in a force of pressure.
Jason didn't know he could feel. He was quickly learning on this trip that Dick Grayson wasn’t the infallible, perfect son from his memories. He was a tired man, alone, and very much fallible.

Jason repressed an impulse to reach out and take his hand.

Nothing he did was going to make Dick's life any better.

Back on the road, Dick couldn't help but keep glancing at Jason out of the corner of his eye.

He had never seen him look so peaceful before. There was always a barely contained undercurrent of tension to Jason, whether it be anger, bloodlust, or violence. But gazing out at the water in Cedartown, he looked his age of 21, free from the weary lines of pain he usually carried with him.

He had looked beautiful.

Dick felt a blush rise to his cheeks at the thought. He was far from taken by surprise that he was attracted to Jason; he was a good-looking man (those thighs alone were the stuff of dreams).

But it hadn't been just lust he had felt. It was a warm, soft affection, the likes of which he hadn't felt for a long time. It didn't scare him, exactly. But it certainly surprised him.

Jason was full of surprises recently.

"We can make it most of the way to Virginia Beach if we don't make too many more stops." Jason said, interrupting Dick's thoughts.

"A little touristy, isn't it?"

"Did you or did you not just buy a shirt with a starfish airbrushed on it back there." Jason deadpanned.

Dick laughed, "Fair enough. Alright, let's head south."

They spent most of the drive that day alternating between Springsteen records and indie playlists on Dick's Spotify.

They didn't talk much, both lost in thought and watching the road pass by before them.

Night was falling by the time Jason (who had insisted on driving while Dick's hands were worse for wear) began to yawn. After some cajoling, Dick managed to convince him to pull over at the next motel. Bags in hand, they headed to the office.

"Two queens, please." Jason told the woman behind the counter.

Dick didn't let his surprise show. What was there to be surprised about, anyway? They had shared a bed one time. It wasn't something he should expect to become a pattern. It wasn't like they were together.

They both got ready for bed with less talking then the previous night, settling into separate beds.

"G'nite." Dick called across the space.
Jason was already asleep, or else he just didn’t reply.

At the sound of something hitting the floor, Jason shot out of bed. A quick glance at the clock told him it was 3:30 am. He was automatically on high alert, scanning for an intruder. Everything seemed to be in order, except for the fact that Dick was thrashing around in the other bed. The crash he had heard was his arm knocking a lamp off the floor. Jason got out of bed and approached and saw that there was a sheen of sweat on Dick's forehead, blanket tangled around his legs.

He was making small, helpless sounds, some of which Jason thought might be names, accompanied by the word 'no'. Gently he reached out and shook Dick’s shoulder. The response was automatic. Dick lashed out, Jason just missing a punch to the jaw.

"Dick, calm down. It's me. It's Jason."

Dick seemed to focus slightly. "Lil' Wing?" he mumbled.

Jason nodded, swallowing at the nickname. "Yeah, it's me. We're in a motel, remember?"

Dick let out a shuddering breath. "I'm sorry."

"It's fine."

"I woke you."

Jason shrugged. "Yeah, but I'm not judging. You aren't the only one who gets nightmares." He grinned sardonically, tapping at his temple.

Dick nodded shakily. "I'll just go sit in the bathroom for a bit or something, you go back to bed."

Jason raised an eyebrow. "Dude, you aren't going to go sit in the bathroom. What, you think I'd exile you in there or something? You didn’t do anything wrong."

Dick shook his head. "I'll just keep you up. I don't want to inconvenience you-"

"Dickiebird." Jason cut him off. "Do you really, legitimately want to go sit in the bathroom?"

Dick glanced at him, then shook his head again.

"Then stay here. Will you be able to go back to sleep?"

Dick looked unsure. Jason thought back to the previous night- there had been no sign of nightmares then. Dick had slept like a log.

"Does it help if..." Jason couldn't believe he was even asking this "if someone else is with you?"

Dick gulped, then nodded. "Yes." He said, voice quiet. “Damian was there the night before we left. Pets and all.”

Jason sighed. "Then move over, you big idiot."

Dick did as he was told, shifting to the other side of the bed, then laying on his side facing Jason. Jason got under the covers and faced Dick. "Mind if I ask what it was about?"
Dick swallowed thickly. "The Court. They had me, and they were trying to turn me into one of their... their Talons. They had the others, too. Damian, Tim, Bruce, Babs, Cass, you."

Some sick kind of feeling twisted in Jason’s gut at the knowledge he was important enough to Dick to feature as a victim in his nightmares.

Dick let out a shuddering breath. “I hate that I’ve let them get in my head. It’s exactly what they wanted.

“Hey,” Jason cut him off. “You didn’t let them do anything. You didn’t ask for this.” With a hesitant touch, Jason acted on his impulse from earlier in the day and took Dick’s hand in his own.

(The 14-year-old him in his heart was losing his shit over the fact that he was in bed with Dick Grayson, holding his hand. There had been several years where something like this would have made him nut on the spot.)

“I should be stronger. People count on me, this is just stupid- “

“Is it stupid that I’m still pants-pissingly afraid of the Joker?”

Dick opened his eyes and frowned. “No, of course not.”

Jason reached out and laid a hand on Dick’s cheek (because he was a grown ass man in control of his body, god dammit). “You’re allowed to be scared. It took me a long time to realize that. But you are; you’re only human, Dick. We’re both just human.”

Dick met his eyes and nodded slowly. “Thank you.”

Jason huffed, and let Dick slowly slide closer to him. As Dick pressed himself to his chest, he found that he couldn’t summon the panic he knew he should be feeling. He couldn’t help but glance down at Dick’s lips, red and puffy from biting them in the midst of his dream.

Instead Jason just squeezed his hand, then closed his eyes.

“I’ll see you in the morning.”

The next morning, Jason awoke for the second time in 48 hours with the warmth of Dick’s body pressed against his own.

It had been intentional this time, at least. That mitigated the freak-out factor at least a little. Dick’s forehead was pressed into his chest, their legs tangled together under the sheets. Slowly, Jason detangled himself from Dick and sat up. Glancing back, he was taken by surprise by how at peace Dick looked. Aside from the circles under his eyes, there was no sign of the previous night’s nightmares.

But then, he was learning that he had never been able to read Dick as well as he thought he could.

Reaching down to where his jeans had been discarded, Jason pulled them on. He grabbed his pack of cigarettes from the bedside table and stepped out onto the balcony overlooking the parking lot.

What was he doing?
What was he doing here, laying tangled with Dick and driving aimlessly along the coast? He didn't get this. This kind of thing had never been a part of his plans, and he didn't know how to react to it.

But damn if it didn't make him feel more alive then he had since swinging across Gotham in the short pants all those years ago.

The sun had turned from pink to gold and had well crested the horizon when he heard the door open behind him.

"Hey." Dick said, voice thick with sleep.

"Yo." Jason replied, not turning around. In a moment, Dick was leaning on the railing next to him.

"Sorry about last night. I don't know what got into me."

Jason snorted. "Emotional trauma, maybe? I know a thing or two about it."

"I'm fine, though."

"Bullshit, Goldie. You're not fine. Your world crumbled around your fucking shoulders. Maybe Bruce and the replacement and the demon let themselves believe your bullshit, but don't try it with me. I don't expect the things from you that they do." Jason snapped, turning to face Dick. The other man's blue eyes had widened and were watching him with apprehension. Then all of a sudden, he seemed to deflate, typical perfect posture slumping forwards until he was leaning partially on the railing and partly on Jason.

Jason, almost without thinking, reached around and wrapped his arm around Dick's shoulder.

"I just," Dick started, voice wet with unshed tears. "I just wish I knew if they knew about it. My parents, I mean. If they knew the whole time and were really just going to give me to the Court. I'm not sure I really knew them at all, anymore."

Jason didn't respond. What was there to say? It wasn't as though he had advice to offer on dealing with family that extended past vaguely homicidal rage. All he could do was hold Dick against him as tears began to fall down his cheeks.

They ate at another greasy spoon where Dick made less conversation with the staff and patrons then usually, then continued their way down the coast.

It was only 7, and Jason was of a mind to make it to Charleston by nightfall.

Dick had moved the seat back, so he had room for his cast and was now trying to reach forward to fiddle with the radio.

After a few minutes Jason reached over and stopped him. Familiar notes filtered out of the radio, taking Jason back 15 years, to a shitty apartment in Crime Alley that was long since torn down.

"I never pegged you as a Tracy Chapman fan." Dick commented.

Jason shook his head. "This song was my mom's favorite."

He turned up the volume and let the words fall from his lips. He could remember being a kid and singing with his mom. The he had thought it was just a song about cars. Once he had been old enough to understand it, she had been too far gone for him to tell her he understood why she loved
You got a fast car
Is it fast enough so we can fly away
We gotta make a decision
Leave tonight or live and die this way

He had known it by heart since he was 6 years old.

It faded out and was replaced by some country band he didn't know. Jason coughed, blushing.

"Sorry."

Dick shook his head, smiling softly at him. "It's fine." A few more miles of road passed before he spoke again. "You've never really talked about her."

"Mom?" Jason thought back. He supposed he hadn't. As Robin her loss was still too raw, and after- well, until two days ago he hadn't been one to spill his feelings.

"She tried. She tried to be good to me, and that's more than a lot of kids I knew got. My dad was a piece of shit. Did enough petty theft to buy his booze but not to feed us. She got into heroin when he broke her ankle, and it was kind of downhill from there. But after he died we were... we had each other."

"You loved her." Dick said.

"Yeah. She meant well, at least."

"Hm." Dick agreed. "That's good, then."

Jason didn't anything, keeping his eyes on the road.

The hours rolled by and miles flew behind them, Virginia coming and going as the sun crept across the sky. They eventually stopped for dinner at a diner along the boardwalk in some small-town Jason didn't remember the name of. They decided to take a walk along the boardwalk, looking out at the ocean, illuminated by the soft golden glow of the setting sun.

Suddenly, Dick stepped off the boardwalk and started towards the water.

“What are you doing?” Jason asked, following behind.

“We haven’t actually gone swimming yet. Why not now?”

“You’re going to fuck up your ankle even more.”

Dick shrugged, grinning. “It’ll be fun!”

Jason sighed and tagged along as Dick limped his way to the water, where he pulled off his show and cast before heading into the water and jumping out again about three seconds later.

“Shit, that’s cold!”
“Yeah, Dick, it’s the Atlantic Ocean.” Jason deadpanned.

“It’s not like I swim all that much.”

“Did you sleep through geography?”

“I slept through practically everything. You’re the bookworm, remember?”

With a sigh, Jason kicked off his shoes and waded into the water. For all Dick’s complaining, he followed him back in until they were both up to their knees.

With a sigh, Jason kicked off his shoes and waded into the water. For all Dick’s complaining, he followed him back in until they were both up to their knees. Dick came to a stop next to him, and they stood quietly staring out into the sea.

Jason felt Dick slip his hand into Jason’s. He looked down at their joined hands, then up at Dick. He was still staring out into the water, gaze far away.

Jason felt as though he had spent most of his life watching Dick watch something else. Bruce, the Titans, his own boiling anger. There had always been something between them, something to keep them apart with violence and pain.

But here, alone on the water, Jason felt they had been laid bare before each other for the first time.

"Hey.” He spoke. Dick turned his head to face him, deep blue eyes reflecting the golden light that played on the ocean around them.

Everything that he had felt towards Dick Grayson since he was 14 spilled over at that moment, and with a dreadful sense of finality Jason leaned over and kissed him.

He felt Dick let go of his hand. Pulling away, he saw those blue eyes were wide and staring at him with shock.

Jason turned his head back to the water.

"Sorry, forget it, I just-"

Before he could finish, he felt a hand on his jaw, and before he knew it Dick was holding his head with both hands and kissing him.

It was brief and when Dick pulled away, their eyes met. Jason could feel the red blush on his face and knew he probably looked ridiculous. But Dick was smiling.

"Thank you." He said, his soft smile more genuine than any patented grin.

"What for?” Jason breathed, aware his voice was ragged.

"For the past few days. For being there for me. For this.”

Jason swallowed. "I've wanted to do it for a long time.”

Now Dick's smile grew. "How long?"

Jason knew the answer was embarrassing, but with a start, he also realized it wasn't true.

He had been 12 when his dad had stolen a wallet with tickets to Haly's Circus in it, when he saw Dick Grayson flying above the rest of the world like he really was some mythical bird.
But Jason just said; "Since the first time I saw you fly."

Dick blinked in surprise and laughed. "That's a long time Little Wing."

Jason nodded. "Can I kiss you again?"

Dick grinned. "I'd encourage it."

Jason leaned in and pressed their lips together. This time they were both ready, and he felt Dick step closer to him. Jason carefully placed one hand on the small of Dick's back, the other right on his ass.

He'd been thinking about squeezing that ass for ten goddamn years, and damn if he wasn't going to do it now that he had the chance.

Dick bit his lower lip lightly, and Jason leaned in to deepen the kiss.

Dick pulled away to breath and whispered; “If this water wasn’t so fucking cold I’d definitely be hard right now.”

Jason laughed. “We can probably do something about that.”

On their way to find a place for the night, Jason forcibly removed Dick’s hand from his pants twice (which, unfair. Had he not seen his thighs?) and said they had to actually get food. Food turned out to be truck stop hot dogs (not exactly sexy, but Dick’s culinary standards were low.) While Jason inspected yet another rack of paperbacks, Dick decided to be optimistic about his evening and grabbed condoms and lube.

The bored teenager didn’t even blink ringing him up, and soon he and Jason were back on the road (bad fast food, sci-fi paperbacks and condoms in tow.)

It took them about half an hour to settle on a hotel. A slightly nicer one than the past couple of nights, probably owing to both their good moods and the promise of things to come. The room was on the third floor, with a balcony for Jason to smoke.

As soon as the door closed, Jason dropped his bag and turned to Dick. His gaze was heavy, weighed with desire and nervous energy. Dick closed the steps between them and pecked a kiss on Jason's lips. "I'm going to shower. You're welcome to join me if you want."

Jason shook his head. "I'm gonna- I'll just wait here."

Dick nodded and headed into the bathroom. He left his walking cast by the bed, already limping less then he had a few days ago.

Under the hot water of the showerhead, he let out a breath. He would be lying if he said that he hadn't felt anything building between them over the past few days. He had been aware of Jason's crush on him as a kid- teenagers weren't known for subtlety, and Dick had been parading around in a V-neck that went to his navel. He vaguely remembered finding it funny at first, and the Titans had teased him about it. But then Jason had died, and it all became another grief tinted memory.

He hadn't expected Jason to kiss him, though. He hadn't been sure how he would feel about it until it happened, and he felt a spark of electricity. His skin had seemed to tingle, and he was realized that this, whatever exactly it was, could be good.
He scrubbed himself off under the hot water, avoiding his healing cuts and being gentle with his broken fingers.

When he finally exited the bathroom, he found Jason standing in front of the window, staring out at the lights of whatever town they were in.

He made his way over in just pyjama pants and laid a hand on Jason's shoulder.

"You okay?"

Jason turned to him. "Yeah, I just... never thought I'd actually do this."

"Do you regret it?"

Jason shook his head. "No."

Dick smiled and pressed a kiss to Jason’s lips, and felt Jason walk him backwards until he was pressed into the wall, Jason mouthing along his neck.

Dick yawned, shattering the moment somewhat. "I admit, I was making plans for tonight, but I feel like I'm about to crash."

Jason smiled, and it was a softer expression then any Dick had seen on his face before.

"Then let's go to bed."

Dick awoke the next morning much like he had the past two, but this time he was expecting the feeling of his face pressing into Jason's chest. A little less expected was the feeling of Jason's erection pressing into his stomach. But that was something he figured he could work with.

He carefully extracted himself to go to the bathroom, and when he entered the room again Jason was awake, gazing sleepily at him from the bed.

"I'm not sure I could ever get used to waking up to shirtless Dick Grayson in bed with me."

Dick smirked. "Well, I'll just have to give you something even better to focus on."

Making his way over to the bed and climbed in, straddling Jason's waist.

"I have a question."

"Oh yeah?"

"Mhmm." Dick hummed, kissing the corner of Jason's mouth, hands grasping his t-shirt. "Since you've got this happening," he said, stroking the tent of Jason's boxers lightly, and enjoying how Jason tensed under him, "can I suck you off? Feel free to say no."

"Jesus," Jason breathed. "Has anyone ever turned down that offer from you?"

"Only once or twice." Dick replied. "So is that a yes?"

"That is very much a yes."

"Well then," Dick said. "Allow me to take care of this."
Of the top ten sex fantasies Jason had, Dick (and wasn't that a pun and a half) featured on a solid seven of them. They had gotten more and more convoluted with time, some involving the Cave, other's his cop uniform, and one he had drunkenly confessed to a giggling Kory that involved him eating Dick out while he was in the short pants.

He was quickly realizing he hadn't given enough thought to the wonders of a simple blow job.

Dick made his way between Jason's thighs, slowly pulling off his boxers and ghosting a breath over his cock.

"Dick," he moaned, "please."

Apparently, Dick was feeling merciful (or just low on energy given he wasn't used to getting up before noon) and took Jason into his mouth.

Jason let out a cry as Dick bobbed his head from base to tip, pulling off with a sound that was a sin in of itself. He stroked Jason off as he tongued his slit and wrapped his lips around his head, and it wasn't long before Jason was crying out and shaking his way through what was, in his humble opinion, the most satisfying orgasm of his life.

Dick lay down back next to him, placing his hand on his propped elbow. "Good?"

Jason blinked slowly, the turned to Dick. "Is that the Nightwing wake-up special or something? Because if so, we should have done this a long time ago."

Dick laughed. “Not always, I’m just in a good mood.”

“Want me to return to favour.”

“An interesting fact about me,” Dick said pressing a kiss to Jason’s cheek, “I can’t get it up before 10 am.”

Jason blinked several times in rapid succession before bursting out laughing.

“Fair enough.”

He looked up at Dick, smiling down at him.

There was a part of him that was expecting to wake up from a dream any second now. But Dick lay down and curled against his shoulder, and as Jason slowly fell back asleep with the warm comfort of a familiar body by his side, he thought perhaps he would be allowed to have this for a little after all.

Dick woke up again later in the day, 11 am according to the flashing green numbers on the bedside table, to his phone ringing. He leaned over the side of the bed and raised it to his ear.

“'Lo?” He croaked.

“Grayson, would you care to explain why you are still on some sort of vacation with Todd?” Damian’s voice sounded, tinny over the speaker.

“Hey, Dami.” He replied.

“Were you planning on contacting me at any point about your taking off?”

Me, not us, Dick noted. Damian was worried. He worried about Dick, which was adorable,
though he would never admit it.

“I’m sorry Dami. I just needed to get away for awhile.”

“Because of your argument with father?” Damian asked.

“Partly. Also just to… have some time for myself.”

"You are still upset about the events with the Court."

"Yeah, I am." He knew that, in his own way, Damian understood. He too had escaped a what had been planned out for him, becoming a disappointment to those who would have used him.

"Will you return soon?" Damian asked.

"Miss me already?"

There was a huff on the other end of the line. "Please. You do have a job to do, and you won't be injured forever."

Dick smiled. "I miss you too, lil'D. I'll come back soon, okay?"

"I assume you will be bringing Todd with you?"

Dick looked over to the open bathroom door, where Jason had gotten up and gone to brush his teeth.

"I don't know," he answered truthfully, "I hope so."

Once Dick had started paying attention to his phone, and Jason did the same, it became clear that their little vacation was coming to a rapid close. He heard Jason discussing a job with Roy, and Dick answered several emails about cases and issues at work.

There was an unspoken agreement that this was going to be the farthest south they got.

They decided to spend the day in town, and that afternoon found them on the main strip. They got lunch at one of the local diners, and Dick somehow acquired a pack of cards and began doing tricks for tourists, doing basic magic, pulling coins from behind kid’s ears and juggling anything he was handed. He missed busking; it had been one of his favorite ways to spend time and get pocket money as a child. In Gotham, the ward of Bruce Wayne performing on street corners was just unthinkable, and in Bludhaven he never had time. Jason watched for a while before wandering off, and Dick found him a few hours later in a used bookstore debating depression-era American literature with the old man at the desk.

Wandering through town led them into a debate about motorcycle engines with the local Dykes on Bikes group, and somehow getting invited to the town’s boardwalk dance that night. Dick poked Jason in the arm until he agreed to go.

The dance was a small event, a local band playing while vacationing college kids got drunk and locals slow danced. No one was wearing anything fancier than jeans and a t-shirt.

At one point when the band switched songs, Jason snorted with laughter.

“What is it?”

Jason just shook his head. “Better Days. Because everywhere Dick Grayson goes becomes the
Dick grinned. “Hey, I’m not the one with the Jane Austen collection.”

“Those are classics!”

“Still romance, though. What would people say, if they knew the Red Hood was really a hopeless romantic?”

“What would they say if they knew Nightwing was slow dancing with him?” Jason retorted.

Dick smiled, then leaned up on his toes to whisper in Jason’s ear. “As much as I’m loving this mediocre cover band, do you want to get out of here?”

Jason swallowed thickly and nodded, and Dick took his hand and let him out of the crowd.

Jason wasn’t a dumb kid anymore; he knew exactly what Dick meant by taking his hand and leading him away from the crowd with a secretive smile.

But he also knew Dick didn’t do casual. He had witnessed more than one of Dick’s relationships crash and burn over differences and things that could have been controlled. And as much as he wanted Dick, as much as he always had, he wasn’t interested in being another ex. He wasn’t sure he could take it.

So halfway back to the hotel, with Dick holding his hand and pulling him along the deserted street, he found his voice.

“What are we doing?”

Dick turned around to look at him, confused. “Well, I was hoping we’d- “

“I get that, Dickhead. But I know you’ve never done casual. And we’ve gotten to know each other better the past few days, but… Dick, we have to know what this is. I have to know what you’re willing to let this be. Because if this is a one off, if we get back to Gotham and pretend it never happened… I just need to know now.”

Dick cocked his head to the side. "What do you mean?"

Jason sighed. "We both know that our morals aren't always compatible. We’ve fought about it before, and we will again."

"Jason, you haven't killed anyone in a year. Unless there's something no one knows about, but I've never known Roy and Kory to be particularly bloodthirsty."

"I don't kill as a policy anymore. But Dick, I'm going to kill the Joker. That hasn't changed. If the opportunity presents itself, I'm going to kill him."

Dick looked into Jason's eyes. There was fear there, uncertainty. The unspoken question if whatever was developing between them could survive Jason taking a life. Dick took a deep breath and prepared to confess to something he hadn't spoken about in years.

"That's not something I can judge you for anymore."

Jason’s eyebrows furrowed. "What do you mean?"

Dick closed his eyes. "Bruce didn't tell you."
"Tell me what?"

"I killed the Joker."

He opened his eyes, and Jason was staring at him, mouth hanging open and shock clear. "How?" He whispered.

"I thought he had killed Tim. I was beating him up, just trying to take him into custody. Then he brought you up. He looked at me and said, 'I hit Jason harder than that.' And I beat him to death."

"You killed him because he... mentioned me?" Jason asked, voice breaking.

"It was part of it. But then Bruce brought him back."

He half expected Jason to push him away at that, but he just stared at Dick for a moment before pulling him into his arms and wrapping him in an embrace.

Dick let himself lean into Jason's arms, wrapping his own around Jason’s torso.

They stayed that way, Dick's head tucked under Jason's chest, for a minute before Jason spoke.

"I can't lie, that's kind of a turn on."

Dick let out a ragged laugh and looked up at Jason. "Good to know." He paused, voice serious. "Bruce kept him alive because he was afraid I wouldn't be able to live with myself. But if it comes to it, I won't stop you from killing the Joker."

Jason nodded. Dick continued; “I can’t tell you what will happen between us. I don’t know. But I do know that right here, right now, I’m happy. Are you?”

“Yes.” Jason answered, saying so truthfully for what felt like the first time in years.

“Then we focus on that. And we take the problems as they come- and they will. I know that. But I also think we can get through it. I want to get through it. I want to get through it with you.”

Jason looked into Dick’s eyes, as open and earnest as ever. “Then let’s try.”

They made their way back to the motel, hands clasped together and necking like teenagers. Dick walked Jason backwards toward the bed, pressing him down and straddling his hips. Dick pulled off his shirt and threw it across the room, then reached down to do the same to Jason.

At that moment, Jason remembered the other reason this had terrified him.

Dick had never seen his chest.

He grabbed Dick’s wrists. “It’s better if you don’t.”

Dick frowned. “Why? Did something happen?”

Jason almost laughed but held it back. “Let’s just say it’s a bit of a mood killer.”

“I probably have as many scars as you, that’s not exactly a turn off. And I dated an alien, trust me
when I say there’s probably nothing about your body that’s going to weird me out.”

“Kori visuals aside, I can guarantee this will. It’s a lot more ‘that’s disgusting, get away from me’ then it is ‘wow, so sexy and exotic’.” Jason said. He began drawing away from Dick.

He should have known that this wouldn’t work. He didn’t get happy endings. They just weren’t in his nature.

“Jay,” Dick said, breaking his train of thought, “I won’t make you show me. But I want you to trust me, and I promise I won’t be grossed out.”

Jason looked at Dick. He wanted to believe it- knew Dick probably did believe himself.

But if this was going to end, Jason decided, it might as well do so now before there was any more baggage added.

With trembling hands, Jason gripped the hem of his shirt. “Whatever brought me back, then the pit- I was healed. But it didn’t let rid of the scars.” He pulled off his shirt and cast it aside, eyes downcast. He didn’t want the image of Dick’s disgust ingrained in his mind.

He heard a sharp intake of breath. When Dick reached out to touch the scars, Jason flinched slightly.

“Is this…” Dick trailed off.

“Bruce had an autopsy done. For show, I guess. It’s not like he didn’t know how I died.” He risked a look at Dick. He had a hand pressed to his mouth, and his eyes were wide. Jason grabbed his shirt and began pushing Dick off him. “I should go. I’ll get another room.” He said, standing.

“No. Jason, wait.” Dick said and grabbed Jason’s hand. “I mean of course you can, if you want, but you don’t have to.”

“It’s okay, Dick. I know it’s pretty awful to look at.”

“Jaybird, look at me.” Dick said, voice steady.

Jason turned back and saw there were tears on Dick’s cheeks. “It is awful. But not because it’s on you. What’s awful is that you’ve had to endure so much, and that you think it makes you any less then you are.”

“Dick-“

“You’re beautiful, Jason. Those scars- they’re evidence you made it. You made it back to us. To me. I could never think less of you for them, and they could never disgust me.”

Jason made a choked sound and realized with a start he was crying as well.

“Jay,” Dick whispered, “Come back to bed.”

Jason let himself be pulled back to the bed the against Dick’s lips. He let himself be laid down as Jason kissed along his neck.

“Can I undress you?” Dick asked, breath hot in his ear.

“Yeah. Yes.” Jason replied. They were both crying a little, which should have felt weird, or wrong, but instead just felt honest. Like they were being laid bare before each other for the first time.
Dick began moving down his neck, and his lips found the beginning of the large Y incision on Jason’s torso. Jason gasped as Dick kissed his way along it, lips kind and soft against the evidence of Jason’s violent death. He continued following the trail of the scar down past Jason’s navel.

He pulled Jason’s boxers over his hips, freeing his erection from them. He took Jason in his mouth for a moment, bodied up, down, then off and leaving Jason gasping. Slowly he made his way back up Jason’s torso, tongue swiping over sensitive scars until he made it back to Jason’s face. Dick’s face was flushed, lips wet and swollen. Slowly, too slowly, he ground their hips together, causing Jason to moan.

“Do you see?” He asked, kissing the tear tracks on Jason’s face. “Do you see how much I want you?”

“God, Dick. You don’t know how many times I’ve thought about this.” Jason groaned out as Dick aligned their hips again. He pressed a gentle kiss to the scar tissue at his temple in the shape of a crowbar’s tip.

“In that case,” Dick said, breathing shallowly, “can I ride you?”

“Fuck,” Jason cried, “again, has anyone ever turned down that offer?”

“I don’t make it to just anyone.” Dick replied, smiling as he kissed Jason lightly. “I’ll be right back.”

Jason watched as Dick walked over to his bag and pulled a couple things out of a plastic bag, abandoning his shorts and underwear along the way.

“When’d you pick those up?”

“Sex is one of the few things I plan in advance.” Dick said wryly, climbing back into Jason’s lap. He began pouring some of the lube onto his fingers when Jason spoke. “Wait.” he said, and Dick paused. “Let me?”

Dick smiled. “Of course.” He replied, handing the bottle to Jason.

Jason poured a liberal amount onto his fingers and reach between Dick’s legs. He waited for Dick’s nod of assent between adding fingers. He took his time finding the sweet spot, causing Dick to gasp and buck back into his hand.

“Jay,” he moaned, “please.”

Jason rolled a condom on and pulled Dick above him, sinking in.

He fell into Dick’s body like he had fallen in love with him; with a rush of dizzying emotion that left him scrambling to keep a hold of himself.

Dick started to move, and Jason gasped with every rise and fall of his hips, thrusting up to meet Dick’s rhythm. Dick let out a staccato of gasps to match the rhythm they set.

Jason pressed his mouth to Dick’s pulling him into a kiss as he came, hips still stuttering to a stop and he stroked Dick to finish. They pulled apart gasping, falling onto the bed and clinging to each other like if they let go they would never touch again.

Jason had not known much in the way of hope in his life. He had learned at an early age that if
you wanted to get by, you fought tooth and nail and didn’t let anyone see your soft underbelly. But he had still lost everything.

Dick had lived giving himself to others, sustaining himself on kindness and being true hearted. He had been betrayed and lied to anyway.

Maybe, thought Jason as he pressed a kiss to Dick’s temple, they could be more together then they were apart.

End Notes

Yes I ended on a smut scene, and will die by that decision.
Thanks for reading!

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