

Batman Beyond: Days of Future Past

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/37855012) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/37855012>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	Gen
Fandoms:	Batman - All Media Types , Batman Beyond , Batman (Comics) , Batman: Under the Red Hood (2010) , DC Animated Universe (Timmverse) , Batman: The Animated Series
Relationships:	Terry McGinnis & Jason Todd , Terry McGinnis & Bruce Wayne , Jason Todd & Bruce Wayne , Dick Grayson & Bruce Wayne , Tim Drake & Terry McGinnis , Dick Grayson & Terry McGinnis , Tim Drake & Bruce Wayne , Terry McGinnis & Damian Wayne , Bruce Wayne & Damian Wayne
Characters:	Terry McGinnis , Jason Todd , Bruce Wayne , Dick Grayson , Tim Drake , Joker (DCU) , Roman Sionis , Talial al Ghul , Harvey Dent , Alfred Pennyworth , Damian Wayne
Additional Tags:	Time Travel , Time Travel Fix-It , Angst , Movie: Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker , Operation BEAT UP THE JOKER , Street Punks Unite , and give Bruce a headache , Terry McGinnis is Batman , Jason Todd is Red Hood , Jason Todd Needs A Hug , Good Sibling Terry McGinnis , We are pretending Jason is canon in the DCAU , Jason Todd Deserves Better , Good Sibling Jason Todd , Movie: Batman: Under the Red Hood , Jason is such a drama queen istg , Tim Drake is Robin , Bruce Wayne is Bad at Feelings , Bruce Wayne Tries to Be a Good Parent , Damian Wayne is a Little Shit
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of The DCJU: Earth 12.5
Stats:	Published: 2022-03-20 Updated: 2024-02-10 Words: 39,535 Chapters: 25/27

Batman Beyond: Days of Future Past

by [blackdragonhellfire](#)

Summary

Terry McGinnis has dealt with the consequences of the Joker's Madness on the Old Man's (his) Family.

Now, stuck a good 15 years before he was even born, he's dealing with them firsthand, and learning just how much they turned Old Man Wayne into who he was.

(In which Terry puts his Joker beating up skills to good use, even though he really isn't supposed to mess with the timeline.)

Notes

I feel like this is the DC version of Days of Future Past because it's a character going back in time to keep something awful from happening. In this case, Terry goes back in time, accidentally, and keeps the Joker from torturing Tim Drake and turning him into Joker Junior, (despite protocol saying he shouldn't), causing the Batfamily to fracture irreparably and Bruce to shut everyone out. In the X-Men's case, they're preventing the apocalypse. Eh, not as high stakes, but...

Anyway, that's why the title is Days of Future Past.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Wayne, I’m going in.”

Terry could almost hear Wayne frown through his receiver. But, to be fair, he was always frowning. And it wasn’t a frown because he thought Terry would screw up, like in the early days. These days, it was a frown because he was worried about him.

In the early days, Bruce would sometimes get an absent look in his eyes, staring in between the old Robin suit in the corner, the plaque under it, and Terry. Even when he had faced off with the Joker during that whole fiasco with Tim Drake, Bruce had told him he wasn’t fit for the suit because he was “too much like him. Too reckless,” while giving the case that same empty stare. The commissioner had mentioned that Tim wasn’t the first tragedy that the Joker had caused the family. But she had never given any details about what else had happened.

Terry had pulled through and beat the Joker in the end, and Bruce had stopped comparing him to whoever had worn the suit in the corner.

And now, he was staking out some crazy in an abandoned warehouse, who had been stealing large and very dangerous parts from Wayne-Powers and Foxteca.

“Be careful, Terry,” Old Man Wayne said, “We still don’t know what he’s building.”

“Yeah, but we do have some educated guesses,” Terry responded, “World’s greatest detectives, remember?”

Wayne grunted, and Terry activated his jet boots, gliding down to the building’s doorway.

He landed silently, and turned on the suit’s camouflage feature, getting ready to figure out just what this crazy dude was building, and how to get the parts back.

He made sure to have a clear view of the inside of the warehouse, zooming in his video feed so Wayne could see it better.

Wayne was silent on the other end, analyzing the footage.

“Go closer, McGinnis,” he ordered, “I have a basic idea of what he needs the parts for, but I need to see the machine up close to confirm my suspicions.”

Terry walked closer to the machine.

“What’s it for?” he whispered into the radio, walking around the machine slowly.

“It’s a-” Wayne started, but the audio feed cut off, replacing itself with static.

“Old Man? Old Man, come in!” Terry whisper-called. He knew better than to actually call out for Wayne by name. And he wasn’t going to call him “Oracle,” no matter what the Old Man wanted. What a dumb codename.

He turned around just in time to notice the man swinging a crowbar at the back of his head, ducking away and flipping back upright.

“I should have expected this,” the man with the Crowbar fumed, his face covered by a mask with a purple target on it. “Of course you’d be here to catch me! You always are, aren’t you?”

Terry was confused.

“Sorry, psycho,” he retorted, “But I’ve never met you in my life. I think I’d remember your face, don’t you think?”

The man looked at him, and started laughing.

“I should have guessed,” he said, “The other one would have gotten old by now, huh?”

Terry paled. This guy must have been one of Wayne’s old villains. But weren’t most of them old, too? This guy was standing tall and proud, not hunched over by age.

To be fair, it could be another Joker situation. Or this guy could just be an android sent by this villain to mess with him in his place. Or maybe a villain’s apprentice?

Terry would need to prove conclusively whether this guy was flesh and blood, and he knew the best way to do just that.

He ran up to the villain, and threw a right hook straight at his face, meeting flesh underneath.

Well, that proved that.

The man straightened up from his hunched position, and lunged at Terry, trying to catch him around the middle.

Terry jumped straight up, turning around in midair and doing a flip over the other guy’s head.

They continued fighting, and Terry pushed the man closer and closer towards the machine, intending to corner the man against his own handiwork.

But he didn’t know that was exactly what the man wanted.

The man flipped a switch on the machine’s side, and the machine turned on, a glowing hole forming in between the two pillars by the front.

Terry tried to get as far away from it as possible, but it seemed intent on sucking him and everything around him in.

“Blast!” the man said, somehow staying stuck to the floor “It seems as if I’m going to have to alter the algorithm against this again. Oh well, it’ll do exactly what it needs to do, in this case.”

Terry growled, and continued holding on to the side of the machine, hoping it wouldn’t suck him in.

“What. Have. You. Done?” he yelled, straining against the force of the portal.

“Oh no,” he asked, starting to pry Terry’s hand off of the metal supports with his crowbar. “It’s more about ‘what will you do?’ than what I’ve done. What I did is already in the past. And soon, what you will do...”

He hit Terry’s hand with the crowbar, one, two, three times, hard enough for him to have to let go of what he was holding.

“Will soon be in the past, as well.”

Terry got sucked into the portal, screaming as it took him in.

Chapter End Notes

I had to add the "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE???" thing. The new Batman movie rocks lol.

Also, here’s the timeline for this fic, since we’re pretending Jason is canon in the DCAU:

1990: 26 year Old Bruce Wayne starts being Batman.
1991: Dick Grayson gets Adopted at age10
1999: Batman: TAS happens (Dick is in college)
2000: New Batman Adventures, but Jason becomes Robin, not Tim
2004: Jason dies
2006: Tim becomes Robin
2007: Under the Red Hood
2010: Tim becomes Joker Junior, Joker Dies
2019: 55 year old Bruce Retires
2023: Terry is born
2039: Terry finds the Batsuit.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jason knew what he had to do. Of course he did. He had known what he had needed to do ever since Talia had told him what exactly Bruce had done to avenge him: case in point, nothing.

He needed to kill the man who had taken him away from his family, since his family didn't seem to be doing a damn thing to show they missed him. It wasn't like they did. They thought he was nothing better than a troublemaker, after all. How many times had Bruce looked at him like he could do so much more and be so much better, but knew he never would be able to live up to his expectations?

Jason's vision turned slightly green at the thought, and he resisted the urge to punch his wall until it was a mess of drywall. Thinking about his old family always activated the pit rage, to an extent.

But not as much as thinking about what that clown did.

He dreamed about how he died every night. In his dreams, the crowbar hit his skin, breaking bones and bruising. He screamed until he wasn't able to anymore. And he crawled slowly to the bomb in the middle of the room, his body protesting every inch he moved, but it counted down, until it got to one, and then-

He always woke up feeling more tired than he did when he fell asleep, only propelled to get through the day by the adrenaline of dying in his dreams.

And waking up always reminded him that he was back. He didn't know why he had been brought back, but, to him, he had only one purpose before he kicked the bucket again and ended up back in hell: becoming a nightmare. He would haunt Bruce's dreams until the old man died, and make that damn clown just as afraid of him as he was of the clown.

And after that, his life's purpose would have been fulfilled. The clown would be gone, Bruce would avenge him, and he...would be dead.

Today was the day. The day where he implemented the first phase of his plan. He was going to gain notoriety, and put himself on the map.

He spent the day tracking some low life drug dealers in Black Mask's gang, and systematically taking them out. And then, to make a statement, he cut off their heads and put them in a duffel bag to show to their buddies.

He felt a bit sick, thinking about what he had done. But he knew that he had to do it. Without breaking into the drug scene, there would be no way he would have enough funds to pursue

his goal. And besides, he got to get drugs away from kids, and get rid of any scum that decided to deal to kids anyway. He had seen what drug addiction did to kids firsthand, and Batman had never done a damn thing about it, so it fell to him to take up the Old Man's slack.

The fact that he had to anger him. He had been so blind to Batman's faults when he had been Robin, and now that he wasn't, he was pissed that the man he had looked up to was so ineffective. Before he died, he thought Batman had no flaws. But now, he knew better, and he missed his former naivete.

So he had to do something about it, because he had been one of those kids who had fallen through the cracks. Even if his life's purpose was to kill the Clown, he could at least go out making sure no one ever had to live like he did before the Bat snatched him off the street.

The meeting with the remaining drug dealers had gone well. He had successfully gotten them into his pocket, and started to make a name for himself. Step one of the plan had started.

He tried to ignore the nausea in his gut when he recalled the gray faces of the disemboweled heads that had been in the duffel bag, staring back at him with blank eyes.

He had to stop on a roof, and try to take a few deep breaths while he panicked. He had done worse before. He had killed many people under the supervision of some of the finest assassins in the world. So why was he panicking now?

Then, he heard a scream from the alley below, and he was reminded of his purpose.

He grappled down from the roof he was on, only to find a thug tied up neatly and a little girl being comforted by a man wearing all black, with two spikey antennae sticking up from his head.

The man turned and looked at him, and he was met with a glowing red Bat-Symbol shown proudly on his chest.

The green crept back into his vision just from seeing that damned symbol, and he unholstered his gun, aiming it at the man in front of him.

Then the man straightened up, and Jason realized that there was no way this person was Bruce. He was too skinny, too lithe, sort of like a Gymnast.

The man looked him up and down.

"Nice outfit," the imposter bat said, "You trying to make a statement or something?"

Jason didn't recognize the voice, but he recognized the Gotham Accent within. It wasn't the Gotham Accent of the Elite, like Bruce had. It was more of an accent of the Gotham Slums, of someone who had spent time on the streets. He didn't know who this guy was, but there was no way Bruce would make someone like him Batman.

"Are you?" he shot back, "There's no way the big bad Bat would let some random street punk wear the symbol."

He saw the imposter grit his teeth through the mask.

"I AM Batman," the masked man responded, doing his best to sound menacing.

Jason tried to resist the urge to crack up, but ended up failing. God this was the best laugh he had had since... probably since he was alive the first time.

"No you're not," Jason shot back, "The Bat wouldn't just let someone replace him. Not in his lifetime. You should try out to be Robin. He picks them up like strays."

The Bat-Imposter cringed, like he knew something Jason didn't.

"What?" Jason pressed, "You're gonna contest that? He throws them away like trash, uses them up until they're not useful anymore and goes on to the next one."

The Bat-Imposter looked at him, seemingly staring into his soul.

"You were one of them, aren't you? One of the Robins."

Jason saw green, and charged.

Chapter End Notes

Jason is basically Terry but with waaaaay more baggage and angst tbh

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

This guy was good, Terry thought.

Of course he was good, he reminded himself. This guy was a Robin, trained by the Old Man when he was in his prime. He had never seen this guy's suit, but he knew the bitter attitude towards Bruce like the back of his hand. Barbara used it every time she was with him. There was a reason none of the Robins talked with the Old Man, after all.

Just his luck.

The man threw a punch at him, and Terry grabbed it and prepared to take the man down by throwing him over his shoulder, but the man saw through him and used his momentum to twist Terry's arm behind his shoulder in a painful hold, and then punching him repeatedly in the face, hoping that Terry would give up and fall down.

Terry saw through his ruse. He knew the man was angry, and that made him erratic and unbalanced.

He stomped on the tender spot between the man's ankle and foot and turned around, throwing a haymaker at the man's relatively unguarded shoulder. The man ducked, but a second too late, and the haymaker still caught him.

He staggered, and Terry used the suit's enhanced strength to launch forward and get the man into the same hold that he had used on him. He knew that the man probably knew how to get out of it, but he just needed to hold him still until he could ask him a few questions.

"Who are you?" he barked.

"Let me guess: the Big Bad Bat never talks about his poor, dead second son, who never did anything more than disappoint him."

Terry's eyes widened. The Old Man never, ever talked about his kids, but that was how Terry knew he loved them to bits. And besides, he always compared Terry negatively to his kids. To him, not even the new Batman could hold a candle to his old partners.

"Sure," he said, "Whatever you say. How many of you are there?"

"There's only one me, if that's what you're getting at."

Terry rolled his eyes.

"No," he barked. "Robins. How many Robins have there been?"

"Why, the Bat didn't tell you?"

"No."

"But there's a new Robin right now. How could you not know how many of us there's been?"

Terry sighed, and decided he had to ask his next question. He could have asked anybody, but asking this guy was probably his best shot at asking while not looking weird.

"What year is it?"

"What?" the man responded, "What sort of question is that?"

"What. Year. Is. It?"

"What, are you the future Batman or something?"

"Yes," Terry responded. "Now, what year is it?"

The man managed to turn around to look at him, masked lenses to masked lenses.

"Fine," he said, "It's 2007. Happy?"

Shit, Terry thought to himself. He hadn't thought he had been booted far enough into the past that he wouldn't be born for another 15 whole years! His estimate was about 2018, a year or so before the Old Man had decided to retire.

His hold loosened in his distracted state.

He didn't notice that the man had twisted him around and threw him against the alley wall.

"Now," the man said, "I have a few questions for you, Imposter Bat. Who are you, and what are you doing here?"

"I'm here by accident," Terry admitted, straightening up. "I was booted here from 2040 by some crazy with a purple target on his mask."

"And you haven't followed the Time Travel Protocol yet? The Old Man must really be desperate if he chose someone who didn't follow his orders."

Terry huffed. Who did this guy think he was? Of course he was going to follow the protocol and get to the Cave as soon as he got out of here! There was no way he was going to tell this guy any more about the future than he had to.

"I was going to," he said, "But then I saw a girl getting assaulted and did my job. Happy?"

The man scoffed.

"Of course, Batman and his typical hero complex. I'm surprised, though. Batman never hangs around Crime Alley. It's too dirty and plebian for Mister Rich Boy."

"Batman," Terry asserted, "Does his best to save everyone he can, despite who they are. That's what we do. That's what you did, as Robin."

The man turned towards him, stiffening with rage.

"Then how can you explain how he didn't save me?"

Terry looked at him, confused.

"What?"

"He didn't tell you? Wait, of course he didn't. Why would he talk about me when he's got a better Robin now that I'm gone?"

Terry frowned.

"I still don't know what you're talking about."

The man stalked towards him slowly, like a predator on the hunt.

"The Joker. He beat me to death with a crowbar, and I died. And Bruce? He didn't do a damn thing about it."

Terry's eyes widened. Was this what Barbara meant when she said the Joker had caused other tragedies to the family? Because if he was Bruce, the Joker would have been dead and gone if he beat one of his sons to death.

And then, the Joker had been left alive to take Tim Drake. To cripple Wayne's whole family, both physically and psychologically.

"And now," the man continued, "I came back, and now I'm going to make Batman avenge me. I'm gonna make sure that Clown is dead and gone, or die trying."

Terry thought this guy had the right idea. However, he also thought this guy was Bat-Shit Crazy, no pun intended. If the Joker had really beat this guy to death, he had full rights to getting back at him. However, Bruce held fast to his no-killing rule. That was just how the man was. Even if there was someone trying to kill him and his family, he'd aim to subdue them, not get rid of them.

And now, Terry had been dragged into Wayne's crazy family, so it was up to him to fix his mess. Protocol said that he wasn't supposed to mess with the timeline, but the Joker had more than made Bruce suffer. He had made his whole family suffer, and laughed while doing it.

He more than deserved to die for what he did, and what he would do to Tim Drake. Protocol be damned,

"Wayne's Batman doesn't kill. That's just how he is. But my Batman doesn't mind getting rid of people when they threaten me or my family. So while Wayne won't avenge you, I sure as hell will."

Terry looked the man straight in his lenses.

"What do you need me to do?"

Chapter End Notes

Came up with the timeline for this version of the DCAU (basically the DC-Jay-U since it's just me adding Jason.)

Anyway I love how Return of the Joker highlights the difference between Terry and Bruce, so I'm gonna make sure this fic does as well. And Terry does canonically kill a few people (Mr.Fixx, Ian Peek, the Earth-Mover, etc) so I'm not making that up.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Terry and Jason hang out, and get to know each other a bit.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jason watched the Bat-Imposter look around his safehouse he had taken him to, taking note of all the devices in the kitchen and the living room.

"Nice digs," the Bat-Imposter said, "Very retro."

Jason rolled his eyes, and took off his helmet, tossing it onto the nearby second-hand couch, before plopping onto said couch and putting his feet up on his shitty coffee table.

"Thanks, Mister Jetson," Jason said, "What, are you sad that the kitchen doesn't make the food for you?"

Imposter Bat plopped onto the couch as well, rolling the helmet towards Jason and then taking off his mask in one fluid motion.

"Hey, we cook plenty," Bat-Imposter said, with a lighter tone of voice. "I know my way around an old fashioned kitchen. Before he hired me, Wayne lived on take out and microwave meals."

"He hired you to be Batman?" Jason said. The Bruce he knew would never have hired someone else to take his spot.

"As a cover," Bat-Imposter said, looking him in the eye. Jason looked closely at him, and noticed just how much he looked like Bruce. The eyes, the hair, the smirk. He really, really didn't want to think about an Old Bruce getting it on with some lady who could have been his kid. Ew.

"I stole the Batsuit after my dad got killed," the Bat-Imposter said, stopping Jason's theory that this dude was Bruce's secret kid from the future. Thank god. "Wayne hired me as his assistant as a cover for my night job."

"Huh," Jason said, "Sorry about your old man, Bat-Imposter. What'd you do about it?"

The Bat-Imposter sighed, and then raised an eyebrow at him.

"Bat-Imposter?"

"Well, there's already a Batman. There can't be two of you, you know."

The kid had the balls to smirk at him.

"Okay, Robin."

The green crept back into Jason's vision, and he was this close to gutting the kid like a fish. He wasn't Robin anymore, and would never be again. He came back wrong, and besides, he got replaced by someone who Bruce thought was better in every single way.

The Imposter raised his arms in surrender, although he tensed up, ready for a fight.

Jason growled at him, and then remembered that this dude had offered to work with him. And, with his tech and obvious know-how, he would have the edge over both the Old Man and the Joker.

"The name is Red Hood. Got it, kid?"

The Imposter rolled his eyes at him.

"Fine then..." he said... and then he smirked at him.

"...Buckethead."

Jason was once again close to strangling this annoying ass punk kid, but the green didn't creep into his vision, so he decided on rolling his eyes and punching him in the shoulder. Like they were friends, or something.

He could almost see being friends with the Imposter. After all, he was the only person who knew who he was, behind the helmet, and knew his past. And he seemed to understand why he needed to complete his mission, and was even willing to lend help. He guessed that his plan didn't work in the kid's version of the past, and he wanted to succeed, so he welcomed it. Anything for the mission, after all.

The Kid clutched his shoulder, and scowled at him. "You know," he said, "For someone who's suit doesn't enhance their strength, that sorta hurts."

Jason rolled his eyes.

"Your suit enhances your strength?"

"Yup," The Kid said, "Reflexes, too. But it's not the suit that makes me. I'm Batman, with or without it."

Jason nodded. He was definitely going to get this kid to help him reverse engineer that tech. If the kid let him, anyway.

The Kid looked at him again, a more serious look in his eyes.

"You know, I got rid of the man who killed my father. And the man who hired him. Took a bit, but the Old Man and I managed."

"Got *rid* rid of him," Jason asked, to clarify.

"Yup," The Imposter said, surprisingly casually. "I'm surprised the Old Man let me, from what Gordon told me. She said he wasn't exactly a fan of vigilantes going around and killing people."

Jason let out a low whistle.

"Of course Barbie's still alive and kicking in 20-fucking-40. Damn."

The Imposter gave him an incredulous look.

"You call her Barbie?"

Jason nodded.

"And you're still alive?" The imposter asked, slightly slack jawed from awe.

"I mean, I was dead for a bit," he said, "Got the autopsy scar to prove it. But Barbie's not a killer. A killer hacker, sure, but not an actual killer."

"Thank god for that, otherwise I would have been dead before I managed to get here."

Jason chuckled, and the Bat-Imposter joined in.

"By the way," the Imposter asked, "What's your name? I'm gonna guess you're not Tim Drake."

Jason's vision tinted slightly green at the mention of him.

"My newer, better replacement got talked about in the future, but not me. Of course."

The Imposter gave him a serious look.

"Wayne never talked about him, either. The Comish told me about him, and that was only because of..."

The Imposter shook his head.

"Anyway, know that Wayne never talked about any of his kids in the past. I know he had a few, but that's it."

Jason stared at his ratty, beat up coffee table as he took that all in. He's surprised that the Bat would let anything bad happen to another Robin after what happened to him.

He turned back to the Imposter.

"The Commissioner?"

"Gordon."

"She ended up taking after her dad? Huh. I thought she'd stick with the Bat forever."

The Imposter shrugged.

"I wouldn't know. I knew her old man was the Commissioner before her but that's all I know about it."

Jason nodded. The Imposter had said that Bruce didn't talk much about the past, so he definitely didn't know anything about the good old days.

"I'm still surprised the Old Bat lets you get away with offing people. Thought he'd be more of a stickler about his whole morality complex and all that."

The Bat-Imposter sighed.

"I think Old Man Wayne's been through a lot. More than anyone should have gone through in their life. And, at the end, I think he just... gave up on trying to be nice. Probably after the thing with the Joker."

"What thing with the Joker? The thing with me?"

The Imposter shook his head.

"Not you. But what he did to the family after he killed you."

"What'd he do?"

The Imposter looked him in the eye.

"Two words: Joker Junior."

Chapter End Notes

Updates are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so here I am. I'm determined to finish this story, because I generally have trouble finishing fics and I want to prove a point to myself.

Anyway, it's up to your interpretation whether Terry understood Jason's reference to the Jetsons lol.

Will they ever learn each other's actual names? Maybe. I'll decide later.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Terry sat behind the Red Hood's old, beaten up computer, hoping that he could at least use it for something useful while the Hood was on the hunt. For now, he was waiting for some code breaking software that the Hood had stolen from Black Mask to transfer onto Hood's stupid computer.

"Come on, you old clunker," Terry grumbled, staring at the buffering icon with annoyance. "Hurry up, will you?"

The Red Hood sighed through his communicator, and Terry heard the sound of a grappling gun firing, and then a grunt as the Red Hood jumped off of a roof.

"Imposter," Red Hood said, "It's only been five seconds."

Terry didn't know why Hood had stuck with that nickname for him, and he was half tempted to argue with him about it. But, he couldn't go by Batman, since the Old Man was holding the title, so he guessed a shortened form of "Imposter Bat" would work for now.

"Yeah," Terry grumbled, "But this much data would have taken two seconds to load back home."

"Well, face it. You're not in Kansas anymore, Toto."

Terry looked back at the computer, which still had not finished downloading the application.

"What?" Terry responded, confused.

"You don't know the Wizard of Oz?"

"That super old movie? I think I watched it once. Don't remember it all that well, though."

"It's a classic, Imposter. Even I watched it as a kid, and I was homeless for most of my childhood."

"Huh," Terry said. He didn't know the Hood had been homeless. "How'd the old man manage to make you his sidekick, then?"

The Red Hood cackled.

"I stole the tires off the Batmobile."

The computer dinged, showing that the file had finally been downloaded.

"I guess that explains why the Batmobile flies in my era," Terry remarked, "No one would steal the Batmobile's tires if there's no tires, right?"

"It flies?" the Red Hood said.

"Yeah," Terry replied. "Saves time."

"I guess," Hood replied, "But we've gotten pretty good at breaking traffic laws over the years."

"True," Terry acknowledged, "Otherwise the Old Man would have missed half of his fights."

Terry opened the file, and dragged it to the applications folder.

"God, that took forever. Now, are you going to get the goods, or what?"

"On it, Imposter," the Red Hood replied, "Stop being so impatient. I'll get there."

"I'm not impatient," Terry scoffed, "You're just slow, Old Man."

"And you youth are impatient. I'll get there when I get there."

Terry rolled his eyes, and pulled up a satellite map of the city, with Red Hood's tracking beacon shown proudly on it.

"You sound like my dad," Terry remarked.

"And I'm old enough to be your grandfather."

Terry smirked.

"You know, for an old man, you're remarkably limber."

"Shut up, Imposter. I've got dealer ass to kick."

He heard the telltale sound of gunfire, and decided to stay silent for a little while.

Terry was looking through Black Mask's files, after taking the requisite ten minutes to crack them and trying to wrestle with the ugly, outdated software on Hood's computer.

And then he spotted something interesting on Black Mask's shipping list.

"Hood," he said, "Have you ever heard of Amazo?"

"Yeah," Hood said, "That pain in the ass robot that managed to beat up the Justice League, right?"

"Yup," Terry said, "And Black Mask managed to ship one to Gotham."

"Huh. He must be pretty desperate to try to take me out of the picture."

"But not desperate enough to let our target out."

Jason sighed.

"You think we should steal it?"

"What?"

"We could use it to distract the Bat."

"Good idea," Terry said, "But it won't distract him for long. He's too meticulous. He'll want to know who stole it, and why."

"Hm..." The Hood said, "Why don't we use it to give him a few clues about the Red Hood?"

"That could work," Terry mused, "If you want the Old Man to know you're around."

The Hood stayed silent.

"Do you?" Terry pressed.

"The Red Hood was the Joker's old alias," the Red Hood deflected, "If we let the Bat and Black Mask know the Hood exists, they'll be more likely to involve him to stop us."

Terry knew what went unsaid. If they tipped the Joker off about Red Hood, he would be more likely to escape from Arkham himself to investigate, putting him into a perfect spot for them to eliminate him, in case their original plan of getting Black Mask desperate enough to spring the clown out of prison to stop the Hood didn't work.

But the Red Hood wasn't answering his question.

"You're not answering my question, Hood."

The Hood stayed silent.

"Do you want the Bat to know you're alive?"

The Red Hood stayed steadily silent for a moment, but Terry could tell he was angry.

"Fine," The Red Hood yelled, "I do. I want him to know how he failed. Happy?"

"I guess," Terry replied. But he wanted the Old Man to know about the Hood for a different reason.

If the Old Man knew his son was alive, despite what the Joker did to him, maybe he'd mellow down a bit. Maybe he'd be easier on the Hood when he figured out just what he was up to, and he wouldn't get as mad at them for trying to off the Joker. The man had a soft spot for his kids a mile wide, which is why he avoided them in his Old Age. He didn't want to see how much they hated him, since he had failed them so badly.

But if the Joker died now, then he wouldn't have the chance to fail Tim Drake. What happened to Nightwing wouldn't have happened. His family would stay together, and the Old Man would finally be paid back for the chance he had given Terry, back when he was just some ex-punk trying to avenge his dad.

Hopefully, by taking this chance now, he could repay every sacrifice that had given him the chance to change the world for the better.

Hopefully, this future would be better than his.

Chapter End Notes

Missed the Thursday update because I was writing another story. But I am back, like mosquitoes always are.

Expect more of Terry teasing Jason about being old, and vice versa.

Chapter 6

"The deal's going down by the docks," The Imposter said into the comm. "We should be able to catch it just in time."

"Good," Jason responded. "Do you know what they're trading?"

"Crack, Heroin, Meth, the usual old school stuff," The Imposter replied. "Maybe some Venom. Apparently it's in right now."

"Roger. ETA is five minutes."

"Copy, Hood," The Imposter replied. "Shame I don't have my Batmobile. I could have made it in two."

"Shut your ass up, Imposter," Jason said, smiling. "Enjoy the ride, will ya?"

"No way," The Imposter replied, a smirk in his voice. "Talking with you is like talking with one of those old statues in the middle of Robinson Park."

Jason flinched. Robinson Park was Ivy's hideout.

"They open the park back up in the future?"

"Is it closed?"

"Poison Ivy lives there, and kills anyone who gets close."

"And you guys just let her?"

"You know how the Old Man is."

"Good point."

It was silent for a couple of minutes, save for the clicking of keys.

"Hey, do you ever listen to music through your helmet?"

Jason scoffed.

"No way," he said, "That's an easy way to get myself shot."

"That's what Wayne said to me, too. But he hogs the comm channel, so it isn't like I could in the first place."

"Controlling as ever, isn't he?"

"That's an understatement."

Jason took a turn left on a busy road, dodging oncoming traffic.

"Are you kidding me?" Terry said.

"What?" Jason replied.

"The top songs this year. They're like... old people songs. Like, songs my Mom listens to for fun."

"They can't be that bad."

"Yeah, but it's clear these people have never heard of New-Wave Industrial Cyberpunk Pop yet."

"New wave what?"

"Never mind."

"Way to spoil the future, Imposter."

"Like me helping you isn't?"

"Good point," Jason responded. "B would have a fit if he found out."

"True."

He pulled up at the warehouse next door, and parked his cycle.

"I'm at the location."

"Got it, Hood," The Imposter replied. "This should be an easy bust. See you soon."

At first, the Imposter was right. It was easy.

Jason scanned the scene, and dropped in on the deal, guns blazing and shooting anyone in his path.

The thugs tried to shoot back, but Jason dove for cover and took them out before they could get anywhere close to him.

But he had made a critical mistake. He hadn't heard the bomb counting down until it was too late.

The warehouse exploded, and he felt the distinct sting of shrapnel digging into his side and fire licking his armor before being thrown back by the force of the explosion, through the warehouse window behind him.

He hit the ground below with a sickening crack, and his head bounced against it from the recoil.

He let out a groan.

"Hood," he distinctly remembered hearing, "I heard the explosion. Are you down?"

He distinctly registered the fact that his vision was fuzzy before passing out.

Jason next woke up on a comfy surface.

He sat up slightly.

His side was neatly wrapped, and he could feel the stitches holding his side together. He had been stripped down to his boxers, and his stinging arms were covered with bandages.

He looked around, only for the room to spin in front of him.

He laid back down, and took deep breaths to combat the nausea. God, his head hurt like a motherfucker.

"Careful," The Imposter said, from his side. "You have a concussion. I woke you up after stitching you up to check your pupils, but you stayed out, and I couldn't wake you back up to check for any brain damage."

Jason scoffed.

"I don't have any brain damage."

"Sure," the Imposter said, "What were you doing before you got concussed?"

"Busting a drug deal."

"What were they selling?"

Jason recited what they were selling, deadpan.

"What was the date of the drug deal, backwards?"

Jason recited that, too.

The Imposter sighed.

"You're good, but there's no way the Red Hood is gonna be able to go out. At least, not for a while."

Jason cursed, and tried to sit up, only to convulse in pain and fall back onto his bed.

God damn it.

"Fuck," he grunted.

"You need to rest," the Imposter said.

"The Red Hood needs to be out there!" He said, angrily. "Otherwise, the plan isn't going to work."

The Imposter sighed, and gave a couple of pills to Jason.

"Antibiotics for the burns and the shrapnel wound. Your concussion is mild enough that you shouldn't need pain meds, but you might need some for your - "

"No pain meds," Jason grunted. "I don't do pain meds."

"You sure?" Terry said.

"Damn sure," Jason responded.

Terry sighed.

"Good, because I couldn't find any here, and I have no idea where I'd get some."

"I have some contacts I get those supplies from," Jason replied. He needed to contact Talia soon to get the ammo for the next step of his plan. He wondered, did the League of Assassins exist in the future?

"Don't forget, you're stuck here. Or I will tie you to the bed."

"Kinky, Imposter," Jason replied, smirking. "Should have guessed that from the guy in the bat themed suit."

"At least my girlfriend likes it."

"You told her about the Bat?"

"No," the kid replied, "But I've heard I'm not lacking in the performance department."

Jason barked out a laugh, and regretted it a moment later when his stitches stretched a bit, and he hissed.

There was no way he was going to be able to go out, in this shape. Even if the city needed him.

"There's gonna be another deal soon," Jason said, "They're gonna do as much as they can while I'm out."

"They'll try to," the Imposter said, "But the Red Hood will be there to stop them."

Jason gave him a funny look. Didn't he just say that he'd tie him to the bed if he tried to get up?

"How?"

The Imposter smirked.

"Your suit looks about my size, right?"

Jason sighed.

He had to admit, the Imposter had a point. Even if he managed to go out, Black Mask's goons could probably take him out of the game permanently with minimal effort, in his condition. But the Imposter was in tip-top shape, and knew how his operation ran.

And the Red Hood had to be active, if he wanted to keep the drug trade under his control.

"Fine," he said. "You're it. But if you fuck this up..."

"Yeah, yeah," The Imposter said. "We'll be right on schedule by the time you're all healed. Who knows? Maybe we'll even be ahead once I'm done."

"Don't flatter yourself, Imposter," Jason said. "You're not nearly as good as me."

"Whatever," the Imposter said. "Go back to sleep. I'll handle things tonight."

"You sure you don't need me on comms?"

"Pretty sure, yeah," the Imposter replied. "I know exactly what's gonna go down, and what I need to do to stop it. It'll be easy peasy."

Chapter 7, pt 1

Chapter Summary

Terry runs into some trouble while out as the Red Hood.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Black Mask's new deal wasn't set for another day, so Terry decided to continue Hood's usual routine of occasionally patrolling Crime Alley and looking out for danger. All he needed was to be seen today so that Black Mask's men didn't get any funny ideas, so he thought a nice relaxing night of kicking rapist and mugger butt would be a great way to start.

It was awfully quiet patrolling by himself, without Hood or the Old Man chattering away into his ear.

He missed the Old Man. He wondered what he'd think of Terry teaming up with the Red Hood. He already guessed what his younger, more moral counterpart would think, but the Old Man was different. More jaded. Even then, he'd probably give Terry a long lecture on breaking the Time Travel protocol and messing up the timeline before even thinking about helping him with the mission.

Stubborn bastard.

God, he missed him. He missed his mom, Matt, Dana, Max... he even missed the Jokerz gang at times.

Well, he missed good old knock 'em sock 'em patrols where he beat the living daylights out of them. Those were fun.

He sighed, and jumped over to a fire escape, waving at the working girls working the corner below.

They waved back, and he crouched down and watched them for a bit longer, cataloging how they moved, if they hissed slightly at hidden bruises and cuts, and if there were any recent injuries visible on them.

There was nothing notable, from what he could tell. Hood's patrols and vicious takedowns of any pimps and johns who harmed the working girls seemed to be working.

He decided to ask them, just in case. The working girls trusted the Red Hood, and the helmet's voice modulator would keep from sounding too different from the original, if he worded his questions right.

He attached his grapple to the fire escape, and rappelled down to the alley below.

“How’s it going?” he asked. That was generally what Hood asked when he was there, after all.

“Not bad,” one of the ladies told him. He remembered that her name was Candy, since he had heard Hood talk to her through the comms. “It’s the usual work, but it’s a quiet night so far.”

“That’s good,” Terry replied. Hood had been working on making sure the working ladies were comfortable, and had access to free places to meet with clients, as well as medical testing and opportunities to find new careers, if they decided to.

“Is Doc Thompson treating you guys well?” he asked. In his day, the Leslie Thompson Memorial Clinic was run by a scarily competent blonde haired woman named Doctor Brown. He had gone there a few times back when he was a scrappy street punk in need of treatment, too scared to ask his parents to pay hospital bills. For now, though, Leslie Thompson wasn’t dead yet, so it was still her clinic.

“She always does,” Candy said, “You don’t have to worry about us.”

She was probably right about not having to worry about getting medical treatment. Terry and Hood had just paid off the remaining medical balances on every working girl he could find, and, on top of that, sent a hefty donation the clinic’s way. It was a better use of Black Mask’s money than paying dealers to deal to kids, anyway.

“It’s my job to worry,” he replied.

“We know,” Candy replied, “But rumor says you went down by the docks yesterday. Are you sure you should be out?”

Of course the rumor had spread. That just made his job thirty times harder, since everyone was going to be wreaking havoc while they thought the Red Hood was out of commission.

They’d get the right idea soon enough. Soon, the rumor that the Red Hood was up and running despite his spat at the docks would be spreading. And thank fuck for that, because he needed to get back and change the real Red Hood’s bandages. Even if the stubborn bastard thought he would be able to do it himself. Terry bet his batsuit he’d try to.

“As you can see,” he bit out, “I’m fine. Don’t worry about me.”

“We’re glad,” Candy responded, “Now go and make sure other people know that, before they start doing things they’d regret later.”

“Will do,” Terry replied, getting his grapple ready. “Let me know if anything else happens.”

“Of course, Hood,” Candy replied. “We’ll see you around.”

Hood gave them a salute, and then grappled out of the alley, vaulting onto the fire escape outside the building and using it to get to the next roof.

Now, to make sure that everyone knew that the Red Hood was alive and kicking, before they started trying to take over the streets in his place.

He barely noticed the black clothed figures following him around on his patrol at first. But as he went around Crime Alley, intentionally trying to avoid fighting them, they became less and less discreet.

Soon enough, he ended up surrounded by a bunch of familiar looking black-clothed ninja lookalikes.

Of course the League of Assassins would be after Hood, too. Who wouldn't be?

But what was the League of Assassins doing in Gotham? Didn't the Old Man make it clear that they weren't allowed in the city early on?

Terry stopped and stilled, holding out a gun, ready to shoot. He was still thankful Big Time taught him how to shoot, even if he didn't even want to think about what Big Time wanted him to do with those skills.

"What do you bozos want?" he yelled.

They stayed still, tensed up and ready for a fight.

"Well?" he yelled. "Come and get me!"

They charged at him, swords drawn, and Terry managed to shoot a couple down before they got too close, despite being rusty. Even then, he ended up using the gun as a projectile, knocking out one of the assassins before they could reach him.

He really, really hoped Hood would be back in the costume the next time he had to actually shoot someone. Because he sucked at it.

He sort of regretted putting on the Red Hood costume now. Hood's whole schtick was shooting people, and Terry wasn't exactly as good of a shot as Hood was. Even so, Bats backed each other up when they were in danger, and he'd much rather have a bunch of assassins fighting him than trying to get at Hood while he was down.

He threw a right hook at the nearest assassin, waiting for him to dodge to the left before feinting away and taking him down with a vicious spin kick.

Another assassin tried to take him down from behind, but Terry ducked and pulled the assassin's weight down with him, throwing him to the ground in front of him. He got out Hood's other pistol and pistol whipped the assassin to make sure he stayed down, before throwing the gun at yet another assassin's head.

Both assassins collapsed, and Terry stood up, getting into a fighting position.

But then, he felt something prick his neck through the armor, and a flash of dizziness hit him.

He fell to his knees.

He distinctly heard a woman's voice tell the assassins to stand down, before Hood's helmet was removed.

A familiar woman stood in front of him.

Ra's, he thought distantly.

"You're not the Red Hood," she said, in a stern middle eastern accent. "Who are you?"

Terry bared his teeth at her in a fascimile of a smile, and everything went black.

Chapter End Notes

Some fun news: I'm planning on adding some more stories to this universe! However, they're all going to be alternate universes of this in which the time machine doesn't work. (I might add one in this timeline later, but idk, that's for future me.)

I'm very excited to write more. We've got some cool villains, ever cooler heroes, and my own interpretation of what happened to the members of the Batfamily they didn't put in *Batman Beyond*! As well as me adding a villain I thought would have been perfect in the DCAU but didn't exist when the show came out, a few Batman fanfiction tropes I think would be fun, and the usual banter. They'll be released in the series this work is in, so if you like that, subscribe to "DCJU: Earth 12.5"!

Also let me know what you'd want to read in future stories in this universe!

Chapter 7, pt 2

Chapter Summary

Terry gets captured by an old and new enemy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Terry's head felt like it was full of fuzz, and his mouth tasted like static. Typical, after getting hit with a tranq dart.

He opened his eyes to the sight of a decrepit room, and fought the urge to close them, if only to get away from the blinding lights. God, where was Hood's helmet when he needed it?

And why the heck did they even have lights on when there was a skylight? If he had his suit on, he could have just broken the ropes and flown right out, but no, he was stuck wearing Hood's vintage clothes and antique gear.

That was when he noticed he was tied tightly to a chair with no utility belt in sight. Hell, the kidnapper didn't even leave any room for him to move his arms.

Great, he thought. Just great.

Oh, and there were ninjas standing in front of the nearest feasible exit. Just what he needed, after getting kidnapped on the job.

And that was when the kidnapper herself appeared, black hair cascading down her back like some sort of vengeful goddess.

Ra's al Ghul.

No, he corrected himself. Talia. She hadn't been taken over by her father, yet. Hopefully.

She grabbed his chin, and wrenched up his face until he was looking her in the eye, her grip hard enough to bruise.

"Who are you, and what have you done with the Red Hood?" she asked.

"You mind letting go of my chin so I can answer?" Terry retorted. Or, at least tried to, since Talia was grinding his jaw into his skull.

She backhanded him, hard.

"Save the cheek for someone who wants to hear it," she responded. "Now, where is the Red Hood?"

God damn was that going to bruise.

"Somewhere. Why do you want to know?"

"Your babble is trying my patience. Now, where is he?"

"Not here, obviously. Next question?"

Talia made a tscking noise, and looked closer at him, turning his head and examining every feature of his face.

Terry was starting to get a bit creeped out. Even Ra's kissing Bruce as Talia wasn't as weird as the woman herself staring at his face all funny.

"You share an overwhelming resemblance to my beloved," Talia decided.

Terry stayed silent. Just because he happened to have black hair and blue eyes didn't mean he looked like Bruce. Why did everyone think he looked like the guy?

Talia looked him in the eye.

"What whore did he bed this time?"

"What?" Terry choked out. That was not what he had been expecting.

"Do I need to ask twice?" she replied, looking at him like he was less than a piece of dirt.

"Psycho kidnappers tend to need to," Terry replied, automatically. In reality, he was still processing the fact that Talia legitimately believed he was related to the Old Man. He doubted it, since his parents were very much in love when he was born and the Old Man was like... 50 then? 60? He didn't know. And he didn't even want to think about a slightly younger version of Old Man Wayne canoodling with his mom.

Ew. He wanted to permanently scrub his brain free of that image.

Talia dug her nails into his face hard enough to draw blood.

"Do not let your relation to my beloved make you think that I will spare you or any of his brood any mercy."

"Maybe we're not related," Terry said, "Have you considered that?"

"Or maybe you're a fool who can't see past his own nose," Talia bit back. "I would suppose so, since your mother was obviously of inferior stock."

She did not just go there.

“Did you just call my mom an inferior whore?” Terry shot back, “Because you might want to take a look in the mirror.”

Talia backhanded him again. Boy, wasn’t she getting predictable?

“And you’re foolish enough to believe that you could take a place at my beloved’s side.”

“I don’t need to believe that. I’m already there,” Terry replied. He had been working for the Old Man for over a year, after all. “You do, though.”

Talia stood stock still, but Terry could tell that she was starting to get pissed by the fact that she was starting to tremble.

Good, Terry thought. That meant it was time to keep talking until she got pissed enough to make a mistake and had to leave to cool down and continue to look in control. Then, he could work on escaping, and hoping Hood didn’t do anything stupid in the meantime.

“He’s not going to take you back, you know,” Terry told her, “Last I checked, he was perfectly happy without you. Or any woman in his life. He’s definitely the type of guy who’d rather die alone than take any old girlfriend back, in my opinion. Especially one of the crazy ones.”

Well, he knew Wayne wouldn’t take back any of the girls he had pined after for a fact, but Talia didn’t know that.

He heard the click of the safety being turned off on one of those old fashioned guns, and felt the cold steel of one’s muzzle touch his temple.

“Say one more word about my beloved,” Talia ground out, “And I will not hesitate to kill you.”

And then the skylight crashed in, and someone in a very familiar black suit landed in a roll, straightening up.

The Ninjas drew their swords and prepared to pounce.

Terry recognized him even before he took a pistol out of the holsters he had strapped to Terry’s utility belt, and aimed it at Talia.

He groaned. Of course he would remember that Terry’s suit could enhance his strength right after he got injured.

One of the ninjas took a step towards the man in the suit, but Talia held up a hand, and he stilled.

The figure cocked the gun.

“Heya, Talia,” Hood said, “Figures you’d show up around town just as I was taking my day off.”

Chapter End Notes

Bad news: This chapter is a bit shorter than usual. And I had no idea how to write Talia, so I just sort of guessed.

Good news: You get an extra chapter because I wanted to also add Jason's POV of the situation. And to the commenter who guessed Jason was gonna show up in the Beyond suit, you called it! Nice job!

More bad news: I might not be able to update as frequently right now. My bio says I live in the circle of hell reserved for pre-law students, and it's right. The 10th circle of hell is a bitch.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Jason finally manages to get on the scene.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

This was not Jason's day. Hell, it wasn't even his month, or his year. But today took the cake.

First, he had met the imposter. Who he admitted was a great help, even if he was a bit too chatty and kept making jokes about him being old. But, the Imposter was quite helpful, and had even patched up a few kinks in Jason's master plan that he didn't even think of, so Jason didn't mind him too much.

But the guy was still a Bat at heart, even if he was more his speed than Dickie's, per se. And Jason wasn't a Bat. Not anymore. Hell, he didn't even know why he let the guy stick around in the first place, instead of sending him Bruce's way and washing his hands of him. It wasn't like they'd believe some rando from the future if he said something about an old Robin running around in a Red Helmet, after all.

Maybe he saw a bit of himself in the guy. He didn't know. He didn't even know the guy's name, and they had been living together for more than a week. How fucked was that?

Then Jason had been injured on the job, delaying his plans. Sure, he trusted the Imposter to do what Jason would do as the Red Hood. The Imposter was hanging with him and not the Old Man, after all. But he didn't even know if the Imposter could shoot. Sure, the Imposter walked around with the swagger of anyone who had been at the bottom of Gotham's barrel, but it wasn't like every street tough could shoot. And if they could, there was no way they could aim as well as the Red Hood could.

He knew the Imposter could at least fake it until he made it, though, and Crime Alley needed the Red Hood's iron grip to keep it in line. So he let the Imposter take his suit and go for a spin.

And then, the Imposter didn't show back up on time.

Jason had woken up at 3:15 in the morning, after a stressful night of barely resting due to the amount of pain he was in. The Imposter knew Jason's patrol schedule, and knew that he'd usually be back and in bed by 3:30.

Jason gave him the benefit of the doubt until 4, and then decided something was gravely, gravely wrong.

He grabbed his comm from the bedside table, hissing when he pulled at his stitches and burns.

"Imposter," he said, "Imposter, come in!"

Nothing.

He tried again, and got the same response.

Fuck. Of course the guy would get kidnapped on his first day out as the Hood. Or hurt, or even killed. He didn't know.

Shit, how was Jason going to keep control of the Alley now? The Red Hood had been incapacitated twice in as many days. Black Mask's crew was going to think he was a joke.

He was super thankful he had put a tracker in the helmet now. And one in his belt, of course. If a kidnapper was likely to nab it and he was likely to need it, he had put a tracker in it so he could nab it back and shoot the fucker who took it in the face. But at least he could track where the Imposter went, and go from there.

There was a problem, though: how the hell was he going to get out of bed and rescue the Imposter? He could barely move without flinching, and his legs felt like jelly. He barely had the strength to get out of bed and cross the room. And there was no way in hell he was going to call the Bats to get the Imposter out. What would he say? "Hey, Jason here! I'm not dead. Surprise! If you rescue the Batman from the future, I'll wait before pummeling you to bits for not killing my killer and letting another kid wear the suit I died in!"

Green crept into his vision at that, and he clenched his fists. God, thinking about Bruce and the Replacement just made him pissed beyond belief. He needed to keep his cool around the Bat, not kill him before he had the chance to make him see reason and kill the clown. So asking him for help was out of the question. And obviously, he couldn't ask Nightwing or Robin. Or Batgirl. Barbie would rat him out to Dickwing, no question.

So it was up to him.

Maybe he could track the suit and then call the Police about something happening at that location?

Nah, he thought. If it was Black Mask's goons who took the Imposter, the police would have been bribed to stay away, and wouldn't show up.

And then the thought struck him.

Didn't the Imposter say his fancy schmancy suit from the future enhanced his strength and speed? And, even more conveniently, it was just across the room, under the bin with the computer on top.

Killing two birds with one stone, huh?

Hopefully he wasn't accidentally killing a bat with the same stone's throw.

He had pulled the suit on, and it had automatically connected with the computer's tracking software somehow, making it that much easier for him to track the Imposter to a warehouse across town. Of course, he had added his guns to the suit's utility belt, since it didn't seem to have anything too lethal in it. It didn't even seem to have a grapple with it, so he added one of those, too.

How the hell did the guy take anyone out with such shit gear, anyway?

At least it didn't hurt too much to walk. Or get to the location on his bike.

He stared at the side of the warehouse the tracking device pointed him to. He had noticed a couple of guys each at the front and the back entrance, so he knew going through the front door was a no go when he wanted to fight as little as possible. He couldn't waste energy in his condition.

How the hell was he going to find out where the Imposter was in there?

The suit beeped into his ear, showing a menu.

Observation Mode on? Yes/No.

He tried to look for buttons to press to get the menu to go away, only to end up cursing.

Vocal Command Not Recognized, the suit said. *Observation Mode On? Yes/No.*

"Fuck it," Jason said, "Fine. Yes. Whatever. Just go away."

The menu went away, and his vision switched to some sort of infrared display, but with the added bonus of being able to see heat signatures inside the building, and not just outside.

The Imposter was surrounded by bodies on the second floor, which meant he had to get to the roof. This style of warehouse tended to have a skylight on the top floor, so he wouldn't have a problem getting inside.

He got his grapple, and shot a line to the roof. But before he could pull the trigger, the suit sprouted wings, and somehow launched him in the air.

He tried to resist the urge to yell in shock. He really, really didn't want to alert the fuckers guarding the entrance.

Flight Mode Activated, the Suit said.

"Fuck me," Jason said, "Warn me next time, will ya?"

He managed to land softly on the roof, somehow, and crawled over to the skylight, peering in.

Talia al Ghul of all people stood in front of the Imposter, holding a gun to his temple.

Jason needed to be down there as of yesterday. Sure, Talia was helping him out, but he hadn't told her about the Imposter yet. She would probably see him as a threat, and try to take him out.

And that would be spectacularly unhelpful for his plans.

He jumped as hard as he could and crashed through the skylight.

Talia, in lieu of greeting him, grabbed a knife from a sheath at her thigh, holding it to the Imposter's throat.

"Jason," she said, "How... good it is to see you."

Jason sighed.

"Let him go, Talia." Jason demanded. "He's an ally."

"Hm... perhaps," Talia said, "But I do not see any reason not to dispose of him here and now. After all, he is a threat to the legacy of the Bat."

What did she mean by that? Had she figured out that the Imposter was from the future, or something?

"Good luck with that, lady," the Imposter snarked, before Jason could get a word in. "I bet your dad wouldn't be able to take me out without extra help from the geriatric ward. You'd have no chance."

Talia dug the edge of the blade into the Imposter's throat hard enough to draw blood.

"Do not speak of things you do not know of, child," Talia snarled. "My father has the power to annihilate cretins like you with one word. Unless you'd rather he go after your whore mother?"

The Imposter snorted, and then started laughing.

"My mother?" He said, chortling. "Wow, you really are nuts. Good luck with that."

Jason's eyes widened. This kid really didn't know who he was messing with, did he?

Talia looked like she was this close to stabbing him and being done with it, so Jason decided to interrupt before she actually slit the Imposter's throat.

"Imposter, you really shouldn't mess with her. She could kill you."

"She's tried before. It didn't work." The Imposter replied, flippant as ever.

Jason sighed.

"She's helping the Hood out. Without her, we'd never be as far in as we are."

The Imposter almost gaped at him.

"Seriously?" the Imposter said. "You're working with her?"

Jason rolled his eyes.

"Yes," Jason replied. "You gotta problem with it? We need her."

"Fine, whatever you say," the Imposter replied. "Since you're all friendly and everything, can you get her to let me go?"

Jason looked to Talia.

"Will you?"

Talia sighed, and pulled the blade away from the Imposter's throat, motioning for the other assassins to come closer.

The assassins started forward, and Talia made another motion.

It was the sign to attack.

The assassins darted forward, and Jason ran over to the Imposter, slicing through the bonds holding him to the chair.

He handed him the Batarang he used to slice the ropes, and pulled out his guns, using one to take out the nearest assassin.

"That's it?" the Imposter asked, looking incredulously at the lone Batarang in his hand. "Nothing else?"

Jason handed him one of his guns.

"That's all I've got for ya," Jason said. "Think you can keep up?"

"Obviously," the Imposter said, before launching himself at an assassin and clubbing him in the head with Jason's pistol. "Think you can?"

Jason smirked, and launched himself into the fray.

What neither noticed through the commotion was Talia taking the knife and handing it carefully to another assassin in the corner, with orders not to touch the blade or wipe off the blood.

Jason and the Imposter walked out of the warehouse, a trail of dead and half dead assassins behind them.

The Imposter fit better in his suit than Jason thought he would. Hell, he didn't even seem to have trouble walking, despite the shoes probably not fitting. Jason was a bit taller, after all.

“Wait,” Jason asked, curious. “Do we have the same shoe size?”

“Yup,” the Imposter replied, “And you know what they say about men with small feet -”

“Shut up,” Jason responded, hissing as he walked. The adrenaline was starting to wear off, and the pain was kicking back in. “My feet are perfectly proportional to my size.”

The Imposter slung Jason’s arm around his shoulder, and guided him back towards his motorcycle.

“And the girls love me more for having large feet,” the Imposter jibed. “Now, are we going to go back, or what? There’s a bandage with my name on it and a first aid kit with yours.”

“Don’t remind me, Imposter,” Jason said, his speech slurring slightly. “And I’m not injured that badly.”

“Sure, whatever you say,” the Imposter replied, “God, you’re like a fracking mule.”

“Not a mule,” Jason replied. “Bat.”

And then he slumped forward, properly exhausted.

Chapter End Notes

This is the longest chapter I've written for this story as of yet. To be fair, however, I had to take a break from writing for a week in order to work on productive writing, so I owed it to you.

Question: if I made a Discord server for this series/fic, would you guys join? I need people to talk about Batman Beyond with.

I also drew some art for this chapter [here](#):

Let me know what you think in the comments!

Chapter 9: Interlude

Chapter Summary

Terry and Jason bond while Jason heals. (Dual POV)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Terry slunk through Hood's open window, taking off Hood's Helmet and throwing it towards the couch. He was exhausted, and looking forward to taking a nice, hot shower and going the fuck to sleep. After checking in with Hood, of course.

At least Black Mask's goons hadn't been expecting the Red Hood to show up at their drug deal, beat them up, and then blow up the warehouse while they were in it. Especially since they had just done the same thing to him a few days earlier.

Terry called it "A better idea than letting some goon notice that it's not the real Red Hood in the suit because I'm not at his level with guns." Hood agreed, but also called it "karmic justice for those fuckheads."

Terry could get behind that, if he was honest. Although he could also add "making Black Mask piss his pants" to that. Bruce hadn't talked a lot about Black Mask back in his time, but from what he could tell from his time here, he was the furthest thing from a good person. And hey, it was fun to make the baddies piss their pants in fear, right? That's what Batman's reputation was for. And Red Hood's, for that matter.

Hood lifted his arm up and caught the helmet, only to hiss when he pulled his stitches.

Terry scoffed.

"What did I tell you?" he said.

Hood sighed.

"You'll let me listen in on what you're doing if I stay still and don't aggravate my injuries."

Terry waved his hand.

"And?"

Jason grumbled out a few choice curse words.

"No putting on the Batsuit unless you're about to die or get kidnapped."

Terry smirked, and flopped down onto the couch.

“Exactly. You get it.”

Jason sighed.

“I hate you.”

“Nah,” Terry replied. “You think I’m great.”

“I think you’re useful, Imposter. There’s a difference.”

“Sure,” Terry said. “Whatever you say, Hood.”

“I told ya, kid,” Hood scoffed. “You know my name. Use it.”

Terry sighed.

“Fine.”

Jason turned to him.

“You know, I still don’t know your name.”

Terry looked at him.

“Really?” he said.

“Nah,” Jason deadpanned, “Your name’s Marty McFly, obviously.”

Terry rolled his eyes.

“Yeah, yeah. Just admit you’re pissed that I haven’t told you my name yet.”

Jason flicked him off, and started to stand.

Terry stood up before he could, and put Jason’s arm over his shoulder, letting him put his weight on him.

“You don’t have to pamper me, Imposter.”

Terry sighed.

“Don’t tell me the Old Man didn’t help you when you were injured.”

He saw Jason clench his teeth.

“We are *not* talking about him,” Jason gritted out. “Not now.”

“Yeah, but you were a team, right? Batman and Robin.”

“And now he has a new Robin to be all chummy with. So what?”

“Teammates help each other,” Terry replied.

Jason clenched his fists, and glared at Terry.

“What are you getting at?” he yelled, eyes glowing green again. “Are you going to start going on about how Bruce is family and we should all be best friends and sing kumbaya together?”

“No,” Terry said. “I wouldn’t be here, with you, if I didn’t think being mad at the Old Man was justified.”

“And?” Jason snarled.

“We’re a team, right?”

The green light in Jason’s eyes faded slightly.

“Obviously.”

Terry gave him a look.

“So we help each other,” he pointed out.

Jason gave him an annoyed look, and then he scoffed.

“An undead zombie and the time traveling Batman from the future, huh? What a team we make.”

Terry smirked.

“The Old Man won’t know what hit him when we’re through with him.”

“Damn right,” Jason said, “Now, I’ve heard that time travelers from the future come with free first aid help, ain’t that right?”

Terry rolled his eyes, and muttered a few choice curse words fondly under his breath. At least Jason was letting him help, now. He didn't like being helped unless he thought he had a real reason to need it, and even injury didn't count sometimes.

Maybe he was opening up to Terry. He didn't know.

Jason punched him in the shoulder, and let Terry guide him to sit on the bed.

“Terry,” Terry said.

“Huh?” Jason replied.

“My name. It’s Terry McGinnis.”

Jason squinted at him.

“It fits better than Marty McFly,” he concluded.

“It’d better,” Terry said. “Marty is a ridiculous name.”

“Damn right it is,” Jason said. “Now, are you going to get the first aid kit, or what?”

Jason stretched, glad he could finally stretch without pulling his wounds. A week or two of rest had done wonders for him.

Terry smirked at him, and pulled on the cowl of his Batsuit before settling into a fighting stance. Today they were finally sparring, and Jason was excited. His blood purred for a fight, and it had been a good couple of weeks since he had gotten one.

Damn, he missed going out and beating the shit out of people.

Terry had gone out as the Red Hood, but only as needed. They both knew that while the average thug wouldn’t be able to tell the difference between them, Bruce would be able to. And Bruce was getting closer and closer to coming after the Red Hood, based on what Terry and Jason had been able to snoop on from the Bat’s comm system. It was surprisingly easy to hack when they had future technology that made cracking the best protection 2007 had to offer look like breaking candy.

Jason was extra glad he had Terry on board, now. He couldn’t listen to the comms for too long before getting... emotional, for a better word. He didn’t exactly know how to place the complicated tangle of emotions he felt every time he heard Bruce’s voice.

He was pissed at Bruce, for sure. He was pissed at the fact that he didn’t seem to give a damn about him after he died. But, for some damn reason, he missed the guy. Bruce had been a constant for the best few years of his life. But those years were never coming back, so there was no use in thinking about the good old days, when he would go out as Robin with his dad and beat criminal butt. When crowbars and coffins wouldn’t make him hyperventilate.

And that was why he wanted to be the one who took off the red helmet and looked Bruce in the eye while he poured accelerant over the remains of Bruce’s carefully crafted life without him.

That was why he had asked Terry to stay mostly unseen, so that Bruce wouldn’t confront the Red Hood before Jason had the chance to get back into the helmet.

Terry just nodded, and did what he said without complaint. He was great like that.

“You ready?” Terry called out, smiling through his cowl.

Jason smirked back from under his helmet. God, he had missed it.

“Hell yeah,” Jason called back, his voice echoing throughout the warehouse they had chosen to spar in. “Prepare for the beatdown of your life, Imposter.”

“You’re on,” the Imposter replied.

And then, they lunged at each other, and the fight was on.

“Damn,” Jason said, flopping onto the couch in their safehouse after their spar, “That was a doozy.”

Terry joined him on the couch, panting himself.

“It wasn’t too hard to beat you,” he said.

Jason took off his helmet, and threw it at Terry.

Terry, of course, caught it without complaint, and set it down on their shitty coffee table.

“You had to work for it, though,” Jason said. “And we were matched most of the time.”

Terry took off his cowl, and ran a hand through his sweat soaked hair.

“Okay, maybe. But to be fair, I didn’t get Robin training like you did.”

Jason sat up.

“Bruce didn’t train you?”

“He taught me basic stuff. Intimidation. How to use the suit. Life-saving techniques. First aid. Stuff like that.”

“Yeah, but he didn’t teach you how to fight.”

“He didn’t,” Terry replied. “He couldn’t. He could barely walk without a cane, and function without heart meds. I couldn’t ask him to.”

Jason scoffed.

“You said Barbie was around, though. Didn’t she teach you?”

“She was too busy being the commissioner. And besides, she didn’t even want me in the suit. She thought I was too young. Too under-qualified.”

“That’s rich, coming from her,” Jason replied. “She was the definition of under-qualified when she started, from what I’ve heard.”

“Really? She always seemed scarily competent to me.”

“She went out in a homemade costume,” Jason said. “With barely any gear or training.”

“Damn,” Terry said, “Well, she made it work, at least.”

“Obviously,” Jason said, “But come on, don’t tell me Dickiebird didn’t at least teach you.”

“Dickiebird?”

“Don’t tell me you don’t know who Dick Grayson is.”

Terry guessed that was the full name of the DG who owned that suit Wayne lent him, at least, but didn’t know anything else about the guy.

“Who?”

“Nightwing?”

“Oh. Yeah. I’ve heard his voice here, but I’ve never met him in my era.”

Jason gave him a deadpan stare.

“You’re fucking with me, right?”

“I told you,” Terry said, “The only Robin I had heard of before coming here was Tim Drake. The Old Man doesn’t talk about you guys at all.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. The less he talks about someone, the more he likes them. That’s just how he is.”

Jason just stared at him.

“I mean,” he said, “I’m surprised I didn’t visit you at all in the future. You seem cool enough.”

“You could be dead.” Terry pointed out.

“Come on. I wouldn’t go down that easily.”

“Who knows what’ll happen in the next 35 years?”

“You seem to.”

“I don’t know everything.”

“Sure you don’t.”

Terry threw his sweaty cowl at Jason and Jason caught it, before swiftly putting it on top of Terry’s head.

Terry gave him a glare, and let it fall into his lap.

“I’m just shocked, you know?” Jason said. “That everyone’d be so mad at B that no one would go and visit their newest baby Bro.”

Terry gave him a look.

“Why does everyone think Bruce is my father? God.”

“You don’t have to be related to your family by blood, brother mine. ‘The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb,’ right?”

Terry gave him a curious look.

“You really think I’m your brother?”

“Damn right, Baby Bat.”

Terry scoffed.

“Don’t call me that.”

“You’re part of the family now. Which means you get a ridiculous nickname. Deal with it.”

Terry rolled his eyes.

“Whatever, Grandpa.”

Jason glared at him.

“No.”

“Hey, you said that if we’re family, we get ridiculous nicknames, right?”

“That is *not* what I said.”

“I don’t care. If I’m a baby, you’re a grandpa. Deal with it.”

Jason took a pillow off of the couch, and threw it at him.

“Fuck you, Imposter. You’re gonna get it for this.”

Terry caught the pillow.

“What, so I’m Imposter again now?”

Jason decided enough was enough, and grabbed the pillow from Terry, before whacking him with it.

“Your nickname privileges got revoked.”

“Whatever, Old Man. You’re not gonna beat me with those joints, anyway.”

Jason whacked him again with the pillow, and Terry grabbed his wrists, trying to wrestle the pillow from him.

They ended up on the floor, breathless from laughing, just as Jason had been with Nightwing on the rare occasions that they were together and Dick wasn’t screaming at Bruce about something and storming out.

Man, he missed having a brother.

Chapter End Notes

That was a bit longer than the usual. I just wanted to squeeze some more Terry and Jason bonding into the fic.

(Also catch Jason admitting he's a part of the Bat-Family while not actually admitting it since he's all like "I'm edgy and my family (sans Terry) doesn't love me boohoo.")

Update: changed the Baby Bat nickname to Batkid because I liked it better.

Update 5/17/22: Changed it back to Baby Bat. Why? Idk.

I made a Discord server! The link will be in the end notes for the fic!

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Terry and Jason start enacting the Master Plan, and Terry reflects on the mission.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Terry was bored.

He had stayed on comms while Hood threatened some of his thugs into stealing Black Mask's new Amazo unit, and tracked the thugs so Hood could follow them and take them out after the Bat inevitably got to them, using trackers Hood had discreetly put on their truck and clothes. Jason wanted Batman to know that the Hood existed, but didn't want him to know that the Red Hood was Jason until he could get some more work done on Gotham's criminal underbelly.

It seemed as if Terry and Jason both knew that the Red Hood's criminal empire wouldn't last confrontation with Bruce, so they were trying to keep it from happening until the right moment, when Black Mask was well and truly desperate and the Red Hood controlled Crime Alley.

"Hey, Jason," Terry had asked, a couple of days before, "What're you gonna do when this is all over?"

"I dunno," Jason replied. "Hell, once that clown is dancing with the devil where he belongs, I might even take a vacation. See the beach. Drink piña coladas and get a tan, you know? I never got to do that when I was alive, before."

"Are you thinking about going back to the Old Man after the Clown is dead?" Terry asked, cautiously. He didn't want Jason to blow up on him at the suggestion of going back, but Terry knew that after the Joker was dead and gone, Bruce would be the best person to help Jason recover from everything. And he wanted to keep the family together, not let it split apart. That was why Terry was there, right?

And if Jason decided to split after the Joker was six feet under, Terry would have failed, spectacularly.

But that was exactly what Jason was going to do. So even though Jason would probably kill him for it, Terry would keep the family together. Even if it meant dragging Jason back to the Batcave by his ankles.

He didn't think he could sway him, but he could at least try, right?

Jason sighed.

“Nah, Imposter Bat,” he said, “That implies that he’d want me.”

“Why wouldn’t he?” Terry asked, “You’re his kid.”

“So?” Jason yelled, “I’m damaged. A killer. I’m not the kid he remembers, and I never will be again! Why would he want *me*?”

“Because you’re his son?”

Jason scoffed.

“I’m no son of his. I was just his pawn. His sidekick.”

He spat the last word out like it was venom.

“Have I ever told you about how Bruce would always talk about me behind my back?” Jason continued. “He’d always go on about my aggression and rage issues. How I was unstable, compared to Dick. A failure.”

“You weren’t a failure to him,” Terry interrupted. “You -”

“How would you know? You said it yourself, Imposter. He doesn’t talk about me.”

You were his son, Terry was going to say, He loves you, idiot. You could never be a failure to him.

“You’re right,” Terry said, “I wouldn’t know. But I know the Old Man. And that guy has a soft spot for his kids a mile wide.”

“His kids, not me,” Jason said. “His kid died in a warehouse in Ethiopia.”

And with that, he left the room, and Terry was left alone to stew in silence.

“How’s the fight with the Amazo going?” Terry called out over comms, from his spot in their apartment. Jason was waiting on a roof to snipe the guys who had stolen the Amazo in the first place, while Batman fought the Robot below.

“Entertaining,” Jason replied. “Apparently, Nightwing’s in town.”

“Huh,” Terry replied. That was a new development. They had both thought that Nightwing was babysitting Robin in Bludhaven at the moment, dealing with the crime bosses there.

“I forgot how fun it was to watch the original duo work together,”

“Wish I could see it,” Terry said. “Shame your helmet doesn’t have a video feed. That’d save me a lot of grief.”

“Hey, I’m on a tight budget,” Jason replied. “And besides, you can’t trust the League of Assassins with everything.”

“I still can’t believe you didn’t split with them after you got out of the pit,” Terry said.

“I did, for a bit,” Jason said, “Then I found a newspaper saying ‘Batman and Robin take down the Joker.’”

“Oh,” Terry said. That explained it. The League did like to prey on the emotionally vulnerable. They got to the Old Man because he felt crippled by his age, after all. Not that that worked out, thank God.

“Yeah,” Jason said. “I had to get the skills to take that fucking clown out, since Batman obviously didn’t give two shits about me. So I stuck it out. Talia said she’d find people to teach me, so I learned what I could from ‘em, and then took them out, too. Half of them were scumbags, anyway.”

“Make sense,” Terry said, “You think Talia was using you to get rid of them?”

“Obviously,” Jason said, “Now shush, Baby Bat. The Old Man and Bird Boy are finally confronting the guys.”

“Best of luck,” Terry said. “And make sure you set the right vat of chemicals on fire.”

“Obviously,” Jason said. “What, you don’t trust me?”

“Only as far as I can throw you,” Terry said. “Now go get ‘em.”

“Copy,” Jason said. “I’ll be back ASAP.”

“Roger that,” Terry said, “And don’t forget to pick up your joint medicine on the way back.”

“Fuck off,” Jason said. “And shut it. I need to concentrate.”

Terry rolled his eyes fondly, and looked back at the map. No plan survived first contact with the enemy, and he could only hope Jason's plan worked. But, deep in his heart, he knew it wouldn't. Not without him stepping in.

Chapter End Notes

I rewatched Under the Red Hood for reference and had to rework half the remaining plot, but I'm excited to get it out there! This is a bit of a shorter chapter, since the last two were a bit longer. Man, the ending just got me. And Jason saying "It's too late for me" when Bruce told he he could come with him and go back. Ugh. I love that movie.

Also shout out to everyone on the Beyond the Bat's Nest Discord Server (linked below) for being awesome. And to everyone who comments! You guys are the best.

Enjoy!

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Jason gets mad. He and Terry talk about the future and the past.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jason didn't know how to feel. Well, scratch that, he was tired as the dickens, and covered in cuts and bruises from his tussle with the Fearsome Hand of Four.

But...Bruce had been there. Bruce had fought side to side with him, just as they had back in the good old days, back when he was Robin.

Internally, he wanted to lock himself into his room, take off his armor, and cry for a good, long time. However, he didn't have the luxury of being able to do that. Terry would be able to hear him through the wall, and while Terry was the type of dude who minded his own business, he also tended to be a bit protective. Which meant that he'd probably worry. He was sort of like Bruce like that, except Bruce wouldn't mind his own business for shit. The old bastard was too damn paranoid to not poke into everyone else's shit.

God, he missed Bruce.

Hell, he didn't just miss the guy, he missed the fact that he used to be the man's son. That he had had a future, before he died. He thought he was going to be the first Todd to go to college. The first Wayne to really know what Gotham's poor wanted from the Wayne Family's philanthropy. And then, his life had been cut short, because he had trusted the wrong person. Because he didn't stop and appreciate what he had.

Now, years and a stint in the ground later, he appreciated it more than ever. Sure, the Red Hood had food, water, shelter, and money, but he didn't have a Dad. Not anymore. Bruce wouldn't want a killer as his son, after all.

Especially if the son that was doing the killing was Jason.

He could tell what Bruce would think. It was logical that the overly aggressive son would become the one that went around taking out his anger on the scum surrounding him. Obviously, Dick wouldn't. His replacement was better than him in every way, so, obviously, he wouldn't. Only the family disappointment would go around murdering people. And he was the family disappointment. He was the only one who was stupid enough to get killed on the job, after all.

He felt the burn of the Pit in his veins at that thought, and took off his helmet, throwing it at the wall.

Terry jumped from his spot on the couch, standing and taking a fighting stance.

“How do you feel?” Terry questioned, “The Old Man is pretty tough to be around,”

“Fine,” Jason growled. He didn’t want to talk about his confrontation. Not now.

Terry sat back down, and gave him a scathing stare.

“You’re never fine after dealing with him, Jason.”

Jason stopped, anger simmering under his skin. Of course Terry would butt in. He should have expected him to. After all, they both had been trained by Bruce, to differing degrees. They both got his paranoia.

He clenched his fists. When would people just leave him alone?

Everything in his vision glowed green, and he had the urge to destroy everything in his path, to kill everyone who crossed him -

Terry was nearby. And he had crossed him.

Jason lunged at Terry, and Terry calmly grabbed his arm, and put him into a hold before he could retaliate, keeping his arm twisted painfully behind his back.

Jason attempted to hit Terry’s weak points to get him to let go. His foot to Terry’s instep was easily dodged, as well as the attempted backhand to the nose and the elbow to the solar plexus.

Terry just twisted his arm harder with every dodge.

“Are you done with your temper tantrum, or am I going to have to put you in time out?” Terry said.

“Let. Me. Go!” Jason growled out.

“Nope,” Terry said, “Not until you calm down.”

Jason growled again, and, this time, his backhand to the face wasn’t hindered.

Terry went down, hitting the shitty coffee table, breaking it under the force of his fall.

Jason turned around, and aimed a punch for Terry’s face.

Terry, despite being winded, managed to block his hand, but by the skin of his teeth. And, he also blocked the punch he threw with the other hand right after.

“We’re gonna have to do this the hard way, huh?” he said.

Jason didn't care. He just wanted blood.

Terry kneed him in the stomach, hard, and then rolled around, putting Jason in another hold.

Before Jason could struggle, he felt Terry jab a pressure point, forcing his body to relax.

"Sorry about this," Terry said, "You'll thank me later."

And then, Terry hit him over the head, and everything went black.

Jason hated waking up after being knocked out. At least, this time, he wasn't tied up by some mob boss and about to be interrogated. Or, in the most notable case, waking up after a certain clown-themed psycho had snuck up on him and knocked him out before starting his crowbar orgyfest.

But Jason didn't want to think about that.

He was thankful that the throbbing in his head made it hard for him to think of anything else at the moment. And that Terry was nice enough to provide pillows and a comfy couch, before starting his own interrogation. And he would. That's what Bats did.

"You're up," Terry said. "Finally. That took forever."

"What the fuck happened?" Jason said.

"Pit rage," Terry said, "You got mad after I asked you about how today's patrol went."

Jason sat up, and groaned. Terry packed quite the punch.

"Damn, Imposter. You hit hard."

"You do, too," Terry replied, gesturing to the coffee table. Which happened to be sitting on the floor, in a neat pile of splinters.

"You're welcome, by the way," Terry deadpanned. "I swept it up while I was waiting for you to wake up."

Jason rolled his eyes.

"Whatever."

Terry sat down on the other end of the couch, slumping down into the cushions. Jason noted the soreness in his posture, and grimaced.

"You okay, Imposter?"

Terry snorted.

"Peachy. You?"

“You look like something crawled down your pants and died.”

Terry rolled his eyes.

“Nah,” Terry said.

He sighed.

“What?” Jason asked.

Terry looked at him.

“You think I’m gonna be able to go back?”

“Obviously,” Jason said. “The Old Man and the League know their shit when it comes to Time Travel. They’ll get you back in no time.”

“I guess,” Terry said. “I just don’t know how I’m gonna approach the guy about it. Or when.”

Jason sighed.

“You’ll get there. Worry about it after we get this whole thing done.”

“That’s probably the smart thing to do. I mean, while 2007 is pretty schway, it’s no 2040, you know? I don’t want to be stuck here with your dinosaur computers and no good music.”

Jason snorted.

“That’s what you’re stuck on? Not your family or friends?”

Terry gave him a look.

“Oh, I miss them plenty. I just try not to dwell on it. I have a job here, and I have to do it.”

Jason shifted a bit closer.

“Tell me about ‘em.”

Terry looked up at him.

“Really?”

“Yeah, man. You’ve been stuck avoiding my family for the past few weeks. I want to know about yours. And tell me everything. All the juicy details, embarrassing baby stories, the works.”

Terry smiled, a real, genuine smile that seemed to light up his whole face.

“Okay, so, my mom, right? She’s only a kid right now, but in about 2016, she had this partying phase...”

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, I know. This is a filler chapter. I didn't want to write the Fearsome Hand of Four scene because I don't like writing directly from movie lines, so I decided to be a bit more original and do some filler.

We will be getting into the real meat of the story next chapter, though! Finally.

Anyway, also, if you like "Batfam characters who weren't in BB ending up in BB while ignoring the comics" stories, check out my new story with my friendo theycallme-ook called "Dear Mr. Thomas," in which Duke Thomas is Terry McGinnis's long suffering ex-youth counselor from Juvie. I'm having a lot of fun writing Terry lol.

Enjoy!

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Terry and Jason get ready for the big day.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Missile Launcher? Check. Convenient rooftop located next to Black Mask's stupidly large penthouse suite? Check. Bugs in said penthouse, letting Jason know when Black Mask was going to have his next meeting? Check.

Terry's commentary on how this was either going to be epic or a huge disaster? Double check.

"Relax, Imposter," Jason said, "How else are we going to get the clown out of his little madhouse? We need to give Black Mask some... incentive to do what we want. And besides, desperate times call for desperate measures."

Terry sighed.

"Fine. Whatever. Doesn't mean that this is a good idea, though."

"You're gonna make a joke about how I should be picking up my old man meds instead, aren't you?"

"Slag. You saw right through me."

Jason still barely got the jist of most of Terry's weird future slang, but even he knew "slag" was just another way to say "damn."

"You know," Jason said, "That joke is really starting to get old."

"So?" Terry shot back, "So are you."

Damn it, he set himself up for that one.

"Fuck you," Jason said, "Target in sight. Which means it's time for you to either put up, or shut up."

"You're really sounding a grandpa with that sort of lecture-"

"What did I just say?"

Terry huffed.

“Fine. Whatever. And hey, make sure to tell Black Mask I said hey, will you?”

“Will do. Over.”

Jason hefted the missile launcher onto his shoulder, and began the process of aiming it smack dab into the middle of Black Mask’s penthouse.

He could almost taste the sweet taste of revenge already. It hung on the tip of his tongue, waiting for this coward to get so desperate that the only way he’d be able to stay in the game was to bust the clown out of jail.

Little did Black Mask know he would be sending the clown on a one way trip straight to hell.

“You know what we should do, before the final stretch of the plan starts?” Terry said to him, as soon as he threw his helmet onto the couch and plopped down onto it, every muscle in his body strained.

“What?” Jason asked.

“We should have some fun. You know, go to the arcade, eat some greasy food. Relax a bit! Who knows when the next time we’ll be able to.”

Jason looked at him like he had grown an extra head.

“No way in hell,” Jason shot back, “The Bat will be onto us faster than a shark in water.”

“So?” Terry replied, raising an eyebrow. “You have a whole drawer full of makeup and wigs for disguising yourself to get groceries. What’s stopping you now?”

“The Joker is going to be broken out of prison tonight, at the absolute earliest. We need to be ready and rested to counter him.”

Terry gave him a look.

“You sound just like the old man with that spiel.”

“I do not,” Jason growled.

“Hey, like father, like son.”

“I’m not his son.”

“I’d say you are. Like I keep telling you, the guy adores his kids. Almost to death.”

“And like I keep telling you, that’s a load of shit,” Jason yelled back. “He didn’t even bother avenging my death! Instead, he replaced me with another, better kid as soon as the costume

grew cold. Tell me, how would you feel if he just gave the Batsuit away as soon as you went six feet under?”

Terry pinched the bridge of his nose, and sighed.

“It’s different for me. I’m not his son.”

Jason scoffed.

“He lets you go out in his old clothes, Imposter. I’d say he cares about you, at least a little bit. So cut it with the ‘I’m not his son’ crock.”

Terry sighed again.

“Even then, Gotham needs a Batman more than it needs some ex-punk twip with an attitude. And I’d understand if someone else decided to step up and take the role if I was gone. I might be Batman, but, at the end of the day, I’m mortal. I go into every fight knowing that I could die, and I battle that slim chance as hard as I battle anyone or anything else.”

He gave Jason a serious look.

“That’s just how it is, in our line of business. We can’t get cocky.”

“It’ll get us killed,” Jason said, “Don’t I know that one well.”

And he did. He had gotten cocky, gotten complacent, and, ultimately, buried six feet underground in a fancy wooden box. Not that that had lasted all too long, but that didn’t matter too much.

Terry stood up, and stretched.

“I started on dinner,” He said, “You know, Wang’s Asian Market is pretty good, for a front for the Triad.”

“Honestly, I’m not surprised that no one in town gives a damn about that,” Jason said. “I think it’s just because their ingredients are better than any other Asian store in town.”

“Yeah. Honestly, I’m scared to know how they got them.”

“Do they close down in the future?”

“Actually? No. My family’s been buying stuff from there since before I was born.”

“Huh,” Jason said, “So what’s on the menu?”

“You know, I can kinda see why the Old Man keeps you around,” Jason said. “Your food is definitely more edible than his.”

Terry shook his head fondly.

“My food is very edible, thank you very much.”

“Yeah, but it’s not as good as Alfred’s.”

Terry rolled his eyes.

“Well, I’ve never met the guy, so I wouldn’t know.”

“You know, It’s still a little weird that he dies at some point. It always seemed like he’s functionally immortal.”

“Hey, he’s still human.”

“So am I, and I’m still here, despite everything.”

“You gonna dunk Alfred in the Lazarus Pit when his time is up, too?”

“Honestly? Maybe.”

He wondered, if Alfred was killed, would Bruce move heaven and earth to avenge him? Or would he just sit on his ass like he did with Jason?

Alfred probably wouldn’t need Bruce to avenge him if he came back to life, though. He’d probably just pick up his trusty shotgun and brain the fucker from 3 buildings away, with none the wiser.

Meanwhile, Jason knew, deep down in his heart, that no matter what he did or how many steps he took towards his goal, he wouldn’t be able to kill the Clown. At least, by himself.

That’s where Bruce came in. If he was able to convince Bruce to kill the clown, maybe he wouldn’t have a moral high ground to stand on when it came to killing. Maybe, just maybe, he’d prove to Jason how much he cared about him, by doing just this one thing for him. This one, small thing.

Maybe, just maybe, when all was said and done, and his hands were just as bloody as Jason’s... he’d take him back. How would he have any room to judge Jason for killing when he had killed himself? Hell, maybe it wouldn’t be as nice as the first time around, but at least Jason would have a family again.

Terry wouldn’t agree with him. He’d probably try to step in, and off the clown himself if he knew that Jason was as much of a coward as he was. But, Jason needed Terry to keep Nightwing off his back while he confronted Bruce. And without Terry keeping him in check, his plan would go off the rails quicker than he could say “Holy Batmobiles, Batman!”

So he’d have to go at it, alone. Just as he had, when he had first come back to life.

This took quite a while to whip up. I've been super duper busy, so don't expect frequent updates until about September. But hey! At least I managed to get a chapter done.

I am so excited to finish this fic. These next few chapters are gonna be so much fun. Just wait.

Chapter 13: The Showdown: Part 1

Chapter Summary

The Showdown: Part 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Terry was bored.

Okay, fine. He understood that what he was doing was important. He had to keep the other bats off of Jason's back and make sure he could trap and kill the Joker without them interfering.

But that didn't mean the job was fun.

Beating thugs up while spitting one-liners was fun. Beating Dana and Max at shitty old school arcade games was fun. This? This was... probably more fun than he thought it would be, all things considered.

At least, so far. All he had done so far was track Nightwing and Robin's locations across the city, and stopped some crime here and there. The Police were so focused on the Joker being out of Arkham that they didn't have the time to deal with Petty Crime. Which was what Terry was counting on. Nightwing and Robin knew this just as well as he did, and were probably doing their best to take down petty criminals while Batman dealt with the big guns.

So, all Terry had to do was pretend that he had just appeared in 2007 today, and hope that the Time Travel protocol was enough to keep Nightwing and Robin off of Jason's ass. And, maybe, drop a few clues about the Red Hood's identity. Because, hey, the Old Man was a stubborn bastard, and judging by Terry's surveillance of the Batcave's security system and the comms, Wayne probably wouldn't tell his kids a damn thing about Jason being back besides telling them he was armed and dangerous.

If Matt had died tragically, and then, a few years later, someone had told him he had magically come back to life, Terry would drop everything to make sure his brother was okay and that he knew Terry loved him and had missed him. Even if Matt decided that killing people was a better idea than going to therapy in the meantime.

He only hoped Dick Grayson and Tim Drake would do the same for Jason.

And, of course, Two Face had managed to plan an arms deal right when the Joker was creating his big fiasco. Probably because he had been tipped off about the Joker, and knew as

well as the Bats did that the Police would be too busy with his antics to bother busting the deal. The worst part was that, somehow, he had managed to anticipate the fact that while Batman would be too busy to bust him, Batman's birds would be on his tail like a flock out of Hell.

Literally.

Honestly, he was glad the guy was reformed in the future, because it meant that he didn't have to deal with shit like this on the job. Two Face might have been batshit back in his day, but he hadn't earned his law degree for nothing. He was smart, and he knew it.

Two Face's henchmen had managed to take Robin out of the fight rather fast, and Nightwing was forced to cover him in order to make sure that he could escape the fight unharmed. But he was starting to get overwhelmed, and Robin was alarmingly still on the floor.

Luckily, despite the fact that Two Face was smart enough to plan his drug deal in advance, he wasn't smart enough to plan for Terry.

Which made it even more fun when Terry burst through the warehouse doors and tackled him to the ground.

"You know what they say. Two's a company, three's a crowd, right?" Terry said, before tying Two-Face up with a bola. "Isn't it against your whole thing to invite a third vigilante when there's two that are already there? Sorta makes things uneven, right?"

"Get him!" Two Face yelled, and Terry jumped into the air, forcing the henchmen that had come after him to crash into each other.

He landed nimbly by Nightwing, and shot a few bat-arangs at the remaining henchmen for good measure.

"Let's get this show on the road, shall we?" he said.

Nightwing laughed, and brought out his escrima sticks.

"Let's do this," he said, and they jumped into the fray.

"So," Nightwing asked after all of the Henchmen were writhing on the ground and Two Face was knocked out and gift wrapped for the police, "Who are you?"

"I'm Batman," Terry responded. "Well, I will be in 2040. And you're Nightwing, right?"

"That's me," Nightwing said. "2040, huh. That's gotta be weird."

"It's a bit of an adjustment, that's for sure," Terry said.

They approached Robin, and Nightwing shook him awake.

"Huh, what," he said, looking up at them blearily. "Who's that?"

“That’s Batman. Well, he says he will be, in a few years.”

“Oh,” Robin said. “Nice to meet you?”

Terry looked down at him. It was weird to think that this almost barely pubescent kid would eventually end up becoming the traumatized engineer that the Joker resurrected himself through.

“Same to you, kid,” Terry replied. “I’ve heard a lot about you from the Old Man.”

Nightwing scoffed.

“It better all be good, I hope.”

“Nothing bad. Just not a lot. He’s very close-lipped about people close to him.”

“Of course he is,” Nightwing grumbled.

He turned to Robin.

“You okay, kid? You took quite a beating.”

“Peachy,” Robin replied.

He forced himself upright, only to collapse on his knees.

“Careful,” Nightwing said. “Here, let me help you out with that.”

Nightwing put Robin in a fireman’s hold, and hoisted him up.

“You don’t have to baby me, you know,” Robin grumbled.

Nightwing looked stricken.

“Look. You might be a capable vigilante, but you’re just a kid. I can’t...”

He took a shuddering breath.

“I can’t lose anyone else, you know?”

Terry felt like he was intruding on a private moment.

Robin gave him a reassuring pat on the back.

“You won’t lose me, ‘Wing. I promise.”

Nightwing sighed.

“I know, kid. I know.”

He turned towards Terry, and Terry knew right then that his plan to get Jason back into the fold wouldn't be a waste.

"Look, I hate to interrupt, but something bad is going to happen in a few minutes. And I'm gonna need your help to stop it."

Nightwing and Robin perked up.

"I'm listening."

"*We're* listening," Robin added.

"Okay. So..."

"You're saying that Jason's alive," Nightwing started, gradually getting louder with each statement, "And that Bruce knows he's alive, and didn't tell us?"

"Dick," Robin said, "It's okay. He probably had his reasons."

"What reasons?" Dick said.

He sighed.

"I should have guessed he'd pull a stunt like this. He's a big fan of hiding relevant information."

Terry shrugged.

"Well, there's probably a reason you never come around and visit during my time."

"I don't?" Nightwing said. "That's weird. I mean, Bruce is... Bruce, but you don't seem too bad."

"Thanks, I guess," Terry said, "But, that's not all."

Terry took a deep breath.

"Jason and I engineered the Joker's breakout in order to lure him into a trap and kill him. However, in my timeline, Jason isn't able to do it. And, because of that... let's just say it's bad at best and catastrophic at worst."

"So, in order to prevent the apocalypse, we're gonna have to kill him," Robin surmised.

"No," Terry said, "In order to prevent the apocalypse, I'm going to kill him. You two, on the other hand, are going to convince Jason to come back to the family."

Welp.

Sorry for the wait. I got really into another fandom and then lost inspiration. But I am back! And I WILL finish this fic.

Also writing Nightwing was super fun. I tried to keep him DCAU compliant, but a bit changed since Jason dying probably would have changed his characterization a bit. Also... Tim. He's fun. I hope I did them Justice.

Chapter 14: The Showdown, part 2.

Chapter Summary

The Showdown, part 2.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Bruce, I forgive you," Jason started, gun trembling in his hand, "I forgive you for not killing Dent, or Bane, or Scarecrow. But why..."

Jason wrenched the closet door beside him open, revealing the Clown inside, tied up all nice and neat like a birthday present.

"Why on God's green earth is *he* still alive?" Jason roared.

Bruce, for his part, looked totally nonplussed, despite having spent the last half hour of his time trying to beat Jason to a pulp. He had to give him credit for not faltering in the face of his so-called enemy, even if Jason was trying to get him to see that they were on the same side. But Jason hadn't been Bruce's sidekick for nothing, and he knew the man well enough to see him give off slight tells. His jaw was clenched, showing that he was angry. The left side of his lip twitched, showing that he was agitated or nervous about something. His body was tense, ready for a fight, but haggard, almost as if he was resigned to whatever would happen next.

Jason knew at that very moment that his plan was a failure.

He should have known better than to believe that Bruce would kill the Joker for him. For Dick? Maybe. For the Replacement? Definitely. But never for Jason. Maybe Jason was just irredeemable in his eyes. The ever forgotten middle child, doomed to be the family disappointment. Too violent, too wild, too uncontrollable.

Sure, there had been some good moments with Bruce. Every celebratory dinner after a report card full of straight A's. Every night where Bruce would comfort him after a nightmare, trying to read the dialogue to Jason's favorite stories in the stupidest, silliest voices he could just so Jason would laugh. Every successful takedown of another crook and his henchmen. Every moment Bruce spent listening to Jason ramble on about stuff he liked, from "How that fucker Mrs. McPherson butchered the hell out of her interpretation of Frankenstein," to "How you rich assholes make sure your Catalytic Converter doesn't get nabbed when you park downtown."

Well, when he listened. Looking back, it seemed like he was always too busy doing something else to be with Jason outside of the costume. But when Bruce listened, and they

just spent time together, as Father and Son? It meant the fucking world to him. Jason lived for those moments, when he wasn't seen as Dick Grayson's less cool younger brother or the second, too volatile Robin. When Bruce saw him as Jason Todd, the kid who overcame all odds and made the best of a lucky break.

Jason missed those moments to death, and this was the closest he was ever going to get to getting them again. After this? There was no way he would be able to go back. No way in hell would Bruce believe he could be anything but the crazy, volatile, violent criminal Bruce tried to keep him from becoming by taking him in in the first place.

The Joker laughed, and said some shit about how they should have brought Birthday Cake for the bash or some shit. Jason tuned him out, and jammed his pistol into the Clown's temple to get him to shut up.

Bruce said some sort of spiel about how killing the Joker would make him just like him, but Jason's ears were ringing, and he felt as if he was floating outside of his own body, watching the scene from over his own shoulder. Maybe he was actually a ghost, this time. Had he ever been one, when he was dead? Or had he been one the whole time, jammed forcefully back into his corpse?

The Joker kept laughing, and Jason felt like he was being raked over burning coals with every demented chuckle out of the fucker's mouth.

The green of the Pit crept slightly back into his vision, and Jason finally felt as if he was truly back in his own body for the first time since the Joker broke out of Arkham.

He tossed Bruce the gun, and gave him his ultimatum, aiming his own pistol at the Joker.

And then, the door of the abandoned apartment they were in burst off its hinges, and a futuristic batarang arced around the room, knocking the gun out of Bruce's hand.

"The show's over, Hood," Terry yelled, "Put the gun down."

"Ooh, what's this?" the Joker yelled, "A new kiddie of yours?"

His face contorted into an overdramatic frown.

"How come you didn't introduce this one to me, Batsy? I thought we were friends!"

Bruce gave Terry a cursory once over, but didn't say anything.

"You know," Terry said, "The sad clown act wasn't funny when you started this whole shindig, and it sure isn't funny now."

The frown fell off of the Joker's face, and was replaced with an eerie smile.

"On second thought, Batman, I think this new brat of yours needs a little discipline! Hm... maybe the crowbar, like little Red Riding Hood over here? Oh! Oh! Maybe..."

He made a face that made him deep in thought.

"Maybe something a little more... permanent than what I did to bird boy numero dos. Hm... how about dismemberment? Disembowelment? Incineration? Aha! Maybe..."

Two shots rang out, and the Joker slumped forward, two brand new holes dripping blood from his forehead.

Terry stood at the other end of the room, the pistol Jason had given Bruce smoking in his hand.

"Maybe you just need to shut up, for once." he told the corpse.

Jason stared at the scene, stunned.

And then, he shook himself internally.

God, he was an idiot. Why had he thought to try to get Bruce's Batman to kill the Joker when there was another Batman who was perfectly ready and willing to off the man with no hesitation? And why the hell had Terry played along with his plan, when they both knew it wouldn't work?

Terry tossed the gun to Jason, and Jason caught it, slightly dumbfounded at the turn of events.

"You're welcome," Terry said to Jason.

"Why?" Jason asked. "How come you stuck with me, even though..."

"Even though I knew you wouldn't kill him?" Terry said. "Well, someone had to watch your back. That's what family's for, right?"

Nightwing and Robin ran in, slightly out of breath, but Jason ignored them. He didn't want to think about them. Not then.

"God," Jason said, "I'm such a fucking idiot. I..."

"Yeah, you really are one, aren't you?" Nightwing butted in. "Now, are you gonna explain why you decided to take over Gotham's criminal underworld instead of coming back and telling us you were alive?"

Robin stared at Jason, wide eyed, from behind Nightwing.

"Nightwin-" he said.

"Not now, Robin." Nightwing replied.

He turned to Bruce.

"And you," he said, "Were you ever going to tell us he was alive? Huh?"

Bruce ignored him, and, instead, turned to Terry.

"And you are..." He asked.

"Batman from 2040," Terry said. "I would say I'm sorry for killing the Joker, but if you knew what he was going to do in the future, you'd do it too."

Jason felt Bruce raise a condescending eyebrow behind the cowl.

"Then I'm sure you could also explain to me why you broke the Time Travel Protocol."

Terry smirked.

"And there's the Old Man we know and love," Terry said, "Now, is there a good place we can all sit and chat? Preferably, away from the corpse."

Jason glanced at the Joker's dead body, and turned away immediately. He never would have thought that the Clown's body would be even more disturbing in death than it was alive, but, somehow, it was. Jason decided, then and there, that he'd be perfectly happy never seeing it again.

Nightwing clapped his hands together.

"I know just the place," he said. "Say, how do you feel about the Batcave?"

Chapter End Notes

Oop. I did it.

I hope this wasn't too anticlimactic for you guys. Very excited for the next few chappies.

I am responding to comments on this chapter (idk why.) Ask and ye shall receive. (Also PLEASE comment the most chaotic stuff you can because that'd be hilarious and I'm gonna have nothing to do tomorrow since I'm American and everything will be closed for Labor Day so yeet)

Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Jason learns to deal with being an older brother, sorta.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jason didn't know how to feel about going back to the Batcave. Bittersweet, maybe? Just thinking about being back in the damn cave made him think about how much he had missed his life before he had died.

But that didn't mean he wanted to be there just then. In fact, he had started to protest even going to the cave with everyone in the first place, but Terry shut him up with a quick glare.

"I know what you're thinking, Hood," he said, "And you know exactly what I'll do if you try it."

Jason scoffed and glared at him.

"What, you'll tie me up and drag me there?"

"*And* I'll deliver you to Alfred with gift wrap."

Nightwing chuckled, and Jason sighed. Of all the people in his family, Alfred was the person he least wanted to talk to. Not because he didn't miss him, but because Alfred's disappointment was three times as devastating as Bruce's, and Jason had let the man down so far that he was practically deeper underground than the Batcave.

"Fine," Jason grumbled. "I'll bite."

Nightwing clapped his hands together.

"Well then! Let's get out of here then, shall we?"

"That's probably a good idea, since there's a bomb in the next room," Robin cut in.

Shit, Jason thought. He had forgotten about that. But he wasn't going to point out that he was the one who put it there, because then Bruce would probably find some way to make him feel like shit about it. And there was no way he was going to admit to him that it was an awful idea on his part.

Batman looked between them, expression unreadable.

"I'll deal with the bomb," Nightwing said. "You guys go on ahead."

Batman grunted, and then strode out of the room, leaving them all to follow behind him.

Nightwing went to diffuse the bomb with a mock salute, and Terry followed after Bruce with a "what can you do?" sort of shrug.

Robin snickered after them, from his place in front of Jason.

Jason glared at him, and he shut up instantaneously.

"What?" Robin said, trying to defend himself. "We're like a horde of little ducklings, following their mom."

Jason rolled his eyes. The kid might have been a little goblin who replaced him and made everyone like him better, but even he could admit was sort of funny.

"Ducklings, huh?"

"I mean, my last name is Drake, and Drakes are a type of duck, so..."

"Whatever," Jason said. The green was starting to creep back into his vision at the thought of how his family actually preferred this underfed, underqualified little shit over him. He ached to pummel the living crap out of him for having the gall to get his family to like him... But then, Terry would beat him up, as well, and drag him to the cave to get lectured. So that was a no go, even if he didn't give two shits about what Bruce and Dick thought about his opinion of The Replacement.

So instead, he settled for pushing him out of his way.

"Just stay out of my way Replacement, and I'll stay out of yours. *Capiche*?"

Robin looked at him, wide eyed, and nodded, before looking at the floor, dejected.

Jason honestly felt sort of bad about putting that sort of look on this kid's face, but that was what he got for replacing him without actually earning the title, like the little rich shit he was. He was probably served Robin on a silver platter, like he had been with everything else in his life.

Jason clenched his fists and walked faster, catching up to Terry.

"So," Terry said. "You ready for this?"

Jason glared at him instead of answering.

"Aw, come on. Didn't you want the Old Man to at least hear you out?"

Jason sighed.

"Fine," he said. "I did. There. Are you happy?"

"I mean, the Joker is dead, the timeline's been fixed, and your family seems pretty happy to have you back, so I'd say yeah."

"Them?" Jason replied. "Happy? With me?"

"Well..." Terry said, "Maybe not right now, but they will be, once you, you know, explain everything."

Jason scoffed.

"Sure. Like they'd ever be happy with me when they have *him*, " he said, glaring back at Tim.

Terry sighed.

"You've never had a younger brother before, have you?"

"No."

"Then you're in for a treat, because as soon as he realizes you're as sore of a loser as you are, he's gonna get you for it."

"You learned that from yours?"

"Well, partially," Terry said, "But I've also learned that while younger brothers are annoying, they're also pretty great."

"The replacement isn't my younger brother."

Terry raised an eyebrow, and nudged him in the side.

"C'mon Hood, look at him! He looks like he'd collapse under a wet towel. Don't tell me you don't want to brother him when he looks like *that*."

"I don't," Jason cut in. "I just want him out of my place."

Terry patted him on the back.

"That's normal. Every older sibling feels like that for a while. You should hear my mom tell stories about how I begged her to give Matt back to the hospital after he came home."

"Sure."

"It definitely took me a bit to adjust, that's for sure. But, now, if Matt was hurt... you know what I did for you?"

"Obviously."

"Imagine that, but on steroids. I'd bring the world down just to make sure he was safe. And, you know what? I bet you'd do that for Tim, one day."

Jason sighed.

"Fine," he said. "You've got me. I'd definitely do that for you, and maybe for Dick. But... I don't know about the kid."

"That's progress, at least," Terry said. "Before, you were going on about how much you hated him for taking your spot."

"I still hate him," Jason grumbled.

Terry, as per usual, ignored him.

"Just get to know him a bit better, and you'll change your mind," Terry replied, amicably. "He's not so bad, from what I can tell. He's actually sorta funny."

Jason scoffed.

"You should have heard his stupid comment on how we looked like ducklings trailing after their mom."

"He said that?"

"Yeah. It was awful."

Terry sniggered.

"Okay, it's pretty bad, but it is accurate."

"Tell that to him," Jason said. "I don't want to hear it."

"Oh, I will. I'll even tell him you think he's funny."

"I do *not* think he's funny."

"You do," Terry said. "You just don't want to give him the satisfaction of knowing that and holding it over your head. It's the older sibling instinct."

"Whatever," Jason said, striding up to the Batmobile and the assorted bikes in the alley by the Apartment Complex. "Are we gonna go, or are we gonna keep chit-chatting like little old ladies?"

Robin stopped behind him, looking at him warily.

Nightwing ran up from behind them.

"Deactivated the bomb and called the bomb squad for removal," he said. "They should get here soon. Well, maybe, if the ones that show up aren't paid off by the mob this time."

"And you didn't make sure they weren't?" Bruce cut in.

“Oh, I did,” Dick said, “You just never know with them. And gee, why do you have the urge to comment on everything I do and don’t do, anyway? I’ve been doing this for years, and you know it.”

Bruce gave him a glare and prepared to retort, but Tim stepped in between him and Dick.

“Don’t you think we’ve done enough fighting today?” He said. “Can’t we just calm down and get back already? We’re all tired. We can settle our differences later, when we’re, you know, less tired.”

Terry straddled Hood's spare bike.

“Kid’s got a point,” he said. “Ride home now, bicker later.”

Jason scoffed, and everyone turned to look at him.

“What? Don’t stop,” he deadpanned. “This is the best entertainment I’ve had since kicking the bucket.”

Nightwing gave him a pained look, and Robin let out a snicker, before hiding his mouth behind his hand and giving Jason a wide eyed look, like the baby duckling he was.

Maybe the kid was growing on him a bit, like a fungus. Or mold.

Ugh.

“Maybe a little too soon, Hood.” Terry said.

“What?” Jason replied. “C’mon, it was funny!”

Terry raised an eyebrow in a move surprisingly reminiscent of his predecessor.

"Jason," Batman cut in, opening the Batmobile. "You're with me."

"Fine," Jason said. "But don't expect me to be nice about it."

Bruce just grunted, and got into the car.

Hood followed, and they sped back to the cave in awkward silence.

Chapter End Notes

I finally got a Jason death joke in! Lol. Even if he’s made a bunch of assumptions about Tim that are completely wrong.

I changed Tim’s backstory to his comic book one because Jason is canon. I tried to sort of mix his DCAU and Comic Book personalities though. Tim is weirdly fun to write.

Just imagine this really smart genius kid... running completely off of spite and energy drinks. Very chaotic.

As an older brother myself, I can't help but think of my younger brother when I see Terry and Matt, because my younger brother would also tease the shit out of me with little to no provocation. (He's the funniest guy I know, I swear.) So my writing on accepting sibling-hood was based on my own experience being a big bro.

Hope you enjoyed.

Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Bruce shows off his ability to say the absolute worst thing at the absolute worst time, without thinking about what he truly means to say. And then refusing to apologize.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"So," Bruce started, staring down the future Batman from 2040. He didn't quite trust his story yet, but he had no concrete way to prove it was true. So he'd give him the benefit of the doubt... for now. The simplest explanation tended to be the truest one, and time travel explained the fancy Bat-suit and the knowledge of their identities well enough.

Bruce shoved his cowl off, and raised an eyebrow at him.

"You broke the time travel protocol, helped the Red Hood take over Gotham's Underworld, engineered an Arkham Breakout, and shot the Joker in cold blood?" Bruce summarized.

Currently, he was very curious as to what sorts of things would happen to him in the next 35 years, because there was no way he would willingly choose such a... reckless person to be Batman. It broke protocol to ask, though, so he kept his questions to himself.

"Damn right we did," Jason interrupted, "Got a problem with it?"

Bruce sighed, and pinched the bridge of his nose. And therein lay his other problem: the spontaneous reappearance of the son he had mourned, turned into an unrecognizable monster. A monster who was willing to kill dozens just to get at one man.

Who Nightwing and Robin seemed to admit back into their lives with little to no issue, judging by the fact that they were glaring protectively at Bruce right now.

He cursed himself for not telling them the truth about the Red Hood earlier. Maybe then, they wouldn't be endangering themselves by trying to befriend an unstable killer and the time-traveling so-called "Batman" of the future out of familial obligation.

"I have multiple problems with it," he stated.

"We sorta guessed that, yeah," Future Batman cut in.

"Starting with you," he said, turning towards him, "The fact that you teamed up with a known criminal to start a gang war in order to purposefully change the future is beyond

irresponsible. You could have permanently erased your existence from the timeline, and for what?"

"A chance for justice," Terry shot back. "The Joker needed to die, and Jason wasn't going to kill him. Would you rather what happened in my future happen? Would you rather he tortured Tim until Tim snapped and killed him?"

Bruce looked at Tim, who stared between them, wide eyed.

"Even that would have been better than the slaughter of dozens," Bruce snarled back.

"I can't believe this-" Nightwing started, but Jason cut him off, striding towards Bruce, fists balled.

"Get off your fucking high horse for once, Bruce!" Jason snarled. "You don't know Jack shit about what we were trying to do! If Terry hadn't been there, you know how many more thugs would be in the ground right now? The gang war was my idea, not his. He was the only thing keeping me from escalating it until it leached over into your part of town, and the only thing keeping that madman," his voice broke, "From killing almost the entire damn town, and torturing my precious Replacement while he was at it. So don't you dare blame Terry for my mistakes. Got it?"

Bruce stayed stonily silent.

Jason grabbed his cowl, and pulled him towards him. Bruce noted the glowing green of his eyes, undoubtedly caused by his dip in the Lazarus Pit.

"I said, got it?" Jason all but yelled, shaking him.

"Jason," Terry said, putting a hand on Jason's shoulder. "Calm down. I think he's getting there."

Jason scoffed.

"Sure. Whatever you say."

He let go of Bruce, and took a pack of cigarettes out of one of the numerous pockets of his jacket.

"I'm taking a smoke and getting out of here. Fuck this shit."

He turned around to leave, only to be interrupted by the sound of plates dropping.

"Oh, my," a familiar British voice interrupted. "Master Jason, is that you?"

Alfred stared at Jason, teary eyed.

Jason looked back at him, all hints of earlier anger gone.

"Heya, Alf," he said, "I told you I'd be back, right?"

"Oh, you foolish, foolish boy," Alfred said, striding towards him, before enveloping him in a hug. "It is so great to see you again, alive and well."

"Yeah, I guess," Jason said, staring awkwardly at his feet, but hugging Alfred back with just as much fervor. Bruce noted that Jason's eyes seemed misty as well.

Alfred let go of Jason, and wiped his eyes.

"Do excuse this old man for his sentimental behavior."

"Heya, Alfie, you're good," Dick cut in. "We get it."

"Yeah, Alfred," Tim agreed. "It's totally cool. People don't come back from the dead every day, you know?"

And then, Alfred turned towards Bruce, raising a stern eyebrow. The man always had the ability to make Bruce feel like he was that lost ten year old boy all over again with only a look.

"Master Bruce, I do hope you'll warn me the next time you bring guests over. I wouldn't want them to miss dinner before you inevitably scare them off with your usual demeanor."

"Alfred," Bruce growled, "I'm-I'm..."

He decided it would be best to leave before Alfred made him look even worse.

"I'm going to take a shower."

Alfred just tutted at him.

"As you say, Master Bruce," he says, "Do remember to leave said shower before you shrivel and wilt. The lack of moisture would bring out the unfortunate tan lines on your face."

The other Batman chuckled.

"You know, I think the Old Man was right," he said, "I think we're gonna get along fabulously."

Alfred turned towards him, about to ask who this newcomer was, and Bruce decided it would be best to head out before things inevitably turned against him. Dick could handle introductions. For now, he just wanted to be alone with his thoughts.

The gravity of the situation didn't hit him until he had stood in the shower for a full five minutes, letting the hot water knead the tension out of his back.

He hadn't let himself react to the events of the day until he was sure he was alone. Sure, the Joker had just been killed in a plot orchestrated by his undead second son and the time-

traveling Batman from the future, but his ability to compartmentalize had kept him alive for almost 4 decades at this point. The events of the day may have been... insane, to say the least, but he wouldn't dare show it in front of Dick and Tim. Or even Jason and the newcomer, Terry. They didn't need to see just how much the events of the day truly affected him.

Usually, he would have been in and out of the shower by now. He had perfected the art of Navy Showers years ago, spending just enough time in the shower to clean himself and no longer. But occasionally, he would indulge in a bath or a longer shower, when things were tough or he felt like he needed a break.

And today, he definitely needed the feeling of warm water against his skin, calming him down and relaxing his tense muscles.

Although, his current train of thought wasn't helping him calm down any.

The Joker would have gotten to Tim.

Bruce stared blankly at the wall, feeling his breathing and heartbeat beginning to speed up. He could distantly start to feel himself panicking, and began slowing his breathing in order to keep himself from falling into a full-blown panic attack.

Breathe in 8 seconds. Hold for 8 seconds. Out for 16. Repeat. Breathe in -

The Joker would have gotten to Tim.

What sort of things would the Joker have done to Tim? Would he have replicated what he did to Jason, beating him black and blue with a crowbar until he could barely move? Or would he have experimented with newer, even more brutal forms of torture, until Tim turned into a monster?

Tim was a contradiction. He was a genius, one of the smartest children Bruce had ever met. He had managed to find out his identity at the young age of 8 using only vague memories and logic. And after that, he had managed to deduce Bruce's patrol routes and survive the streets of Gotham just so he could follow him and Jason on patrol and take photos of them.

Photos.

Yet, he was still a child. He regularly made references to silly movies and pop culture, went skateboarding with his friends, and stayed up late just to stare at his computer and play the newest games just as other kids his age did. Other children with his level of intelligence tended to be aloof, self centered, and antisocial, eventually driven mad by their genius. But Tim was none of those things. Despite the neglectful parenting of Jack and Janet Drake and their line of work, he was a sweet, surprisingly well-adjusted young man.

But, according to his future successor, the Joker had turned him into a monster. A killer.

It had taken Jason literally dying and coming back to life to turn him into a monster.

No matter how much Jason's temper had tended to control him, Jason had been no monster. Jason had loved life, and had a zeal for it that made Bruce's all the more brighter just by being around. He had loved being Robin, and loved being able to help people. Sure, he had been overly aggressive at times, but only out of a sense of justice, never out of a sense of true malice. Not like this Jason was.

He mourned how Jason had been. What sort of things had he been through after his death, to turn him into a hardened killer? And what sorts of things would Tim have had to go through, to become the same way?

He even wondered about what had made his future self so cynical that he allowed his successor to actively kill while wearing the suit. What happened between now and then? He could see the Joker taking another Robin from him as being a breaking point for him, but...

What had turned the young man who wore his suit into a killer? And why had his future self encouraged him to continue killing?

He sat in the shower, and he mourned. He mourned his false innocence, and stupid inability to believe that things would get any worse for his family just as they did.

Maybe, he let himself think, the Batman of the future was right. Maybe letting the Joker die was the best thing for the family.

He hated himself for thinking it, but he was glad the Joker was dead. He was glad because it kept him from killing him and turning into a monster himself. He had gotten too close, the one time he had put the man into a full body cast for 6 months, and he knew that he would toe that line again and again, as long as the Joker was alive and scheming.

And now, despite how much he hated it, he was relieved the man was dead. That he could never hurt his family again. Hell, an irrational part of him was glad that the Red Hood's plan had worked, because even despite the dozens that had died in his quest for vengeance, Tim was still alive. Jason was back, even if he was a warped version of his former self. How often had he stayed awake long past when he should have slept, and wished that Jason was still alive, despite knowing rationally that he wasn't, and never would be again?

He had been proven wrong on that count, that was for sure. And, maybe, just maybe, he had been proven wrong about the death of the Joker as well.

But he would be damned if he told anyone except Alfred that. Batman had a standard to uphold, and he wasn't going to let it fall. His partners - no, his children - deserved nothing less than his best, and that was what he was going to give them.

Even if it meant that they hated him for it.

Yeah. Bruce's lack of reaction was pointed out by a commenter, and they were right. So I added a reaction that I thought fit the story. I also wanted y'all to see what he thought of all this from his POV, so we're getting that.

Sorry for the late update. I got really into Devil May Cry and lost steam again.

Enjoy.

Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Alfred manages to fix most things, including dinner.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Ugh!” Dick yelled, when Alfred had left the cave to check on dinner, leaving him, Jason, Tim, and Terry to follow. “I can’t believe Bruce! His son comes back *from the dead*, and how does the man react? With yet *another* lecture. Not even a thank you for doing what we’ve been dreaming of ever since this whole fiasco started in the first place! God!”

Dick took a deep breath.

“Sorry, just... sure, I’m not a big fan of the whole killing random criminals thing the Red Hood does. It’s against my code. But if one criminal deserved to die, it would have been the Joker. That’s the least of what he deserved for what he did. And the fact that Bruce even tries to fool himself into thinking otherwise is just plain crazy, in my opinion.”

“He isn’t even fooling himself into thinking that,” Jason replied. “He really believes it. Hell, he told me himself that he wouldn’t do it. It’d be too repulsive and evil for the big bad Batman to even attempt crossing that line.”

“You know, as Batman, I’m gonna have to object to that,” Terry cut in. “And besides, the Old Man was perfectly fine with me killing a few people in my time. Not everyone, though. Just the guys that were too dangerous to keep around and all that.”

“I still can’t believe that,” Jason shot back.

“And that’s in the future,” Dick agreed with Jason. “This is now. There’s no way Bruce is gonna let this go.”

“I don’t know, Dick,” Tim interrupted. “I mean, the only reason he didn’t kill The Joker when he ran into him after Jason’s death was because Superman literally pulled him off of him before he could.”

“Wait, what?” Jason said. “Dick, is he telling the truth?”

Dick grimaced, and then let out a sigh.

“Yeah. He is.”

“I have the photos to prove it, too,” Tim said. “And copies of the Joker’s hospital records from after saved somewhere. He spent 6 months in a body cast, believe it or not.”

“Jesus Christ,” Jason breathed. “Why...why didn’t he tell me?”

“Because he can’t communicate for crap?” Dick said.

“Because he cares too much,” Terry replied, at the same time.

“Huh?” Dick asked, looking at Terry.

“The Old Man clams up about people he cares about. And that’s because the fact that he can’t keep relationships going is so painful to him that bringing them up makes him upset. At least in my time, where he’d screwed up so badly that none of you were talking to him anymore, he was like that. And yeah, 35 years is a long time, but I doubt that sort of thing would change too much since then, you know?”

“Yeah, maybe,” Dick replied. “I don’t know. I’ve never been able to get a read on the man no matter how hard I tried.”

“Whatever,” Jason scoffed. “It doesn’t matter. He doesn’t give two shits about any of us.”

“Well...” Tim said. “I mean, putting someone in a body cast is a lot to do for someone he doesn’t care about.”

“You know what I mean, Replacement,” Jason shot back. “He might have put the clown into the long term residence ward, but he didn’t have the balls to finish the job while he was there. I was the one who had to get the ball rolling to avenge my own death. How fucked up is that?”

“You didn’t kill him, either.”

“At least I fucking tried to! I had a gun to his head! Meanwhile fucking Bruce couldn’t get away from his moral high ground for long enough to kill the one criminal who had murdered his own son! Why did I have to do it? Why couldn’t he have done it?”

Jason felt his eyes start to burn from the rage of the Lazarus pit. He felt as if he was about to blow, and that just one more thing would cause the chain of dominoes holding him together to fall, causing him to break everything in his path until the rage within finally abated.

“Now, now,” A familiar posh voice cut in. “I’m sure Master Bruce refused to kill him not out of a lack of love, but because he believed that killing him in cold blood would dishonor your memory.”

Jason looked up, and spotted Alfred at the cave’s entrance, with a strange, sad look on his face.

“What?” Jason said. “But that makes no sense! He knows that I would have moved heaven and earth to kill the Joker if he had killed him! So why? Why didn’t he kill him for me?”

Alfred walked up to Jason and put his hand on his shoulder.

Jason felt like he was a little boy again, being comforted by Alfred after another lecture of Bruce's about a patrol gone wrong, and his anger gave way to sadness mixed with bitter nostalgia.

His eyes grew wet, and soon enough, he could feel the hot tears running down his face.

"Because killing the Joker would have turned him into a monster, Master Jason," Alfred continued. "Someone neither you nor I nor any of his loved ones would be able to recognize. If he had killed the Joker, what would have stopped him from killing every other criminal? What would have stopped him from killing the Red Hood when he made his appearance in Gotham?"

Everyone stayed silent.

"The first thing I learnt during my time in the Special Forces was that killing becomes easier the more you do it. I'm sure you understand that as well as I do, from your line of work."

"Yeah," Jason said. "But there's no way Bruce would slip that far. He's too...him. He wouldn't do that. Would he?"

"My boy, you did not see him after your death. One small thing gone wrong would have shattered the fortitude he had spent years building, with no hope of repair."

"It almost did, in my time," Terry said, cutting in. "I think the only thing that kept him from completely going off the rails after what happened with Tim was sheer stubbornness, combined with the fact that it had already happened once. If he had broken his rule the first time, Batman's legacy probably would have gone down very differently in the history books."

"Yeah, I guess."

"That seems like a very astute observation on your part, Master Terrence," Alfred pointed out. "I cannot imagine the horrors he has gone through during your future."

"Well, I barely know, either. He doesn't talk about the past much."

"Sounds like him," Dick snarked.

"Indeed," Alfred said. "Now, on that somber note, I thankfully didn't drop all of tonight's dinner on the cave floor. So it would be best if you boys all washed up and hurried to the dining room, post haste."

"Yes, Alfred," Tim said, running out of the room.

"Good thinking," Dick said, turning to follow. "This conversation's gotten a bit too dark, even for me."

Alfred followed them out, but not without a significant look Jason's way.

Jason sniffled, and wiped his eyes.

“Did I ever tell you how much I missed Alfred’s food?” He asked Terry.

“Only a million and one times,” Terry replied. “It better be as good as you say, or I’m gonna riot.”

Jason let out a wet chuckle.

“It’s not just that good, Imposter,” he said. “It’s better. Now c’mon. Time’s a-wasting.”

Terry rolled his eyes and followed after him.

Chapter End Notes

Another filler chapter, sort of. And more Jason being angsty. We’ll finally move forward with the plot next chapter. I’ve got PLANS (evil laughter.)

Edit a few hours after posting: the amount of TYPOS in this chapter. I’m so sorry. I did type this up on my phone in between other things but that’s no excuse for the half-edited dialogue I just had to fix.

Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Alfred and Terry go grocery shopping. Things get hairy. Really hairy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“So...” Terry said, “Alfred.”

Alfred raised an eyebrow at him from where he was dusting the shelves in the manor’s main living room, despite their spotlessness. No wonder the Old Man glared at Terry after he cleaned, if he had lived most of his life with this level of cleanliness. Sure, Terry’s parents hadn’t raised him to be a slouch, but even he couldn’t keep up with Alfred. The guy was practically superhuman when it came to cleaning.

“Yes, Master Terrence?” he asked. “And before you ask again, no, you cannot help me clean.”

“Slag,” Terry said. “Are you sure? I’m dying of boredom over here.”

Bruce had expressly forbidden him to leave the manor until they found a way to get him back to the future, and Terry was going nuts with boredom. Dick was at work, Tim was at school, and Jason was still sulking in his old room because he refused to talk with Bruce, so he had no one to keep him company besides Alfred.

Terry was seriously tempted to lock Bruce and Jason in a room together and not let them out until they talked, because at this point, that probably was the only way they’d be able to reconcile. Huh, maybe he should get Dick and Tim onboard with that, and Alfred would probably be down, too. But first... boredom. He could wait on that until after everyone came back.

Alfred nodded, saying he was sure. Which was about what Terry thought he’d do.

“Oh well, I tried,” Terry said, shrugging, “But anyway, I’ve got a couple of questions for you.”

“Go on,” Alfred replied.

“Let’s say I *hypothetically* decided to ignore the Old Man’s orders and went out anyway. Would you stop me?”

Alfred sighed.

“Well, frankly? I wouldn’t be able to, no. You’re a growing young man armed with a super-suit, after all. But alas, I was hoping your common sense would stop you first.”

Terry sighed.

Oh well, he’d just get one of the Robins to help him sneak out later. He bet one of them would do it, even if it was just to tick the Old Man off.

Man, now he was really curious as to what the Old Man did in the future to tick them off. He would have loved for them to visit and help him needle at Bruce. The guy was just so stiff! Even before he got old, too. It would almost be comical if it wasn’t annoying as all hell.

“Well, the question was hypothetical,” Terry said. “I mean, Jason’s stuck here too, and someone’s gotta keep him company, right?”

Alfred moved on to dusting the next shelf, even though it was just as spotless as the last one.

“Right indeed, Master Terrence.”

“You know, you can call me Terry if you want. I’m not anyone’s master or anything.”

“Alright then, Master Terry,” Alfred acquiesced. That was probably about as good as he was gonna get, sadly. “Now, I find myself a bit... lacking in expertise on the culinary cuisines of the Far East, and Master Jason says your mother’s family has a Bibimbap recipe that is, in his words, ‘to die for.’ I doubt I have all of the necessary ingredients for such a dish, but...”

“I can show you, don’t worry. And trust me, the Old Man *loves* my Bibimbap. He did tell me that it was ‘the best meal I’ve had since Alfred died’ the first time he had it, and judging by last night’s dinner, that means it’s at least pretty good.”

Alfred smiled.

“Indeed?” he said, “Well then, do you wish to accompany me to gather the requisite ingredients? This old man’s eyes aren’t quite as young as they used to be, I daresay.”

Alfred winked at him.

Terry smiled.

“I’m in,” Terry said, “I’ve been craving Pocky anyway, and Wang’s is the only place in town right now that sells the Matcha flavor.”

“Pocky?”

“Yeah. They’re like these chocolate covered breadstick things,” he said, gesturing as to their approximate shape and thickness.

“Hm...” Alfred replied, “I’ve never heard of them, but I’m sure they’re quite delightful.”

“That’s one way to put it,” Terry said. “Trust me, they’re great. You’re gonna love them.”

“I do happen to possess quite the sweet tooth,” Alfred said. “Now, shall we? We should be able to get back before Master Bruce notices our absence if we make haste.”

“I’m coming,” Terry said, putting on the shoes he had long since borrowed from Jason. “Want me to drive?”

“Oh, I’m not quite that old, yet. But thank you for the offer.”

Terry laughed.

“Hey, sure. It’s the least I can do for the hospitality. And besides, I’ve gotta get you to tell me all of Bruce’s embarrassing baby stories somehow, right?”

“Ah,” Alfred teased, “Now that explains your level of cooperation.”

“I guess it does, huh? Anyway, you got any good ones?”

“Well, there was a time when Master Bruce was a young boy...”

Terry noticed that they were being watched as soon as they left Wang’s, their ingredients in hand. He didn’t know who or what was watching them, but he had enough common sense to know that they needed to get out of there, and fast.

“Hm, the weather is quite pleasant today, isn’t it?” Alfred said, “The sun is rather bright, for Gotham.”

Terry smiled. So Alfred had noticed as well, and knew Bruce well enough to know that he’d probably teach Terry the same codewords for “we’re being followed” that he’d been using for years.

“Well, the forecast says it’s going to rain at 9pm tonight,” Terry replied cheerfully.

They’re at our Nine O’Clock, and coming fast.

“I suppose we’ll have to find shelter before then,” Alfred replied.

Let’s get somewhere private before they take us out here.

“Good idea,” Terry said. “Let’s get out of here.”

They walked back to the parking garage at a leisurely pace, and Terry thanked his lucky stars that it was empty, because as soon as they had gotten to the floor where the car was parked, a group of familiar black-clothed assassins revealed themselves, surrounding them in seconds.

“Oh, great,” Terry groaned. “These guys again?”

“Again?” Alfred said. “Oh, dear.”

“Yeah, that’s about right. I don’t think they like me too much.”

“Of course not, Master Terry. That would imply the League of Assassins likes anybody.”

Terry snorted, and put his bags on the ground behind him, preparing to fight. He didn't know just how much he'd need to protect Alfred, but he made sure he was between him and the assassins just in case.

“We'll just have to give them a warm welcome even despite that, right?” he said.

Alfred just put his own bags down and pushed his way next to him, equally ready to fight.

“Indeed. And perhaps after this, they'll finally understand the meaning of Gotham Hospitality,” Alfred said, as lightly as ever. “And just how it treats those it finds unwelcome.”

“Hopefully,” Terry said, smiling. “I'd hate to have to beat it into them again.”

Alfred was holding his own against the assassins with barely any effort, and Terry was reminded of how Wayne fought the first time they had met, when he had beaten off a group of Jokers armed with nothing but a cane and sheer stubbornness. But Terry didn't have much time to admire him in action, since he was a bit busy trying not to get stabbed.

He was starting to get a bit tired from the constant barrage of assassin after assassin coming after him when he heard a shrill voice yell at the assassins to stop.

The assassins halted, and backed away from them.

Terry and Alfred panted, catching their breath, and a small figure walked up to them, cloaked in all black.

“Huh,” Terry said. “That's weird.”

“Indeed,” Alfred said. “Usually their commanders are... older.”

“I told you fools to fight to contain them, not to kill them!” The leader barked.

“But, master -” one of the assassins interrupted.

“Silence. I will deal with them myself.”

“Master, you cannot even hope to take out two grown men of their skill - “

“Enough,” the leader said. “I have been training for this moment for years. I will not be stopped now.”

“Wait, years?” Terry said. “Because I know for a fact that you guys have only known about me for like... 3 weeks.”

“Tt,” the leader tutted. And god, his voice was high. How old was this kid, 10? How the hell did this kid end up in such a high position?

“Your existence may have been unknown to my mother and I until as of recently,” the kid explained, unsheathing his Wakizashi like he was 5 years older and could swing an actual Katana without falling over, “But I have been training to fight the heirs of Batman since I was toddler, and training to kill since I was even younger. I’m sure beating the likes of *you* will be no challenge.”

His mother? Who was his -

Oh. Oh no.

Shit, Bruce had really screwed up this time, huh? And literally, too.

“Uh...” Terry said. “You know, I would say that I don’t fight kids, but I’m letting you know right now that where I come from, we don’t discriminate based on height. Or age.”

The kid just tutted again and took off his hood, finally revealing his face.

Alfred gasped.

“Oh, dear,” he said, once again.

The kid looked almost exactly like a younger version of Bruce, except with his mother’s tan skin, green eyes, and almost rabid smirk.

“Then I’m sure you’ll be appropriately humbled when the *true* Blood Son of Batman takes his rightful place at our father’s side,” the kid gloated. “If you’re alive to witness it, that is.”

“Wait,” Terry said. “*Blood* son of Batman? *Our* father?”

The kid scoffed.

“Did your whore mother never tell you the truth of your parentage?” he spat.

“She did,” Terry replied, choosing to ignore the dig at his Mom. “And that’s that Batman most definitely isn’t my dad.”

“Then just how *do* you explain the results of my mother’s tests on your impure blood?” the kid said. “Tell me. I’d love to know what excuses your mother told you.”

Terry gave him a funny look. He was kidding, right? And where the hell would Talia have gotten his blood from in the first place?

“You’re kidding me, right?” Terry said. “Because, let’s say your mom actually got my DNA in the first place. If she analyzed it enough to ‘discover’ Wayne is my old man, she’d also know that my mother is currently younger than you by a good three years or so. And by the time I’m born, the Old Man was *way* too old to be anywhere close to her type. There’s no way he could be my dad!”

“What drivel are you going on about?” the kid said, clearly confused.

Terry sighed.

“Slag it. Okay, how about this. You put the Katana away, and we take this to the Cave. Then, we do a blood test, and I prove to you that just because I look like the Old Man doesn’t mean I’m related to the guy at all. Deal?”

One of the assassins came closer to the kid and whispered something in his ear. The kid frowned, whispering something back in rapid-fire Arabic before waving them back.

The child sheathed his sword and walked closer to Terry, holding his hand out as if to invite Terry to shake it.

“I will take your deal, interloper.” the kid said. “But only if you promise to battle me in close combat immediately after.”

“Sounds good to me,” Terry said, taking the kid’s hand and shaking it. And damn, the kid sure had a tight grip.

He let go, and turned towards Alfred.

“Hey, Alfred. Are you good now, or do you want me to drive?”

Alfred looked between Terry and the kid, and pulled Terry closer to him.

“Master Terrence, are you sure about this?” he whispered.

“Hey, we’re some of the best combatants in the world,” Terry replied, in an equally soft tone. “I’m sure keeping a little kid and his group of assassins from killing us shouldn’t be too hard.”

“I wouldn’t hold your breath, if I were you,” the kid said. Obviously eavesdropping. “Now Pennyworth, escort me and this… Terrence to the manor. I would like to commence the testing post-haste.”

“Hey, kid. Just because Alfred’s the butler doesn’t mean you can order him around like he’s some servant, okay?” Terry said.

“He is a servant, you fool,” the kid responded, “Isn’t that the definition of ‘butler?’”

“Yeah, but the Old Man’s not going to be real happy to hear you say that. There’s a reason he’s kept the guy around since he was a kid, and that’s because the guy is practically his second father at this point -“

Alfred cleared his throat.

“Enough bickering,” he said, expression unusually grave. “Let us make haste.”

Terry and the kid both nodded, but not before the kid shot him another poisonous glare.

Terry rolled his eyes. He might have been a trained killer, but his glare was about as scary as Matt's at best, and that was saying something. After all, if the kid was a trained killer, he was still just a twip.

Chapter End Notes

Oho, a wild Damian appears! I mean, if Jason's here, why not Damian too? I'm trying to figure out how that BB episode with Ra's and Talia'd work with him existing, but we'll get there one day!

Sorry for the mildly infrequent updates, I've been working on a Devil May Cry/Batman crossover (because both are awesome,) and also some fics for the Metal Gear Games (which I haven't posted yet, but they're in progress!)

Anyway, to the commenter on the last chapter who was wondering about what Talia was doing with Terry's blood: here you go!

Enjoy!

Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Terry finds out some stuff and tries to punk his newly found twip brother.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

50% Match.

Terry read the results of the DNA analysis again, his mind fluttering between a state of numbness and complete disbelief.

50% Match.

The words on the screen mocked him. Because there was no way Bruce Wayne, of all people, was his biological father. Not when Warren and Mary McGinnis had very much been in love in 2022. And there was no way his Mom, of all people, would sleep with a guy at least 40 years her senior! No way in Hell.

Damian gave him a superior look, like he was so generous for letting Terry know that he was right. His stupid little smug smirk just screamed "see? Isn't it great that my mom was right when she groped your face and called your mom a whore?" Just to spite him, of course. In typical little brother fashion. Wasn't that what Terry was telling Jason Tim would do if he figured out the guy was such a sore loser? Well, even if Damian was born first, chronologically. Terry wasn't the one who was pint-sized. Yet.

Even then, there was no way the Bat-Computer was right. No way. Maybe they accidentally grabbed a swab from Damian? Or maybe they accidentally compared Wayne and Damian with the computer? Yeah, that had to be it.

Or maybe Wayne was his dad, part of his mind admitted. Weren't half the fights his parents had about how neither him nor Matt looked like his dad? About how his mom had probably cheated on his dad not once, but twice?

But... his Mom had loved his dad. She wasn't like that. She *wasn't*.

"This... this can't be right," Terry said. "My Mom wouldn't cheat on my Dad. No way."

"I highly doubt father would equip such faulty equipment, even if that were the case. And my mother would *never* lie to me. Unlike yours, it seems."

Terry clenched his fists. Even if the kid was like, twelve at best, he was this close to punking him. He swore to god if the twip made another comment about his mom, he was kicking his butt.

"I'm running the test again," Terry declared, grabbing another pair of sealed swabs from the first aid kit. "This can't be right. My Mom wouldn't sleep with a man who's 40 whole years older than her. And besides - when she and I first talked with Wayne, they didn't seem familiar at all. This can't be right. Something else has to be going on."

"What are you talking about, you complete and utter buffoon? Father is only 43 years of age. There is no way he is 40 years older than whatever whore gave birth to you."

"And I've told you," Terry said, "I'm from the future. My whore of a mother - who isn't a crazy assassin, by the way, was only born literally 6 years ago. I wasn't even conceived until 2022. Okay?"

Damian rolled his eyes and tutted.

"It's a shame father passed on his DNA to such a bumbling fool. But I suppose I will have to humor your idiocy before I can rid the world of it completely. Pennyworth," he called, gesturing casually to Alfred "Run the test again. This... moron needs to be sure of his heritage before I show him just who the true blood son is."

Alfred just nodded and hurried towards the medical set, getting the vials for the spit samples set up.

"I've got it, Alfred," Terry said, stepping in front of him and grabbing the vials and a stand for them before grabbing another pair of latex gloves and opening his swab, swirling it against his cheek before sticking the head into the vial and breaking the back off.

"Didn't I tell you not to order Alfred around like that, Twip?" Terry said, handing him a pair of gloves and a swab.

"Don't presume to think you can order me about because you are currently older than I am," Damian replied, imperiously. "I was raised better than to defer to those of inferior blood."

"But you'll listen to Talia," Terry said. "Why is that not shocking?"

"Do not dare to insult my mother, you inbred cretin!" Damian shouted, drawing his katana.

"I'm the inbred one?" Terry scoffed. "Okay. Whatever. At least my mom won't be hung up on a guy who'll never take her a whopping 45 years later, kid."

"At least my mother wouldn't whore herself out to a man old enough to be her father!" Damian taunted back.

And that was it.

Terry didn't get *really* mad very easily. He might've been a punk, sure, but he wasn't the type who snapped at everyone like some sort of angry dog. His anger was more in the form of

controlled chaos - he'd beat the shit out of assholes who pissed him off, but he was smart about it. He was precise, even if it had taken long and hard nights of Wayne and Jason correcting his form before he really got to that point.

But uncontrolled or not, he was a man of action. He definitely wasn't the type who'd sit by and let people he loved get shat over for things out of their control. He'd beaten the shit out of skinheads who'd go after him for having an Asian-American Mom before, and he'd very gladly do it again, even if he was beating up a smarmy-ass spoiled 10 year old assassin for being an ass about his mom for the millionth time. One insult? He could forgive. The kid was ten. Two? Okay. Three?

Yep, nope.

This kid needed someone to teach him some manners. If the twip really was his brother, his mom would have grounded his ass to hell and back for using such language to describe any woman. And Wayne? Sure, Wayne didn't like hanging around women, but that didn't mean he'd approve of going around and calling women whores for sleeping with him!

He distantly noted Alfred watching them both with a worried expression, but didn't let it faze him. What Alfred thought about this whole mess was the last thing on his mind, he was that freaking pissed.

He'd beaten up this kid's grandfather while the man possessed his daughter's body, taken on the Joker and lived to tell the tale, and spent enough time whooping thug butt to school this kid so thoroughly he'd memorize his textbooks back-to-front. The kid might've been trained as an assassin, but he was also a high-strung ten year old who wouldn't even stoop low enough to get himself a bottle of water from the cooler because that was "a servant's job." So if he wanted to stick around with Wayne, he'd have to at least have a little bit of humility beaten into him.

And who better to do so than his so-called inferior "half-brother?"

Terry would show him. And he'd show him good.

"You're going down, twip," Terry snapped. He meant business. "Down, you hear me?"

Damian turned towards him with a mirror image of Talia's smirk on his face, and Terry's stomach sank when he realized he'd accurately guessed the kid's next words to him.

"I'm going down?" he taunted. "Oh no, brother. Only one blood son of Batman shall stand at the end of our duel - and I intend for that son to be *me*."

The kid had guts, Terry would give him that much. But what he didn't have was the sheer dexterity and spontaneity that being a Bat came with. His moves were stock, prescribed - ripped straight out of the League of Assassins sword manual.

"What're you gonna do, stab me?" Terry said, dancing around Damian's blows as if he was water. This was a piece of cake, and he wasn't even in the suit. "Good luck reaching

anywhere lethal with your height, brat!”

His opponent merely shot him a shark-toothed grin before sinking his katana into Terry’s stomach and twisting it in one fluid move.

Terry grit his teeth and tried not to yell as the sadistic little brat kept twisting, that damned deranged smirk plastered on the twip’s face. He wasn't going to give this kid the satisfaction of hearing him scream. No way in fucking hell.

The kid withdrew the katana with a *schink* , casually wiping it on his cloak and sheathing it as Terry collapsed to his knees, trying in vain to staunch the flow of blood with his hand.

Fuck, that hurt.

“On the contrary,” the demon brat spat, “I win. By right of conquest, I have claimed the title of our father’s true heir-“

“Just *what* is going on here?” A familiar voice barked.

Both opponents turned towards their father’s stern face, before looking back at each other, wide-eyed.

“On the contrary, *twip*,” Terry replied cheerily, shooting Damian a shark toothed grin he definitely knew was showing off blood stained teeth, “ *You’re* about to be grounded for life.”

Everything went black as his head met the floor.

Chapter End Notes

This story isn't dead! In fact, "On the contrary," it should be finished by somewhere around March. I have another chapter done, as well as most of the final chapter. I just need to get the 2 in between done, and then maybe I'll even post a bonus epilogue. Who knows!

Enjoy!

Chapter 20, pt 1

Chapter Summary

Bruce arrives, but not before some introspection on his part.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Bruce parked the Bat-Wing in the cave, letting out a sigh.

He'd spent the last half a day resolving McGinnis's *situation* with the help of the Justice League. He'd recognized the villain that had sucked Terry into the past, and recruited the help of a couple of the heroes that resolved the situation last time. Static and his partner, Gear, had also run into the man when Bruce had needed their help apprehending them. As well, Static already knew Terrence from when said villain sucked him into the future, so he and Gear were all too happy to help. He had even asked to visit since he wanted to introduce Gear to Terrence and "hang out," as teenagers tended to put it these days.

Bruce remembered some of Dick and Jason's "hangouts." They'd always seemed so happy when their friends had come over, and McGinnis's only friend in this era was Jason, who had locked himself into his childhood room in an attempt to avoid talking with Bruce. Tim was too young for McGinnis and everyone else too old, so he was obviously flagging, but...

Bruce had to say no, since any more alterations to the timeline could create a cataclysmic event down the line. But at least Gear's intelligence allowed him to re-create the machine that had sucked Static into the future the first time almost from memory. Batman, paranoid as ever of someone using a creation for nefarious purposes, had forced Gear to destroy his work the first time. But Richard Foley wasn't a super genius for nothing. He and Static seemed like nice enough young men, even if Virgil's righteousness and impulsiveness and Richie's unfortunately large amount of genius could easily be exploited if the wrong people managed to get their hands on them. Thankfully, they had the Justice League and Virgil's father to keep them in line, so nothing too bad had happened yet.

Yet. Batman still had contingencies for them, just in case.

But that was for him to worry about later. For now...

He hopped out of the plane and into the cave in one nimble motion.

From what he could tell, the house was almost empty, with Jason in his room and Dick and Tim out and about. Alfred was probably out as well, and he had most definitely taken Terry McGinnis with him.

That was about what Bruce expected, honestly. Even if he was technically Alfred's boss, he never could get the man to do anything he truly didn't want to do. And in this case it seemed that Alfred's common sense outweighed Bruce's paranoia. If he wouldn't let McGinnis out of the house with supervision, the teen would probably just end up leaving on his own. So, to him, it was better to go with Terrence than leave him alone to disrupt the time stream even more than he already had.

Bruce didn't exactly know how to feel about Terrence McGinnis.

It was obvious he had taken a few lives during the Red Hood's crime spree, but he was obviously too well adjusted to really be the type of person who killed everyone they crossed. Too cheery, even if it mostly was an act to cover up some form of mischief the teen was getting into. And McGinnis loved his mischief. He even managed to get Jason to come out of his room for more than just grabbing food, even if it was only because of minor pranks he and Tim had come up with involving some stolen gadgets from the cave. And even if Jason had only left to try to beat McGinnis into a pulp for messing with him.

He hadn't, obviously. McGinnis was just about the only person Jason tolerated out of the entire household. Well, besides Alfred, who everyone liked. But Jason and McGinnis clearly had a rapport that was almost...brotherly. And even Dick and Tim were starting to become a part of it, even if Jason couldn't tolerate them for nearly as long as he could McGinnis.

Tim had ended up turning into an intermediary between Jason and Bruce, even if he made it seem like he was only telling Bruce information about Jason and not vice-versa. The whole household made it obvious that they wanted Jason and Bruce to reconcile, but if there was anybody who wanted Jason and Bruce to reconcile enough to force his hand, it was Tim. Maybe it was a sunk cost fallacy on his part, since he had spent enough time trying to keep Bruce from going off the deep end after Jason's death. Or maybe it was because Tim had spent so long without anyone that loved him for him that he believed that sacrificing himself would make it so that people would keep him around.

Bruce scoffed internally at the thought. Jack and Janet Drake may have had custody of Tim, but he was the one who had gotten to realize just how truly brilliant their son was. Tim was more his than theirs at this point, and he would keep being that way if he had anything to say about it.

Everyone in the house agreed. Especially McGinnis, who seemed to be dropping more and more subtle hints as to just why Bruce should get legal custody. Although he had also been dropping hints about trying to get Jason and him to reconcile and to get Dick to stick around for longer as well, much to Bruce's chagrin.

There was something about Terrence McGinnis and his strange ability to appeal to anyone he wanted... provided they passed some test of trustworthiness, first. At least his future self had picked someone who wasn't a complete idiot, even if he was, well, *interesting* was a good way to put it.

But Bruce wasn't thinking about McGinnis's strange ability to pick up strays when he honed in on the sounds of a scuffle in the cave above him.

He hurried upstairs in what felt like record time. Were they being attacked? Was the cave compromised? What was going on, and why hadn't Alfred called him and told him about it yet?

He arrived just in time to watch as a strangely familiar looking child drove a katana into Terrence's stomach with lethal precision, even going so far as to twist it just to watch McGinnis's expression contort in pain.

The child smirked, seemingly pleased with himself, and Bruce realized just why the child looked familiar. He was a dead ringer for how he looked at about the age of ten, except for the child's tan skin and bright green eyes. Which also happened to belong to a certain female assassin he had been in a relationship with once upon a time.

Alfred gasped, and the child opened his mouth to say some sort of retort, only for Bruce to beat him to the punch,

"Just *what* is going on here?" Bruce barked.

McGinnis smiled and said something before collapsing to the floor, and Alfred rushed in to stabilize him before carting him off to the Cave Infirmary.

Bruce gave the boy he definitely knew to be his son a dark look. His glares tended to make people uncomfortable at the best of times, but even then, the boy just met his gaze with a challenging smirk.

"Hello, Father," he said. "I believe I have just proven myself the true heir to the Batman Legacy, correct?"

Chapter End Notes

I'm not super happy with the chapter since it doesn't go over anything new. That's where next chapter comes in - that'll be the aftermath. This was supposed to be one chapter but I decided to split it because I didn't feel like writing part 2 right now and this was already done. Part two will be out soon though! And you guys get 3 extra chapters because I have to rework the ending so... idk.

Happy Lunar New Year to those who celebrate!

Chapter 20, part 2

Chapter Summary

Bruce has a talk with Damian.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Bruce felt sick.

"I can't believe this," Bruce said, "Alfred, what is the world coming to these days?"

Alfred sighed.

"I'm afraid the world is just as mad as usual, sir," he said, shaking his head. "But, let us rejoice in the fact that Master Terrence's mother is not nearly as... unconventional as Miss al Ghul, from what I can parse. "

Bruce didn't know how to reply to that.

"What do you know about her?" Bruce asked. "McGi -" he stopped himself. Terrence was his son, not a stranger. He at least deserved to be referred to by his first name. "- Terrence's mother."

"I do know that she is at least part Korean," Alfred said, "But I'm afraid that's all I was able to glean from our little jaunt to the Asian Store."

"You took Terrence to Wang's Asian Market?" Bruce said. Even that little trip probably did irreparable damage to the time stream, which, for some reason, only he cared about. And he already knew that Alfred would find some way to sneak Terry out of the manor, so he spared the man the lecture. It wasn't like Alfred would listen to what he said, anyway.

"Indeed," Alfred said, "And while we were there, I took the chance to update our bugs. Just in case the Triad decides they wish to cause extra trouble in the wake of Master Jason's little... experiment."

Bruce nodded his thanks, staring blankly at the rise and fall of Terry's chest, as shown on the bat-computer by a camera in the infirmary.

"And speaking of trouble at Wang's Asian Market..." Alfred said.

Bruce sighed. That must have been where Alfred and Terrence had found out about the existence of his other son.

"I know, Alfred."

But Bruce didn't know what he was going to do with either Terrence or Damian.

Obviously, Terry was going to have to go back to his future as soon as Gear's time machine was finished. But Damian would probably be staying in Wayne Manor indefinitely. Judging by his willingness to stab someone he knew to be his own brother, Talia had done quite the number on him. And while Bruce may have been a failure of a father and a failure of a mentor, but he wasn't one to let a child continue suffering when he knew he could help it.

There was no way he was going to let Damian back into his mother's clutches. But after what happened with Jason... Bruce didn't know if he was the right one to help him.

Yes, he was Damian's father. It was his *job* to help him. But he had failed monumentally with not just Jason, but with all of his other children. He'd failed with Dick, who seemed constantly annoyed by his seeming inability to do right by him. And he'd even failed Tim, who didn't hate him, but who Bruce had to keep his distance from at first out of sheer grief. He couldn't let another child get close to him. Not when they'd most likely end up hurt, or even dead.

Not after what happened to Jason.

And Damian would need significant help in order to adjust to normal life, amongst other things. He'd need love. Affection. Things that Bruce tried to give all of his children, but that all of them thought he didn't give enough of.

So how the hell was he going to make sure Damian didn't accidentally leave even worse off than he arrived? Even more angry at the world?

"All relationships start somewhere, Master Bruce," Alfred said, seeming to sense his thoughts without him needing saying anything. As per usual. "'A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step,' correct?"

"Lao Tzu, Alfred?" Bruce replied. "Really?"

"Indeed, although some mistakenly attribute it to Confucius."

Bruce snorted, and then sighed.

"I don't know, Alfred," he said. "What if this goes south? What if I fail another child, Alfred? I- " his voice broke. "I don't know if I can... keep going like this if I fail another son."

"Oh, you silly, silly man," Alfred said. "I think you're not giving yourself enough credit. Who was the one who saw another boy in his situation and took him in so that no else would end up an orphan in the same way?"

"It obviously didn't work, though."

"But because of you, Master Richard is living a full and happy life. And Master Jason -"

"Jason ended up *dead* because of me, Alfred," Bruce snapped.

Alfred sighed.

"But, again, because of you, Master Terrence was able to bring him back to the family."

Bruce didn't need to bring up the fact that Jason wasn't speaking to him, but he didn't need to.

"And before you start on yourself, I'm sure that the things you've done to help your children definitely outnumber the things that have hurt them. Like when you made sure that Master Dick's -"

"I get the picture, Alfred," Bruce cut him off brusquely. He didn't need Alfred to recap his entire life's journey. Which he would, if he thought it'd get his point across. "Thank you."

"Of course. But, to be frank with you, I didn't think you to be the type to develop cold feet before talking to a mere boy, Master Bruce. "

"I'm not," Bruce said, "But this child happens to know how to use a katana."

"And the Katana is in the capable and secure hands of the cave's armory. So?"

Damian himself was currently in one of the cave's interrogation rooms, being monitored by the cave's security system. Bruce could see him pacing around the room on another window open on the Bat-Computer, knowing that if he was anything like Bruce was at that age, that he'd probably take to dismantling the room's camera and escaping at any given moment. Bruce wasn't capable of such a feat as a child, but Damian had Talia's training on his side. Which meant that it was a matter of minutes before he would break out and make his way back to the Cave's main room.

Which was what really incentivized Bruce to take his first step to any sort of relationship with the newest member of his family. Totally not any sort of sentimentality or parental responsibility. Not at all.

It was a lot of pressure, but Bruce would deal with it. It wasn't the first time he'd faced impossible odds in his life.

But he'd have to start somewhere.

"So," Bruce said, sitting down in front of his son. "Your name is Damian."

"It is, yes," Damian said, staring him straight in the eye.

Bruce sighed. He knew from the job that talking to kids like Damian required finesse. Patience. A mix of trying not to talk down to said kid and grace that an adult could only give a child. But Damian was... a special case. Not some random kid, but his own son. And, knowing how his mother thought and acted, Damian would probably try his patience very, very fast.

"Do you know..." Bruce tried to figure out how to word the question. "Why your mother never told me about you?"

Damian made a tutting sound.

"She said that while you were the strongest warrior in the world, you were too soft to do what was needed."

"And what did she mean by that?"

Damian gave him a blank stare.

"You refuse to accept Grandfather's offers of leadership and instead devote your time to picking up urchins off the street and attempting to curb the rot infesting this abominable city, for some inconceivable reason."

Bruce raised an eyebrow.

"Are those your mother's words, or are they yours?" he asked.

Damian tilted his head.

"What do you mean?"

"Did your mother tell you that," Bruce explained, "Or is that what you've gathered from being here so far?"

"Why should I have to gather any evidence to the contrary when Mother was so obviously correct?" Damian snapped.

"Well, adults can be wrong," Bruce said. "Even I make mistakes. Ask anyone in this house, if you want some examples."

"I don't need any. You are making one by insulting my mother in front of me," Damian snapped. "Which I don't appreciate, even if you are my father."

Bruce winced internally. He should have guessed that Damian would be smarter than the average pre-teen, and not just better trained in the art of killing. He probably thought he was being talked down to, even if another kid his age wouldn't even notice.

"It wasn't my intention to insult Talia," Bruce said.

"I'd hope not," Damian said. "But, if you want an answer to your inane question... I suppose Mother was wrong about one thing."

"And that is?"

"She didn't say that you were deaf and dumb as well as stupidly soft," Damian replied. "Which explains why you keep those others as your heirs, despite their ineptitude. Especially McGinnis. What a disgrace. His whore mother should have - "

"Excuse me?"

Bruce forced himself to take a deep breath and remember that this kid had been raised to kill people before he sabotaged their entire relationship by snapping and yelling at him.

"I don't appreciate you insulting both me and a woman you've never even met," he said.

Damian scoffed.

"That woman was foolish enough to open her legs for you and not even tell her own son you were his father," Damian said, speaking slowly, like he was talking to a child instead of his own father.

"And that makes her a whore how, exactly?" Bruce said. He actually did understand why Damian would call her that, to an extent. Talia was insanely jealous of any other woman he happened to be close to. But he would have thought she'd raised Damian to be more respectful to women, having had to fight against her father's stereotypes and sexism for most of her life.

"Because she *slept* with you, you imbecile!" Damian yelled, "Do I have to explain copulation to you, of all people?"

"You don't," Bruce snapped back. Talking with Damian really was beginning to fray at his patience. "But I don't appreciate being yelled at in my own house."

"Tt," Damian tutted. "Whatever. But that woman is inferior. Mere chattel," he spat. "Women like her do not deserve to live, let alone survive. *We* do. Mother and you and I. The strong rule the weak, and the weak are culled. That is the way of the world."

"And did your mother tell you that, or did you find it out yourself?" Bruce stated.

He decided to cut Damian off before he could hear him repeat some answer that his mother and grandfather had drilled into him from an early age.

"Listen, Damian," he said. "You know just as well as I that I don't have any interest in ruling the world."

"Which is pointless," Damian said. "Why continue to fight the symptoms in this cesspit of a city when you can eradicate the disease from the top?"

"Because crime never stops. It will never stop, no matter what you or I can do. If we get rid of one player, another will swoop in and take their place. That's how it's been since before I was born, and how it'll be for a long, long time. All I can do is do my best to help the people affected most with all my ability."

"But you could do more! You could -"

"Do what Ra's wants to do? I could. But then I'd be stooping down to the level of the criminals I fight. *Millions* would die if your grandfather gets his way. If he succeeds, there would be barely anyone left to fight for, let alone anything."

"The point is that there would be no need for fighting -"

"But only if you stay in line, right?"

This discussion was getting off track. He was there to tell Damian that stabbing his brother was wrong and lay out an appropriate punishment, not talk philosophy.

"So, you stabbed Terrence because he was weak and you were strong?" Bruce asked.

"Yes," Damian said softly.

"And because you thought I'd acknowledge you if you defeated him."

Damian just glared at him, before returning to stare at his feet.

"And I'm sure you know what I think of that, correct?"

"You think that I should treat that imbecile as an equal," Damian said.

"And all of the other 'imbeciles' living here, too. Is that clear?"

Damian stayed resolutely silent.

"This isn't the League of Assassins, Damian," Bruce continued. "You don't earn your place here by subduing people. You earn it through trust. And you can only earn that trust if you can prove that you know what you did is wrong. Do you understand?"

Damian scoffed.

"Fine," he said. Which probably meant that he disagreed with Bruce's every word, but he would play along for now.

"Good," Bruce said, standing. "Let me show you to your room. Which is probably where you're going to be spending the foreseeable future, at least for a while. You are grounded, after all."

"Grounded?" Damian asked.

Bruce felt like he could smack himself. The poor kid probably was used to... alternative punishments, and didn't even know what grounding was.

"Grounded," Bruce said. "Unable to do fun things, or leave the house. It's supposed to be a punishment."

Damian scoffed.

"How... quaint," he said, standing up himself. "Well then, Father. Shall we go?"

Credit for this line: *"This isn't the League of Assassins, Damian," Bruce continued. "You don't earn your place here by subduing people. You earn it through trust. And you can only earn that trust if you can prove that you know what you did is wrong. Do you understand?"* goes to my wonderful buddy Reggie (@regnumveritatis on here!) She is very cool.

Anyway, I'm back! Sorry it took a month and a half - a LOT of shit happened. But no matter what, this story will be finished at some point! (Probably not by the story's 1 year anniversary, but at some point.)

(Wang's Asian Market being owned by the Triad is an inside joke for this fic. Check chapter 12 (the one right before the showdown!))

Updates will be a bit slow since I'm juggling what feels like 30 zillion WIPs, a bunch of homework and exams, and a part-time job. So I'm pretty swamped haha.

Next up: Jason and Bruce FINALLY talk about stuff. Not because either party wants to. But they do, because I said so. This is Hell's puppet master and I am the Master of Puppets (insert cool acoustic section here.)

Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Jason and Alfred talk. Jason goes to punch shit after... only to find someone beat him to the punching bag. (Reposted)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Hey, Alfie?” Jason asked.

Alfred turned around from where he was cutting up a bunch of vegetables for some stew, looking noticeably more tired than he usually did. Which was saying something because the guy almost never showed anything besides a stoic facade.

“Yes?” Alfred said.

Jason sat down on the kitchen counter, leaning back on his palms. Usually Alfred would scold him for doing so as soon as his butt touched the granite, but this time, the man just tutted and went back to chopping the veggies with single-minded fervor.

“What the fuck just happened?”

He’d heard yelling between Bruce and some new kid from the corridor by his room while he was distracting himself with a worn copy of *Treasure Island*. He was getting bored of brooding, but there was no way in hell he’d tell Bruce that. That was admitting defeat. Or admitting that he’d gone overboard with his plans for vengeance, which he was fairly sure he hadn’t.

Okay, maybe he had. Slightly. But Terry kept him from going off the deep end, right? He was fine!

He’d had a lot of time to think ever since Terry blew the Joker’s brains out, cooped up in his room and only ever interrupted by the need to get dinner or surreptitiously grab a new book from the library while everyone was out of the house.

Terry caught him. Twice. But Terry was fine. It wasn’t Terry that he was mad at.

Well, okay. Fine. Terry needed to fucking stop with all the damn pranks. Every other day or so, without fail, he’d set up some sort of trap for Jason when he’d step outside of his room for food. And, without fail, Jason would end up almost falling for it.

Bat training be damned, he thought. Terry was a beast of his own. He pitied the poor soul the guy would end up training to be Robin, if he decided to be stupid like Bruce and rope an innocent kid into the life. He wouldn't fucking dare, if Jason had anything to say about it. If he saw some kid wearing the red and green in 20 fucking 40, Terry's ass was grass.

Well, Terry's ass was going to be grass here in 2007 if he didn't stop the damn pranks. He'd even roped the Replacement into helping with his stunts. The Replacement, of all people!

Jason wasn't an idiot. He knew the kid was leaving books he knew he'd like in front of his door as some sort of bribe for his affection. Or maybe as a bribe to go and talk to Bruce. Heaven knew the man would never approach him to talk first.

But the Replacement wasn't the owner of the voice he'd heard yelling at Bruce in the hallway. Sure, it was obviously pre-pubescent, but it definitely wasn't Tim. Tim wasn't that much of an asshole. And Tim would never, ever call Bruce father. He almost always called the guy Bruce.

So who was this mystery kid? And how the Hell had he managed to shake Alfred up enough that the man didn't even comment on his use of the word "fuck?"

"Ah, yes," Alfred said, sighing. "That."

Jason raised his eyebrow.

"That?"

Alfred nodded, looking forlornly down at his vegetables.

"There was a... situation."

"What sort of situation?"

Alfred didn't respond.

"Alfred, I know you're trying to avoid telling me something. I'm not an idiot. Let me guess, you think I'm unstable, huh? Damaged beyond repair like Bruce does?"

"Of course not, dear boy. I - "

"Then what?"

"I am *attempting* to prevent you from doing something you will regret, Master Jason," Alfred said sternly.

"The new kid did something that would put my panties in a twist then, huh?"

"Your vulgarity is not conducive to gaining a read on the situation, Master Jason."

Jason sighed.

“Look, I’ll pay you back for it. But only, and *only* if you tell me what’s going on.”

“Very well.”

Alfred took a deep breath.

“It seems as if Miss al Ghul has had a contingency in the works to control Master Bruce for the past decade or so.”

“The kid - he’s Talia’s?”

How did Jason not know about this? He'd basically lived with her for years. Well, he guessed she'd had more secrets than he knew, huh?

Oh, well. It wasn't worth thinking about.

“Yes. And, in Talia’s jealousy... he has been taught that any other child of Bruce is of as little worth as chattel. Especially ones that happen to be an unknown to the League.”

Meaning that...

Oh, shit.

“Fuck!” Jason yelled, punching the granite in his anger. “That little shit is *dead* . Dead, you hear me? Dead!”

“No, Master Jason,” Alfred said, “He is not.”

“What do you mean?” Jason yelled. “That - that *brat* hurt Terry! You can’t just - just let him off the hook! Let him stay in our fucking house, knowing that he did that!”

Alfred sighed.

“Master Damian has already been met with a punishment appropriate to his age, and will be met with no further threats. He is as much of your brother as Master Dick or Tim is, and is to be treated as such.”

“Bullshit!” Jason yelled. “Talia probably raised this kid to kill and enjoy it. You and I both know that after a while of doing it, you start craving it. Even if you stop, you’ll never let it go. You’ll never truly be able to hold back. Is that the type of kid Bruce wants? Huh? Because we both know that he sure doesn’t want me around.”

Jason scoffed, holding back tears of frustration.

“The only reason I’m still here is because Terry’s here. The only reason Bruce and I haven’t started screaming at each other and he hasn’t kicked me out is because *Terry* is making us play nice. Me being here has nothing to do with his approval, and you know it.”

“Oh, Master Jason,” Alfred said. “Master Bruce loves you very much - “

“He sure has a funny way of fucking *showing* it then! Beating me half to death? Sure, that’s a great way to bond with your long lost son. But whatever,” Jason said. “Fuck him, and fuck everyone else in this goddamn place.”

He jumped off the counter.

“And since I obviously can’t go take out my copious frustrations on a bunch of mobsters, I’m going to go punch the shit out of something downstairs. Excuse me.”

He stormed out of the kitchen and towards the study with the entrance to the Batcave in it, not noticing Alfred’s wide, hurt eyes trailing behind him.

Jason had just finished wrapping his hands and started checking to make sure the wrappings were secure and he wouldn’t accidentally fuck up his knuckles by punching the bag a little too hard... only to notice that a certain someone had beat Jason to the punching bag.

Of course Bruce was going to hog the punching bag, Jason realized. The guy probably just spent half an hour trying not to strangle his newest kid for being homicidal, judging by his track record of strangling his own children if they happened to disregard his no kill rule. And he’d only barely managed to, it seemed, and only because the kid’s balls hadn’t even dropped yet.

The kid was one lucky bastard. Jason would have strangled the shit out of him despite that. In fact, strangling the kid was looking more and more appealing since the punching bag was taken and Jason still felt the distinct need to punch someone or something then and there. He’d only barely managed to ignore the burning in his veins long enough to walk to the cave and not make a detour to a certain kid’s new room, and that was only out of respect for Alfred.

Bruce’s old calming techniques really tended to come in handy sometimes, didn’t they? Breathe in, breathe out. Count 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 you can hear...

But before Terry had forced himself into his life, trying those calming techniques would just serve to make Jason angrier. But now when he tried them, he’d calm down enough to think of all the times Terry had managed to calm him down from a rage - whether just by talking him down, beating him back up, or making shitty jokes about him being an old man or an idiot. And thinking of those generally made him feel fond enough that he could calm down the rest of the way with little effort.

What had Terry called pit rage once? Pit PMS? Jason had walloped him for that one, but Terry just cackled and took it in stride. And now that Jason thought about it... it *was* pretty accurate. And a little bit funny, even if it was sort of insulting. Not that he’d ever give Terry the satisfaction of knowing that.

But thinking of Terry right now was doing the opposite of helping him calm down. In fact, Jason was just about to say ‘fuck it’, turn around, and head up to the new kid’s room to teach him a lesson when his plans were interrupted by Bruce calling his name.

Jason spun back around, clenching his fists once again. Knowing Bruce, he probably was just going to give Jason a lecture on how this whole situation with the new kid proved that Jason was also nothing better than an evil murderous maniac or something. He didn't know. But he wasn't looking forward to the lecture, anyway.

"What?" Jason said, "Wait, no. Let me guess. You want to beat up your other homicidal kid as a stand in for the little shit, right? Because why else would you talk to me?"

"Stand down," Bruce barked.

But then the man did something uncharacteristic and let out a tired sigh, seeming to deflate almost instantly. Like the weight of the world rested solely on his stupid, cape-covered shoulders.

Jason just stared, dumbfounded. What the fuck had just happened? Had the kid really gotten to him that much? Was he actually an alien imposter this time? Or possessed?

No, that wouldn't make sense. Bruce had too many safeguards, and Jason knew for a fact that no aliens or demons were currently picking fights in Gotham. So what was his deal? Had the kid really gotten to him that much?

"No," Bruce added, in a soft voice. "I just..."

He shook his head, before suddenly turning and punching the bag again in frustration.

"Damn!" Bruce yelled. "Why can't I do anything right?"

Huh, Jason thought absently. Maybe the kid *had* fucked him up that much.

He suddenly sort of felt... out of place. Weird. Bad? He didn't know how to identify the realization that Bruce knew just as little about how to handle the situation as he did, and Bruce was the type of guy who knew everything.

But even Jason knew that if there was one thing Bruce would never master, it was his own emotions.

"Where did I go wrong, Jason?" Bruce begged. "What did I do to make you... this? Please. Just... help me understand."

Make him understand? Like Jason hadn't tried to do that at least five times already?

Oh, Jason would make him understand. He'd make him understand *real* good.

"You know exactly what you did, Old Man." Jason said, bitterly. "You left my memory to rot and left the monster who murdered me alive, while gallivanting around with your newer, better Robin! You -"

Jason took a few deep breaths, in and out and in and out again. He needed to calm down. He couldn't... he couldn't just stand there and keep yelling at Bruce when he knew for a fact that Bruce wouldn't listen. And if he wanted to make the man listen, he'd have to do it his way

and be objective. Calm. Detached. Which would probably be impossible for him, but he had to try. He had to try to get Bruce to actually understand how he felt, for once in the man's life.

He felt the burn of the pit start to fade away, only for Bruce's intense stare on him as he tried to calm himself down to make it roar right back up.

"What?" Jason yelled. "Is there something on my face? Huh?"

"No," Bruce said morosely. "I just..."

He turned around, facing away from Jason once again.

"I didn't mean to stare, son. I - "

"Don't you dare call me son," Jason sneered. "You said it yourself. I'm not your son. Not anymore."

Bruce remained silent, opening and closing his mouth like he was about to say something, and Jason started to really feel sort of bad about being angry at Bruce right then. Not because he didn't deserve it, but because looking at the man the way he was now... he was just too pitiful to be worth the anger. Too broken. And hadn't that been what Jason wanted? To show the man where he went wrong?

God, he was such a piece of shit. The man knew what he'd done already, Jason realized. Jason's presence was a constant reminder of it, after all. He didn't need the lesson to keep being hammered in.

So why had he asked what he'd done wrong when he already knew?

Jason sighed. The man would probably just keep being confusing and cryptic, no matter what.

"Look," Jason started. "I get why you did what you did. Alfred said... he said that you were doing it to honor me. To honor my so-called legacy, because you totally didn't believe I threw a rapist off a roof and killed him once. Not at all, right?"

Jason let out a bitter laugh. Now that was a laugh riot in itself.

"You didn't kill Felipe Garzonas though," Bruce said.

"Of course I didn't!" Jason roared, "You think I just suddenly changed my mind and started killing rapists for kicks? No, Bruce. I did it because someone had to do it. And even if I hadn't wanted to do it at first, it's all I'm good for, anyway. Being violent. Killing people. Hurting people. I'm just a street tough, right? No better than an animal. A thug."

They stood together in silence.

"Is that what you think I think of you?" Bruce asked.

“What?” Jason shot back. “You don’t?”

"No," Bruce replied. "Jason, I thought the world of you. I..."

He shook his head, breathing out harshly through his nose. Probably in frustration over his emotional constipation, knowing him.

"I never say anything right, do I?" the man mumbled. It was almost pitiful, watching Bruce be reduced to... this. Jason had only seen him like this once or twice before, and only for a few minutes before he locked himself into his room. Back in the early days, when Bruce and Dick were still on the outs and fighting almost non-stop.

"No," Jason replied. "You never do."

Bruce let out a sad chuckle.

"You know, Jason," he said, "It might not seem like it lately, but... I still think the world of you."

“Uh huh.”

“I wasn’t finished,” Bruce said, tone steely once again. That was more like it - more like the Bruce he usually saw. They were back in familiar territory, and Jason relished the feeling.

“I know you’re capable of great things,” Bruce continued. "Things that can help so many people in a way that I never could. Never can. But what you did as the Red Hood is... unconscionable. Unforgivable. You've killed so many people, Jason, and for what? Petty vengeance?"

"You know why I did it, Bruce."

"But that doesn't make it right."

Jason laughed mirthlessly in response to Bruce’s naïveté. It wasn’t right, huh? So what? He’d told already. Someone had to do it, and it wasn’t gonna be Bruce!

“So you’ve given up on me, huh?” Jason shot back. “What else should I have expected from you?”

“Do you want me to give up on you, Jason?”

Jason didn’t know how to respond to that. Did he? Or did he not? Had he even wanted him to in the first place? He didn't know, and it didn't matter. Bruce probably had given up already, anyway.

“I did think you would never change, you know,” Bruce said. “That you didn’t want to.”

“But you think I do now?” Jason asked. “That I want to stop killing people and start singing kumbaya with pimps and rapists all of a sudden?”

Jason scoffed.

“What a load of crock,” He said. “I’m not going to change, Bruce. This is who I am now, and you’re gonna have to deal with it. And that’s that.”

Bruce shook his head.

“It’s not,” he replied.

“And why not?” Jason shot back. “Why not, huh? You gonna answer me or just keep standing there?”

Bruce smiled sadly at him.

“You know why,” he said simply.

And then he turned and headed for the cave’s showers, leaving Jason to sit and stew while he tried to figure out the answer. Because he was so helpful when it came to that. As per usual.

Speaking of helpful...

“Alfred helped you with that whole speech, didn’t he?” Jason yelled in the direction he went. Because no way would Bruce have said any of that sentimental shit on his own accord.

He received no answer besides the sound of running water.

Oh, well. Bruce was wrong, anyway. Jason was a killer, and that would never change. Not while he was still alive and kicking.

And as soon as Terry was better, he was going right back to proving it. Because no matter how many of the dumb speeches he heard from Bruce or Alfred tried to convince him otherwise... they were still wrong.

And only he could do what needed to be done.

Chapter End Notes

Y'all, it's been ONE YEAR since I started this story. One year since I started actually trying to write more long form stuff. My life has changed so much this past year, it's not even funny. I never thought that this story would end up where it did back in March 2022, but here we are now, a year later. So, to celebrate, I finished this chapter. I originally just posted the first half, but I managed to finish the second so I combined them.

I have ONE more chappie to write and then this will be DONE. Which is frightening and also awesome.

Anyway, enjoy! I'm responding to comments today too!

Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Terry recovers from being stabbed.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When Terry finally opened his eyes, the first thought that crossed his mind was "Why is the ceiling so fuzzy?"

The second and third, of course, were "Ow," and "What the heck?"

"Terry?" someone said from beside the bed, scooting closer.

Terry groaned, turning his head slightly towards the source of the voice. Scratch that, it wasn't just the ceiling that was fuzzy - everything was fuzzy, including the silhouette of the guy sitting next to his bed. And all floaty, too, which was always fun.

Jason looked almost as tired as he did while recovering from the burns he'd received back when he'd been stuck in that exploding warehouse, which said something. He wasn't the one who'd been stabbed this time, after all.

And everything hurt too, slag it. His head felt like it was stuffed full of cotton - probably from whatever old school painkiller Alfred or the old man stuck him on while he was out. Which explained why the ceiling was fuzzy and he felt like he was floating, now that he thought about it.

"Hey," he said. His throat felt all dry, like he hadn't talked in days. Just how long had he been out, he wondered?

Eh, he'd ask later. Right then, Jason looked like he was about to cry, which Terry would have found funny except for the fact that it was *him* he was crying over.

He sniffled and lunged forward all of a sudden, almost tackling Terry with the he put into giving him a hug.

Terry chuckled, moving to pat Jason on the back. But the movement and Jason's grip pulled at the stitches in his wound, causing him to hiss from the pain.

Jason's grip loosened and he slipped back into his chair, a guilty look on his face.

"Sorry," he grumbled, "Don't know why I forgot about your injury, all of a sudden."

“No big deal,” Terry replied, “Just watch the stomach next time. I mean, it’s not gonna kill you again to be a little careful.”

“Uh huh,” Jason said, raising an eyebrow. “Like you don’t have room to improve there, too.”

“That’s why I was the brains behind the operation and you were the brawn,” Terry shot back, smiling. “I don’t need to be careful if I’m just sitting in your apartment and guiding your way, right?”

“And bitching about how boring it is here compared to the 2040s.”

“That too. I mean, you’d do that too if none of your favorite shows have come out yet!”

“No I wouldn’t, because I like to do a little something called *reading*. You should try it.”

Terry groaned.

“You’re really laying your inner Grandpa on a bit thick with your old man hobbies, you know.”

Jason rolled his eyes.

“I’d off you right here and now for calling me old, squirt, but then I’d actually end up missing you.”

“Bet on it, grandpa. And hey! I bet you actually missed the old man jokes.”

Jason gave him a flat stare.

“You totally missed them,” Terry goaded. “C’mon, admit it!”

Jason sighed.

“Fine,” he gritted out. “I missed them a little bit. Okay?”

“Ha! Called it!” Terry started to raise an arm in triumph to accent his statement, but that caused his stomach to twinge once again.

He clutched his wound. God, why had he done that? He couldn’t believe he forgot that he’d tried the same thing not even five minutes before and gotten the same results, like a total idiot.

He could really be stupid sometimes, huh?

He glanced back at Jason, who was gritting his teeth, fists balled tightly on his knees.

“You’re lucky the brat didn’t kill you,” Jason growled, eyes glowing green. “Because I’m going to kill you for letting him beat you up like that. And then I’ll kill him for beating you up in the first place!”

Terry let out an agitated breath. This was the last thing he wanted to deal with right now.

“Oh, c’mon!” He replied, “That’s not fair. He’s like... eight! What happened to the Hood’s policy of ‘touch kids and you die?’”

“The kid landed a hit on you, that’s what happened!”

“Trust me, I’m not happy about it either!” Terry shot back. “But he’s a kid, right? Cut him some slack!”

“Kids can be just as dangerous as adults!” Jason grit out. "You don't *get* it, Terry."

“Well, obviously they’re dangerous! Do you know how many kids from my school I’ve had to take down while on the job? But even then, that doesn’t mean that kids should be condemned for stuff they do when they’re, like, eight! I mean, my brother’s about the same age as this twip, and if he did something similar, I’d beat the snot out of him for doing something so dumb. But I wouldn’t kill him! He’s just a kid! He’s got time to learn and all that, right?”

Tense silence filled the room, neither man wanting to give in to the other, but neither wanting to argue further.

Eventually Terry gave in first, giving Jason a slight shrug.

“Well, that’s what the Public Defender said to reduce my stint in Juvie from a year to six months,” he admitted. “I think. I can’t remember a bunch of what he said to be honest. But, to be fair, my head’s a little fuzzy right now.”

Jason stood, giving him a pat on the shoulder, and pushing him gently back towards his pillows.

“Go back to bed, baby bat. Hell knows you need some more rest.”

Terry sighed, nestling into the covers.

“You’ll think about what I said, right?” he asked.

“I’ll try.” Jason said.

Terry smiled.

“Good. Just do me a favor and don’t kill the kid while I’m out, okay?”

Jason gave him a wan smile.

“No promises.”

“You know,” Tim started, shuffling through the cards he had in his hand, “I think even Alfred is sick of Damian.”

"Wait, what?"

Alfred? Alfred who never got sick of anybody, not even Bruce? Damian must have done something crazy to piss off the guy, which mean that Terry just had figure out what it was.

"What did the twip do?" Terry asked. This was going to be good.

"Oh, man," Tim groaned. "So at breakfast, Damian started going on about how Alfred's food was nothing compared to what his grandfather's personal chef makes, amongst... other things. And Alfred genuinely looked like he was going to strangle him! I've never seen Alfred look like that in my life, to be honest."

"Huh," Terry said, "You know, I thought the brat would have learned to at least pretend to like him by now. It's been a whole week since he got here, right?"

Alfred had removed his stitches and gave him the all clear to stand and walk for short periods without assistance that very morning, so he guessed it was around that time. However, he was still confined to the cave infirmary until Alfred was certain his wound wouldn't reopen, which mean that he spent a good amount of his time sitting in his bed and doing nothing.

"Yup. You got any twos?"

Well, sometimes he spent time playing cards with Tim, hanging out with Jason or Dick, or checking in with Alfred. But they had lives, and stuff to do beyond sitting around and thinking about how boring the early 2000s were. Unlike him.

Those lucky bastards.

"Nope," Terry responded. "Any sevens?"

"Go fish," Tim replied, "Seriously, though. I'm a little scared that I'm going to be the next one Damian gets to."

"Well, you are the closest one to him age wise. And he's definitely not used to having any siblings. At least from what I can tell."

"Or healthy competition in general. I don't know what it's like being raised by the League of Assassins, but I'd bet it doesn't leave a lot of room for, well, healthy emotional development. Got any sixes?"

Terry snagged a six from his hand, and tossed it over to Tim.

"I mean," Tim continued, "When B introduced us, he gave me this look like I'd just peed in his cereal! Heck, even Jason didn't hate me that much! And Jason *definitely* isn't my biggest fan."

Terry gave him a sympathetic pat on the shoulder.

"You're warming up to him, don't worry," he said, "But I don't think your pranks aren't helping your case."

“Well, it’s still better than being ambushed by a crazy pre-teen armed with a sharp object,” Tim grumbled.

“Wait, what?”

“Yeah! You should have seen Dick’s face when he walked into the room!”

Terry let out a whistle.

“Oh, boy. That must have been something.”

Tim shrugged, before letting out a small hiss of pain and massaging his shoulder.

“He got you good, huh?” Terry asked.

“It’s nothing compared to what he did to you. And besides, Alfred patched everything up afterwards. I’m fine.”

“You sure?”

Tim gave him a flat look.

“Yes, Terry. I’m sure.”

“Okay, whatever you say,” Terry said, not wanting to argue. “Got any fives?”

Tim sighed, pulling two fives out of his hand and throwing them at Terry.

“Something’s eating at you,” Terry stated.

“I’m fine,” Tim said. “Really.”

“And I’m the easter bunny. What’s going on?”

“Well…” Tim started.

He sighed.

“Dick’s taken it upon himself to manage Damian so the rest of us don’t have to. Which means the rest of us are off the hook, at least. And I should be happy I don’t have to deal with him anymore. I shouldn’t be complaining about this. But…”

“Dick’s been spending more time with him than you, huh?” Terry guessed.

Tim looked towards the sheets.

“You’re the first person to ask if I’m okay besides Alfred,” he said, in a vulnerable voice.

“Not even Bruce asked?”

Tim shook his head.

“I think he’s just busy and hasn’t gotten around to it. But, still. Damian’s actually Bruce’s son. I’m nothing compared to him. I wasn’t raised knowing how to fight or anything. He’d probably be twice the Robin I am!”

“Kid, he’s actively homicidal. Robin and murderous don’t exactly mesh, from what I can tell.”

“Jason seems to be doing fairly well making it work.”

“Yeah, but he’s not Robin. Robin means being Batman’s partner, and he’s not. Besides, Wayne’s Batman doesn’t kill, and he’d probably rather kill someone himself than let Robin kill someone.”

“Your Batman kills people, though.”

“Yeah, but that doesn’t mean I’d let some kid go out and patrol with me. I don’t need a kid fighting my battles, and I especially don’t need some kid going out and killing. That sort of stuff weighs on the conscience, you know? Look at what it’s doing to Damian.”

“True,” Tim said, “But Batman doesn’t get to choose whether there’s a Robin or not. Generally, we come to him and make him take us on whether we like it or not.”

“Well, let’s hope there’s no kid stupid enough to want to be Robin in 2040,” Terry grumbled.

Tim gave him a look.

“Uh, I hate to break it to you, but kids being dumb is sort of a universal constant. Sorry, but you’re stuck.”

“Ah, slag,” Terry cursed. “Well, if I have to supervise some kid out there, I’m just going to hope that whoever it is isn’t my brother. I think I’d rather die.”

“Because he’d get into danger?”

“That, and because he’d embarrass me on purpose in front of bad guys. For fun.”

“Sounds about like it. Got any 10’s?”

“You seem to be healing right on schedule,” Alfred noted, as he scanned Terry’s wound. “You haven’t been roughhousing, have you?”

Terry groaned. He’d been moved out of the infirmary after another half a week, but he still was barely allowed to leave his bed for much more than carefully sitting on the sofa in the foyer across the hall, going to the bathroom, or walking around the sunroom.

“But staying still is so boring!” Terry complained. God, he was starting to actually miss the stuff he’d had to use in the future. Sure, it might have hurt like a bitch for a bit while it knit him back together, but at least he wasn’t completely incapacitated after every stab wound! Most of the time he’d lay on the med table for an hour or so while he got all fixed up, and

then he'd be good to go the next day.

Even then, it hurt so much that it was only for extreme emergencies. So he didn't really miss it all that much.

"Of course it is, lad. But boring often is beneficial, especially to the impatient mind."

"I don't know," Terry replied, "I guess we'll have to agree to disagree on that."

"How unfortunate," Alfred deadpanned.

"For you, maybe."

"For me? Oh, dear. I suppose I'll just have to prove the merits of idle time to you by remaining uninjured while you and your brothers continue to fall victim to reckless stunts."

"You haven't met reckless yet, Alfred. Trust me."

"I've been raising reckless ever since his parents died, Master Terry."

Terry barked out a laugh.

"Oh, don't I know it. And he was the one who always harped on about how I was too reckless! But I wasn't the one who kept beating people up with his cane, despite barely being able to walk without assistance. "

"Was he, now?" Alfred said, "Oh, dear. And here I was, hoping his recklessness would finally temper with old age."

He sighed.

"But, alas. What else did I expect?"

Terry snorted.

"Never expect him to turn down an opportunity to be a self-sacrificing idiot."

"A trait you seem to understand intimately yourself, Master Terry." Alfred replied. Ouch. "Now, you should be on track to return to light exercise in a matter of days - but only, and *only* if you restrain yourself from emulating your father in more than just blood and career choice."

"Aw, you're no fun," Terry said. It would be a lot easier to restrain himself from being reckless if he had his tablet here to text his friends and play mini games to his heart's content - but, like most of the things he regularly enjoyed doing, he'd left that behind in the future.

Alfred raised an eyebrow.

"I can be perfectly fun. I just choose not to be when it encourages reckless behavior."

Sadly, he'd already long since exhausted every old school game - tabletop or computer - that he knew of. A month ago, he never would've guessed that he'd get sick of Pong in less than a week, but there he was.

"Please tell me there's something else to do around here," he asked. "I'm going to die of boredom before I die from reckless behavior at this point."

"Of course there is," Alfred said. "But to be frank with you, the best cure for terminal boredom isn't idle pastimes, but good company. Shall I escort you to the media room? I believe Master Richard was planning on a marathon of the original *Gray Ghost* series."

Terry stood up, ready and raring to go just at the mention of *The Gray Ghost*. He loved that series. He still remembered the day his parents took him to see the movie remake in theaters fondly. One day of just him and them, no extra burdens, no fighting, no worries - just fun.

And boy, did he miss that.

"Say no more, Alfred," he said, "I'm in."

"You won't be in any shape to join if you plan on running out the room like a fiend, Master Terry," Alfred said, grabbing his arm. "Let me escort you."

Terry groaned. The media room was almost halfway across the manor. He could be careful for that long!

If he wanted to. Which he didn't. Because that was boring. And they both knew it.

Which meant Alfred was going to take forever in helping him to get there on purpose.

Terry loved *The Gray Ghost*.

Really, he did. It was his all time favorite TV show, as well as one of the few topics of conversation he and Wayne had in common. Wayne wasn't exactly into computer games and the Neo-Gotham party scene, after all, and they had to talk about *something* when there was downtime. No matter what Wayne said about "crime never sleeping" and all that.

But being in the same room as Damian while watching *The Gray Ghost*? That was a whole different experience.

Terry honestly would rather have been stabbed again than let Damian wreck the experience of watching his favorite show for the rest of eternity. But there he was, watching *The Gray Ghost* while a certain homicidal twip sat not even ten feet from him.

Alfred had conveniently forgotten to tell him that Bruce had all but ordered Damian to join in on the *Gray Ghost* marathon in order to keep him away from the cave while he and Tim went on patrol, with Dick left behind to supervise and make sure he didn't make any escape attempts or hurt anybody.

Dick paused the TV, cutting off Terry's train of thought on the merits of purely hypothetical child torture. Mostly purely hypothetical, that was.

"What did you think, Damian?" Dick asked, turning to Damian and plastering on a smile that would fool any rich socialite into thinking he wanted to be there. "Thoughts? Comments? Concerns? This is your dad's favorite, you know."

Damian scowled.

"Tt," Damian sneered, "It seems as if Father's taste is more... lacking than I thought it was, then."

"I think your existence proves that more than his taste in TV," Terry quipped, under his breath.

Damian turned his way.

"Excuse me?" he said.

"Have you looked at your mom recently? The whole boob window thing is *so* not working for her. And is Bruce supposed to find the whole assassin thing attractive? I mean -"

"Do not bring my mother into this! You're just jealous my mother isn't dollar store trash like yours is -"

"Hey, hey!" Dick interrupted, waving his hands between them. "Let's try to talk this out like rational people and not... Bruces, okay?"

"This stopped being rational territory when he insulted the Gray Ghost!" Terry said.

He was tired. He was cranky. He was still healing from the stupid stab wound the twip gave him, for Christ's sake, and walking from his room to the foyer they were marathoning the show in made the wound twinge up once again. So sue him for acting all like Jason when he was feeling especially homicidal!

"That's what angered you?" Damian asked, "My correct opinion of this... mediocre propaganda for children?"

"Oh, you did not go there. The Gray Ghost is a classic, not just some stupid kids show -"

"Hey!" Dick said, "You know what? I think we're going to call this a night."

He stood up.

"Come on, Damian," he said, "Let's go."

"I don't see why I have to be the one to leave," Damian said, "It's McGinnis who has the defect, not me!"

Dick sighed.

“Well, yeah,” he said, “But you can walk away from the fight and he can’t. He’s the one recovering from the stab wound, not you.”

Damian gave Terry a strange and almost regretful look... before turning and strutting out of the room like the little prince he thought he was.

“As you wish then, Grayson,” he said, “But you owe me another round of sparring for forcing me to watch that... garbage!”

Dick gave a hollow chuckle, turning towards Terry with a roll of his eyes and a “what can you do?” shrug.

Terry just rolled his eyes in return.

He only made it halfway through the first season before falling asleep, which blew, in his opinion. The season 1 finale of the *Gray Ghost* was his absolute favorite. The drama, the mystery, the sinister plot revealed at the end -

He jolted away all of a sudden, disoriented and wary. The finale was long since over, judging by the DVD menu music playing on loop in the background.

And Damian was standing behind the couch, glaring down at him.

Terry almost jumped out of his skin.

He was tempted to roll over and pretend to be asleep until the twip left the room, but the twip caught his eyes fluttering open before he could put his plan into action.

“I know you’re awake, McGinnis,” he said.

Terry groaned.

“Let me guess,” he said, “You’re here to make fun of my mom again? Well, no thanks. I’m going back to sleep.”

Damian rolled his eyes, before whipping out one of Alfred’s steak knives and putting it at Terry’s throat.

Terry froze.

“I will say this one time, and one time only,” Damian hissed.

“Okay?”

Damian gave him a strange look, almost like he was disgusted.

“Uh, are you going to say what you’re going to say? Or can I sleep now?”

Damian removed the steak knife, shaking his head and turning back towards the door.

“I made a mistake deciding to do this,” he muttered, starting to walk out of the room.

That was when Terry realized something.

“Wait. Are you trying to apologize for stabbing me?”

“No, you fool!” Damian hissed. “I’d rather die than apologize for attempting to claim my rightful inheritance!”

Terry let out a hysterical laugh.

Damian gave him a strange look, and Terry couldn’t help but smile in response.

“Whatever,” Terry said, turning over. “I’m too tired to be mad right now. Just… don’t repeat that performance, and we’ll be okay. Okay?”

Damian tutted.

“Those are… adequate conditions.”

“I’m going to guess that’s twip speak for ‘sounds good to me.’”

“What does twip even mean?”

Terry smiled.

“That’s something for me to know and you to find out.”

“Imbecile,” Damian said, “Of all the buffoons to be related to, why do I have to be related to _?”

20 ninjas broke through the foyer window before he could finish, scattering glass over the carpet.

Then, all hell broke loose.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the long wait! I've been super busy with finals, writer's block, stuff, writer's block, more stuff, and more writer's block. Ahhhhhhhhhh.

Anyway, enjoy!

Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Damian and Terry try to deal with some ninjas. Key words: try to.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Damian hadn't intended to apologize to McGinnis.

He was their heir to the league of assassins, the one true son of the greatest warrior in the world and the daughter of the demon's head. He didn't apologize, ever. Apologizing was for lesser beings, for those who wouldn't survive the League of Assassin's ultimate plan. Not for people like him.

But, for some reason, he felt compelled to tell McGinnis that he may have erred by deciding to stab him during their duel.

Perhaps it was father and Grayson's constant spewing of sentimental drivel over the course of his stay at Wayne Manor. Or the constant guilt-tripping that came with it. Maybe it was testing Drake and realizing that out of the two, McGinnis was a far superior combatant.

He had stood in for the Red Hood and held his own for long enough to fool most of Gotham's scum into thinking he was the real article. Therefore, McGinnis was clearly skilled, even if his disposition was idiotic at best and annoying at worst.

From what he could tell. Because he most definitely didn't sneak to the Bat Cave when no one was looking and patch into the security feed for his room. Not at all.

He'd been trained to know better than to let a threat remain unmonitored, no matter if said threat was incapacitated. And while McGinnis was not a true threat, he was the one with the family's allegiance.

Not Damian. But him.

Maybe that was the real reason Damian felt compelled to speak to him. Obviously there was something that McGinnis had learned that helped him gain the family's allegiance, despite his obvious lack of combat prowess. Something that Damian had never been trained in, since the family obviously despised him.

He'd listened to how Todd and Drake talked about him, behind his back. To his face, they merely glared and hurried away as fast as possible, but behind his back, they made him out to be some terrible monster, a spoiled brat with no care for anything except bloodshed.

At least they feared him, Damian thought. But despite that, they didn't show him the proper respect he was due as the blood son of Batman. And he couldn't quite figure out why they didn't. If they feared him, surely they should respect him as well?

Why did they prefer the company of an injured, impure weakling over the company of someone practically raised to be their father's perfect heir?

But, even then, that was the only reason he regretted not making sure McGinnis was wounded in a more critical area. Not because he was curious about what made the other blood son so desirable, compared to him.

Not at all. And not that he would ask how he did it. He didn't need aid from a blatant imbecile with a disregard for proper threats and a stupid fascination with animated American children's propaganda.

But, no matter how long he'd watched McGinnis, no matter how much he'd studied the man's body language and interactions with the rest of his father's cohort, he couldn't figure out how he'd won them over.

And before he could muster up to ask, his mother's men had already burst through the parlor's windows, swords at the ready.

The assassins stood stock still, as if they were waiting for him to make the first move.

Damian regarded them the same way they regarded him. If anyone was making the first move, it would be his mother's men, not him. His mother vetted her men thoroughly before letting them swear themselves to her service, and despite his skill, he wasn't nearly foolish enough to rush a group of highly specialized assassins. He knew the names and abilities of every person in the room, and he'd even worked with some of them find men that would help him confront McGinnis and Pennyworth in that garage, all those weeks prior.

However, he wasn't the only one in the room the assassins were facing.

McGinnis had hauled himself off the couch, holding himself in a ready stance and looking ready and raring to rush the group on his lonesome despite still being in a state of injury.

Idiot. If Father knew and preferred him so much, why had he encouraged his recklessness?

"McGinnis," Damian barked, holding his hand out, "Wait. I'll handle this myself."

"Are you crazy?" McGinnis replied, "You might be tough, but you wouldn't stand a chance against an entire group of crazy assassins unarmed!"

Damian rolled his eyes and turned towards his mother's men. Perhaps, if he played his cards right, he could keep McGinnis from getting his fool self further maimed, or killed. Father would be especially displeased if either happened, after all.

"*State your business,*" Damian barked in the League's Arabic, turning towards the leader.

“Your mother sent us to retrieve you from your father, young master,” the leader replied. “She is displeased that you ran off to him, and especially displeased that your father made sure that we couldn’t retrieve you earlier. I am sorry.”

Damian opened his mouth, and then closed it again. On one hand, he was surprised his mother had taken so long to retrieve him. Even if they’d been apart for longer, it was unusual for her to leave him without trusted supervision or some word for longer than two weeks, let alone a month.

She’d been on a mission when he’d left. His grandfather had sent her on some long-term mission halfway across the world, so he supposed he couldn’t fault her for taking so long to send her best men after him. The men he’d taken to Gotham obviously wouldn’t have stood a chance against his father, being some of the weakest-willed of the League. No one else would have gone with him. Anyone else would have either refused to take him seriously or attempted to assassinate him, heir to the demon or not. But weak-willed men were easy to convince and even easier to threaten, so he’d had no trouble finding men willing to follow him and aid him on his quest.

He could have requisitioned some of his mother’s allies, but most of his mother’s men had gone with her. That was for the best, probably. They would have stopped him from undergoing this ill-fated quest before he could even start. His mother most definitely would have - at least, until he was better trained and could go with adequate supervision.

This was nowhere near the longest they’d been apart, but he found himself missing her already.

His father’s estate was vast and prestigious, as was befitting of him. But the people living on it left... a lot to be desired, at best. Grayson was alright, even if he was obviously unused to Damian’s quirks. Drake avoided him like the plague - which was fine by him, since he was an imbecile at best. McGinnis, obviously, had been too incapacitated to bother with. But, for some reason, Todd hadn’t said a word to him. After what Damian did to McGinnis, he was shocked the man hadn’t even challenged him to an honor duel. That’s what they would have done in the league, and Todd had been League until very recently. At least, that’s what his mother had told him.

“I’m surprised she didn’t come here herself,” he gritted out. And he was. She was notoriously overprotective when it came to him, and everyone knew it.

“I’m afraid she was otherwise occupied,” the leader responded.

Before Damian could respond, McGinnis fell to his knees, clutching the back of his neck before keeling over onto his face in an especially undignified fashion.

A tranquilizing dart, Damian noted upon seeing the projectile sticking out of McGinnis’s unprotected neck. He spun around, looking for its source - but before he could, a stinging sensation appeared at the back of his neck.

He’d barely started to feel his legs start to wobble before his vision started spinning, and everything faded to black.

He'd learned the hard way years and years ago that waking up after being tranquilized was never a fun sensation.

Despite the pounding in his head and the dryness in his mouth, Damian was able to note his current circumstances. He wasn't just bound at hand and foot and tethered to some sort of post, but blindfolded and gagged as well. He'd obviously been searched, judging by the absence of cold steel at his ankle and the small of his back - where he usually kept knives in case of emergency.

Being his mother's personal guards, his captors seemed to appreciate his skill despite his age - which was a point in their favor, Damian decided. He'd been kidnapped dozens of times due to his position, but rarely had his captors gone to such lengths to keep him contained.

He'd have to thank his mother for taking him seriously at some point in the future.

Their precautions didn't matter to him, however. He'd been trained to escape from worse - and besides, the idiots hadn't bothered to cover his ears. As long as he pretended to be asleep, he'd be able to pick up vital information while they thought he wasn't listening.

So far, there was little sound besides the low hum of an engine - plane turbines, judging by how different breathing felt compared to normal - lighter and less constricted, but shallower regardless. But the sounds around him would change soon enough. The plane had to land in the near future, and he had to be offloaded onto his mother at some point.

For now, Damian was content to parse through his thoughts in lieu of anything else to do.

Everyone had an ulterior purpose for everything, he'd come to learn. The men holding him hostage probably had some other benefit to his capture besides his mother's will. And every decision his mother and grandfather made was calculated in order to further the influence and standing of the League, to keep their assets under their control. And his father wasn't the type to do things frivolously - at least, he hadn't seemed the type to, before Damian had met the man and learnt otherwise.

So what was his father's motive for keeping him at his manor? And why had Damian humored the man and not tried to escape?

He'd spent the long first days at his father's manor waiting for his mother to send his team to extract him. And after that had failed to happen, he'd spent the rest of his so-called punishment pondering a multitude of questions. Why hadn't a team appeared already? Why hadn't father sent him back to the League, knowing he was one of them? Why did he insist on continuing to give his gang of street urchins more privileges than his own blood heir?

Once he'd finally been released from his room, other questions started to pile up. Why did Grayson insist on showing him animated children's propaganda and challenging him to asinine games? Father had tasked him to watch Damian, but Grayson seemed to insist on treating him like he had the intellect of that fool Drake, not like the heir presumptive to one of the largest multinational organizations on the planet.

And, on that note, why hadn't Todd challenged him to that duel for McGinnis's honor? Todd had some league training, even despite being a brute. His mother had seen to that. It would have been well within his rights to do so, even if Father probably had banned him from doing so. Even then, why was he listening to him? He knew for a fact that Todd was at odds with Father. Some of his men had been tracking the Red Hood's exploits for his mother, before he'd assumed command of them for his impromptu quest to challenge McGinnis for his birthright.

So, what was going on? What was his angle? What did his cohorts have to gain by being "nice" to him? And why had his mother's men only come now?

A door opened somewhere in his vicinity, and Damian strained his ears for any hint of conversation.

A few stray murmurs, but nothing intelligible. Just as he'd expected, judging by the distance between him and the noise. But that didn't deter him in the slightest. He'd eavesdropped in worse conditions, anyway.

The door closed, and the heavy plodding of footsteps approached. Probably a man, judging by the time between footsteps and the heaviness of their gait.

The footsteps abruptly stopped and the approaching person sighed, before letting out a string of curses that would've had both his mother and Alfred scrambling for the nearest bar of soap.

"Damn brats," the man murmured in Arabic, *"More trouble than they're worth, both of them."*

Brats?

That was when Damian remembered that he wasn't the only one who'd been knocked out before ending up here. McGinnis had also been tranquilized - and, evidently, his mother had tasked their men to retrieve him as well. Most likely because of Damian's ill-fated quest.

Damian cursed internally.

Just when everything seemed to be returning to rights, everything had to be upended yet again. As per usual, during the past month.

And, as per usual, it was *definitely* McGinnis's fault.

Chapter End Notes

I am SO SORRY. I didn't realize it'd been so long since the last update until I looked a minute ago! I'm trying to get back into the habit of updating everything regularly now that I'm less busy (last semester was Hell lol,) so here I am. I've had this chapter written

for a bit, but I wasn't happy with it. However, I ended up deciding it'd be smarter to edit everything instead of rewriting, because I'd never finish the damn chapter if I started from scratch again, so here we are.

Crossing fingers that the next update happens in less than 9 months lol.

End Notes

I got bored and wanted some bonding between Jason and Terry, so I started writing this. Will I ever finish? Who knows! But at least I started it.

ALSO I read all of your comments I'm just really busy and don't respond. They make me crack up sometimes, roll my eyes in fond exasperation others, and smile all the time. Thanks for supporting my story, it means a lot to me.

4/19/22: As well, I'm planning on adding some more stories in the original timeline of the DCJU, in which Terry doesn't go back in time but Jason exists in the DCAU. You will see ;)

4/26/22: Reworked parts of Chapter 7.

5/11/22: This fic has a Discord Server now! The link is [here!](#)

5/17/22: Changed the nickname Jason gives Terry in Chapter 9 back to Baby Bat. Why? I liked it better. There.

9/8/22: you get 3 extra chapters because I have that much left to write. Maybe more later. Enjoy

9/16/22: had to turn off guest comments. Feel really bad about it so leave an extra kudos instead ig

11/7/22: got rid of the song quote because idk

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!