

The next morning I woke up early and immediately headed to the mountains gym and worked my way through some light exercises, which felt like nothing to my enhanced body. Honestly it was hard not to smile when I was bench pressing twice my old body weight and not even struggling. I was thinking through the plan for the day while running on the treadmill when I noticed Superboy coming into the gym. He nodded and headed for the benches, racking up pretty close to what I would consider my maximum and started lifting it like a warm up. I chuckled and kept running, focusing on going as fast as possible without ruining the treadmill. Eventually, when I had been running for thirty minutes, I stepped off and stopped, hardly even winded.

“It’s hard to work up a sweat.” Superboy said, catching my attention.

I looked over to him and noticed he was lifting even more now, but still not really struggling. The equipment, however, certainly was. The barbel was loaded with so much weight that it was visibly bending, way more than could ever be considered was really safe. Superboy shook his head and put the barbel down, sitting up and looking frustrated.

“Yeah, I know what you mean.” I agreed, eyeing his barbel before he started stripping off weights, clearly giving up. “I didn’t have that problem with the weights but the treadmill feels like it’s going to come apart before I even really start to push myself. It wouldn’t even come close for someone like Kid Flash. I’ll put in a request for more super work out equipment. Maybe they will let us have the stuff we used for tryouts.”

“Request? To who?”

“I talked to Batman yesterday.” I said before expanding. “I had a couple questions so I sent him a message. He stopped by to answer them and ended up putting me in charge of keeping everyone supplied for missions and putting in requests for equipment.”

“Oh, I was in the library most of yesterday.”

“I kind of expected you to still hear us.”

“...I had a computer playing white noise.” He admitted.

“Oh! Does it help? Were you reading?”

He nodded as he racked his last weight, leaving the barbell where it was. He looked at the treadmill next to mine as if contemplating it before shaking his head.

“I’m gonna take a quick shower and head to the kitchen.” I said, grabbing my new phone off the bench and heading out. “I’ll meet you there and I’ll make some breakfast for us. How do you feel about bacon and pancakes?”

"I don't know." He responded, but surprisingly continued. "But we can find out."

I smiled and left the gym, going back to my room to take a quick rinse before throwing on some jeans and a t-shirt. When I got to the kitchen I started the extremely fancy looking coffee machine and fed it some expensive looking beans before starting on breakfast. I was flipping the bacon for the last time when Superboy joined me.

"Is that what you've been reading?" I asked as he walked to the table and sat down.

"Yeah." He answered simply, already opening the book.

I shook my head with a grin. It looked like he found a hobby. I focused on cooking, working the pancake batter as little as possible to keep it nice and fluffy. I let it sit as I pulled the bacon out and laid it on a paper towel covered plate before pouring the grease out of the pan. While I was pouring out the first pancake I felt M'gann wake up. I was glad I made extra.

By the time the Martian made it to the kitchen I had four pancakes stacked up, another three on the way. I could feel her smile when she walked in.

"Good morning!" She said happily, walking closer and checking out what I was doing. "Oooh pancakes! Thank you Warren."

"No problem. Why don't you set the table?"

She floated into the kitchen, grabbing plates, napkins and silverware with her telekinesis and floating it to the kitchen table. She was radiating happiness through her presence in my mind, enough that it caught my notice. I sent her a mental question and she actually blushed before brushing it off.

*"He is reading!"* She thought to me, changing the subject quickly.

*"What? I thought he was doing a coloring book."* I replied with an undercurrent of sarcasm.

I could feel her roll her eyes at me and I chuckled as she grabbed the maple syrup and the butter next, holding it and bringing it over herself instead of using her telekinesis. When I was done with another few pancakes I brought the stack and the plate of bacon to the table.

"And breakfast is served!" I said with a posh accent, getting a giggle from M'gann and a confused look from Superboy. "Help yourselves."

We quietly made our own plates and started eating. I couldn't help but hum in appreciation when I crunch on a piece of bacon.

“God I missed good food.” I said, pouring maple syrup over my pancakes. “I had to buy the cheapest stuff when I was living alone. I’ve put off looking in the freezer because if there is even a halfway decent cut of steak in there I don’t know if I’ll be able to wait for dinner.”

“Do you cook a lot?” M’gann asked. “Because these are really good.”

“Well pancakes aren’t too hard once you figure out the tricks to make them better.” I assured her. “But I liked cooking even before I came here and had to cook for myself.”

“It is really good.” Superboy agreed, munching on his food, his book now closed and to the side.

“D-do you think you could show me the basics?” M’gann asked. “I would love to learn, especially baking.”

“Yeah. I mean I’m not a proper chef by any means but I don’t mind helping you figure it out. Don’t know too much about baking, but I suppose we could learn that together?”

M’gann smiled and sent me a mental hug, which I returned as I served myself another two pancakes and another slice of bacon. Breakfast continued for a while until the food was gone. M’gann volunteered to do dishes while Superboy said he was going to head back to the library to read. As he left I followed after him.

“Wait up Superboy.” I said, catching up to him as he stopped. “I’m going to try and get the whole team together soon, maybe tomorrow. Just wanted to let you know.”

“Alright. I’ll be here.”

I watched the stoic teenager leave, letting out a sigh before turning back to the kitchen. M’gann was using her telekinesis to load the dishwasher, a sight that got me smiling again. I watched her work for a moment before taking out my phone and bringing up the acquisition tab. I made a request for exercise equipment rated for enhanced individuals, added a note for something similar to what we used during tryouts and sent it.

*“M’gann I’m heading down to the equipment storage to see if the Justice League left us any goodies when they bugged out.”*

*“Oh, alright. Mind if I join you?”* She asked, still focused on the floating tableware. *“I’m just about done.”*

*“You’re more than welcome to.”*

I waited a few minutes for her to finish before we made our way to the equipment storage. The door to the large room was much more advanced than the majority of rooms, but it

still opened when I pressed the right buttons. Sure enough it was thicker too, something I noticed as we stepped in and the lights kicked on, lighting up the room.

Dozens and dozens of boxes of various sizes filled the room, with the walls lined with storage as well. As both M'gann and I stepped into the room we stopped, taking it all in.

"Damn... That's a lot of stuff." I muttered

"*What do you think it is?*" She asked, stepping forward to the closest box, running her hand over it.

"*I have no idea.*" I admitted. "*Let's take a peek and find out.*"

"*Are you sure? Seems a bit... invasive.*"

"*If they didn't want us in here they would have locked it up.*" I pointed out, gesturing back at the door while I walked to the nearest metal crate. "*It's the purpose of a security door after all.*"

I fiddled with the latches on the crate before popping it open and lifting the lid. Inside was... laundry. Bright blue clothes with red accents. I took one and pulled it out, letting it unfold.

"*Is that...?*"

"*I think it is.*" I agreed, putting away what appeared to be a spare uniform for Superman. "*Great, well if we ever wanted to pretend to be Superman, we are all set.*"

M'gann giggled, before reaching down and popping the latch on her box, letting out a small gasp.

"*Well... yours might have been silly but this one... Come take a look.*"

I frowned and made my way to her, looking down into the box. Inside, set in foam was half a dozen grappling guns, similar to what I had seen clipped onto Batman's hip a few times now. I took it out and examined it.

"*This... this is exactly the kind of thing I was hoping to find here.*"

M'gann and I spent the next thirty minutes going through the room and popping open random cases, exploring the resources we had available to us. We stumbled on a few more boxes of uniforms, but also found things like a box of smoke pellets, spare bows and a few quivers full of arrows. We found a few crates of equipment from several heroes as well as some random gadgets and parts. After a while we decided to call it a success and made our way out

of the room. I wanted to get some earthbending practice in and M'gann wanted to keep me company in the grotto.

*"Warren... Why were you looking for things like the grappling hook launcher?" M'gann asked as we made our way to the library. "You seemed excited to see the smoke pellets, tasers and stun guns as well."*

*"I was looking for stuff to put on my belt when we go on missions." I explained. "Stuff I think will be useful. Honestly I think we should have a standard loadout we all carry with us. A set of handcuffs or zipties, the grappling hook and a stun gun at the least."*

*"Why would I need any of those?" She asked. "I mean I guess I could see the zipties, but I can fly, why would I need a grappling hook?"*

*"It's less about what you need and more about knowing no matter what we have one." I explained. "If it's part of our standard kit that means we will always have at least a few, meaning we can strategize around ideas that use them. Like what if we wanted you to go invisible but also wanted to drop down several floors on the outside of a building? If Robin is the only one carrying a grapple hook we would have to go down a few of us at a time, which would mean we couldn't do that to ambush someone. But if we are all carrying one..."*

*"Then it's possible." She finished. "I think I get it."*

*"Right. The military functions on a similar concept. If you know what everyone has, then you can plan on them having it."*

*"It seems like a good idea."*

We stepped into the library, and I gave Superboy a wave as M'gann flew up to the second story to grab a book, floating back down after she snagged one. The room was filled with white noise static, the computer playing it pretty loudly. Superboy gave me a nod back before focusing on his book. I was pretty sure it was a different one than he was reading yesterday.

"Superboy, Warren and I are going down the grotto so I can read and he can practice his earthbending. Want to join us?"

"No thanks." He said simply. After a moment though he turned slightly and looked at us. "But... This book series has some movies based on it. When I finish it...maybe we could all watch the first one?"

"Oh, like a movie night! That would be so much fun!" M'gann said excitedly.

"Yeah, I would be up for that." I added with a smile.

Superboy nodded, looking back to his book and turning the page, a small smile on his face. I looked at M'gann, who had a big bright smile on her face, and I gestured with my head to the exit. She nodded and sent me a happy hug through her presence.

We made our way down to the grotto and I stomped up a seat for M'gann, who was smart enough to snag a pillow to sit on. I made myself another platform to sit on as well, along with a half dozen chunks of stone to practice my control on.

I practiced for a while, working my way through a few chunks of rock. I got pretty far with my fifth try, ending up with an egg shaped stone that most definitely did not qualify as spherical, but didn't have any flat edges or massive defects. Considering it a definite sign of progress I leaned back on my hands to take a break.

*"M'gann... Can I ask you a personal question?"*

*"Umm... Maybe."* She responded a little hesitantly. *"What is it?"*

*"Why do you want to be a hero?"* I asked, before continuing with a gesture. *"If it's too personal or whatever you don't have to answer."*

She was quiet for a while, and I could feel her presence struggling with something. I looked over to see she had put her book down, looking down into the water. Eventually though, she answered, looking back at me and catching my eyes.

*"I snuck aboard Uncle J'onnn's ship to get here, did you know that?"* She asked feeling nervous. I sent a wave of reassurance through her presence in my mind. *"I don't want to talk about why, but I wasn't happy on Mars. Earth seemed like such an amazing place, full of so much life and happiness... I bonded with Bioship before Uncle J'onnn could so I could sneak aboard without him knowing. I'm lucky he didn't just send me back when he found out."*

She paused and seemed to sink a bit, so I sent a wave of support through her presence. She gave me a small smile and gathered herself again.

*"I was just happy to be here. At first, being a hero... it was just because it was what Uncle J'onnn did. But the longer I stayed the more I realized that the problems here weren't any different from the problems I faced at home. The difference was that here, I could do more to help than I ever could at home."*

I smiled and gave her a mental hug, which she returned eagerly. After a few moments her presence shifted, her attention focusing on me again.

*"What about you? Why do you want to be a hero?"*

*"It's nothing as noble as you." I admitted, sheepishly rubbing the back of my neck. "I just don't think I could sit on the sidelines in a world with superheroes and villains, not when I could genuinely help. I've never been able to stand bullies, and while the... newest parts of me made it all but impossible, I like to think I would be doing this anyway. Besides, the man who my enhancement first belonged to? Steve Rogers? Let's just say I have a legacy to uphold."*

As I talked, M'gann slowly lifted off of her stone chair and flew over to me, sitting down next to me on my stone meditation platform. She leaned over and gave me both a mental and physical hug. After a moment or two she pulled away, the slightest hint of a blush on her cheeks.

*"I think that is plenty noble Warren." M'gann assured me, now with an even bigger smile. "From how you described him, I think Steve Rogers would be proud of you already."*

*"I hope so." I said with a small smile, looking over the small pond.*