

The next day started with a large delivery. A nondescript moving truck buzzed in early in the morning, dropping off the metahuman rated work out equipment I had asked for. We got the treadmill, the bench press and a half dozen other machines that were all rated for more intense workouts. Superboy and I spent two hours getting everything into place, celebrating with an actually satisfying workout, something I didn't think I would ever be able to say.

"Do you know what your top speed is?" I asked after I got off of the treadmill, trading places with Superboy.

"... It depends." He admitted, standing on the running pad, tapping away at the settings. "I can run normally at about thirty miles an hour. But... I have super speed that I can engage. It hurts to use though. A lot."

"It hurts to use?" I said, frowning. "That can't be good Superboy. We need to get that checked out."

"... I wanted to ask Superman but he won't talk to me."

"Still?" I asked, raising my eyebrow.

"Still."

I cursed under my breath, shaking my head. Eventually I focused on Superboy after a minute. He had started a light run, which for him was about seventeen miles an hour.

"That's really fucked up you know." I finally said. "Him being a bitch like this doesn't reflect on you."

Superboy stumbled a bit before pressing the stop button on the treadmill, looking at me with wide eyes.

"Did... Did you just call Superman a bitch?" He asked, still shocked.

"Yeah, I did." I said with a shrug. "Look, I get that getting his DNA stolen is a violation of his personhood or whatever but do you think he is the first guy to have the 'Suprise your a dad!' moment?" I asked, my eyebrow raised. "It happens all the fucking time Superboy, and guys are expected to man up and take care of their shit. Which is kind of fucked up in all honesty but that's not important. What's important is that you needed help and he booked it. Like a bitch."

"But... What if he did it because... I can't use all my powers?" He asked. "I'm supposed to have all of his abilities but I don't."

"I don't think that's the reason, but if it was then that just means he goes from bitch to straight up asshole." I explained with another shrug. "Anyone who sees a person who is

struggling like that, and who should be responsible for you, even if it's just partially, and turns the other way is a grade A asshole.”

“I... I don't know if that's true.” Superboy said eventually, stepping down from the treadmill, walking to a nearby bench and sitting down. “What should I do?”

I walk to him and sit down next to him, putting a hand on his shoulder, patting him before looking ahead.

“I don't know Superboy.” I admit with a shrug. “But if you like I can help you figure it out.”

After a moment he nodded, standing up silently, making his way back to the treadmill. He stopped before he climbed back on, turning back to me a small smile.

“Thank you.”

We both got back to our morning workout, testing all of the machines we had just brought in. When Superboy and I were finished we made our way to the kitchen, dining room, living room area, where M'gann was waiting, breakfast already made. She rather proudly served us egg and english muffin sandwiches, cheese and breakfast sausage included.

“So what are you guys going to be up to today?” She asked when we had all finished eating.

“I need to do more training, and write a message to Batman.” I said, frowning slightly at the last bit.

“About what?” Superboy asked.

“Black Canary.” I said simply before continuing. “I really don't want to complain but it's been five days and she hasn't gotten back to me about a training schedule. I wanted to get an idea of what she had planned for us and find out what kind of role she was trying to foster, before the group started putting together extra training. All she did was apologize for being busy which is good but that's it.”

“She was so nice during tryouts.” M'gann commented, getting a nod from me in return.

“She was, but we need training if this is going to work, and if she is too busy to even respond to a message?”

M'gann frowned but nodded. I stood and gathered everyone's plates, washing the dishes as I mentally went through what I was going to say to Batman. Once I was done I whipped up a message, re-reading it twice before showing it to M'gann.

“What do you think?” I asked as she read it. “I’m trying to seem understanding but still worried.”

“It... seems fine to me.” She said after she was done, passing the phone back to me.

“Thanks, I just wanted to make sure I didn't come off as whiney.” I said with a shrug.

I paused for a moment before adding in a second question, asking what sort of medical checks Superboy had gotten, and who his legal guardian was. When I was done I re-read the additions before sending it off. I looked up at M’gann with a smile when I was done

“Alright. I need to go get some more practice at the grotto.”

After saying goodbye I headed down to the grotto to start my practice. It was grueling pushing myself so hard, trying to work on my endurance and control, switching back and forth between my open palm lifts and my sphere shaping. I took frequent breaks to keep up my energy, using one to order some fancier, better made clothes through the acquisition service. I looked for a proper leather jacket as well but ultimately decided that I needed to buy that in person. Around three o'clock I stopped practicing, making my way upstairs and back to my room for a shower. I changed back into my normal clothes before calling out mentally to M’gann

*“M’gann, what are you up to?”*

*“I just finished a workout.”* She said, her presence settling close to mine despite the distance. *“I could feel you working hard and it inspired me!”*

I chuckled at her response, sharing my mental smile.

*“That's good, glad I could help. I need to go into town and buy a jacket, would you be up for coming with me?”*

*“Oh! Sure!”* She replied, excitedly. *“Bioship will take us. Do you mind if we stop at the grocery store? I want to try making chocolate chip cookies.”*

*“Yeah, that's fine. Meet you at the hanger in twenty?”*

She sent a wave of happiness, agreement and excitement as confirmation, and I couldn't help but chuckle. Her exuberance was genuinely contagious in a way I couldn't help but admire. I was still smiling while I waited for M’gann to meet me by Bioship. Eventually I noticed her just before she started climbing the stairs to the hangar floor. She had already shifted into a human skin tone. She was slightly on the pale side, though not overly so, with light red hair and freckled cheeks.

*“What, no blonde?”* I asked teasingly, referring to her look at our first time meeting.

For just a moment her emotions swirled before she got a noticeable grip on them, her eyes widening as she touched her hair lightly.

*"W-would you prefer me to be blonde?"* She asked, her hair already starting to shift.

Her initial spike of nervousness, intense anxiety and outright fear caught me off guard, but when I recovered I quickly made my way down to her, wrapping her in a physical and mental hug.

*"I don't know what that was, but are you okay?"* I asked. *"I'm sorry, I was only teasing but if I upset you-"*

*"I'm sorry, it's okay."* She replied, though she didn't pull away from the hug. *"I... it was no big deal, please can we just forget about it?"*

*"M'gann that was a lot of negative emotions."* I pointed out, sending her waves of care and worry. *"I won't force you to talk about it but... I can't just ignore that it happened."*

*"I'm fine, it's fine, I'm okay."* She assured me, the two of us separating, her fully humanoid face looking up at me with anxiety.

*"...Alright. But I am sorry, I assumed that your body shape must be like changing clothes considering you can look however you want."* I admitted, sending waves of apology. *"I know your usual form isn't at all what you really look like so I figured-"*

*"WHAT?!"*

M'gann's mental shout buffeted me as a wave of telekinetic force pushed me back. I stumbled and fell against the stairs, my back and ass landing painfully. Worse still was our connection being abruptly severed, torn apart with a solid mental yank that left me dazed for a moment. M'gann looked scared, worried, like her emotions were spiraling out of control. She stepped back into the air, floating away slowly, her eyes wide and locked onto me.

*"How! How do you know that!?"* She asked, the telekinetic force still swirling around us, tugging and pushing against me.

I could feel the bruises forming on my back, but I shrugged it off. With a groan I pushed myself up until I was standing, hunched to resist the psychic forces around us. Instead of answering her question I reached out my hand, looking up at her. I knew she couldn't feel it directly without linking us back together but nonetheless I focused on my worry, acceptance and a desire to help her, to understand what was going on.

For a moment I thought she would turn and fly away. After what felt like an eternity she floated closer, putting her hand in mine. I pulled her back to me, wrapping her in another hug. For a moment she tensed before relaxing, the swirling telekinetic energy around us slowly fading. When I was sure she wasn't going to pull away I finally answered her question.

"To fill up my free time I've been reading through the Justice League database. Lately I've been making my way through the files on villains, trying to get a decent picture of the big hitters. But, when I first got access I checked out your uncle's files, clicking through to the information on Mars. I was hoping to find information on what Martian culture was like. I wanted to know more about the place you came from."

I explained myself calmly, all the while rubbing her back. Eventually she reconnected our minds, her familiar presence returning. I resisted the urge to swamp her with my emotions, instead getting closer and hugging mentally, sending slow bits of comfort and acceptance. I could feel her wrestling with something for a while, scared and anxious, struggling to figure something out. After a few minutes I could feel her gather her willpower, finally ready to start talking.

*"I'm... I'm not a green Martian like Uncle J'onn."* M'gann eventually explained after a very long pause. *"I'm a white Martian. We... don't get treated very well. I came to Earth to escape that."*

*"I'm sorry M'gann. That's... that's terrible."*

*"I just want to be accepted!"* She said, pain clear in her mental voice. *"I don't want to stand out, I don't want to look different. I just want to fit in."*

Her voice had an edge of desperation to it that hurt to hear. I held her closer, her head tucked under my chin. I sent waves of assurance as often as I could.

We were quiet for a while, standing on the stairs. She had floated off the ground slightly, lifting her legs up slightly as I held her. Eventually, after a few minutes passed and her emotions had slowly calmed down she let out a sigh.

*"Do you think the others know?"* She asked, even her mental voice fragile.

*"Robin might. He is observant and Batman seems like the kind of mentor who gives mandatory reading."* I answered solemnly. *"Other than that I can't say."*

Again we were quiet. Eventually she pulled away, looking embarrassed but much more calm.

*"I'm sorry I lost control like that."* She said, looking down in shame. *"I could have really hurt you."*

*"It's okay. No harm no foul."*

*"The truth is... being able to stay in humanoid form... it's like a giant weight lifted off my shoulders." She explained mentally after another long pause. "I can actually fit in. I know I should be more comfortable in my true skin but... I spent so much time being mistreated, being looked down on... Being in my human form feels so much more natural and freeing than being in my Maritan form ever could. I didn't want anyone to know because... because I don't want to be the weird alien girl anymore than I want to be the useless white Martian."*

*"M'gann you can look like whatever makes you comfortable, it's your body." I assured her. "Screw anyone who says differently."*

I send her a pulse of acceptance before sitting down on the stairs, ignoring my sore back for the moment. After a slight hesitation M'gann joined me, sitting to my right on a lower step.

*"Do you still want to go shopping?" She asked after a few minutes.*

*"If you feel up for it."*

*"I'm okay. It's just..."*

*"Why don't we get some lunch?" I suggested. "If you're up for it we can go shopping. If not, it is completely understandable. I don't think I would be up for it in your shoes."*

*"...Alright." She eventually agreed with a nod, a small smile on her lips. "What do you want for lunch?"*

*"Well we do need to start going through the town's pizza options." I not so subtly suggested, getting a chuckle and a nod from M'gann. "Finding the best choice is very important. important."*

*"Pizza sounds nice." She said, her smile a bit bigger.*

M'gann stood and floated a bit, reaching her hand down and helping me to my feet. We both slowly made our way to Bioship, who extended the back ramp for us. We climbed in and the hatch closed behind us.