

[David Lance POV]

As the days went by without missions, I continued training the team, helping them improve in their shortcomings to the best of my ability. During this time, my mind was clouded with the thoughts of my future mission and what that entailed.

I knew this had to be done. But that didn't make it any easier.

Infiltrating the Light, playing the role of a villain, training under Deathstroke. It was all so daunting, so terrifying, and so uncertain that I didn't know what to think, but I had to remain strong for my friends and family. Because I knew that if the Light wasn't stopped, those I cared about would never be safe.

"Alright, that's it," Raven said, walking toward me after we had finished the team's latest training session, "You've been off in your own head a lot lately. What's going on?"

I hesitated for a moment before responding with a sigh. ~Can we talk in my room?~

Raven nodded and followed me silently as we made our way to my room. Once we were inside with the door shut and a

soundproof spell in place, I let out a sigh and sat down on the edge of my bed.

"Speak," Raven prompted.

I took a deep breath, ~Well... I have a mission.~

"What kind of mission?" Raven asked, her brow furrowed in concern as she sat down next to me.

~As you know, the Light is a problem, one that we can't face as we are now,~ I replied, my eyes focused on the floor as I sighed. ~So, seeing as we have no information about them besides the bare bones, well, I have to go undercover, in order to take them down from the inside.~

Raven froze for a moment before she slowly turned to look at me, her eyes wide in horror. "You can't be serious."

I heaved a tired sigh and gave her an apologetic smile. ~Right now, there's basically no other way.~

"No," Raven shook her head in denial, "There has to be another way. You can't just go and play the villain."

~They are preparing for war, Raven, the Light is making weapons, clones, and God knows what else,~ I replied, my signs breaking slightly thanks to a shudder as the reality of the

situation sunk in. ~And if we don't stop them, Dinah will be in danger, Oliver... you, and I can't let that happen.~

Raven was quiet for a long moment until, all of the sudden, one of my pillows exploded under her magic, losing control for a brief second. "Fine," she hissed, her voice laced with anger, "If there's no other choice, I'm coming with you."

I shook my head in response. ~No.~

"What do you mean by no?" Raven demanded in hurtful disbelief and anger. "You can't go undercover without backup."

~It's too dangerous, Raven,~ I signed with a shake of my head, ~I can't put you in that kind of danger.~

"And what about you?" Raven asked heatedly, her eyes glowing white as she pushed to the back of my room against a wall with her magic, sealing all of my movements. "Do I really look helpless? Do I look like I need protecting?"

Finding myself immobile, I was taken aback by the force Raven was using to subdue me. Right now, for better or for worse, I was at her mercy; heck, even blinking seemed out of the window with the amount of pressure she was putting on me.

"You can't speak, can't you?" Raven said in a low tone as she floated toward me ever so slowly. "I shut your mouth tight with my magic, then how about sign language? Can you sign?"

I think this is the first time I have seen Raven truly angry, and it wasn't a pretty sight, to say the least.

Raven, seeing I couldn't reply, scoffed, releasing the hold she had of my hands. "Go on, talk."

~No, you don't look helpless Rae,~ I replied as I met her glare with a soft smile on my face, noticing that at any time she could restrain my hands again if she so wanted. ~You're the strongest person I know. But that doesn't mean I'm going to put you in danger if I can help it.~

Raven's eyes softened at my words. "You are not the only one that gets to care, you know," she said quietly as she floated back to the bed, releasing me from her hold. "I care about you too, David."

~Rae...~ I signed, walking to her side.

"I know I might not be the most emotional person in the world, but I still feel," Raven said softly as she looked away from me. "And I don't want to see you get hurt."

~I know, that's the same reason I don't want you to come with me,~ I replied as I gently took her hand in mine, giving it a reassuring squeeze.

Raven was quiet for a long moment, simply holding my hand. "I won't let you go alone, David. Call me selfish, but I refuse to let you go on this mission alone."

~Batman won't let you,~ I pointed out with a raised eyebrow.

Raven scoffed in response. "Let him try and stop me."

I hesitated for a moment before I slowly nodded my head in defeat. ~I won't talk you out of this, am I?~

"No," Raven said with a shake of her head, going back to her usual monotone, "You're not."

~I guess we could play into Constantine's fear of you being evil,~ I suggested with a smirk, knowing full well that Constantine still thought Raven was evil, him, and Giovanni Zatara.

"I honestly don't care about that, as long as I can be there with you," Raven replied as she slapped the back of my head.

"Someone has to make sure you don't die out there. Imagine the trouble I would go into to find another friend like you. Do you have any idea how hard it is to find tolerable people?"

A few moments later, after my talk with Raven, I contacted Batman to tell him about Raven's decision, to which he replied with a text saying that he wanted to meet with us in the Batcave as soon as possible. Seeing no point in delaying that meeting, we made our way to the Batcave, using the Zeta tube to portal to Gotham.

"Black Bolt told you about the mission," Batman said as soon as we arrived, not even bothering to look up from his computer screen.

"He did," Raven replied calmly.

"Then you know why you can't go," Batman replied, finally turning to look at us.

"With or without your approval, I'm going," Raven said in a tone that left no room for argument.

Batman sighed in response, pinching the bridge of his nose. "You're not thinking this through, Raven. It's too dangerous. But beyond that, it is too unbelievable. Two heroes deflecting at the same time is highly improbable."

"Then make it probable," Raven replied. "You're the world's greatest detective; figure it out."

Batman was quiet for a long moment. "You are letting your feelings cloud your judgment."

At this, Raven took a step forward. "You are talking about feelings to me? Since the day I was born, I have had to control my feelings completely because if I ever lose control, bad things happen, terrible things. You might have years of experience above me when it comes to being a hero, but when it comes to self-control, you are the one behind."

"Am I?" Batman asked, his tone heavy.

"You are good, Batman, but even the greatest can't hide their emotions," Raven replied calmly. "I can feel your emotions, everything you have bottled up. It's faint, very faint. If I don't focus, if I don't really focus, I can't feel it, but if I do, like I'm doing now, I can feel it deep within you, your anger, your sadness, your guilt, and something dark you try to repress."

Batman said nothing, simply staring at Raven.

Raven sighed. "I understand better than anyone the importance of self-control. I know what it's like to have to bottle everything up. So, is my decision an emotional one? Perhaps to some extent, but your decisions when it comes to David are the same, aren't they?"

Is she insinuating the fact Batman is probably training me to fill his shoes? I mean, I know that I won't ever take that job, but I know that I know Batman sees in me the best possible

candidate to pass not the title of the Batman, but what he represents.

"What are you insinuating," Batman said in a low voice.

"I'm not insinuating anything," Raven replied calmly. "I'm stating the truth. You trained David more than anyone else, more than your sidekick, because you want him to inherit your role in this world. I can feel it; you can't stomach the idea of Robin becoming you, so you decided to pick someone else to avoid that."

I was right; she's insinuating that.

"You are overstepping your boundaries, Raven," Batman said in a dangerous voice as he narrowed his eyes on her.

"Am I wrong, though?" Raven asked calmly in response. "Can you say with confidence that you haven't thought of this? not even once? That you have never entertained the idea?"

Batman was silent for a long moment, his jaw clenched. "I entertain many things; terrible things, that, however, doesn't mean I act on them. Feelings and thoughts don't equate to actions."

"That doesn't answer the question, doesn't it?" Raven replied, arms crossed.

~This is getting out of hand,~ I interjected, getting between the two to get their attention.

Batman's eyes flickered to me for a fraction of a second before he sighed and turned back to Raven. "She's not entirely wrong. Out of everyone I have ever met, you are the only that could fill my role when my time to retire comes. Be that as it may, I didn't train you because of that, nor will I force you to take my role or anyone for that matter. I have faith that in time, what I represent won't be needed, at least not to the extent I represent it."

~Look, I honestly don't care if you were grooming me to fill your role or not because ultimately, it would've been my choice to take the role or not,~ I said, turning my attention to Raven. ~As for you, Raven, I appreciate you protecting me, but like you, I can protect myself from anyone. I already suspected Batman wanted me to do that to some extent, and I was okay with that because, more than not, we think alike, and I appreciated the training.~

"It seems you might have misheard me," Batman interjected. "While I admit I have thought of this, like many of my thoughts, I wouldn't have acted on it. I was simply stating that she was right about you being the perfect candidate if I ever wanted to do that."

"I apologize. It seems that to some extent, I let my emotions guide my actions right now," Raven said, taking a deep breath.

"You won't take no for an answer, won't you?" Batman asked, giving her a hard stare as she changed the subject back to the original point.

"I won't," Raven replied firmly.

"I'll see what I can do," Batman replied after a long silence, his voice heavy. "However, if fitting you in, in the plans, proves to be impossible, you will stay out of this mission, whether you like it or not."

Raven said nothing, giving him a stare that said. We'll see.