

## [David Lance POV]

Much to my incredible surprise, after his defeat, Superboy had decided to join during training.

Nevertheless, it became immediately apparent to me that while open to the idea of training, Superboy was not entirely comfortable with the entire situation.

During training, he carried himself stiffly as if he expected to be insulted or provoked at any given moment. More than not, he would avoid making eye contact with anyone in the room unless we were sparring.

When he did make eye contact outside sparring situations, his entire demeanor would change in a different direction. He would hold his head high with an air of defiance around him.

One didn't need to be a genius or have the ability to read minds to know what he was thinking when he did this.

That air of bravado demonstrated that, on some level, he thought he was better than the rest of us; even when failing,

that; this training wasn't going to be enough for him. I could see it in his eyes.

I wasn't angry about this. Not even bothered, really; in fact, I welcomed his behavior with open arms to an extent, as long as it didn't interfere with the training directly, because I knew that this show he was putting on for the rest of the world was nothing but a self-made mask to hide his fears.

To hide the fact that deep down, he thought that he wasn't enough.

It was simply a matter of time before he came to terms with himself, so until then, it was more than enough for me that he actually wanted to train, even if he didn't believe training would help him at all.

Now.

On the matter of Miss Martian. Well, that was a completely different can of worms.

She had immense power, but little to no skill or control over it. Talent like no other, but lack of confidence to capitalize on it, in short, from a psychological point of view, she was a wreck, perhaps one even bigger than Superboy.

I had severely underestimated what decades of racism, abuse, and other factors had done to her.

Be that as it may, working with her was proving to be easier than one would expect, all things considered.

While it was true that she had many, many problems. She was, unlike Superboy in most situations, open to the idea of a helping hand because, unlike Superboy, she was willing to accept her shortcomings, well, almost all of them.

In fact, because of this, she was eager to prove herself. If I had to take a guess, she was not only trying to learn but gain any semblance of approval and acceptance from us.

In Raven's words, her emotions felt like those of a starved child looking for affection, a mix of desperation, despair, hope, and fear, all at once.

Even though I had deduced that much from a simple glance here and there, it was actually remarkably shocking to hear how M'gann felt.

I guess that, in some way, I was still clinging to the M'gann I had seen in Young Justice, a girl that, while not without her problems, she would face them quite easily.

Well... That's the difference between reality and a show. Both can share much, but reality always hits harder.

“I did it!” M’gann cheered.

Did what?

Confused, I turned around to find M’gann and Raven training in hand-to-hand combat without powers.

“Congratulations,” Raven said in a barely audible tone. Her tone and expression were blank, emotionless.

I tilted my head, giving the girls a look.

“I managed to block four hits in a row without panicking!” M’gann said, reading my expression and answering my unspoken question, with a big smile on her face.

I smiled at her from my eyes and under my mask.  
~Congratulations.~

“Again?” Raven asked.

“Another spar? Sure,” M’gann nodded.

I grinned at this, giving Raven a look. ~Since when are you eager to spar in hand-to-hand combat?~

“Since the moment I was given someone below my level,” Raven replied, giving me a piercing look. “You and Black Canary always beat me up.”

I frowned. Sure, I had won every spar we had ever had, but I wasn’t beating her just for the sake of beating her; I wasn’t even beating her. That was my sister. All I was doing was parrying/blocking her hits and giving her my pointers here and there.

I might have thrown a kick at her, here and there. But she ain’t no saint when we train with powers. Hell, I’m pretty sure that last time she sent me to a demonic dimension for a brief moment.

“I did not,” Raven said.

I narrowed my eyes.

“You have no proof,” Raven said.

“Are you two having a telepathic chat?” M’gann asked, her eyes going between the two of us, confused as to what was happening right now.

“No,” Raven replied, a small smile gracing her face. “But I’ve been with Black Bolt long enough to know what he thinks. It also helps that he’s easy to predict.”

Did... did Raven call me a basic bitch?!

“I did,” Raven nodded.

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Well, time to use one of my secret weapons.

~You just won yourself a M’gann breakfast,~ I said, smiling at my choice of punishment.

At this, Superboy snorted in a faraway corner, slipping out of his sulking persona.

“And how do you intend to make me eat, said breakfast?” Raven asked, one of her eyebrows perking up.

I smiled, an impish smile at that. ~Oh Fabio, the darkness within me consumes me, for there are two souls within me, one bad, one evil, both in love with-- I hadn’t managed to

finish what I was saying when Raven had materialized in front of me, using her magic to stop my hands.

“How did you find that out?!” Raven hissed, her eyes glowing black.

I blinked a few times at her, Disney style. ~You used my library card...~

Raven froze. “.... Well played....”

“I... Ehmm... what’s happening? And why does my breakfast feel like a punishment?” M’gann muttered, confused as hell with the situation.

“It’s an earth thing; couples fight all the time according to the internet; this is what some people call a love fight or a fight without bark,” Superboy replied.

“I won’t even dignify that with a response,” Raven said, turning around to mildly glare at Superboy.

“You guys aren’t a couple?!” M’gann gasped. “I could’ve sworn you were; I mean, you can read each other's thoughts without a clear connection! On Mars, only lovers can do that!”

Well, this is getting weird; time to bail.

~So... library?~ I asked Raven.

“Yes,” Raven nodded, engulfing us in her magic.

On the good side, M’gann and Superboy were showing some behaviors that were to be expected of their ages, like teasing, sadly they picked the worst target for teasing, Raven, and a mute by a choice. But, nevertheless it was progress.