

It took a few minutes for everyone to gather on the tenth floor. Superboy and I led everyone back to the strangely built room, as Batman was busy searching for any sensors or traps in the revealed elevator. When we were all gathered in the hallway around the large door, Batman joined us.

“The elevator is too small for all of us to enter at once,” He explained. “Skarn, Green Arrow, Green Lantern and myself will ride down first.”

Superman opened his mouth to speak but Batman raised his hand and cut him off.

“The Light is clearly prepared to do whatever it takes to achieve their goal and they would have anticipated having to deal with you,” he explained. “It would be too easy for them to design a fully lethal security measure specifically designed to counter you, like red sun projectors or kryptonite.”

“What's to keep them from just killing you then?” Superman asked, though his tone was simple questioning rather than accusatory or demanding.

It kind of sounded like he was pouting.

Either way, Batman ignored his probably rhetorical question and stepped into the elevator, with Green Arrow and Green Lantern stepping in behind him. I stepped in last, turning to the front of the Elevator.

“Going down?” I asked, reaching out and pressing the only button on the panel.

A moment later the elevator door closed with a ding, the entire metal box jostling for a second before it began going down. And down... and down.

“Unless something strange is going on, this is lower than the lowest level of the primary hidden facility.” Batman said after a full minute of going down.

Finally, the elevator stopped, the doors opening with a ding. It led into a medium sized landing, enough for Batman to step out into, head on a swivel as he scanned for security measures. The platform had two sets of stairs on either side, leading down a few feet to the main floor.

The room was massive, with row after row of glass tubes, each one big enough to fit a person, with most of the pods having dark shadows of various sizes inside of them. Some of them were undecipherable, amorphous shapes that could be anything. Others were clearly discernible bodies or limbs, though very few fit the category of human, or even humanoid.

“Holy... This is even bigger than we thought.” Green Lantern said as he stepped out of the elevator. “I’m going to fly up, check the dimensions and do a quick sweep.”

Batman nodded and the Green Lantern took off into the air, flying slowly to the roof of the massive room, scanning around with his rings. Green Arrow on the other hand couldn't wait any longer, immediately climbing down the stairs, beginning to check each of the cryotubes. Batman headed to a nearby computer terminal, while I kept looking around.

"Initial scan seems clear," I heard Batman say, turning to see him speaking into his comms. "The rest of you can come down. We are going to need help clearing this room."

After a while I distantly heard the arrival of the rest of the group, but I focused on clearing tanks, walking from pod to pod, skipping over any of them that had shadows too small to be people. After wiping away the frost on a tank that contained some sort of humanoid canine, who looked perfectly intact save the almost perfect seven inch wide hole in their chest, I looked back at Batman.

"What are they?" I asked, shaking my head. "These can't all be them fucking with genetics."

"They aren't. The vast majority of these creatures are aliens." He explained, still looking down at the computer he was working on. "Where they are finding these I don't know, but the database gives information on most of them. We-"

"Uh guys? I think I found him." Robin called from further in the massive storage room,

Batman and I quickly followed his voice to a row of tanks further inside the room, almost all the way to the farthest wall from the entrance. Sure enough, the tank contained a human male with red hair, who looked exactly like the Speedy I knew, save a few years younger. He was also missing his right hand, a few inches down from his elbow.

"Roy... no, what did those bastards do to you?" Green Arrow said weakly, putting his hand on the glass. "Batman, get him out of there, we-"

"No, this is not the place to breach his containment" Batman responded, shaking his head. "We need proper medical equipment to monitor and slowly bring him out of stasis."

"He should also go through a mental scan," I pointed out, holding up my hands when Green Arrow gave me a look. "Hey, all I'm saying is that so far Cadmus is pretty into mind control bullshit. For all we know its standard procedure for everyone here to get some sort of mental adjustment. We should be scanning everyone involved."

It took a moment but eventually Green Arrow nodded, looking back to the pod. Black Canary stood beside him, rubbing his back.

“The good news is that he is alive, in relatively good health,” Robin said, tapping at the computer panel next to the young hero's pod. “It says that any future samples should be taken from the materials that were previously harvested, stored in lab thirty two. Do you think...?”

“There might be a chance that his hand is still viable to re-attach if they are storing it in proper conditions.” Batman said, peering over his protege's shoulder to read the panel. “This directive is old, but a hand is a lot of material to use.”

“Robin, Superboy and I will go to the genetics lab on level thirty two while you continue to search this room.” I volunteered, getting a nod from Batman, though Superman looked a little concerned.

“Very well, keep us posted.”

The three of us rushed back to the elevator, skipping steps as we piled in. I tapped the only bottom on the panel again and the doors closed. We were silent for a while as the elevator made its way back up to the tenth floor. Eventually Robin broke the silence.

“He has been here for three years,” He said, shaking his head. “Longer than I've known Speedy. I've never known the real Speedy.”

“I... I don't think you've known any Speedy then, Robin, real or not,” I said, shaking my head. “They took what was essentially a newborn and forced someone else's memories on them. That's not the same as copying them.”

“They need to pay.” Superboy said, his fists clenching. “This... what they did to me, to Roy... to the Genomorphs. They need to pay.”

I turned and put my hand on his shoulder, giving it a squeeze.

“They will. But before we can do that we need to figure out what ‘they’ deserves the punishment,” I said, trying to be supportive. “Once we have done that we can focus on taking them down.”

The elevator opened on the thirty second floor, and we stepped out into another floor of rooms. A quick inspection showed it was mostly laboratories, with one large lab on the side farthest from the elevator, each of these labs labeled clearly. The largest lab took up just under a whole third of the entire floor

Without saying anything Robin hurried across the rooms and headed to the main laboratory, leaving Superboy and I to follow behind. I shook my head as we stepped into the large room, which was filled with impressive looking machinery, though they could have been espresso machines for all I knew.

“So the justice league just let Cadmus keep running after you guys found out about all this secret shit?” I asked, turning to one of the desks. “Seems like that was kind of a mistake.”

“They didn’t have much of a choice,” Robin responded from his desk. “It is a private company and... well to be honest there is a lot of gray area around the concept of artificial life. It's... it's a new branch of science and laws are kind of lagging behind it. Batman explained that the only reason there weren't legal repercussions for us breaking in was because of the fire. And because we got attacked by that big guy.”

I heard a crunching noise from behind me, and I turned to see Superboy holding the remnants of a microscope, crushed in his hands.

“That’s all sorts of fucked up,” I said, shaking my head, turning back to the desk and thumbing through a folder filled with information, ignoring the sound of Kyle dropping the microscope. “That needs to be fixed. Now that it's happened once you can guarantee it will happen again. Not to mention its implications for AI people like Red Tornado. You can't undiscover this kind of thing.”

I put down the stack of paper and leaned in slightly, rapping my knuckle on the wall, frowning when I realized it was completely metallic. I kept rapping my knuckle across the walls, trying to see if there was any concrete, drywall or stone, but came up empty.

“Okay, I found a list of what they have on this floor,” Robin said, still looking at the computer. “But I’m not seeing anything like what we are looking for. There are a few samples, a bunch of materials, some of which have specific containment procedures... Nothing that sounds like a hand.”

“I can’t say I’m surprised,” I responded, looking around. “They went through all that trouble keeping the storage room secure and off the books, so it makes sense that the samples from that room were equally hidden...”

We looked around for a bit longer before eventually Superboy called out from the hallway. Robin and I, who by now were in separate rooms, came out to find him looking at the end of a hallway, ignoring the door next to him and staring at the blank wall.

“What’s up?” Robin asked.

“This wall is colder than everywhere else,” Superboy explained. “Not by a lot but enough for it to stand out to my infrared vision.”

I frowned and reached out, running my hand along the wall, nodding when I noticed a detectable shift in temperature.

“Yeah, I can feel it, this might be it,” I said, Robin nodding beside me.

The bird themed hero pulled out a handheld scanner, similar to the one Superboy and I had seen Batman use earlier. He ran the device around the wall, scanning around until the image on the scanner showed two blue lines. Following the lines to the wall perpendicular to the cooled wall led to the discovery of a panel, which Robin had opened and hacked in five minutes. A couple of button presses later and the snap and hiss of a sealed container opening reached our ears as a door slid in and to the side.

“Nice find Superboy,” I said, nodding in appreciation.

The door revealed little more than a hidden cabinet, which was clearly temperature controlled to be kept cold. There were several small glass containers, each one slotted into some sort of charging port along the shelves. A quick scan of the large cabinet and we found it.

It was the biggest storage vessel in the hidden cabinet, and was tucked into the highest space. A quick scan showed that it was mostly intact, though it was missing its ring finger, some strips of skin. The cuts looked clean though, and it seemed to be-

“Holy shit.” I muttered, focused on the small information screen attached to the glass and metal vessel, which was no bigger than a large loaf of bread.

“What?” Superboy asked, looking over his shoulder.

“The... sample has a log number, HSPA-7629,” I said, pointing to the number on the screen. “I just finished reading some papers talking about a sample not being needed any more since the project was closed. That it was slated for destruction because it was just a convenient sample, not needed for further study. The time table for its destruction was the next few weeks, they were just waiting for final confirmation that the project was a success.”

“They... they were just going to destroy his arm?” Robin asked, his own frustration leaking out. “What the fuck?”

“Just add it to the list,” Superboy said, shaking his head, his hands clenched again.

“Yeah, no shit.” Robin said, before tapping his ear. “Batman, you copy?”

“Copy Robin.”

“We found it,” He responded, looking closer at the arm. “The sample was kept in a hidden storage area, but Superboy picked it up with his infrared vision. It... it's missing a finger and some skin, and there are several needle marks and holes along the forearm, but... If their stassis tech holds up It might be viable to reattach.”

“Leave it where it is, but mark the wall,” Batman instructed, Robin nodding seemingly instinctually. “Then get down here. There is something Superboy needs to see.”

The three of us shared a look before stepping back and gently closing the door to the hidden storage, which sealed itself shut, the wall panel also disappearing. Robin took out a small marker and drew a large “X” on the wall before all of us beelined for the elevator. Superboy was understandably tense as we dropped down, the elevator slowing and stopping before opening up.

It took us a moment to find the gathered heroes, all of them save Green Arrow and Black Canary gathered around another pod, this one larger than all the others. It was a large pillar, with glass panes on each side, with controls and equipment attached to and stationed around it. It was clearly a different type of storage, and it seemed more heavy duty.

Superman was the closest to the pillar, his hand on the glass, his body blocking the view as he stood directly in front of it. Green Lantern and Martian Manhunter standing beside him, the former scanning the interior with his ring, the latter concentrating with his eyes closed. Batman turned as we got closer, giving us a silent nod before returning his focus back to the computer alongside the pod. Robin and I stopped beside him as Superboy got closer, finally getting Superman's attention. He turned back to his clone, his eyes tired, stepping back to reveal the pod's contents.

There, laying back in the pod was another Superman clone. They looked almost identical to Kyle, dressed in a white suit with Superman's symbol on his chest in red.

“What... Another one?” Kyle asked, stepping closer, now standing beside Superman. “Why... Why would they make another one.?”

“They didn't.” Batman responded. “This was their first attempt. Project Match is a full genetic clone of Superman. And apparently extremely unstable.”

“The ring is picking up prevalent cellular degradation, it's minor now, but it won't stay that way if he is woken up, the cryostasis has all but stopped it.” Green Lantern said, his ring winking out after his scan was complete. “The... degradation is in his brain... I can't tell you what that exactly means, but I can tell you it's not good.”

“Are you picking up anything J'onnn?” Superman asked, still looking into the pod as his full clone.

“No,” J'onnn said, shaking his head and opening his eyes. “It is possible that the stasis is too deep, but there is hardly any brain activity at all.”

Kyle put his hand on the glass, looking into the pod. He was silent for a long time, before eventually looking at Superman.

“You said you would help me. Will you help him too?” He asked simply, meeting the adult hero's eyes.

“Yes, of course.” Superman said with solid certainty. “We need a way to transport him to the Fortress and run some scans. But if there is anything I can do I will.”

Superboy nodded, before looking back into the pod. He was clearly struggling with his emotions. Superman put his hand on his shoulder, nodding in the reflection of the glass panels.