

## [David Lance POV]

After six days of continuous training with the world's best fencer, Charles du Marchand, I managed to defeat him in a clean match for the first time ever, that victory being the first of many against him, effectively ending my training with him as per Batman's instructions.

My training under Charles had been intense at first.

Every morning I'd be up at the crack of dawn to begin my stretches and footwork exercises before spending hours practicing my forms and techniques with a wooden sword, before spending the rest of the day sparring Charles himself, followed by more training with the wooden sword into the night.

Eventually, this routine had all paid off, concluding with my victory against the seasoned fencer, who, upon his defeat, had been more than elated that I had, in his own words, surpassed him in less than a week.

"Good luck out there, kid!" Charles smiled as we walked to the exit of his manor.

~Thank you, Charles. For everything.~ I replied with a smile, backpack in hand, as I walked out of his house.

Now that my training with Charles had ended, all that was left to do was wait for further instructions for Batman, which didn't take long, for I had barely exited Charles's manor, saying my goodbyes to the man,

when my phone rang, the ringtone telling me that it was a message from Batman.

*{Congratulations on completing the first step of your training so fast. As for your next step, you are to track down the cat burglar that goes by the name of Grey Shadow. Good luck.}*

I sighed as I waited for the cab Charles had called for me. To track Grey Shadow, with no information, beyond the burglar's moniker. I guess this won't be easy.

I guess the best place to start with this mission, seeing I had no information, would be at the scene of the burglar's latest heist. From there, I would be able to get a general idea of who I'm dealing with in order to track the burglar accordingly.

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After setting myself in a hotel, I started working on my mission by doing some research on the target at hand. And, as I had expected, there was nothing I could find online about the so-called Grey Shadow, other than that whoever it was had never been caught.

So, seeing the internet had no clues about Grey Shadow, I decided to take a different approach to the situation by using Oliver's League credentials to enter the League's database, as I was sure Batman had blocked mine to make this quest more challenging. In there, I found a few clues and recently redacted documents about my target, showing Batman had expected me to do what I had done to access the League's database.

However, while it seemed he had expected this approach and had acted accordingly, he hadn't outright deleted all information there was about Grey Shadow, leaving bits here and there for me to find. One bit of information, in particular, caught my eye. A small document that said that this mysterious burglar was one to strike in a Robinhood-manner without the giving to the poor part.

Taking a deep breath, I downloaded all the information there was about Grey Shadow in the League's Database before deciding to text Rachel to see how she was doing; after all, the night was already falling, and Grey Shadow could wait until tomorrow.

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[Richard Grayson POV]

I can't stop thinking about it.

It's been more than a year, and the guilt still consumes me. I was so afraid to tell David what had really happened, afraid of his reaction, that I had, instead of confronting my mistakes, avoided him all this time.

And, the more time passed, the more difficult it felt the whole idea of even talking about what had truly happened that night at the factory, the fact that I had lied to him, using his trust in me to get my way into going into a mission without Batman's permission.

I had been so sure that I could handle it and that no matter what awaited for us, I would be good enough to handle it. But I wasn't, and the guilt had been eating away at me ever since.

I had risked both of our lives that night. And, even though we had made it out alive, I knew how close we had been to biting the dust.

I had to tell him the truth.

I had to come clean.

But even now, as I sit here in the dark of my room, trying to muster up the courage to finally tell him the truth, I can't help but wonder if it was already too late. If he could ever forgive me for what happened... and if I could ever forgive myself.

I had promised him I would never betray his trust, and I had failed. Miserably.

I had let my own fears and selfishness get in the way, and, as a result, things had broken apart.

Bruce was right. This was no way of living.

David had the right to know, even if that meant he would hate me, which he probably already did.

I mean, I hadn't talked to him in over a year. Not since that night.

"I will tell him when he finishes his training..." I muttered to myself, finally coming to the resolve of just facing the consequences of my actions.

But even as I said the words, I knew the wait I was deciding to take was nothing more than a cowardly excuse.

Because as much as it pained me to admit it, I was still scared.

But regardless of how I felt about this situation I had put myself in, I had to come clean. I only wished I had come to this resolution earlier; he didn't deserve the treatment I had subjected him to because of my cowardice.

"Master Dick, dinner's ready," Alfred said, knocking at my door.

"I'm not hungry," I replied without opening the door because I knew very well, that I couldn't bring myself to leave my room and face anyone right now; my mind was simply too clouded with these thoughts.

Besides, I wasn't hungry anyway.

"Master Dick, don't make this old butler get the broom," Alfred replied, in a threatening tone only he could ever pull off because it was both friendly and scary.

"I'm not hungry, Alfred," I said again, in a firmer tone.

"With all due respect, Master Dick, I don't care if you're not hungry," Alfred replied, opening the door of my room to give me a stern look. "You will eat, and you will enjoy it, am I clear? young man?"

I sighed, knowing there was no way I could win this argument with Alfred.

"Fine," I said, getting up from my bed and following him to the dining room.

"I already dealt with a brooding kid, and I am prepared to deal with another, Master Dick," Alfred added with a hint of humor.