

Summary: Another late night visitor and more talk

Categories: [Batman](#) Characters: Bruce Wayne (Batman), Bruce Wayne (Batman)/Dick Grayson (Nightwing), Dick Grayson (Robin/Nightwing), Garth (Tempest), Garth(Tempest)/Richard (Nightwing), Original Character(s)

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Story Notes:

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## 1. [Chapter 1](#) by PurpleWaterlili

Chapter 1 by PurpleWaterlili

"Just a flick of the wrist and...voila." Purple sparkles died away as the latch gave way to Garth's white magic. "Kiddie's play," he whispered as his feet slipped onto the tiled floor with a tiny thud. "Ohhh Robbieee," he whispered in a soft singsong voice. "Ohhh Robbieee, Diiiick." He continued towards the bed.

The room he always admired- it was gorgeous, in a contradictory way, much as Richard was. His eyes scanned the room, finding the bed in which Richard lay. It was a large almost pompous affair that seemed ready to challenge the rest of the room's minimal furnishings. The room was airy. The floors were covered in exquisite grey marble that shone, the walls painted with a whimsical sky blue that leant levity to the imposing opulence of the bed. The small vanity in the corner had carried a few mementos, mostly pictures of Dena as a baby, one of him with his adopted family- Mr. Pennyworth, Richard and Bruce Wayne and a huge Christmas tree gleamed behind them. Pictures of his friends still with Haley's circus, one of Wally and his family, two from when he was 10 years old clowning around with his big brother and another with the whole Flying Grayson Clan-all of Dick's happier times. None with him, he noted.

From the corner of his eye Garth captured Richard's movement beneath the black silken comforter that shrouded the four-poster monster causing it to shimmer the deepest shade of blue, showing off its true colour; reminiscent of the moon enjoying her nightly dance, skipping on the wavelets in the middle of the Atlantic. At each of the posters, like sentries, was draped yards of silken blue-black fabric, loosely tied to be easily released with the slightest tug forming a barrier arresting all light at their boundaries. It provided Richard with a sanctuary in his sleep. He always seemed to be seeking some safe harbour. "Same ole Robbie." Under all the bravado was still that sad lil boy.

Smiling, he slipped even closer to the bed. Richard was a bit restless, tossing and turning his hair tousled, hiding some of his face. It had gotten longer since he had last seen Richard; only about two or three inches longer, though, by next summer it would probably reach his waist. Garth's nimble fingers pulled the wisps of hair away from Dick's face

"Robbie, I missed you so much."

Richard moaned and moved deeper into the touch. "God how I yearned for you, Dick," he muttered against Dick's warm skin. Climbing in next to him as Dick lay stretched out vulnerably on his stomach, his head laying on a soft down pillow. Garth almost wanted to laugh at how the circus rat had become so accustomed to luxury. Garth's arm reached across Richard's body. His magical fingers tingling Richard's already flushed skin of his ribcage as they moved; moans from

Dick urging him on. His lips firmly pressed to the exposed nape of Richard's neck.

"Ohh Bruce..."

"BRUCE!!!"

Richard, startled from his dream, twisted around skittering out of the embrace over to the other side of the king-sized bed, where he found himself staring deeply into shocked purple eyes.

"SHIT ... Garth ... What the hell ... what the hell are you doing here...how did you get in here?" His head moved wildly around his room, settling on that blasted window. "Fucking perfect," Richard muttered softly, slipping to the floor on the same side of the bed as Garth ... who leaned in for an innocent kiss only to be pushed aside as he walked over to Dena's bedroom door, closing it's door softly.

"Well, that's a hell of a welcome!" he said dejectedly as he removed himself from Richard's bed. "I did wonder why you came back here after all this time; I guess now I know."

"Ohhhhhh no you don't. I refuse to feel guilty for what just took place here. You just came in through my god damn bedroom window which, by the way, I'll broad up myself in the God Damn morning though I doubt it would do much to stop people like you that it seems I just need to hang around with." His voice was held quietly in check but his sarcasm had the most vicious sting. "Then you start to molest me in my sleep. What the hell were you thinking?"

"I ... I thought I was being romantic." His voice was low and regretful. His gentleness of spirit and kind heart meant Garth always seemed to be getting hurt, and in the last 4 months before he left Bludhaven to return to his seas, Richard was the cause of much of that pain. It was one of the reasons Richard himself had decided to leave Bludhaven as well. He could not wait indefinitely for Garth's return, nor did he want to remain in a relationship where he would be the cause of someone else's pain like that, especially anyone as sweet as Garth.

"Jesus. Garth and I said...I'm sorry but you had no right."

"When I first found out, you moved back in Gotham, I guessed it was because of him. I admonished myself for such thoughts but now I know, don't I? My coming here tonight was way too much wishful thinking. I'm sorry," he said, heading for the exit to the bedroom.

"Garth..."

"What? Are you going to say we need to talk?"

"Yes, I think we need to."

"You'll never change will you Robbie? Well, I hope not. You always think you can work things out if you just talk them out. At least that one thing you didn't learn from that maniac."

"Knock it off, Garth."

"Look, Robbie, I'll do whatever you want. You know that. I love you, Dick."

"Garth..."

"Fine. Fine, we'll talk, it won't change a thing but we'll talk."

Richard gave a sorrowful sigh. "Go down to the kitchen. I'll be there in a minute." Life always seemed hell bent on being complicated.

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Richard appeared downstairs about ten minutes later. He needed to change his shorts and clean himself up a bit after his dream.

Garth stood in the kitchen waiting for the coffee maker, his back was towards Richard, and he was simply staring off in a distance when Richard got there. Richard hated hurting Garth. The man had been extremely good to him and Dena, but he knew he didn't love him the way gentle Garth deserved to be loved. As he stood watching him from the doorway, then Garth began to talk.

"What is it? Really, I need to know what kind of hold Bruce Wayne has on you? I mean God, Dick, he's just a man, a man who hurt you so much over the years."

"Garth, don't you think we should be talking about us?"

"Fine, but Richard you can't be as blind not to see that Bruce is what is wrong between us."

"That isn't fair, Garth."

"Isn't it? I love you, Richard Greyson, and you want me to give you up without a fight? I refuse to let you go. I refuse to concede to that mad man."

"Garth, why can't you understand?"

"What is there to understand? You've become tricked into believing that Wayne could possibly care for you. Don't you get it Robbie? Bruce Wayne is incapable of love. Not to mention he fucking certifiable, a hair's breath away from lunatic and he has hurt you again and again, yet you are allowing yourself to fall back under his spell. It will come to no good, Robbie."

"Don't you dare say that Garth."

"Why not, isn't it true?" He sighed and his purple eyes flared.

"No, it's not. Garth, Dena is a product of what Bruce and I had."

"I knew you'd throw that in my face. I've been more of a father to your daughter than he ever was."

"Don't you get it? That's my fault; I stole those years away from him. Me. I prevented him from having a relationship with his own daughter. You will never understand how that eats me up inside. I didn't give him a choice, Garth, and worst of all, I didn't just hurt him, I hurt her. That's worse than anything he ever did to me. Every time she asks about him my heart sinks a little further. There is nothing perfect about Bruce; I know that, I'm not that much of a fool. I also know you've been wonderful for her..." Standing a foot away from Garth he reached out to touch his face gently laying his fingers against his cheek. "And for me. But I owe her this as much as I owe him."

Garth captured his fingers, kissing their tips. "Robbie, I love you, I love Dena. I want to make a life with you."

"I don't have a doubt in my mind you do love Dena and she loves you. I also know you think you're in love with me, and I'm sorry, Garth, but its over. Garth it was over when you left, us for Atlantis. The surface isn't where you want to be and I can't be a part of your life down there, not like Tula was. I love you, Garth, I do."

"But you're not in love with me."

"No!"

"But you are, with that crazy man."

"No...I was a kid, and as you said, he hurt me."

"So why are you here? Why aren't you a million miles away? You could have stayed in Bludhaven or even gone back to Metropolis. Why here?"

"You know why I'm here, Garth, because of Dena. As much as I hate being back here in Gotham, I made her grow up without knowing her father ... she deserves to know him, to grow up with him in her life."

"A hell of a lot of good that did you."

"That isn't fair."

"Isn't it? He made you so fucking co-dependent you can't even see it can you. You were virtually cut off from the rest of the world. Only so he could model you into an exact cryptic replica of himself. He fed off of it, like some kind of drug. Then once you were gone, he got another clone, now if that isn't the zenith of all narcissistic insanity, I don't know what is."

"Fuck you, Garth. It wasn't like that. I told you so before. I'll admit things between Bruce and I got really bad near the end, but he raised me. You of all people must understand that. I was 10 when my world was ripped apart and Bruce helped fit what pieces were left back together again. And that was not much older than you when Aquaman found you."

"He has nothing to do with this."

"Come on, Garth, who do you think you are talking to? We both know if he asked you to come back now to help him, as crazy as he is and as much as he hurt you turning you out after his son was born, you'd go back in an instant. Now isn't that true?"

"First, he would never ask such a thing, and second, it is simply not the same, Robbie. I never had an affair with my mentor."

"An affair...but you do glamorise it don't you? I have never lied to you, Garth. I won't lie to you now, either. I was in love with him. From the time I was 14, I was in love with him."

"Fourteen." He scoffed

"Garth, yes it is true my world began and ended with Bruce Wayne. I know you understand what power he had over me. I know it was similar to what you went through with Aquaman, but yet... yet Bruce never once took advantage of me. Why can't you understand that?"

"Never."

"Things were never that way, Garth, as much as you and the other Titans made your cracks about our relationship; there was nothing between us. We're nothing like you thought. Why can't you believe me, Garth?"

"I want to, Robbie, but...but ... I know Batman. Robbie, I don't know, I just can't trust that man. I don't want him around you or Dena."

"He's her father, Garth."

"He doesn't deserve to be."

"Garth...even when we became involved I never once, not once did I ever deny loving him. He and Alfred were my only family. He was my father, my brother, my best friend, but as I got older, I wanted more."

"He never forced you?"

"Forced me? That just proves how little you do know about him. Bruce Wayne would never force himself on anyone, least of all me. Never, Garth." Richard moved away from standing at the entrance to the kitchen and sat beside Garth. He took his hand in his own and looked into his eyes.

"My earliest memory of loving Bruce was when I was about 13 or 14, it was the first of the truly lovely spring days. It was a Saturday and I had done my usual training like crazed dog with Bruce. Afterwards, I'd just hang out around the Manor, do some studying; find some odd thing to occupy what little leisure time I was allowed. I was in the garage covered in oil and grime since I had taken apart one of his antique bikes and was putting it back together again as a private project of my own. Alfred used to help me a lot, he taught me all I know about engines. As I busily worked, I heard Bruce saunter in. He stood at the door. My eyes looked up from the engine that was laid out on the floor and I found him just watching me. His face was it's normal cold marble. He told me to get cleaned up and put on some clean clothes, we were going shopping. I rushed off to do his bidding, at that age I jumped at the chance of any time with him that wasn't training. There was going to be one of those silly society functions in a few days and he was taking me along. It was my first society ball. Bruce took me with him when he went to pick out his tux and he had me pick out one as well. That's when he told me I'd be accompanying him. It all seems so silly now but I guess I fancied myself a bit like Cinderella and all of a sudden my fairy godfather had also become my prince charming and in a few days we were off to the ball. I remember that evening trying to make myself all perfect for the ball. I had to be worthy of Bruce's full attention. I remember the soft knock at my bedroom door. He came in, he never smiled brighter than when his eyes fixed upon me. It was a smirk almost...Bruce never smirks, sneers maybe, but never smirks," Richard joked, trying to lighten the mood, it didn't work however as Garth's flinty eyes turned away from him. "I was all but dressed save my bow tie. He was always so handsome and he came over to me, kneeling ... even in his tux. He told me how proud he was of all I had done. I was beaming. His nimble fingers worked my tie and in a matter of seconds I was ready for the ball. It was a lovely evening, though it was far from my dream. He dispatched me to Alfred's care around ten o'clock. I left him smiling brightly into the eyes of Tipper Maxwell; she was a 24-year-old socialite. Her perfect size 4 frame fitting so perfectly in his arms, long blonde hair shimmered down her shoulders, her dress accentuated all her best qualities and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that she had not a single flaw. Garth, Garth look at me!" he yelled.

"Yes I was 14, he couldn't possibly have known I loved him then, and if he did and had acted upon it you would be throwing words like paedophile in my face right now. For almost 5 years I pined for him. Wishing, praying he'd love me the way I loved him. In that time his lovers came and went, but I remained always off stage. All that ever happened between Bruce and I was a single night when I was 19."

"Then why can't you just let it go?"

"I wanted to. God, I wanted to so much. You know that's why I left Gotham. When I found out about Dena two things were clear, I could never give her up, and I couldn't face him then either. I was angry and I let that anger be my guide for too long. Looking back, it was like that for longer than I even recognised. Even now still angry with him but I refuse to live my life under the control of those emotions."

"You lie to yourself, Robbie. I don't think you mean to, to lie to yourself but you do, if you think you only loved Bruce. Richard you never stopped being in love with him."

"Garth..."

"He'll hurt you again. Whatever your dream is now, it won't be realised now either."

"I know I've always harboured feelings for him, but I'm not in..."

"Yes, you are, every word you've said, says so Robbie. You are in love with Bruce Wayne and that scares me. Being around him is unhealthy, Dick. He isn't stable, that's not a good environment for you, or Dena, he only succeeds in hurting those around him."

"Granted, the world Bruce brought me into was far from perfect, I know that, I accepted that a long time ago, but it was all I had then. And yes maybe near the end I thought he was insane but his insanity and paranoia protected me as much as it..."

"As it endangered you."

"Garth, I'm not asking you to like Bruce or how I plan to live my life. I'm asking that you at least respect my decisions. The facts remain, Garth. Bruce was a part of my life. I loved him and he hurt me. I shut him out of my life and what did it accomplish? I ended up hurting Dena."

"And he'll hurt you again Robbie, only this time there is much more at stake. I don't want Dena to suffer because of him. Dena has gained much more from being away from that man than she ever could have gained from knowing him."

"That is not for you to decide, Garth. Did you gain more being without your parents? I know I didn't. I still miss my parents, I always will. I loved them. Bruce...he's still alive. She has the right to get to know him to love him." Tiredly Richard sat on the counter, his head laying against the cabinet above him. "As her father I have responsibilities to her. There must come a time for me to stop hiding behind my anger and pain and fear, stop licking my wounds and acting like that 19 year old kid that ran away from home, to take responsibility for my life and those that depend upon me. I came back to Gotham because I needed to Garth, things began here that have to reach their conclusion."

"Richard."

"No listen to me just a minute more. Please. When you left Garth...I was devastated. You ripped a hole in my existence. I had come to depend you, I loved you even if it wasn't what you needed. You're leaving for Atlantis hurt me so badly. I didn't know when or if you were ever coming back."

"I said I would Richard."

"I doesn't matter now Garth, I forgave you. It also gave me opportunity to contemplate life on the other side. I left Bruce, much like you left me. We both felt like we had little choice in the matter. If I could forgive you, maybe he could forgive me. I had to come back here for my own sake as much as Dena's. She needs to have him in her life but we both know he will never leave this city. He will always be her father."

"As for us, Garth, it is over and I don't know why I feel so damned guilty about it. You were the one who walked away from me. Or should I say swam away. You wanted to go home; maybe it was as simple as my wanting to come home too. Gotham, Wayne manor, Alfred and Bruce- they are home to me, Garth. I understood when you felt Atlantis calling you home. I need to be here now. Garth, I could give you million and one reasons, reasons on top of reasons, the simple truth

is that I'm here, and I'm staying. I'm sorry, Garth, truly I am but we have separate dreams. I can't be a fit into yours. And Finally you have to admit Bruce isn't the only one looking for replacements, and I can't be Tula's replacement. I'd never want to be, and I don't want to try only to fail in your eyes."

Garth hugged tightly Richard. He clung to him afraid his heart would explode if he let go. "I don't think I'll ever stop loving you. I'm sorry you think I look to you as a replacement. I don't, but everything is relative isn't it?" Richard nodded on his shoulder.

"Well I once read that one must set love free and if it's really meant for you, it will find you again. What a stupid concept, but I guess I'm about to find out if the theory holds any water."

"Garth, you must understand. I do love you too, but I'll only hurt you if we got back together. I could never be a part of your world in Atlantis, my life is here. I also need to make amends with Bruce. For Dena's sake and my own, I want his forgiveness."

"You ask me to respect your wishes, and I will, but I'll be around. I won't let that lun..." Richard raised his eyebrow. "I won't let him hurt either of you again."

"Thanks, Garth."

And as they shared a goodbye kiss and hug, a tiny figure snuck back up the stairs and into her father's bed after witnessing much of what occurred between her Dad and Uncle Garth.

continues in Interlude: A Child's Mind

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