



TURBO LOVER
BIRDS OF PREY
FAN FICTION COLLECTION
Volume 3

**T U R B O L O V E R
FAN FICTION
COLLECTION**

Volume 3

IT ALL ENDS HERE

HOLD UP

REUNION

PHOTOGRAPH

GUILT

STAY (warning - NC-17)

T U R B O L O V E R
FAN FICTION
COLLECTION
Volume 3

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

As usual, I start with the standard disclaimer - I do not own the characters of the Birds of Prey. No copyright infringement is intended. No money is being made off of this collection of fan fiction.

The concepts belong to me and these stories are not to be copied or distributed in any way without written permission.

Since I have a good amount of stories, I thought it would be cool to put them together in little books so that readers could have all of the stories in one place, and be able to print them out if they wanted to.

As time goes on, I'm sure I'll have more stories to share with you. For now, I hope you enjoy what I have to offer.

DEDICATIONS

I'd like to dedicate these works of fan fiction to my fellow fan fiction writers over at the birdsofpreyonline.com site! You guys and gals are an extremely talented group of writers! Your positive feedback and enthusiasm for the stories makes it worth while in carrying on where the show sadly left off. Thank you all!

~ TL

IT ALL ENDS HERE

Written: 5/2004

PART 1

The distance between Barbara and myself for the past week has been huge. I think I've said maybe two words to her within that time because she hasn't been around.

She's taken a leave of absence from work and locks herself up in her room during the day. She comes out at night and works at the computers or in the lab like some sort of madwoman, mumbling to herself and mixing all sorts of chemicals.

I haven't even attempted to make conversation with her because I'm honestly afraid to. Dinah's tried but Barbara ignores her as if she wasn't even there.

It's not healthy for her to be acting this way and it has to stop. Now.

She's in the lab, I can hear her turning machines on and off and clanging glass around.

"Barbara, we need to talk." She ignores me and continues mixing colored liquids in a beaker. "I'm serious," I say as I put my hands over hers and make her stop mixing.

"There's nothing to..."

"Don't give me that. There's PLENTY that we need to talk about because you haven't said a word to me since Taylor's death."

"I need to finish this," she said as she tugged her hands free of my grip.

Out of rage, I grabbed the beaker away from her, spilling some of the liquid onto the floor.

"Are you out of your mind!" Barbara yelled at me as she spun around in her chair.

"You're not getting it back until we've talked."

"Give it back, now!" Barbara demanded through an angry, clenched jaw.

"No!" I spat back as I placed the beaker high on top of one of the cabinets where she couldn't reach it.

I didn't expect her next move, she sped over to me and rammed her chair into my knee, knocking me to the floor.

"Don't fuck with me right now, Helena. Give it back to me, I don't have time for this."

I could see the anger radiating from her eyes as I got back up. "You can beat me up some more if that'll make you feel better, but you're not getting that back until you start talking."

She shut her eyes for a moment as she tried to calm herself down. "I told you there's nothing to talk about."

"Right. There's nothing to talk about. Mmmhmm. So I guess you don't want to talk about Taylor's death, Bombshell's quest for killing us all or..." I leaned over and placed my hands on the arm rests of her chair, "did you forget all about how your daughter pumped four bullets into my chest and nearly killed me? Huh? Did you forget about that?"

I could see Barbara's lip quiver. "Stop it," she whispered.

I knew that one would crack her. "We need to talk about it. YOU need to talk about it."

"Stop it!" she yelled as she batted my hands away and began slapping and pushing me. "Stop it!!"

I grabbed her arms and yanked her out of the chair in order to get her to stop. I got myself behind her and hugged her tightly as she struggled to free herself from my grip.

"Stop! Let me go!" she cried.

"I'm not letting go of you, Barbara. You need to let IT all go."

She finally stopped struggling and went limp in my arms as she sobbed uncontrollably for what seemed like forever. But she needed to do it. She needed to cleanse herself of those feelings building up inside her.

I just let her cry until she fell asleep.

PART 2

When she woke up, a few hours later, she was confused as to where she was and appeared to wonder why she was on the floor and not in her bed.

She scooted over and turned around to face me. Panic washed over her face as she looked at me sitting on the floor with her, my back leaning against the cabinets. "Helena!" she gasped as her hands began roaming all over my body as if she was searching for injuries.

I put my hands over hers. "Barbara, it's okay. I'm fine."

"The blood," she said, "I saw it all over you."

"It was a dream. I'm fine. Look," I said as I held my arms out and lifted up my shirt a little.

Bad move. She saw the healing scars on my stomach and began to cry again. "Helena," she barely squeaked as she put her hand on my stomach. "I'm sorry."

"It's not your fault. You didn't make Taylor into who she was."

"I can't help but feel like I'm responsible because of the choice I made. If I had kept her things would have been different."

"You made the right choice given your situation. It's not your fault."

"I could have loved her and instead I sent her away to a family that gave up on her. Why? Why would they do that?"

"Maybe you need to pay them a little visit and ask them."

"I've already called them on the phone and..."

"I think you need the closure. You need to go see them."

Barbara wiped her eyes and moved away from me so I could help her back into her chair. "Maybe you're right."

"I am right. I'll go with you," I suggested as I helped get her back into the chair.

"No, maybe..."

"I want to," I insisted.

"Okay. Let me give them a call and let them know we're coming."

"Bad idea. I'm thinking an unannounced visit might be better."

"We can't just show up on their doorstep."

"Yes we can, and we're going to." I reached up and got the beaker off the top of the cabinet and put it back on the table. "Then after this trip we can get back to some normalcy around here."

Barbara smiled slightly. "Yeah. I hope so."

PART 3

We took my father's jet to Minnesota and then drove out to Arlington where Taylor's parents lived.

It was almost 9:00pm so I'm sure they weren't going to be pleased with the late visit, but the air needed to be cleaned for Barbara and I really didn't care whether it was midnight.

We got to the front porch and I could immediately sense that something wasn't right.

"What is it?" Barbara asked as she noticed my eyes change.

"Something's off."

Barbara rang the doorbell as I walked over to the front window to get a peek inside. The TV was on in the den but the room was empty.

She rang the bell again and still no one answered.

I reached out for the doorknob and turned it. The door was unlocked so we slowly went inside.

"Hello? Anyone home?" Barbara called out before swallowing hard.

"This doesn't feel right," I said as I walked towards the stairs.

"What are you sensing?"

"Blood."

I began walking upstairs and went into the first bedroom, finding nothing. It looked like a spare room that was used as an office, judging by the computer and file cabinets.

I crossed the hall and went into the next room which turned out to be their bedroom.

There wasn't one photo of Taylor anywhere. I guess they really did cut all ties with her after she left them.

When I left the room and walked down the other end of the hall I could smell the blood even stronger. I knew I was close.

I opened the door to the room on my right and felt myself gasp at the sight - Taylor's parents were lying on her bed, both covered in blood. Further inspection allowed me to see the tiny pins that had embedded themselves all over their bodies.

"Bombshell," I grumbled under my breath before leaving the room to go find Barbara.

Barbara was in the living room going through a drawer full of old photographs. "There aren't any photos of Taylor anywhere."

"They're dead."

Barbara put the photos down and looked up at me. "What?"

"Bombshell got to them. They're in Taylor's room."

Barbara hung her head and then slammed her fist down on the table. "I can't take much more of this, Helena." She looked up at me with tears brimming in her eyes. "We have to stop her."

She was right. We needed to put Bombshell out of business, and fast.

PART 4

The moment we got back to the Clocktower the Delphi started buzzing away.

Dinah came downstairs after hearing the alarm blaring and met us over at the computers. "What's going on?"

"I'm getting some sort of message," Barbara said as she typed and read the incoming text. "It's coming from an untraceable connection."

"Is it her?" I asked as I watched the screen.

Barbara didn't answer, just continued reading.

Suddenly, a small video screen popped up on the monitor and Bombshell's face appeared. "Hello, Barbara." She wore this devilish smile on her face that was begging for me to wipe away.

"Michelle," Barbara said with little emotion.

"So I heard you just came back from a little trip? Tell me, did you and Helena have fun?"

"Listen, you little bitch..."

Barbara put her hand up to me, indicating that she wanted me to stay out of it. "What do you want?" Barbara asked her.

"The old drive-in at the edge of the city. Meet me there in an hour." Bombshell winked before cutting the transmission.

The adrenaline had already begun brewing within me and I was ready for a fight.

Barbara clicked a few buttons and turned the monitor off. "Okay, here's the plan...I'll meet with her first and if there's any sign of trouble I'll signal you both."

"Oh no. You're not facing this bitch all by yourself. We'll be right by your side the whole way."

"Helena, I don't even want you going at all. You're still not 100 percent yet and..."

"We're ending this now and I'm going to help you. End of story." I started walking towards the elevator. "Let's go, times wasting. I've got some ass to kick." That normalcy that I had talked about was slowly making its way back. I HATE IT when she needlessly tries to protect me.

PART 5

We got to the drive-in and there was no sign of Bombshell anywhere.

"Stay alert," Barbara said as she took out a small bag and unzipped it. "Helena, come here." She took out a small vile of green liquid and loaded it into a syringe.

"Oh no, you're not injecting me with anything."

"This could save your life."

"Could?" I questioned.

"This is what I've been working on in the lab. When you inject it, it hardens your skin so that those needles won't penetrate." Barbara loaded another syringe and handed it to Dinah. "The only problem is that it doesn't last long. My longest test was fifteen minutes."

"So basically we need to get this done quick. Not a problem." I was confident that we could take her down in a short amount of time now that we knew her style.

"When you see her pull out one of those bombs, inject yourselves with the serum. That will buy you time." Barbara loaded a syringe for herself and tucked it inside her jacket.

I walked further into the drive-in towards the old, decayed screen. Half of it had collapsed at some point, while the other half stood tall, obviously abused by the weather and vandals.

"Come on bitch, where are you?" I said outloud, softly.

I turned around towards Dinah and Barbara and didn't even see the rock that had been hurled towards me.

BAM!

It struck me right in the side of the head, knocking me to the ground. It dazed me for a moment and I had to get my bearings before I could react.

"Hello, ladies," Bombshell said as she appeared behind me.

I touched my fingertips to the side of my head and could feel the wetness of blood along with the swelling flesh.

I got to my feet and turned around, snarling at her. "What the fuck is your problem? First you try to make human pin cushions out of all of us and then we decided to give you a taste of your own medicine. Now we find out that you're alive and you're playing mommy..."

"Yes! Isn't it grand!" Bombshell laughed. "She was fantastic, wasn't she! Nothing like her mother."

Even though my back was turned to Barbara, I could feel her anger radiating from that direction.

"And you, Helena...Taylor told me all about how she snuck into your apartment and waited for you." Bombshell began circling around me as she spoke. "She told me how she waited in the darkness and got you before you even had a chance to take a breath. I taught her that, to strike your prey when least expected. Barbara would never have taught her that."

I just let her talk because it was only fueling my rage and when she was finished I'd be able to kick her ass

within seconds, I was sure of it.

"So tell me, Helena. How did it feel to have your mentor's daughter shoot you over and over again?" She pointed her finger at me and tapped me at various spots on my chest. "I bet it hurt like hell, huh. Bang! Bang!" she said, making mock gunfire sounds.

I'd had enough. I grabbed her finger with one hand and her wrist with the other and shoved her down to the dirt, pinning her down with my weight. "It all ends here, right now," I warned as I tightened my grip on her, hearing some cracks of her bones.

I could see Barbara and Dinah approaching from out of the corner of my eye and was glad that we were finally going to get down to business.

Bombshell laughed, amused by the whole situation. "She should have finished you off. I would have made sure of it. That was the only mistake Taylor made."

I pressed down on her harder as I started to get even more pissed off.

"Oh what a sight it would have been to see the look on Barbara's face to see your bloody dead body." She laughed again, this time a little louder.

"Fuck you, bitch!" I threw a series of punches at her, all of them landing where I wanted them to, but she was unfazed by it.

Blood trickled from her split lip and still she laughed. "No worries. I'll make sure I see that look before I leave here tonight." Bombshell brought her knee up and caught me off guard, hitting me right in the side where I'd been shot. I couldn't help but gasp.

"Aw, that must be a sore spot."

"Enough!" Barbara yelled as she took out a gun and aimed it at Bombshell. "Back away from her."

"Since when do you use guns, Barbara? That's so not like you."

I was surprised at the sound of the gun firing and quickly looked up and saw a dart protruding from the side of Bombshell's neck.

She yanked it free and inspected it before tossing it to the dirt. "I knew you didn't have it in you to use a real gun."

Barbara shot her again, this time bringing her to her knees.

Again, she pulled the dart out and threw it away. "You've pushed me too far, Barbara." She dug into her pocket and I heard Barbara yell from behind me.

"The serum!"

I took out the syringe from my pocket and jammed the needle into my thigh, allowing the serum to seep into my system. I hate needles and now I have to say that I hate them even more when I'm the one sticking myself.

Bombshell let one of her bombs fly and we all took cover. Needles flew through the air and I could feel them hitting me and falling to the ground as if they'd hit a brick wall.

I looked up and saw her on her knees, a look of confusion plastered on her face. She tossed another bomb our way and the same thing happened...nothing.

"No!" she screamed at the top of her lungs as she staggered to her feet. She threw a handful of the bombs towards us which had no effect either, but I knew time was ticking and there would soon come a point where Barbara's serum would wear off.

Barbara let a Batarang fly towards Bombshell and it jammed itself in her shoulder, sending her back to her knees crying out in pain.

"Bet that hurts like hell," I taunted as I stood up and walked towards her. I kicked out at her and forced her down to the ground on her back and stood over her, crossing my arms over my chest. Then I put my boot on the edge of the Batarang and pressed on it, digging it into her shoulder even further.

"Helena!" Barbara scolded me from behind.

"Now's not the time to play good Samaritan, Barbara. This piece of shit doesn't deserve it. She ruined your daughter's life."

"I did NO such thing!" Bombshell gasped. "She had no one to turn to. Barbara didn't want her and her adopted parents didn't understand her."

"Right. So you taught her how to kill to make up for it."

That evil smile came back. "No one gets anywhere in life by being nice all the time. Isn't that right, Barbara. Huh? You went around New Gotham in your cute little Batgirl outfit trying to save the world and what did it get you? Crippled!"

Those words stung me so I'm sure they stung Barbara even more.

I turned to see if Barbara was going to come over and help me kick her ass but she stayed where she was with Dinah by her side.

BLAM!

I was knocked off my feet by what felt like a hard punch to my gut. As I laid on the ground I could see a puff of smoke coming from my stomach. There was a hole in my shirt but no blood.

BLAM!

Another jab of pain erupted in my forearm, but still no blood.

Bombshell was trying to shoot me but the serum I'd taken must be acting like a bulletproof vest because the bullets weren't penetrating.

I jumped to my feet and charged at her, ignoring the next pain that was a result of another fired bullet.

We landed in the dirt and rolled around while we fought hand-to-hand.

Despite her being drugged and having a Batarang lodged in her shoulder, she managed to keep up with me and landed a few powerful blows of her own.

I saw her go for the gun again but I quickly grabbed her wrist and pointed it away from me. The gun went off and the bullet sped off without hitting a target.

I slammed her hand down on the ground and got her to let go of the gun. It fell from her grasp and I snatched it up, aiming it at her head, right between her eyes.

"Go ahead. Do it!" she said, breathing heavily.

I pulled the hammer back on the gun and felt my finger tightening on the trigger.

"Helena!" Barbara screamed from behind me.

"Remember when I said tonight is where it all ends? Here's that part."

"Helena!"

I could hear Dinah pleading with Barbara and didn't understand why until I felt the darts sink into my back - three of them. Guess the serum had worn off.

Everything started moving in slow motion. My eyes began to roll back in my head and I fell to the ground.

PART 6

My head is killing me. It feels worse than a hangover, and I know a thing or two about hangovers.

I'm in the back of the Hummer, lying across the seat. "What the hell did you do to me," I mumbled as I sit up, rubbing my temples and shutting my eyes.

"I had to," Barbara said as she sped along the streets, " you were going to kill her."

"So! God, Barbara, I seriously don't understand how you don't believe in an eye for an eye."

"She didn't kill Taylor, I...." Barbara's voice began to tremble, "I did."

"That may be, but she tried to kill all of us and she killed Taylor's parents. Doesn't that count for something?"

There was a bit of silence before Barbara continued.

"She didn't kill Taylor's parents...Taylor did."

Okay, even I didn't expect to hear that. "What?"

"I sent someone back to the crime scene to take some samples and I had them tested. I..."

"Why didn't you ask me to get samples while I was there?"

"Because I didn't want to do it. I didn't want it to be her!" Barbara began to cry. "I couldn't take it anymore and had to know who killed them."

"Barbara, I..." When I looked closer at her from where I was sitting, I could see blood all over her hands. "Oh my God, Barbara. Who's blood is that all over your hands?" It dawned on me that Dinah wasn't making any comments and I immediately felt the panic rise up within me.

I launched myself over to the next row of seats and leaned over into the passenger seat where Dinah was securely belted in. She was unconscious and bleeding from a nasty gash on her arm.

"What the hell happened?"

Barbara took a deep breath and let it out. "After you were knocked out, Bombshell ripped the Batarang out of her shoulder and threw it at Dinah. The serum had worn off so it tore a good sized gash in her arm. Bombshell taunted her and Dinah went after her. They fought for a while and Dinah managed to knock her out. I lost all control of the situation."

Barbara was clearly starting to get emotional.

"What else did Bombshell do to her? Why is she unconscious?" Dinah could be a real pain in the ass but I did care for the girl.

"I gave her a sedative and something for the pain. She'll be fine."

"So where's Bombshell?"

"Can we talk about it later, when we get to the Clocktower."

"Where is she? Don't tell me she got away because if..."

"I killed her." She said it in a short, flat tone.

"You...you what?"

She didn't answer me and I didn't press her. Instead, I sat back in my seat and stayed silent for the remainder of the ride to the Clocktower.

PART 7

I carried Dinah to the elevator and Barbara still wasn't talking. I wanted desperately to bring up the subject again but I assumed I'd let it rest until we got Dinah fixed up.

When we got to the loft, I took Dinah into the med lab and let Barbara work on her while I waited out in the kitchen.

I was nursing a beer when Barbara wheeled out after sewing up Dinah's wounds.

"She okay?"

"Yeah."

"And what about you?"

Barbara went to the fridge and took out a beer, something I've never seen her do. "I'll be fine." She took the cap off and took a long swig of it.

"You sure?"

"I had to do it. She was going to kill Dinah if I didn't."

"Soooooo you wouldn't let me kill her when I had the chance but you..."

"I couldn't let you kill her. This was my problem and you didn't need to have her blood on your hands."

"Oh and it's okay because it's on yours?"

"No! It's not okay. I...I got lost in rage. I thought about what Taylor did to you and what she did to her parents and that was all because of Bombshell. Taylor may have been angry from the get-go but Bombshell fueled her anger by twisting her mind." Barbara took another sip of her beer. "I remembered back to when I found you lying there bleeding all over the floor. And what drove me over the edge was the night that Derek was killed. I hit her over and over. My knuckles were numb and I kept hitting her. Then I grabbed her by the neck and...broke it."

Damn. I didn't think I'd ever hear her say anything like this.

"I can't say that I'm sorry you killed her and I can't blame you for doing it."

Barbara wiped her eyes. "You know how I feel about killing, but..." she stopped for a moment and shook her head, "it felt right. I know that sounds vicious and I HATE it."

I put my hand on her shoulder. "She needed to be stopped, Barbara. She would have continued to kill and most likely it would have been one of us."

"I know, but I just think if I had called Reese to have her locked up in Arkham."

"Why? So she could break out and start her killing spree all over again! Don't feel guilty over this. This was justice."

"I wish I could see it that way as clearly as you do."

All I could do was give her a small smile and rub her back to comfort her. "I'll go check on the kid."

As I walked away from her I could feel the guilt all around her. It was like an aura. Hopefully she'll rid herself of that needless guilt soon so she can find some closure.

~FIN

HOLD UP

Written: 7/2004

I finally saved enough to buy it...a Honda VTX1800, black of course.

I've wanted a motorcycle ever since I was a teenager. One of my ex's had a Harley and I always had to ride bitch. As I've said before, I'm no one's bitch so I want my own set of wheels.

I didn't start off with a Harley because I'd surely break my ass, they're too powerful. I'm starting slow.

Barbara doesn't know about the bike and it's better that I just surprise her with it rather than subject myself to her lecture about the dangers of motorcycles and blah blah blah.

I gave them a deposit on the bike last week so it's as good as mine as far as I'm concerned. Now I'm here at the bank to cash my pay check so I can give them remaining amount and bring her on home.

It makes me feel good inside to think that this is something that I worked for, not something that daddy's money paid for just because I wanted it. I don't want to have anything to do with that money. I can make my own way in the world.

The line I'm in huge and it doesn't seem to be moving at all. As I glance at my watch I realize it's lunch time and the majority of the people in this place must be on their lunch break. Stupid move on my part but I'm anxious to get this money. I'm on a mission.

To pass the time, I take out the bike brochure out of the back pocket of my jeans and drool over the photo of my bike some more.

"Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen!" I hear a man's voice yell across the bank from the entrance. "If you could be so kind as to get down on the floor and put your hands over your head it would be greatly appreciated."

Four men are behind him, all of them are dressed in black and wearing Halloween masks. They shut and lock the main entrance and pull the shades down.

They take down the two guards by spraying something in their eyes, knocking them unconscious. At least I hope that's all they are.

As I get down on my knees they spread out and make sure that each one is covering a section of the bank. They're armed with guns in their hands and guns by their sides.

People begin to panic, some are screaming while others are crying and pleading for their lives.

"If you'd all just shut the hell up this will go quickly and smoothly!" the leader shouts as he moves closer to where I am. "There will be NO heroes here today, unless you'd like a bullet in your body as a parting gift."

Now that I listened to him more closely, I picked up on his English accent.

"Get your head down!" he screamed at a crying woman a few feet away from me who had a matching crying child tucked under her arm. "And tell your kid to shut the bloody fuck up!"

Okay, now my boil began to boil.

"How we doing on time, guys?"

"We're almost there. Two drawers to go," one of the men behind the counters yelled out in response.

Everything seemed to be going according to their plans, that is until I heard someone yelling from the back of the room.

"Freeze right where you are!"

I couldn't see who was yelling but it was a man.

"Oh bloody hell! Are you insane my good man?" the leader asked the man who was shouting.

"All of you drop your weapons!"

"Number two, will you kindly take care of this little matter for me."

BLAM! BLAM!

The sound of the two shots rang through the bank and made everyone jump, including me.

"Problem solved," the shooter said.

"Who's in charge here?"

No one spoke, mostly as a result of fear.

"I asked a question and I expect an answer. Who's the manager?!?"

Still no answer.

"Okay then." He reached down and snatched the woman's child from her, putting the barrel of his gun against the young boy's temple. "I'll blow this little fucker away if the manager doesn't step forward right now!"

"Let him go!" I yelled.

"I'm the manager, a man said as he slowly stood up, his hands in the air. Don't hurt the boy."

"You," he said nodding towards the manager, "Are there anymore security guards in here?"

"No."

"You better not be lying to me," he said as he shoved the gun into the boy's skull causing him to start screaming.

I got to my feet in a matter of seconds. If smoke could come out of my nostrils it would be bellowing out like no one's business. "Leave the kid alone!"

He gripped the kid's shirt tighter, I could see the fabric wrinkling. "Get back down on the floor, mind your own business and keep your damn bitch mouth shut!"

This guy wasn't scoring any points with me today. "Excuse me?"

"Don't," I heard the woman next to me whisper, pleading me not to antagonize him any further.

"You heard what I said, now get back down!"

"Only if you let the kid go."

"Why do you care? It's not even your kid!"

"Let him go," I demanded. My fists unconsciously clenched by my sides.

"Number four!"

"Yeah, boss?"

"Take Madame big mouth and put her over there by herself." As one of the men approached me the leader let go of the kid's shirt and shoved him down to the ground. "Happy now?"

I sneered at him and shot him a glare that clearly indicated my anger.

The big guy came over and grabbed my wrist, pulling me over towards the other side of the room but the leader stepped in front of me before we got too far.

"Say thank you."

I stared right into his eyes and didn't utter a word.

"Say IT."

I looked away in defiance and received a strong punch to the ribs for my attitude. "Oomph!" I huffed as I doubled over.

He grabbed me by the back of the head and turned my face towards him. "I still can't hear you."

"Thank you," I answered through a clenched jaw.

He let go of me and gave me a shove. "Put her over there so I can keep an eye on her."

The guy pushed me down near one of the desks, laughing as he walked away.

I leaned against it, holding my aching side. My little display seemed to have put even more into everyone because the crying stopped.

"Boss!" one of the men screamed out from the front of the bank. "The cops just showed up!"

"Shit!" he leader yelled. "Shit, shit, shit!" he yelled again as he kicked over a trash barrel and threw whatever was in his way onto the floor in a rage. "Fuck!!"

"What do we do now?"

"Who triggered the alarm?" he asked as he looked over towards the teller windows.

"Couldn't have been anyone back here. I've got 'em all in the corner."

"I bet rent-a-cop over here did it. Guess I shot him a little too late."

"Unless someone heard the shots and called the cops."

"Either way, you might as well give up," I said sarcastically.

"Didn't you hear what I said about shutting ya damn yapper?"

"I'm just saying, geesh."

He was about to come over to me to give me a follow-up beating but was stopped when the police began yelling to them with a megaphone.

"You in the bank, this is the New Gotham P.D. We don't want anyone to get hurt in there so let's talk. We've placed a cellphone outside the main entrance."

One of the men near the door started shaking his head. "Are they serious? I'm not opening that door! One of those snipers'll take me out in a second."

"Don't worry, you won't have to go out there, she will," the leader said as he pointed to me. "Get up."

I stood up and crossed my arms over my chest.

He pointed his gun at me. "Go out there and get the phone. You try anything funny and I'll put a bullet in your back."

"Switching to decaf might help some of that anger you've got there, dude."

I walked over to the door and slowly opened it. There were about five police cars out front along with a bunch of cops, one of which was Reese. Our eyes locked and I saw him say my name. I reached down and got the phone then went back into the bank.

The leader grabbed the phone out of my hands and pushed me back to where I was sitting before. It rang twice and then he answered it.

He paced back and forth as he listened to the voice on the other end of the line and I could see that he was starting to get angry.

"No! I call the shots here. You get your men out of here and let us go and no one dies." He walked over in front of me as he held the phone to his ear. "NO! Dammit! I'm giving you ten minutes to clear out or I start shooting. Women and children first." He hung up the phone and tossed it on the counter.

The woman with the young boy began wailing again and she was actually starting to aggravate me as well.

:: Huntress? :: I heard Barbara say through my comm.

"Not now," I said in a cough so that he wouldn't hear me.

:: Reese just called me and told me that you're in the bank. How many of them are there? ::

I coughed five times and ended up catching the jerk's attention.

"What's your problem?"

"Nothing," I said as I cleared my throat, "Can I get a drink of water?"

"No," he spat at me. "Are they gone yet?"

The guy by the door peeked through the shade. "Some of them but not all of them."

"Well they better hurry up about it or this place is gonna get bloody."

:: Huntress, are there a lot of people in there? ::

"Mmmhmm," I whisper.

:: Okay, sit tight. I'm on my way over there so I can work from the Hummer. ::

The leader paced around some more and it was evident that his anger was building with each step. He looked at his watch and threw his hands up. "Time's up! Are they all gone?"

The guy looked out again, searching around the entire area. "The cop cars are gone but they've got snipers on the roof across the street."

CRASH!

A sniper's bullet flew through the window and struck the guy peeking out the window right square between the eyes.

"Shit!!" the other guys began yelling.

"What the..." the leader said, stunned at what had just happened.

"No way, man!! This isn't supposed to go down like this!" The man cradled his dead partner's head in his lap, getting blood and everything else all over him.

Everyone in the room was in a panic. The crying began again and people were really starting to freak out.

"Shut up! Shut up! SHUT UP!!" the leader screamed in a rage.

"Tell the cops to stop," I whispered into my comm.

:: What's going on? ::

"That's it! They're going to play by MY rules now!" He walked over to the woman with the child and aimed the gun at her head. She begged him to spare her life but her pleas were falling on deaf ears.

I could almost hear his finger bearing down on the trigger, and that's when I ran towards him.

Everything happened so fast I almost didn't know what was going on even though I was in the thick of it all.

I heard a few gun shots go off but I ignored everything around me in order to keep him from shooting the woman and her child.

He was strong, no doubt about that, and he managed to get a few good blows to my face, but I held my ground. Then I saw the other men drawing closer, their guns aimed at me. That's when I grabbed the leader and used him as a shield. As they riddled him with bullets I grabbed his gun and shot back, hitting all three.

Everyone in the bank was screaming, ducking for cover, holding onto one another.

I rolled the leader's dead body off of me and noticed that one of the men was getting back up. I kicked him in the face and knocked him back to the floor then I kicked the gun away from his reach.

Suddenly, I felt arms around me, bear hugging me and cutting off my air.

:: Huntress?!? ::

I struggled and gasped for air as the man squeezed harder. Then the guy I'd just kicked got up and

decked me right in the face a few times, hard enough to make me see a few stars.

I kicked backwards and managed to strike the guy behind me in the shin. He yelped in pain and let me go so I reached up, grabbed his neck and brought his face down on my knee.

:: Huntress?!? :: Barbara called out again.

"Little busy," I huffed as I tossed the unconscious man to the floor and focused my attention on kicking the other guy's ass.

He threw a punch at my face and I leaned back to avoid it, successfully. I grabbed his arm and bent it, hearing it crack under the pressure.

"You bitch!" he screamed as he fell to his knees, clutching his arm. He looked to his side and saw one of the guns lying on the floor.

"Don't even think about it," I warned him as I shoved my boot in his face, bloodying his nose.

He rolled back onto the floor but still went for the gun.

"You don't listen very well, do you?" I stomped on his wrist, causing him to let go of the gun. Then I slammed my fist in his face, knocking him out cold.

CRASH! BLAM! BLAM!!

I heard two gunshots sound behind me and at the time I had no idea if they'd hit me or not because my mind was racing a million miles an hour.

Turning around, I saw Reese coming over to me, tucking his gun into it's holster by his side.

"You okay?" he asked with wide eyes.

I looked down at myself and saw blood, but it wasn't mine. Then I looked past Reese and saw one of the men bleeding out fresh blood from his chest.

:: Huntress, are you there? ::

"Good timing, detective."

Reese smiled and helped me up. "You've saved my butt before so I figured I owed you one."

"Or two. Or three," I joked.

:: Huntress!! ::

I turned to the side to speak to the nagging voice in my ear. "Chill out, will ya."

:: Well, you didn't answer me. Is everything okay? ::

"Yeah," I said, watching Reese help them secure the scene and escort the people out of the bank. "I'll meet you at the Clocktower in a little while. I think I owe someone a statement."

:: You're sure you're okay? ::

"I'm fine, honest."

:: Okay. I'll see you in a while. ::

I walked over to Reese and tapped him on the shoulder. "You think I can give you my statement so I can get outta here. I kinda had some place to be before this all happened."

"Sure, why don't we go outside."

I followed him to his car and he took out his little notebook. "As you know, I'm used to handling this kinda stuff at night, so this is weird for me," I said as I chewed on my lip.

Reese smiled as he uncapped his pen. "This is true. Normally we meet under darker circumstances. I just happened to take a day shift."

"I'm glad you did or I'd be picking lead out of my back right now."

He smiled again but this time it looked like it belonged to a high school boy that had a crush on one of the girls in his class. It was kinda cute and a little bit of a turn on.

I gave Reese my statement and then told him what my mission had been before going to the bank. He took me to his apartment to clean up, which I was extremely grateful for. In the dark you can't see the blood on you but in the daylight it's almost creepy.

He drove me to another bank so I could cash my check and then he even offered to drive me to the Honda dealer. Of course I took him up on it, I'm not stupid.

He couldn't stick around while I filled out all the paperwork and whatnot, which I was thankful for in a way. This was my experience, my freedom and I was kinda happy to be doing it all on my own. Besides, if I had brought him with me they probably would have looked at him the whole time and not me. I think some guys think that just because you've got a set of tits you can't do certain things. Lord knows that's not the case with me.

I pulled into the garage of the Clocktower and counted all of thirty seconds for Barbara to come down in the elevator. I knew she'd be watching on the security camera.

As I climbed off the bike she began her barrage of questions.

"What in the hell is that?"

"My bike."

She was speechless.

"Shut your mouth before the flies get in there," I teased.

"You can't be serious. Come on. Who's bike is it? Reeses'?"

"It's mine, I told you. M-I-N-E."

"Do you know how dangerous these things are? They're motorized human slingshots."

"I have a helmet," I said as I picked it up and showed it to her.

"But...I..."

I walked past her and patted her on the shoulder. "Don't worry, I'll take you for a ride."

I couldn't help but laugh as I walked into the elevator, leaving her alone with my bike to bask in it's beauty. The bike was damn hot and hopefully it's scorching hotness would turn her around.

It had been one hell of a day, but considering all that had happened it ended up okay. It doesn't always end well for me, so it was a nice change.

~ FIN

THE BIKE:



Credit to: <http://www.hondabikes.net/honda-vtx1800.html>

REUNION

Written: 8/2004

PART 1

With the wind blowing through my hair and the low rumble of her between my legs combine to give me a feeling I've never felt before - freedom.

I don't really have a destination, just feel like being anywhere but the Clocktower right now. Guess I'm just in one of my moods because I feel like that place suffocates me sometimes.

Hours pass and I'm still driving. I got so lost in my own thoughts I lost track of time, not that that's a bad thing.

It was obvious that I was far away from New Gotham because I could actually see grass on the side of the road.

Up ahead, the sun began to rise and I decided it would be cool to watch so I pulled over and turned off the bike. Easing back in the seat, I watched the giant orange ball slowly rise into the air. Night soon turned into day, illuminating the world around me.

As I reached for the key to start the bike, I heard a car pull up along side me. It was a beat-up van that looked like something out of a stoner movie.

"Hey, you need some help?" a young guy asked me from the passenger side.

"No thanks. Just stopped for a minute."

"You sure?"

"Yeah," I said as I started up the bike. "Thanks."

I pulled out into the road, heading back towards New Gotham. I was running low on gas and God only knows where the next gas station is around here.

When I got back into the city I fueled up and drove to my apartment to grab a quick nap and a shower, both of which revitalized me.

As I headed back out, the phone started ringing and I completely ignored it, feeling good as I did so. It was probably Barbara calling to ask where I am and then a thirty-minute lecture on whatever topic pops into her head. I'm so tired of that shit.

I drive off into the heart of the city and pass by Gibson's store. He spots me and waves me over. I sigh heavily, but pull up by the curb. He is a major pain in the ass but he's helped me out of a good share of jams so I guess the least I could do is talk to him for a few minutes. Besides, it'll give me a chance to brag about the bike again.

"Helena, what have we got here?" he says as he looks over my bike.

"Isn't she a beauty. Got her about a week ago." I turn off the engine and lean back in the seat, admiring the bike's style.

"That's some bike," he says. He knows nothing about bikes, he's too nerdy. Computers yes, books yes, bikes no. "Hey!" he exclaims as if a light bulb just lit up above his head. "I have the perfect thing for it!"

He runs back into the store and soon comes out with a small pair of pink fuzzy dice. He hands them to me with a big grin on his face. "Got them out of one of those crane thingies at the arcade last week."

I take them from him and offer a small smile. "Gee, thanks."

"You're welcome." He smiles and nervously digs his hands in his pockets.

"I better head back out, I'll see you later."

"Be careful out there."

I put my helmet on and start up the bike. I really don't like wearing a helmet because it restricts my view of the world, but I guess I don't want to have my brains splattered all over the pavement like apple sauce if I were to fall off.

As I pull away from the curb and ride down the street I notice the van that stopped along the road yesterday. It's parked in front of a set of stores and doesn't look like anyone's in it. It sticks out like a sore thumb even in this section of town.

PART 2

I find myself in the same place as the day before - on the roadside watching the sun rise.

I've watched the sun rise before, from the Clocktower, but the fact that there are no skyscrapers in the way right now makes it cooler.

When the sun finally sits high in the sky, I continue my ride, this time heading away from New Gotham. I'm sure Barbara.... I feel around my throat and then my ears and realize I left my comm set at my apartment. Oh well. I'm certainly NOT going back for them. This is my freedom.

I continue riding down the deserted stretch of road, taking in the sight of miles and miles of nothing when I suddenly feel a presence behind me.

Looking in my mirror I can see that old van coming up the road. I can hear their engine rev up as the driver stomps on the gas in order to pass me.

As they come up along my left side, the guy in the passenger seat gives me a wave and then a mock kiss. Now I'm officially grossed out so I return his gesture with a flash of my middle finger.

They pull in front of me and start to speed up. A puff of white smoke bellows out of the tailpipe as the tired exhaust system tries to keep up with the driver's lead foot.

I'm tempted to pass them but I don't want to push it. I'm still breaking the bike in and I don't want to go wrecking the engine.

The back door of the van opens up and I can sense that something's not right.

"Fuck." I say to myself as I try to figure out what to do. Being on a bike doesn't afford much in the way of protection.

They don't give me much time to think things over because a couple of shots were fired towards me. The next thing I know I slammed to the ground, skidding along the pavement and tumbling along with the bike. All I feel is pain before everything turns black.

PART 3

I'm awake again, barely it seems.

I hate that, when you're knocked unconscious and wake up not knowing what the hell happened in between that time.

"She's awake," a male voice says near me.

It takes me a moment for me to become aware of what's going on, but it's the nagging pain all over my body that grabs my attention first.

I'm lying on the most uncomfortable bed ever constructed and it's not helping that my arms are over my head and handcuffed to it's frame.

As I become more alert, I begin to check myself for injury. My right shoulder feels like it's on fire and the slightest movement makes me feel like I'm being stabbed over and over. I think it's safe to say that it's dislocated because I think that's the first thing that hit the ground.

I can't tell what's blood and what's sweat as I feel liquid dripping down my face. I can taste blood and I'm sure there's some sort of gash on the side of my head judging by the throbbing, burning sensation. I guess it ended up being a good thing that I had a helmet on because it could be a lot worse.

My ribs are definitely bruised to shit but not broken. Hurts like hell, that's for sure, and breathing isn't the easiest thing to do right now.

Then there's my leg. My leg is what feels worst of all. Looking down, I can see that my leather pants are ripped by my knee and there's a lot of blood seeping out, staining the mattress and splashing onto the floor. My knee feels like it's about to explode, there's so much pressure underneath my knee cap. I've got a nasty case of road rash and the only thing I can compare my leg to is ground up hamburger. I know, not a good visual.

I remember them shooting at me. I don't think any of the bullets hit me. I'd certainly know it if they had.

"Ah, sweet little Helena Kyle," a man says to me as he walks into the room, waving to the two other men to leave.

"Who the fuck are you?" I say with a sneer. I'm in pain, irritated and being held against my will so I'm certainly not going to be polite.

"Ouch," he says with a mocking cringe. "You're certainly not like your father, are you? You've got a little spark to you. I almost admire it."

"So that's what this is about. My father."

"Indeed. You see, my dear, your father owes me and he owes me big. Years ago he and I started a business down on the south side of town, the old iron works. He agreed to take care of some of the finances and I agreed to split the profits with him. The only problem is, your father disappeared and I haven't seen a penny. I tried to continue the business but I was forced to shut down the factory due to the rising tax costs of the city. I lost millions!" Spittle flew from his mouth as he spewed forth his rage.

"I've got bad news for you, I don't know where my father is anymore than you do."

He shrugged. "No matter. I've done my homework on you and I'm betting that your friend Barbara Gordon

knows exactly where to find him."

I have to admit that I was a little shocked that he knew Barbara and I had contact. "She's not going to give any information to a lunatic that..." Ya know, I should learn to shut my trap because that one cost me a punch to the gut.

He whipped out a cellphone and stuck it in my face. "What's the number?"

My focus was on the pain and trying to be able to breathe again, not on the stupid phone number.

"What is it?!?" he asked again, balling up his fist.

"Uncuff me and I'll dial it."

"Don't play games with me! Give me the fuckin' number!"

I stayed silent and it really pissed him off.

"Fine, have it your way." He stormed out of the room and soon returned with a large, muscular bald man. "Get the number from her no matter what it takes, but don't kill her, I need her."

"You got it, boss."

The man left the room, leaving me alone with the muscle-bound dufuss who was going to take great pleasure in working me over.

I think it's safe to say that I'm officially screwed.

PART 4

I can hear his voice again as I slowly come to.

"It's for you," he says as he stands over me, holding the phone out.

I'm no longer handcuffed to the bed. In fact, I'm not even on the bed I'm on the floor in a heap of pain and blood.

He kicks me in my bad leg. "Wake up!" he shouts as he shoves the phone next to my ear.

I can hear Barbara calling to me through the phone. The sound of her voice makes me more alert. "B...Barbara," I slur into the phone.

"Helena, are you alright?"

I take somewhat of a deep breath and shut my eyes. "No," I whisper softly in a pain-filled voice.

She didn't answer right away because I think my answer got to her. "Where are you?"

"Don't know," I slurred. I swallowed hard and shut my eyes against the wave of pain that grabbed hold of me. "I'm sorry I gave him the...the number. I...I couldn't take it..."

"Put him back on the phone."

I could tell she was pissed off because of the stern tone in her voice.

I moved my head away from the phone and he put it back to his ear. "I think Helena isn't feeling too well right now. She....NO! YOU listen to me and listen to me good. Bruce Wayne and I have some unfinished business and if he wants to see his daughter live to see her next birthday then I suggest you find him and have him meet me at the old iron factory where this whole mess started. I'm giving you an hour to reach him." He hung up the phone and looked at me. "You better pray she comes through for you."

He left the room and I felt my body relax in the silence. His goon had done a number on me, clearly one of the worst beatings I've ever received. How pathetic is it that I couldn't even defend myself. I just let him beat me.

I managed to roll over onto my back which was a huge accomplishment given my condition. It was a little easier to breathe this way, plus I didn't have to look at all of my blood on the floor.

I'm not sure how much time had elapsed, but the door to my room slowly opened and a young boy slipped in. He looked to be around Dinah's age.

I readied myself for a fight but his movements indicated that he didn't come to go a few rounds with me.

"It's okay," he whispered, "I want to help you." He set a small duffle bag on the floor and unzipped it.

"Who..."

"He's my father," he answered as he took out some towels, bandages and other medical supplies.

"He'll probably kill you if he catches you in here."

"I don't care. I don't agree with his ways of doing business. He's always made it a habit of pushing people around, including me."

"Ow!" I gasped in a hiss as he applied antiseptic to the cuts on my face.

"Shhh! My father's men will be back soon."

He cleaned me up as best as he could and it made me feel a little better.

"What the hell are you doing in here, Jason?!?" his father yelled as he entered the room.

Jason quickly stood up to face his father. "You can't do this! You can't go around beating on people every time something doesn't go your way! Especially not a woman! She..."

WHACK!!

His father punch him hard in the face, knocking him down beside me.

"Don't you EVER talk to me like that again!"

"She needs a doctor," Jason said as he held his swelling eye.

"Charlie! Get in here and drag her out to the van."

Two of his goons came into the room and roughly grabbed onto me, yanking me up. I couldn't help but yelp out in pain as my injuries were abused by the sudden movement.

"Don't do this!" Jason yelled.

"ENOUGH from you! Go with Charlie. You can ride in the back with her while I decide what to do with you. Now GO!"

They threw me into the back of an empty van and I immediately curled up into a ball, desperately trying to stem the pain.

Jason climbed in after me just as they shut the doors.

"You okay?"

I shook my head because I was far from being okay.

PART 5

The ride to the factory seemed to only take a few minutes, but that's probably because I passed out at some point along the way.

They brought me into a room where I was surprised to see Barbara already waiting. I heard her gasp as I was pushed down onto the floor and she started to come towards me.

"Uh uh. Don't move," the man told her.

I heard the click of a gun cocking and swallowed down the nausea that came over me. I was in no shape to even attempt at defending my own life. And if there's one thing I hate, it's being unable to do something.

"Where is he?"

"He'll be here," Barbara said.

"He'll kick your ass all over this place," I said in a barely audible voice. It was definitely a feeble attempt at being tough.

"Oh please! Bruce Wayne couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag. He's a millionaire not a prize fighter."

"Don't be so sure," I said as I groaned and rolled onto my side, locking eyes with Barbara from across the room.

I must look like shit because Barbara's nervous movements and facial expression speak volumes.

The man looked at his watch. "He's late. Maybe daddy doesn't care about his little girl after all."

"I wouldn't say that," a voice said from the shadows.

"Bruce?" the man called out.

Out of nowhere, Batman flew into the man and knocked him to the ground. His gun skidded across the floor and out of his reach.

"Bruce sent me to give you a message," Batman said as he grabbed the man, hauling him up and tossing him across the room like a rag doll.

Dinah rushed in and came to my aid.

"Where were you?" I asked.

"Taking care of Bonny and Clyde out front," she said, proud of herself. "It was too easy playing with their little minds."

"Where's the kid? Where's Jason?" I panted as I tried to get up.

"Don't. Don't move. He's fine."

Batman picked the man up again and punched him over and over. Blood splattered all over the floor and all over his costume.

Barbara quickly wheeled over to him. "Stop it! You'll kill him."

"You saw what he did to her," Batman said as he continued punching the already bloody and unconscious jerk.

"Stop!!" she said as she reached out and pulled at his punching arm.

He stopped a punch mid-launch and let the guy drop to the ground. Then he turned around and started walking towards me.

He knelt down beside me and took off his cowl. "Helena?"

I tried to focus through the pain and managed to give him a smile. But that was all I could do before I passed out again.

PART 6

My body can sense that something's different, I don't even have to have my eyes open to know that.

When I do open my eyes it confirms what I suspected...I'm not at the Clocktower, I'm not in my apartment and I'm certainly not in the hospital. I have a guess as to where I am but I can't be sure until I have a look around.

It takes me a while to sit up, but I finally manage to do so.

My knee is bandaged up and bound tightly by one of those black, hinged knee braces. Looks like I managed to hack it up pretty good.

I didn't think Barbara would make it easy for me, so I don't see a pair of crutches anywhere around. Not that I'd really be able to use them since my right arm is in a sling. No problem. I'm just going to get out of this bed and hobble out into the hallway just like....."OW! OW! OW!" I yelp as the flash of pain jabs me right in the knee from just the slightest bit of pressure I put on that leg. I lean on the bed for a moment as the pain subsides and I keep an eye on the door, waiting for either Barbara, Dinah or Alfred to come busting on in with a boat-load of reasons why I shouldn't be out of bed.

Taking a deep breath, I try again, but before I get too far, I'm surprised by the sight of the person standing in the doorway...my father.

"Where are you going?" he asks me, not moving from the doorway.

"Um," I stutter. Not sure why I'm at a sudden loss for words. Could be the drugs or could be that I'm not used to him.

"Get back in bed." Still he stood where he was, his arms folded across his muscular chest.

"But..."

"I can call Barbara if you want, she's right downstairs."

Dammit. He doesn't even know me but yet he knows me. How messed up is that? "Fine," I say as I turn back around and sit on the bed. It wasn't that bad getting out but getting back in is proving to be a little more difficult.

He's watching me struggle which is pissing me off, quite frankly. I'm in a buttload of pain and am in no mood to deal with his shit. "Don't just stand there!"

"What? You want me to help you?"

"Seriously, that's the dumbest question ever."

"From what I'm told, you never ask for help because you're perfectly capable of doing things on your own." He walks towards me and I can feel my body tense up. "I can see they're right," he adds.

I clench my teeth as the pain surges through my battered and broken body. "Just say it, Barbara told you."

He chuckles softly as he pulls the covers over me. "Barbara, Alfred, Dinah, the list goes on. You're just like..."

"Don't," I stop him. "Now's not the time." The last thing I want to hear right now are the similarities between

my mother and me as told from the eyes of a man who hardly knows me, other than what's he's been told.

"I'm sorry," he says as he lowers his head slightly.

For only a split second do I feel sorry for the man.

He raises his head and looks into my eyes for only a moment before turning around and walking out of the room. Not a word was uttered between us, he just walked away.

I lean back and try to get comfortable, but the thoughts that are now running rampant around my head are distracting me. Closing my eyes isn't helping and neither is trying to steady my breathing. The thoughts are way too powerful.

So I stare off into space and try to organize my thoughts. It's kinda like trying to settle down a room full of screaming children.

I shut my eyes again and figure I'll fall asleep, but I can hear the motor of Barbara's chair coming down the hall towards my room.

Great.

"He said you were up," she says with this pissed off tone in her voice and an equally pissed off look on her face.

"Yeah, looks like you two do a lot of talking about me."

"I hope you're happy." She started fiddling with my knee brace, maybe because she had to or maybe because she was hoping she'd cause me some pain, out of spite.

"Happy about?"

She shot me a look, one of her classics. "He left."

"So. OW!!!" I was right, she just wants to fuck with me.

She pulled on the Velcro straps and made the brace tighter. "I can't believe you sometimes."

"He's the one that wants to get all teary-eyed and mushy with me and..."

"He saved your life!" Her bottom lip began to quiver, the way it does when you know that she's extremely emotional.

"We could have..."

"Give me a break! You couldn't even stay awake much less defend yourself."

Okay...that one pissed me off.

"I could have, Barbara! I-I didn't want to..."

"Stop making excuses! You don't have to be so friggin' tough all the time. You were hurt and..."

"And what? Weak? Defeated? Incapable? Should I go on?"

Barbara inhaled deeply and exhaled. "He loves you. He would do anything for you."

"He doesn't even know me!"

"So let him get to know you! You shut him out."

"He just wants to compare me to my mother. I'm NOT my mother I'm ME, dammit!" I could feel my jaw tighten on it's own as I tried to hold back the tears that were begging me to allow them to spill down my face.

"He's just as scared as you are. I don't think he knows what to say around you so he sticks to something familiar, your mother."

The sick part was that I knew she was right. I'd never admit that, of course.

"Give him a chance. Please? It tore him apart to see you hurt. He checked in on you every five minutes. I had to kick him out a few times so that he wouldn't wake you."

I could feel some of her tension melting away and mine was starting to as well. "I guess I'm just cranky because I don't feel so hot."

"You took a good spill on..."

"My bike!" I exclaimed as I bolted upright, ignoring my aching ribs. "Where's my bike?"

"Hey, calm down," she said as she helped ease me back down. "Dinah found it by the side of the road. We sent it out to be fixed."

"Is it bad?"

"Not too bad. Lots of scrapes, like you." Barbara the pointed to my leg. "You did a number on that knee."

"You don't have to tell me, it hurts like hell."

"I would think it would considering you fractured and dislocated your knee cap. It wasn't easy getting it back into place without breaking it."

"Spare me the gory details."

"Well, I'll let you get some rest. Think about what I said, okay?"

I nodded, half out of wanting to pacify her so she'd leave me the hell alone and half because she was right.

As I watched her leave the room I let out a heavy sigh. I'm so not good at letting people in, much less a man I hardly know even though I'm supposed to call him dad.

PART 7

TWO WEEKS LATER

My knuckles connect with the wooden door as I knock on it with a little hesitation.

I chew on my bottom lip as I wait for a response.

My stomach begins to stir up the butterflies as I hear the latch being unlocked and the door slowly open. Immediately, my eyes lock onto his.

"Helena," Bruce says with surprise.

"Hi." It's all I could come up with to say as I shoved my hands into the pockets of my duster.

"Come on in," he says as he opens the door wider and steps aside.

I walk into the small apartment, looking around at the humble surroundings. How does a millionaire like my father go from living in a mansion to living in a tiny, closet-sized apartment?

"Have a seat," he says as he clears away the newspaper off the couch. "Can I get you something to drink? Soda? Beer?"

"No thanks, I'm fine."

He tossed the newspaper onto the coffee table and sits across from me in a worn chair. Everyone has their favorite seat in the house and that one must be his considering it's seen better days.

I rub my hands together nervously. I can't help it. This is awkward as hell.

"So, what brings you here? I don't get many visitors considering no one knows where I am, besides Barbara, Alfred and Dick."

"I came to apologize."

"For?"

What is it with the company I keep? Everyone claims there isn't a problem when they're talking to you, but behind your back it's as if the world's come to a grinding halt.

"For the way I shut you out when you brought me to the mansion. You saved my life and I wanted to apologize for not acknowledging that." The last few words that came from my mouth were laced with emotion. "Sorry," I said, embarrassed. "I'm not good with apologies."

"No. No. It's okay," he said as he got out of his chair and kneeled down in front of me. "You don't have to apologize, Helena. It was wrong of me to expect that everything is fine and, well, normal between us. That's not fair to you."

"I know you meant well when you compared me to mom, but I'm not her. I guess since helping Barbara take care of the city I've been busy trying to make sure that people know that I'm me and only me, not anyone else, no matter who my parents are."

He reached over and wiped the tears from my cheek. I took his hand but not in order to move it away, just

to hold it to let him know that I'm sorry.

"Helena, you have no idea how much I wanted to kill Perkins for hurting you like that. I haven't felt that rage in quite a long time."

"I'm sorry, I..."

"No. It was both good and bad. Bad because I honestly could have killed him if Barbara hadn't stepped in. Good because it kicked me in the ass and re-ignited a fire within me that was extinguished years ago. I mean, look where I'm living. Look at ME! I'm a mess. I haven't shaven in weeks, I hardly leave the apartment, I sit around eat and once in a while get totally plastered just to forget about it all. I can't live this way anymore."

"You shouldn't have to."

He smiled at me and it scared me because I could see our resemblance.

PART 8

I stepped out of the elevator of the Clocktower and found Dinah and Barbara arguing about something.

Walking over towards them, I stopped when I got halfway into the room. "Looks like you two need to take that into the training room."

"She won't let me wear this skirt!" Dinah said as she held it up for me to see.

"I don't even wear skirts that small!"

"See!" Barbara said with a slight smile.

Dinah growled and tore off to her room to either put the skirt away or to put it on. I'm sure we'd see which was the case in a little while.

"How'd your meeting with your father go?"

"Fine," I said as I walked towards her. "He's not so bad after all." I didn't offer any more info. She'll find out soon enough that my father has broken out of his funk.

"Your limp is getting a little better."

"Yeah, another few days I'll be good as new." I paused for a moment because I knew my next question was going to open a can of worms that I didn't want to unleash, but I didn't know where else to start. "Any leads on the guys in the van?" I could feel my body tense up as I waited for Barbara's response.

"Nothing yet. I don't have much to go on. You shouldn't be worrying about that. You need to take it easy and let me and Dinah worry about it."

I knew she was going to say that. God, she's so damn predictable. "Just figured I'd ask." It took everything I had to keep from lashing out at her, but I decided that it would be better to play it cool for once.

As I started to walk away I could feel the wheels in her mind turning at lightning speed.

"Promise me you're not going to do an investigation of your own," she warned.

I turned around and held up my hands. "I'm just going downstairs to get my bike and go for a short ride, that's all."

"You probably shouldn't be riding that bike so soon."

"You worry too much. It's fine. I'm fine." I got into the elevator and watched the doors close in front of me. I wasn't going to promise anything because I hate promises. Promises are like rules and laws, they're broken too often.

I got to the garage and smiled as I saw my bike sitting there. I climbed on and started her up and was hit with a flashback of the crash - slamming down on the pavement, the tumbling and the pain. I shook away the memory and put the kickstand up.

I set out on the road and took it slow. Since the accident wasn't a result of my driving skills, it made me feel a little better about being back on the bike. In fact, the constant flashbacks only fueled my anger and made me want to find those sons-of-bitches so I could castrate each one of them with my bare hands.

PART 9

I drove for hours and it was getting pretty late.

As I drove along the river towards the bridge, I could see some activity underneath the bridge. Transients mostly gathered under there, warming themselves with fire rushing out of empty oil drums while druggies hung out there to get high.

Something told me to pay them a visit and I've learned not to ignore that little voice. It's gotten me out of a few jams.

When I pulled up to the area, I could hear shouting and glass shattering. I parked my bike a good distance from them and got off, walking the remainder of the way.

The shouting got louder and I could see three men engaged in a fist fight. Two of the men were picking on the other man. Not sure what they were fighting over but when I looked around the area that's when I saw it...the van.

I ignored the fight and used it to my advantage. Everyone was so caught up in the fight they didn't see me sneak over to the van.

I climbed in the back and the God-awful smell nearly knocked me out. These guys obviously lived in this hellhole on wheels because it definitely had that lived-in look.

"Looking for something?" I heard a man ask from behind me.

I turned around and saw him aiming a gun at me.

"Yeah, you," I answered sarcastically.

His two friends soon appeared behind him.

"Guess you didn't take a hard enough spill on that bike of yours, bitch."

The other guys laughed at his comment. Funny how I was the only one not laughing.

"You bled like a stuck pig," one of them quipped as he climbed into the van.

Another one got in and stood behind me. "Now that you're feeling better maybe we could go somewhere quiet." The palm of his hand began rubbing my ass.

I chuckled a bit out of anger. "You better move that hand before you lose it."

"OOOOHHHH! Tough girl!" one of them taunted.

"You have no idea," I said plainly.

PART 10

I walked into the kitchen at the Clocktower and soon felt Barbara coming up behind me. "Let me guess where you were."

I didn't answer her, just dug into the ice bucket and loaded a hand towel full of ice then grabbed a beer before turning around.

Her eyes immediately widened at the sight of my eye which I'm sure looked pretty bad because it felt pretty bad. "Helena!"

I flopped down on the chair and pressed the cool towel to my eye, hissing at the sting.

Her hand turned my face towards her and she hissed as well. "Let's get that cleaned up."

As she cleaned the blood off the side of my face and got the cut to stop bleeding, it was as if our conversation was put on pause because neither of us said a word.

She handed the towel back to me, breaking the silence. "Put that on it for a while then I'll stitch it up."

I took a swig of my beer and applied the towel to my eye.

"That was a nice little gift you left on the steps of New Gotham P.D. Tied up and everything."

I couldn't help but smile. "That was a nice tough, don't you think?"

She shook her head. "I should be mad at you right now, but I'm glad you found them." She laughed a little. "You really beat the shit out of them."

"Payback's a bitch."

"All three are wanted on drug smuggling charges so they won't be around for a while."

"Good," I said, wincing. "I'm gonna sleep here tonight, I'm beat...literally."

"Let me get the suture kit and..."

"No, it's fine," I said as I waved her off.

"You're so damn stubborn."

"I know," I said with a smile as I headed towards my room.

~ FIN

PHOTOGRAPH

Written: 8/2004

Part 1

I've had sporadic contact with my father over the past few weeks, which is fine with me. I think we both understand that baby steps are needed in the building of our relationship so that's how it's been.

To my knowledge, Barbara is still unaware that my father is now back at the manor. Finals have kept her pretty distracted lately so it's perfect timing.

Alfred, however, is fully aware of everything. I swear the old man loves gossip and scoops more than a woman. My father instructed him not to say anything to Barbara, stating that he'd tell her when he felt it was necessary and when he felt more in control of things.

It's weird talking to him, seeing his face not far from my own. Most of the pictures I've seen of him were taken with his Batman costume on so I never knew how handsome he really is.

As I walk along the street I'm still thinking about him, and the thoughts completely distract me from the hand that comes up behind me and touches my shoulder.

Quickly, I spin around, grabbing their wrist and twisting it so they fall to the ground.

"Ow! Hey!" the young man says to me from the ground.

I squeeze his wrist harder. "Who are you?"

"Ow! Let go, I'm not gonna hurt you. I was calling to you and you didn't hear me. I just want to talk to you."

I let go of him and took a step back. I wasn't going to offer him a hand to help him up because I still wasn't sure what his intentions were.

He got up and wiped his suit with his hands. "You're pretty strong, for a girl."

I tilted my head to the side and lowered my eyebrows. This guy wasn't off to a great start with me.

He reached into his jacket and he saw my body go back into defensive mode. "Whoa, don't try and break my other wrist, I'm just getting ID" He slowly opened the small wallet and showed me his ID badge. "Special Agent Rivers. I'm with the FBI"

I looked at the ID and it was the real deal. I've seen far too many fake ID's in my bartending years to know the fakes from the genuine article. "So, you're a fed. What do you want? And where's your posse?"

He looked all around to make sure no one was around before looking back at me. "It's only me. I want this to be a quiet investigation to avoid a media circus. I need some information."

I couldn't help but laugh. "No way. Cops and I don't mix. You'll have to find another girl to pick on." I walked away but the determined little bastard kept following me.

"Please. Let me at least explain."

"Do you have a hearing problem or something because I said I wasn't interested."

He ran around and got in front of me, putting his hand out to stop me while holding up a photo in the other hand.

I was about to take another step but the woman in the photo stole my attention. "Dr. Quinzel," I said as I took the photo from him.

"Now can we talk?"

I nodded but didn't say a word, I had too many thoughts rushing through my head.

"Let's go to the park," he suggested as he motioned across the street.

We walked into the park and sat on one of the benches near the water fountain.

"She was transferred from the Arkham Asylum about a month ago to a facility in Illinois. The other night, she broke out of there, hitched a ride, and killed the man that picked her up. She left him in a ditch, his throat slit."

The news stunned me because Barbara hadn't mentioned any of this. It made me wonder if she knew about it and didn't say anything or didn't know anything at all.

"So how did you know I..."

He handed me a stack of Polaroid photos there were taken from her cell. The walls were covered with photos of me. I felt my stomach sink like a stone in a pond.

"Normally we don't get involved in cases such as this, but because she's crossed state lines we stepped in. We're working with the local police on this and a Detective Reese told me where to find you. He said your name is Huntress. That some sort of stage name or something?"

"Are you for real? What are you implying?" I asked as I stood up, clenching my fists and doing my best not to slug him.

"Nothing! I just...I don't know of anyone that has one name like that other than Madonna or Prince or..."

"I'm outta here," I huffed as I turned around and started walking out of the park.

"Wait! You're in danger! Let me put you in protective custody until..."

I stopped and turned around again. "You don't know a damn thing about me so let me tell you this, shithead, I can take care of my damn self a lot better than you and your Starbucks-sipping pretty boys ever could. So just leave me the hell alone and go play somewhere else."

"I'm going to have to insist that you come with me," he said as he grabbed my forearm.

I looked down at his hand on my arm and smiled slightly. "I'd highly suggest you let go of me."

"I'm afraid I can't do that."

I saw him going for his handcuffs and there was no way I was going to let it get that far. With a quick movement, I grabbed his arm and flipped myself over him so I landed behind him. A chop to the neck knocked him out cold. "Sorry, dude." I patted him on the cheek and ran off.

Part 2

Back at the Clocktower, Barbara was at her desk grading school papers. I think it was one of the few times I've ever come in and she hasn't been at the computer.

I walked over to her, leaned against the desk and folded my arms across my chest.

She looked up at me for a split second and then returned to her paper. "What's the matter? You've got that pissed off look."

"Everything okay?" I asked sarcastically. I loved playing games with her.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing. Just asking." I paused for a moment and watched her make a few more checkmarks on the paper. "Anything you want to share with me that you haven't chosen to share with me before?"

She put her pen down and took off her glasses. "What the hell's going on?"

"You tell me."

"I would if I knew what I was supposed to say!"

"Two words, Dr. Quinzel."

"What about her?"

She knew something, I could tell by the quick loss of eye contact. "You know exactly what I'm talking about, don't bullshit me, Barbara!"

She shut her eyes for a moment and shook her head.

"You knew she was transferred out of Arkham, didn't you?" She didn't say anything. "DIDN'T YOU?!?" I demanded.

"Yes!"

"Why didn't you say something about it? What? You can't trust me?"

"It's not that," she mumbled under her breath.

"Why did they transfer her? I mean, how..."

"THEY didn't," she said through her tears, "I did."

Wow. I didn't see that one coming.

"What?"

"I did," she repeated, more softly this time.

"Why?!?"

"I wanted her out of this city, away from us. I couldn't get her out of my head! I requested the transfer and since then the thoughts have been going away." She snuffed away her tears and wiped her eyes.

Despite her sob story, I was still pissed. "Well, you'll be happy to hear that she escaped from her new home and on her way back here."

"W-what?" she stuttered.

"She hitched a ride from some poor bastard and killed him along the way."

The tears started flowing again and it wasn't having an impact on me, I was still pissed at her for not telling me.

"But wait! Here's the best part!" I reached in my pocket and pulled out the Polaroids and tossed them one by one on the table in front of her. "I have pictures of her cute little cell. I think they speak for themselves."

She picked up the photos and looked them over, her bottom lip trembling all the while.

I walked away and headed towards the elevator.

"Helena!" she yelled as she finally noticed I was leaving. "Where are you going? Helena!"

I got into the elevator and didn't look back.

Part 3

I walked the streets for hours, kicking rocks, walls, garbage cans, anything that got in my way because I was so pissed off.

Barbara is forever telling me to learn to trust people and then she goes and pulls shit like this!

As I sit on top of a dumpster lid I clench my fists and hold my breath as the rage flows through me. I can feel my face turning redder by the minute, my veins nearly bursting, then I take a breath.

I put my arms over my head as I try to sort out my thoughts and I begin to feel drops of rain coming down. Perfect.

I don't try and run for shelter, I let the rain pour down on me, hoping it'll wash away the shit that's just been shoveled my way. I know it's not that simple but I wish it was.

My thoughts are all over the place but they keep going back to Quinzel. How did she get photos of me? Who took them? When did they take them? That was where I needed to start because that bugged me more than the fact that she was coming back to New Gotham to find me. I don't like being spied on or stalked, nobody does.

I look up at the night sky and let the rain beat all over my face, but a flash coming from the roof of the adjacent building steals my attention. I also see the shadow of a person running away.

It only takes me seconds to scale the wall and get onto the roof, but I don't see anyone.

My eyes turn catlike and I scan the entire area. I sense someone to my right so I fly in that direction.

Another flash goes off in front of me, blinding me, then I feel a strike to my face followed by another. I'm down on the ground like a beaten prizefighter.

Another flash.

They grab me by the lapel and shove another fist in my face, knocking me out cold.

Part 4

"Huntress? Huntress?"

I faintly hear someone calling my name. It's not Barbara, unless she had a sex change while I was out.

"Huntress? Are you okay?"

I open my eyes, blinking away the blurriness and see Agent Rivers staring down at me.

"You alright?" he asks again.

I start to get up but am hit with a blast of dizziness. Putting a hand to my head, I squeeze the bridge of my nose. "Where'd he go?"

"I don't know. I heard fighting up here and I came up. He blew past me on the stairs, knocked me down a few of them."

I got to my feet, swaying a bit, wincing a little as I touched my swollen eye.

"Let's get you fixed up," he said as he took my arm.

I pulled my arm away from his grip. "I'm fine. I'm going home."

"Why do you have to be so damn difficult? I'm trying to help you!"

"I told you already, I DON'T need your help. God! Just go back to wherever you came from and leave me alone!"

He stood in front of me, blocking my path. "I've overlooked the fact that you knocked me out in the park, which by the way is a federal offense because it's called assault on a federal officer. I come up here and you're lying unconscious. I try and help you and you won't let me."

"I don't need a highly paid baby-sitter in a cheap suit." I pushed past him and headed for the edge of the roof.

"Where are you going?" he said, unsure as to why I was now up on the ledge.

"I told you, I'm going home," I said as I jumped off.

I disappeared into the darkness and watched him peering over the edge, trying to figure out where I went. Odd thing is, he didn't seem too surprised that I'd just jumped off a ten-story building. He smashed his fist on the ledge in frustration as if pissed that I'd slipped away from him again. Something was starting to smell fishy.

Part 5

I got back to my apartment, tired, wet, and beat up.

When I opened the door I could sense someone inside. I'm really not in the mood to fight so I'm hoping whoever it is goes down easy, and it better not be that asshole Rivers because I'm apt to toss him right out the window.

I slip inside and stalk through my apartment, ready for anything and anyone.

"It's about time you got back," Dinah said as she stepped out of the darkness.

"Geezus, Dinah!"

"Sorry."

I flipped on the light and went into my room. "Look, I'm not in the mood to go through the whole speech about how Barbara sent you here to tell me to..."

"She didn't send me here, I came on my own."

I stopped what I was doing and turned to face her. "What?"

"I came here because I want to know what the hell's going on. She won't talk to me. Hell, she won't talk to anyone. She's locked herself up in her room and won't come out. Alfred has to leave food by the door."

"Shit," I swore as I ran my fingers through my hair.

"What happened to your eye?" Dinah shook her head and put her hands on her hips. "I want to know what's going on!"

I sat down on the bed and inhaled deeply then let my breath out slowly. "Dr. Quinzel hasn't been at the Arkham Asylum like we thought. Barbara had her transferred to some place in Illinois. She broke out and killed some guy that gave her a ride."

"So she's coming back to New Gotham?" she asked as she sat beside me.

"Not sure. Some Fed named Rivers is working on the case. He tracked me down and gave me pictures of Quinzel's cell, it's littered with photos of me."

Dinah gasped.

"I saw some guy trying to take pictures of me tonight. I chased him and he belted me pretty good, knocked me out cold. When I came to, Rivers was there. He claims that the guy blew past him and he wasn't able to catch him but I have a weird feeling about him."

"What do you mean?"

"I dunno, something's not right. How did he happen to be walking by right at the time I was being pummeled by that guy?"

"He was probably looking for you. If he told you all this about Quinzel then he's probably just trying to help."

"That's what he claims, but I'm telling you something's not adding up."

"So what do we do now?"

"I need to talk to Reese. Maybe he can give me more info about this Rivers guy. Go back to the Clocktower and try and persuade Barbara to go to the manor. My father is there so..."

"Bruce is at the manor?!?"

"Yes, long story for another time, now go!" I gave her a light shove towards the door and ignore the look she gives me.

In a way I'm glad that she's stuck with the challenge of talking to Barbara. That's something I definitely have no patience for right now.

Part 6

I tracked Reese down and he looked surprised to see me.

"Where's Agent Rivers?"

"I ditched him," I said with a bit of cockiness.

"You do understand what's going on and that Dr. Quinzel is most likely somewhere here in New Gotham."

"I know. I know. Listen, what do you know about this Rivers guy."

"Not much. He just kinda blew into town asking questions."

"When he came to the station was he with anyone?"

"No."

"You don't find that odd?"

"What are you trying to say?"

"I'm just trying to figure him out. Have you seen him recently?"

"No. I haven't talked to him since the other night."

"Okay, that screams odd. If he was working on an investigation then he'd be consulting with you guys, I mean this is your turf."

"He's a fed, they're loners. It's not uncommon for them to go solo."

How did I know this would be a waste of time. "Fine, whatever."

"Hey," he said as he grabbed my arm before I could walk away. "I didn't tell him your real name, so give me a little credit here."

"Yeah, I know. He pretty much assumed I was a stripper or something."

Reese laughed at the thought.

"Thanks a lot," I huffed.

"I'm sorry. It's just that..."

"I'll catch you later," I said as I stormed off.

This is the reason why I avoid relationships. No one, especially men, ever seem to see things the way I do.

Part 7

:: Huntress, come in. ::

"Go ahead, Dinah."

:: I'm having a hard time getting Barbara out of here. She refuses to come out of her room. ::

"So use your little mind tricks on her and haul her ass out of there."

:: Are you crazy? She'll have my head! ::

"She'll have to get over it. Have Alfred help you."

:: If you say so. Did you talk to Reese? ::

"If you could call it that. Major waste of time."

:: So are you heading to the manor? ::

"Not just yet. I have one more person to talk to."

:: Who? ::

"Rivers. I'm going to find out exactly what's going on."

Before she could try and talk me out of it I switched my comm off. It pisses Barbara off so now it can piss Dinah off. God, I love starting trouble.

Part 8

It didn't take long to find him, he was outside a bar asking people questions, flashing his badge around. So much for keeping things quiet.

When he was finished with the cop routine, I followed him for a while as he walked the streets.

"You're still here," I said from behind him, obviously startling him.

He whipped out his gun, turned around and aimed it at me.

"Easy there, Kojak."

"You're lucky I didn't shoot you," he said as he returned the gun to its holster.

I walked up and got somewhat in his face. "You mind telling me why you're really here in New Gotham."

"What?" he asked with surprise. "I told you..."

"I know what you TOLD me but I want the truth."

He stepped in closer towards me, giving the attitude right back. "What's your problem, Huntress? And what's your real name?"

"I'm the one asking the questions, not you. This is MY city NOT yours." When he got closer I noticed small scars on his neck, right under his jawline.

He laughed slightly. "You think you're so tough to take on Dr. Quinzel all by your little self."

"I don't think, I know. Base it on past experience." I wasn't getting anywhere with him. I had to check again to make sure I wasn't still talking to Reese.

"So what's your real name?"

I shook my head and began walking away. "You're not getting anything out of me."

"Don't be so sure."

At that comment I stopped and turned back around. "Is that a threat? If so, bring it on," I taunted.

"I'm not going to waste my energy. You can fend for yourself."

It was his turn to walk away and I let him, but what I didn't do is let him out of my sight.

I followed him to his hotel and up to his room. There was no way this guy was a fed, this was way too easy.

Part 9

He went out early the next morning and that's when I climbed down to his hotel room window and slipped inside.

I looked all around the room and didn't see anything of interest, then I looked under the bed.

Nothing.

I went over to the closet and started sifting through his clothes but found nothing. On the floor was a silver suitcase. I reached for it but stopped when I heard someone come to the door and start to open it.

Sliding the closet door shut behind me, I shoved myself way inside in the corner and stayed as still and quiet as I possibly could.

I heard the springs of the bed creak as he sat on it and could hear him dialing a number on his cellphone.

"It's me.....No.....I have a few more for you.....I miss you too.....Yeah, I know.....Are they picking him up tonight?.....Good.....I'll meet you there after you get him.....I'll see you later tonight."

He got up from the bed, standing dangerously close to the closet. I prayed that the door didn't open because there wasn't much in here to shield me.

Lucky for me he left the room again, locking the door behind him.

I stayed where I was for a few minutes longer to make sure he was really gone, then I climbed out of the closet, taking the silver suitcase with me.

I threw it on the bed and picked the lock on it, opening it up quickly.

My stomach jumped into my throat as I saw photos of me from the other night when I encountered the photographer. Also inside the suitcase was a camera, complete with an attachable flash. "Son-of-a-bitch," I mumbled to myself as I kept going through his stuff and found my file from my sessions with Dr. Quinzel. He knew exactly who I was, the little prick, and Dr. Quinzel was pulling his strings.

I snapped the case shut and tossed it back into the closet, not being neat about it. I was fuming mad. So fuming mad I walked right out the door instead of climbing out the window. I didn't care who saw me leaving his room, let him come get me.

"Dinah?"

:: Go ahead, Huntress. ::

"How's the relocation of Barbara going?"

:: Well, we got her here. Bruce drugged her. ::

"He what?"

:: She came to and starting giving him crap so he gave her a sedative. I've never seen her drunk like that, it's kinda funny. ::

"Sounds like a fun party. Listen, I just came from River's hotel room. He's the one that's been taking pictures of me and giving them to Quinzel. They've got something going on tonight, but I'm not sure what. Can you meet me over on the roof across from the Winston Hotel, above the deli?"

:: I'll be there as soon as I can. ::

"See you in a few."

Part 10

Dinah and I kept watch on his room for hours and there was no sign of him.

"It's a good thing there's a deli down there," Dinah said as she shoved the last bite of her sandwich into her mouth.

"Maybe I should have followed him earlier."

"Mmm. That was THE best sandwich I've EVER had."

"Maybe he's in his room and we just didn't see him go into the hotel?" I got up and climbed up on the ledge.

"Where are you going?"

"You haven't been listening to a damn word I've said. I'm going to check out his room and make sure we didn't miss him." I turned back around and got ready to scale down the wall but stopped when I heard Rivers' voice coming from behind me.

"You didn't miss me, I'm right here, Helena Kyle."

I turned around in time to see him pull out his gun, raising it towards me.

"No! Don't shoot her!" said a female voice from the shadows.

"Quinzel."

"Hello, Helena. Long time no visit," she said with an exaggerated frown. "Come here."

I didn't move.

"Don't be afraid, Helena. Now come here. Let me look at you."

Rivers waved the gun at me. "Get over there or I swear I'll put a bullet in you!"

I started walking slowly towards her and stopped. "That's as close as I get to you, psycho."

"Ouch. You shouldn't be tossing around insults like that, Helena, when we both know all the dirty little secrets you told me about yourself. Who's the true psycho? Huh?"

"I don't go around murdering innocent people unlike you. And who's the idiot side-kick you've got here?"

"Why that's the new and improved Agent Jeffrey Rivers."

Rivers smiled, rubbing his face. "Let's just say I borrowed his face for a while."

"I've heard of identity theft but that's fucked up."

She started circling around me, getting closer and closer with each pass. "You didn't come visit me. Not even once!" She wound up and punched me hard in the gut, sending me down on one knee. "All the times we shared together in my office and the times I helped you, did you forget all about that?" she growled as she grabbed a handful of my hair.

I launched myself towards her, bringing her down to the ground, my hands wrapped tightly around her

neck.

"NO! Helena!!!" I heard Dinah yell from behind me, then I heard a single shot.

I kept squeezing her neck, ignoring the world around me and ignoring her attempts to free herself from my grip.

The second shot broke me out of my trance and I quickly looked back. Dinah was lying on the ground and Rivers was on top of her.

"Dinah!" I yelled, letting go of Quinzel's neck. I raced towards him and he raised his gun towards me. I quickly kicked it out of his hand then I grabbed his wrist and smiled as I heard the crack.

"Bitch!" he screamed in pain.

"I should have broken it the first day I met you." I kned him in the face and then pressed my boot on his neck. "Then I should have ripped it off and shoved it up your ass."

I heard a God-awful cackling laugh coming from the other side of the roof. It sent a numbing chill down my spine because I knew it all too well.

Soon Quinzel began the annoying laugh as well, coupled with clapping and cheering.

"Well. Well. Well. I got out just in time!" the Joker said as he broke into another fit of laughter.

Rivers got up during my distraction and wrapped his arm around my neck, pulling my right arm behind my back and pushing up on it. The burning pain was intense but I didn't cry out, it only pissed me off.

I tried to fight him, but my attention was drawn to Dinah and the blood that was covering her stomach and the ground beneath her.

"You asshole!" I grumbled as I struggled some more and managed to get away from him. But before I could launch another attack on him, I was grabbed roughly from behind and shoved to the ground. Several vicious kicks landed on my body, some knocking the wind out of me, some drawing blood.

"This is so boring," Quinzel quipped as she kicked me again. "Where are the lights! The drama! The action!!" She tried to kick me again but I rolled away to avoid it.

When I got up I could see Rivers preparing to take me on and boy was I ready.

I wiped the blood from my mouth and like a charging bull I ran towards him, shoving my fist in his stomach, kneeing him right on target, and slamming him onto his back with a kick to the chest.

He flipped back up to his feet and smiled at me.

"Stay down, would ya!" I charged at him again, slamming into him and misjudging how close we were to the ledge.

His back hit the brick and my weight toppled him over, sending us plummeting down towards the street.

I reached out for something to grab onto in order to stop my fall and managed to wrap my hand around an iron bar that made up part of the fire escape. I'm sure I tore a muscle because the pain was like fire.

Rivers latched onto my ankle, screaming and crying like a baby. "Don't let me fall!"

He tried climbing up my leg, but I flashed back to Dinah lying up there on the roof and I began to shake him off of me. One more whip of my leg and he let go, crashing hard onto the ground.

I didn't look down, I don't need that vision as part of my memories. Instead, I swung myself up onto the side of the fire escape and ran back up to the roof.

Dinah was gone. When I looked around the roof the Joker and Quinzel were gone too.

"Dammit!" I yelled out as I smashed my fists on the ground.

I ran to the other side of the roof and looked over. Quinzel was loading Dinah into the back of a van and then she climbed in after her.

Without hesitation I jumped off the roof.

I sailed through the air and landed hard and painfully on the roof of the van, making a good-sized dent in the metal.

The Joker stomped on the gas and I began to slide towards the back. Luckily, the van had a rack on the roof so I grabbed onto it to keep from tumbling off.

I got back to the front of the van and drove my fist through the windshield, ignoring the glass biting and slicing my flesh. I grabbed the wheel and tried to get him to crash into a car, a pole, anything that would make the thing stop. It's probably not the smartest plan in the world but my options were limited.

I tugged and tugged but he kept control of the wheel.

Just as I was about to make another attempt, a large blade came through the roof only about an inch away from my neck.

The blade retracted and then appeared again in a different spot, this time on my right side close to my arm.

"Come on, Helena! Let me make some Helena Kabobs!" Quinzel cackled from inside the van, amusing herself as she tried to skewer me.

She thrust up the blade over and over and I twisted and turned to avoid it, most of the time. She stuck me once or twice and my blood was starting to make the top of the van slippery.

When the blade came up again, I took my foot and bent the blade so she wouldn't be able to pull it back down again. I could see and hear her frustration by the way she was yanking on it, trying to free it, cursing all the while.

I reached down for the door handle of the driver's side door and opened it up. Quickly and smoothly I swung myself in, kicking Joker in the head and pushing him away from the wheel.

I grabbed the wheel but it was too late, the van veered out of control, hitting a small sports car on the side of the road and sending us airborne.

The van turned on its right side in the air and came smashing down on the ground with full force.

Glass, plastic and metal flew all over the place as the van skidded down the street on its side for a while then flipped a few times, finally coming to a halt after smashing into a utility pole.

Silence. That's all I heard in my mind for God only knows how long before I came to.

My body was a mass of soreness, telling me that I must have gotten knocked around pretty good.

I get on all fours and see blood dripping down onto the ceiling of the van. Just the sight of it ignites the

adrenaline inside me. I touch my head and all I feel is wetness. I touch my nose, more wetness. Hmpf. I never looked good in red.

I could hear Quinzel laughing softly from the back, seemingly unfazed by the whole ordeal.

Then I heard a splintering sound.

CRACK.

CRACK.

CRACK. CRACK. CRACK.

BOOM!!!

The pole slammed down on the van and its detached, live wires danced around it, begging for someone to try and touch them.

A strong arm wrapped itself around my throat like a pissed off Cobra, squeezing and pulling, cutting off my air.

I clawed at the sickly white skin trying to free myself.

"Why don't you finish Ms. Kitty off, my dear," the Joker suggested.

"Mmm, with pleasure."

The whole side of Quinzel's head looked like it had been chopped off, put in a blender and slapped back on. I think the injury made her even crazier.

She took out a switchblade, licked the blade and prepared to embed it into my chest.

I fought harder against the Joker's grip because I was starting to feel like I was going to pass out.

Kicking out towards her head, I knocked her back towards the door, hearing the blade clang onto the pavement as it tumbled out of the open door.

She crawled towards the door and reached out for the knife. I figured I'd help her out by giving her a rough shove with my foot.

Her body began convulsing and smoking as the electrical current from the downed wires grabbed hold of her, sucking out every last breath she had.

"NO!!!" the Joker screamed as he watched his lover's body fry in front of him.

I used his distraction to get away from him and suck in as much air as I could.

"NO!!!" he continued to wail, still concentrating on the smoldering body lying outside of the van.

I climbed into the back and found Dinah lying in the corner towards the back. I kicked the back doors open and checked for any wires. Finding none, I dragged her outside and set her down on the sidewalk just as the Hummer pulled up.

"Helena!" Barbara yelled out.

The Joker came out of the back of the van, hell bent on seeking revenge on me. He grabbed me by the back of my jacket and threw me into the brick wall. He came back for another round and I kicked him in

the stomach. Unfazed, he picked me up again and hurled me through a storefront window.

I blacked out for a few minutes and when I came to I could see a large cape blowing wildly in the wind as my father beat the Joker to death. He'd pick him up and slam him down on the pavement over and over until he got tired of doing it. Then he picked the Joker up, held him over his head and tossed him towards Quinzel's body, allowing the electricity to have its way with him.

I staggered out of the broken window, falling onto the sidewalk as fatigue and pain consumed me, but he was there. He scooped me up into his arms and gently placed me into the Hummer.

Part 11

I limped into Dinah's room and found her awake and sitting up, Barbara by her side. So this is what it looks like from the outside. Usually it's Barbara by my side, nursing my wounds, making sure I'm comfortable.

"Hey kid, how ya feelin'?"

"Like I got shot."

"It's no fun, I can sympathize with ya."

"I think your father is still in the den. He was looking for you earlier." Barbara finished up with Dinah's bandaging and began cleaning up.

"I took a shower to get the Joker stank off me. I'll see if he's still here."

When I went into the den he was sitting there watching TV.

"Helena!"

"Hey. You were looking for me?"

"Yes, I-I just wanted to check in on you to make sure you were okay."

"I'm fine. Thanks for helping us out. I owe you two now."

"No need to thank me, but you should have told me what was going on."

"I'm sure I'll hear all about it from Barbara because..."

"Actually, you won't. I asked her not to grill you about it. You were looking out for her. Your intentions were good, but you could have at least told me."

"I know. I was just pissed at her for not telling me about Quinzel. I hate secrets."

"You're right, I hate secrets too. There's something dishonest about them. I can understand your anger."

Wow. Could this be real? Someone was actually on my side for once, and of all people it was my father.

He reached over and turned my face towards the light. "Barbara did a good job sewing those up. You'll hardly scar. She does take good care of you, I'll give her that."

I couldn't deny that, no matter how irritating she can be.

"I better get going," he said as he stood up. "I just wanted to make sure you were okay." He roughed my hair up a little before walking out, as if I were a toddler.

"Bye," I said softly. I doubt he heard me but I was too caught up in the moment to say it any louder.

~ FIN

GUILT

Written: 8/2004

PART 1

I can't believe this is all happening.

Everything was going according to plan when the fight broke out, and it was an easy win for us. But something went wrong. Horribly wrong.

It's my fault. That's why I feel so sick to my stomach.

I told her that everything was clear but I didn't see the one guy in the corner with the gun.

I don't think I'll ever get those two gunshots out of my head.

BLAM! BLAM!

One right after the other, not even giving her time to jump out of the way or giving me time to prevent the bullets from hitting her.

All I could do was look on in shock as she fell to the ground, bleeding all over the damn place.

What's worse is that he got away, and they NEVER get away from me. It's just something I don't allow to happen. But I was too concerned about her, naturally.

I raced back to the Clocktower with her slung over my shoulder, bleeding all over me.

When I told Barbara what had happened I thought for sure she was going to kill me on the spot. Her anger on top of my own guilt wasn't helping me, in fact it sent me straight to the liquor store.

I bought a bottle of Vodka and went back to the Clocktower.

When I returned, I attempted to ask how Dinah was doing and Barbara just told me to "get out." Those words pushed me right over the edge and into this trance-like state.

Her words rang through me over and over, beating my insides like a child wailing away at a piñata.

I trudged into the training room, leaving the lights off. I took off my duster and let it fall to the floor as I headed into the far corner of the room where I sat on the floor, leaning against the wall.

Flashbacks of the evening consumed my thoughts as I opened the bottle and began to drink. And drink. And drink.

I downed about half the bottle in a matter of fifteen minutes and started to feel it's effects, but I don't give a shit, I'm going to keep on drinking.

I can't believe I let her down, I think to myself as I stagger to my feet and decide to go a few rounds with the bag, just to let some of my frustrations out.

Taking my bottle with me, I set it down on the floor after taking another long swig. It stung my throat and warmed me inside for a moment, adding fuel to my fire.

I swing at the bag a few times, feeling the material bite into my bare knuckles.

I swing harder.

Harder.

Even harder.

Then I give it swift kick full of my rage and it rips open, spilling sawdust all over the floor.

I bend over and put my hands on my knees as I try to steady my breathing and I notice that my knuckles are bleeding. Oh well, it doesn't matter because my blood will only match Dinah's blood that's still all over me.

I grab my bottle and walk around the room, drinking and mumbling out-loud with random comments. If anyone were to see me they'd assume I'd gone mad.

"Why?" I ask whoever could possibly be listening. "How could I have missed that!?"

I wipe the tears that fall from my eyes and take a few more sips.

It's getting harder to stand up so I go back to my corner and slide down on my butt.

My guilt is eating me up and finally takes over. I move my knees up and cover my head with my arms as I begin to sob.

"She has to be okay. She just HAS TO!"

I cried some more and then at some point my body shut down and I passed out.

PART 2

When I woke up again, I knew exactly where I was, despite my drunken state.

I knocked my bottle over in a show of clumsiness and quickly picked it up, downing the remaining amount. It was an awful lot to consume at once, but I didn't care that my throat burned like hell, I deserved it.

I took the bottle and threw it across the room, not even flinching when it smashed into thousands of pieces.

What I didn't notice was Barbara wheeling into the room a few seconds afterwards, stopping a good 20 feet from me.

"Don't start breaking shit in here," she said to me in a non-Barbara tone.

"Yeah, well, I'm not having the best day so get off my back," I slurred like a drunken sailor.

"Get up," she said.

I looked up at her through heavily eyelids, unsure I'd heard what she said.

"GET UP!" she yelled.

"Leave me alone, Barbara."

She got up out of her chair and started walking towards me. Maybe I really was too drunk because she's up and walking.

Fuck. Her damn transponder invention thingy.

"I said GET UP!" she screamed at me with a wild look in her eyes.

"You better not get too close to me or..." I didn't get to finish because she grabbed me by the front of my shirt and hauled me up.

"You and I are going to have a little heart-to-heart talk, but I'm going to do the talking and you're going to do the listening, got it?"

I shoved her away and frowned at her. "I feel like shit as it is and I don't need..."

WHAM!

She punched me in the mouth, splitting my lip, and sending me crashing onto the floor.

"I'm SO tired of everything revolving around YOU, Helena! That's what almost got Dinah killed tonight!"

OOMPH!

The tip of her boot connected with my ribs as she kicked me with all her might. Not even a bottle of alcohol could mask the pain of them breaking. I curled into a ball as I tried to stop the pain.

"We're a TEAM and you're always treating Dinah as if she's a bother rather than a teammate."

OOMPH!!

Another kick to the same spot makes my head spin.

Barbara got on her knees beside me and roughly grabbed me again. "She's practically bled to death and might not make it through the night, no thanks to you!"

WHAM!!

She slammed her fist in my face and doubled the rate at which my head was spinning.

I lost all sense of everything at that point. She was saying things to me and I didn't even know what she was talking about. She just kept hitting me over and over like a wild woman.

My head slammed down on the floor, blood spewing from my mouth and splattering onto the floor in front of me.

That was the last thing I saw before everything turned black.

PART 3

"Easy, Miss Helena," I heard Alfred say as I came to. He held an icepack to the side of my face as well as one behind my neck.

"Where..."

"You're in the training room. You had quite the go-around with someone. You mind telling me who? And don't tell me the boxing bag did this to you."

I tried to sit up but it was incredibly painful.

He saw that I was struggling and put his hands on me. "Better lie still, seems you've got more going on than just a broken face. Let me get some supplies. DON'T move!"

My head was spinning and nothing was making sense to me. I felt lightheaded and, well, drunk.

When Alfred returned I could hear him shouting at someone...Barbara.

She entered the room first and I have to admit that I felt a rush of fear come over me. I quickly sat up, wincing as the pain in my side burned and throbbed. "What? You weren't finished?" I said, spitting out some blood.

"Miss Barbara, what on Earth has come over you?" Alfred asked as he stepped in front of her chair as if to shield me.

"Stay out of this, Alfred."

"I will NOT stay out of this. You beat her down and left her here hurt and bleeding. These actions are NOT of the Barbara Gordon I know."

"Yeah, well, this Barbara Gordon is sick and tired of Helena's hero antics which nearly killed Dinah last night, not to mention herself in similar situations."

"Beating her nearly to death isn't going to solve anything. Accidents and mistakes happen. I'm quite positive Helena had not intended for Dinah to end up in harms way."

"Stop sticking up for her! That's why she continues to do it!" Barbara wheeled around Alfred and stopped in front of me.

I coughed a little as I struggled to breathe. She didn't seem to care about my pain, I could see the hatred still blazing in her eyes.

"Do you understand why I did what I did?" she asked me.

"Not really," I answered in a raspy voice.

Alfred knelt down beside me and began cleaning my wounds and assessing the damage she'd inflicted upon me. He pressed his fingers along my ribcage, causing me to cry out in pain.

"You've got at least two broken ribs." He turned around to face Barbara as he stood up. "I'm taking her to the lab."

"Like hell you are! Tend to her in here. She gets no special treatment until she realizes what she's done."

"What the fuck is wrong with you?" I asked as I got on my knees, attempting to stand up. "I think you've lost your mind."

"Miss Barbara, I think you need to get some rest and..."

"DON'T tell me what I need! Any of you! You have NO idea what I'm going through!" That was it, the dam holding back her tears broke. She sobbed like I'd never seen her sob before.

Alfred went over to her and put his arm around her. "Let's get you up to bed." His soothing voice convinced her to go with him. "Stay put, Miss Helena. I'll be right back."

Of course I didn't listen. Why would I?

I slowly and painfully made my way into the lab where Dinah was lying in bed. She was extremely pale. So much so, you almost didn't notice the white bandage on the side of her neck.

She looked so peaceful but I knew she certainly wasn't going to feel that way when she woke up.

I touched her hand and it was like ice. It scared me so much I moved away.

"I'm so sorry, Dinah. If I could change what happened you know I would. I'm sorry I let you down."

I'm not sure that the kid could hear me but I had to get the words out.

"What did I tell you?" Alfred asked as he came into the room. "You're going to cause yourself further harm if you continue roaming about."

"I know. I just wanted to check on her."

"Miss Dinah is holding her own. Come now, let's get you fixed up."

I let Alfred nurse me back to health but all the while I couldn't help but wonder what was going on with Barbara.

After he was finished, he ordered me to my room but I took a detour and went to see Barbara.

When I got to her room, the door was slightly open and I could see her massaging her temples and shaking her head as if to shake the cobwebs out.

She settled back into bed and that's when I knocked softly.

"Alfred, you told me to stay in bed and I am so..."

I poked my head in and she was visibly surprised at my presence. "What?"

I walked into the room, glaring at her as I went to the night stand to find out what she's been taking. "You want to tell me what's the matter with you? Your anger isn't all my doing. You still mad because MY FATHER drugged you in order to get you somewhere safe?"

She looked at me and started to say something but I cut her off.

"Yeah, that's right. BRUCE drugged you, that was none of my doing, contrary to what you believe."

She didn't argue with me. THAT surprised me.

"And do you honestly think that I don't feel guilty about what happened to Dinah? Do you really think that I

purposely put her in that position? How many times have you been out there and missed something? Huh? Oh wait, that's right, you're fuckin' perfect!"

The quivering lip indicated that I'd struck a nerve. So I kept going.

"It was a MISTAKE and I hate like hell that it happened. I've wished over and over that it was me instead of her because maybe things would be a lot easier to deal with around here and maybe..."

"DON'T!" she said as the tears began to fall. "Don't say you wish it was you."

"Oh, and you care all of a sudden? You certainly didn't care earlier when you were beating my face in!" A sharp pain gripped me and I staggered a bit.

"Helena?"

I put up my hand, waving her off.

"I-I'm sorry," she said with a tremble in her voice. "I'm sorry! I'm so....so sorry," she wailed.

Wincing, I sat myself down on the edge of the bed, not facing her, still trying to breathe through the pain as I hugged my aching belly.

"I....I don't want to lose either of you," she sobbed. "It's the first time she's been seriously hurt and....and I didn't know what to do."

I didn't turn around and didn't say anything, I just let her go.

"I haven't slept since all this happened with Quinzel and the Joker. Then Dinah..." her voice trailed off as she started to cry harder.

Still, I said nothing.

"When I put the transponder on earlier, I took some painkillers beforehand. It must have done something to my system. It fueled my rage and I snapped." She started panting and gasping for air because she'd been crying so hard.

I hugged my side as I stood up, breathing through the shift in pressure.

"Helena, don't go."

"Why?" I asked in somewhat of a sarcastic tone.

"Come sit down so I can look at you."

I turned around to look at her and she was wiping her eyes and motioning to me.

"Come here."

"Alfred took care of me, don't worry about it."

"Please," she said in a sobby, pleading voice.

I rolled my eyes and walked over to her, flinching as she touched my arms to move them away from my middle. I watched her expression as she pulled up my shirt, unwrapped my bandaging and saw the devastation she left on my body. I actually thought she was gonna puke on me the way she quickly covered her mouth.

"H-Helena," she stuttered before the tears began to fall again.

Gently, she touched her fingertips on the black and blue flesh. Again I flinched, wincing at the movement and hissing in pain.

"Oh God, I'm so sorry!" she cried as she wrapped my ribs back with shaky hands.

"I need to sit," I said, unable to stand the pain any longer. Plus, her emotions were starting to get to me.

She moved over to give me room and I gently lowered myself onto the bed.

I felt her hand on my chin, turning my face towards her so she could inspect the cuts on my face.

Even though they weren't on her body she contorted her face as she looked at each one, especially the one by the corner of my eye because it was pretty deep.

"We should get you to the lab and restitch these so they won't scar. I know Alfred did his best, but..."

"They're fine," I said as I pulled my head away.

"I don't know how to make up for what I've done."

"I don't either," I said plainly. "Even if you weren't yourself, the things you said to me were deep within you somewhere."

It was her turn to have nothing to say.

"I'm going to find the guy that did this to her and make damn sure he doesn't squeeze another trigger as long as he lives, which won't be long."

I stood up and walked out of the room, leaving her with enough of my words to digest.

PART 4

Later that afternoon, I stopped in to check on Dinah and was surprised to find her awake. Barely, but awake nonetheless.

She smiled at me and I smiled back. "Hey, kid. You hanging in there?"

"Trying," she said in a soft voice. Her eyes narrowed a bit. "They must have given you a run for your money," she commented, looking at the cuts on my face.

Now was definitely NOT the time to tell her who was really the cause of my injuries, so I lied. "Yeah, they definitely did." I looked away from her for a moment, trying not to tear up, then I turned back. "Dinah, I'm so sorry I didn't see him."

"Huh?"

"The guy who shot you. I didn't see him. He must have been hiding behind those crates."

"It's not your fault. I didn't see him either."

I shook my head. "I should have stopped him."

"You were too....too far away."

I couldn't help but laugh at her attempt at making me feel like it wasn't my fault. "I shouldn't have happened this way. I fucked up."

"No..."

"But I'm gonna make it up to you by catching the bastard." With that comment I turned on my heels and headed out, tossing my comm set onto the table on the way out.

"Helena wait," I heard her say, but I kept walking.

PART 5

It's taken a lot longer to track this shithead down than I thought it would, and that's only pissing me off even further. If it's one thing I don't have it's patience. But I managed to find him and have been following him for the past hour and a half. I want to make sure I don't mess this one up so I'm not gonna rush it.

Right now he's tossing back a few at the corner bar. I didn't follow him inside. Instead, I'm in the alley across the street.

So I wait.

And wait.

And wait.

Finally, he comes out of the bar, but he's got some skanky girl on his arm. They're slobbering all over each other like two horny teenagers. The sight is rather repulsive given the fact that this asshole gunned Dinah down right in front of me.

They pass by me and I can feel my eyes change.

I follow them for a few blocks, forcing me to witness his hand roaming all over her ass.

This is ridiculous. They could walk for hours or worse, they could have sex right in front of me. Judging by their periodic stops to make out, that looks like where this sick romance is heading.

Time for me to step in.

"Hey, baby!" I yell at them.

They turn around to see who's yelling at them.

"Hey! What's this? Who the hell is she?" I ask, pretending to be the jealous girlfriend.

"I'm his girlfriend. I guess he failed to mention me to you."

"What the hell are you talking about? I don't even..." He was clearly drunk but not drunk enough not to try and talk his way out of it.

"Don't go there with me! You know when the baby's born I..."

"Baby?!?" the woman exclaimed. Then she slapped him across the face and took off.

"Wait!" he yelled, but she didn't turn back.

"Aw, looks like you're sleeping alone tonight. Or should I say you're taking a long dirt nap." I punched him in the face and then kicked him in the chest, watching him fall to the ground.

I hauled him up, trying to ignore the intense pain flaring up in my side, then tossed him violently into a brick wall.

He sagged to the ground and then I saw him going for something inside his coat, most likely his gun, so I kicked out towards him, pressing my foot on his neck and pinning him to the wall. His hands went up around my ankle, completely forgetting about his weapon.

"You're f-fuckin' crazy, bitch," he gasped in a oxygen-starved breath.

"Yeah, that tends to happen when people try and kill my friends."

It took him a minute to get it but he eventually got it and smiled this sick, lopsided smile. "Heh heh, she was an easy target. I just used her for practice."

I felt myself freeze up out of sheer disbelief that'd he'd have the balls to say that to me. But rather than lash out, I decided to play with them so I moved my foot away from this throat and stepped back.

Holding my hands up in the air by my sides, I taunted him. "An easy one, huh. Well, let's see how lucky you are with me."

He rubbed his throat and stood up. "You'll be easy too," he said as he pulled out the gun from his coat.

"By all means, go ahead and shoot then." After I said it I even wondered to myself if I was going crazy. What the hell was I thinking? I was only about ten feet from him. And he had a gun! I think my rage was blinding my judgment. Still, I didn't move, even when he raised the gun and aimed it at me.

"You're making this WAY too easy for me," he complained.

"Aw, I'm sorry. What can I do to make it more of a challenge for you? I thought you liked the easy ones?"

His gun swayed a little as he tried to steady it and I hoped that his drunken state would work to my advantage.

He smiled at me again and when I listened closely I could hear his finger tightening on the trigger.

BLAM!

A shot rang out and I leaped upwards, flipping backwards and landing squarely on my feet when I came back down. "Missed me," I teased as I winked at him.

BLAM!

Another shot came my way but I dropped to the ground just before it whizzed past me. That one was a little too close for comfort.

"Not so easy, am I?"

CLICK!

CLICK!

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

He was out of bullets already.

"Damn, you're no fun," I said sarcastically. "Now you get to be my easy bitch."

The idiot threw the gun at me, smacking me in the side of the head. I didn't anticipate that one. Then he started to run.

I wasted no time in chasing him and tackled him to the ground, shoving him roughly, face-first, on the pavement.

We traded blows for quite some time and he got in a good swift kick to my ribs. It paralyzed me for a moment but I snapped out of it when I saw him coming at me again.

I kicked out at him and caught him in the chin, sending him reeling backwards, buying me enough time to get up.

I sauntered over to him and kicked him in the face again. Then again. Again. And again until he started crying like a little baby.

PART 6

The ride up to the lair seemed to take forever.

When the doors finally opened, Barbara was there.

I walked past her, ignoring whatever she was saying to me, and dropped him right in the middle of the room like a bag of rocks. Yes, I brought him back to the Clocktower.

Then I went into Dinah's room, turning on the monitor in there and facing it so she could see. "Hey, kid. I have a visitor that wants to say something to you."

Her eyes were filled with confusion, probably because my face was a bloody mess and I kinda blew in and out of the room like a breeze.

I walked back out to the computer area and grabbed Barbara's camcorder. "Here," I said, handing it to her, "Turn it on and film this."

"Geezus, Helena. What are you..."

"Just do it!" I yelled at her.

She turned the camera on, I could see the red light illuminate, and pointed it at him.

I kicked him in the stomach, at the same time holding a tight grip over my own. "Wake up you miserable fuck!"

He moaned a little but didn't react so I decided to speed things up by dropping down next to him and grabbing him around his neck, hauling him up to face him towards the camera.

"Say it!" I demanded.

He moaned some more.

"Fuckin' say it!!!" I screamed in his ear, tightening my hold around his neck.

Barbara put the camera down. "Helena, stop it! You..."

"Get that camera back on him! He's gonna say it or else I'll make his death a slow and painful process that'll last all night long. NOW SAY IT!" I yelled at him again, squeezing harder.

"S...so...sorry," he gasped.

"What? I don't think she heard you." I squeezed even more, turning him a dark purple.

"Sorry!" he coughed out.

"Sorry who? She has a fuckin' name you know. It's Dinah."

"D...D...Dinah!" he huffed.

I let go of him and slammed his head down on the hard floor, knocking him out.

I stood up and wiped the blood from my face with the sleeve of my duster. "Get this piece of shit out of my face before I kill him," I instructed Barbara before heading up to the balcony to cool down.

PART 7

It took her a good fifteen minutes before she came out to check on me.

"Took you long enough," I joked. "I thought you would have been after me in about five seconds."

"I had to check on Dinah first," she said as she handed me a towel.

I wiped my face, looking at the amount of blood staining the towel. "She okay?"

"You scared the shit out of her."

"Sorry. Guess I got carried away."

Barbara smiled slightly. "That seems to be a trend around here."

I couldn't help but laugh too. "This whole thing's been so messed up." I leaned my head back on the wall and pressed the towel on the cut that had reopened by my eye.

"It's over now, though."

"Is it?" I asked.

She shot me a confused look.

"How do I know you're not going to 'go off' on me the next time something happens? I've NEVER seen that violent side to you before. I don't want to see it again, quite frankly, and certainly not aimed towards me."

"I know," she said as she clasped her hands together, "but I can assure you it won't happen again." She took a deep breath and let it out. "I've decided to take a leave of absence at work in order to rest and get my life back on track."

Somehow I wasn't believing that Barbara was going to rest. It just wasn't in her nature to sit around and hang out. She lived for the thrill of crime fighting - like me.

"I'm gonna hold you to that," I said. "The resting part."

She smiled for a moment and then it faded. "I'm truly sorry, Helena. I hope we can get past this and you can learn to trust me again."

There's that damn word again - trust. It's probably the one word that I have the hardest time with.

I nod but don't speak, and even with me not even saying a word I've said enough for her to understand that our conversation is over.

She turned herself around and wheeled back inside.

Everything hurts right now - my head, my ribs, my back, my heart and my soul. I wish aspirin had the power to take all of it away.

~FIN

I leave this fic with the lyrics to Fly From The Inside by Shinedown:

Here's the weight of the world on my shoulders
Here's the weight of the world on my shoulders
On my shoulders
All alone I pierce the chain
And all in all the sting remains
And dying eyes consume me now
The voice inside screams out loud

I am focused on what I am after
The key to the next open chapter

Cause I found a way to steal the sun from the sky
Long live that day that I decided to fly from the inside

Every day a new deception
Pick your scene and take direction
And all in all I search to connect
But I don't wear a mask and I have no regrets

I am focused on what I am after
The key to the next open chapter

I can't escape the pain
I can't control the rage
Sometimes I think that I'm gonna go insane
I'm not against what's right
I'm not for what's wrong
I'm just making my way and I'm gone

Here's the weight of the world on my shoulders

STAY

Written: 8/2004

NOTE: I'm going out on a limb and have written a very short story that is a little out-of-the-norm for me because it's NC-17 (at the end). But, I love the relationship between Reese and Helena and have decided to explore that a bit in this piece.

This story contains explicit sexual content. I am not responsible if readers under 17 read this story.

PART 1

I'm flying down the street at record speed, hot on the heels of a snot-nose punk who just smacked an old man upside the head with a baseball bat because he wanted his money.

When I round the corner I find the kid on his knees in the middle of the street, his hands behind his head.

"You have the right to remain silent," Reese said to him as he cuffed him and read him his rights.

After Reese loaded the kid into his car and shut the door I decided to present him with my comments.

"Why do you do that?"

"Do what? My job?" he said with a puzzled look.

"I could have handled this one on my own and you..."

"Someone called in a robbery and I was on my way to check it out. I saw him running and he fit the description of the suspect so I'm taking him in. End of story." He shrugged a bit and walked around to the driver's side.

I couldn't stifle my irritation and groaned.

"You need to learn to work WITH me sometimes. After all, I am a cop and you're...well, you're not."

I scrunched up my face. "So that makes you more capable or something?"

"No," he sighed. "That makes me within the law." He opened the door and was about to get in but I wasn't finished yet.

"So if I had caught the little prick and then brought him to you that would have been wrong?"

I could see him think about it for a minute before answering. "Yeah," he answered flatly as he slid behind the wheel and shut the door.

"How do you figure?" I asked, bending down to look in the open window.

"Look, just let me handle the streets around here, okay? Plus...I don't want you getting mixed up with some of the riff raff 'round here and ending up hurt."

"Aw, I didn't know you cared," I said sarcastically. What a crock of shit because deep down I knew he did.

"What the fuck is this, some sort of soap opera?" the punk asked from the back seat.

"You shut up back there," Reese scolded.

"The two love birds having a lovers quarrel. How cute."

"I said shut up!" Reese yelled as he twisted around in the seat.

The kid looked at him and laughed, completely unfazed by his weak temper.

"I gotta go. Remember what I said." He pointed a finger at me before driving off which totally irritated me.

As I watched him drive down the street I was torn between emotions.

On one hand I was pissed because he's still not very accepting of my nightly profession, even though it's helping him out, and on the other hand I know that he really does care about me and my well-being. Still, I don't know whether to be mad at him or launch myself towards him and kiss him.

I've had a "thing" for him since the day I met him and I haven't been able to shake it.

Sometimes my "thing" for guys only lasts a short time, no longer than a month, tops. But with Reese it's different. There's something about him. Something about his stare as he looks at me, trying to figure me out. Something about his walk. Something about his arrogance. Ugh! I can't get him out of my head sometimes!

:: Huntress, you there? ::

"Yeah."

:: Everything alright? :: Barbara asks.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Why?"

:: Just noticed that you've been in the same place for a while and wanted to make sure you were okay. Did you catch the kid? ::

"Funny you should ask. I can answer that in one word...Reese."

:: Uh huh. He beat you to it again, huh? ::

"I told him to knock it off but he claims this is his beat and yadda yadda yadda." I heard Barbara laugh but I wasn't finding the situation funny. "Don't laugh, it's not funny. He's seriously pissing me off."

:: Right. :: she said in a heavily sarcastic tone.

"What? And it wouldn't piss you off if someone was cutting in on your action?"

There was no answer.

"I'm calling it a night. I'll see you tomorrow." I clicked the comm off and headed to my apartment. Come to think of it, I think I stomped the whole way.

PART 2

During a restless night of Reese-filled dreams, I arrived at an idea. I decided to have a little fun taunting and teasing him. Since he's felt the need to piss me off I'm going to give some of it back. Just so we're even, of course.

Before I head out on sweeps, I make a pitstop at Gibson's because I'm betting he has something I want.

When I walk in the door, he's in front of me in a matter of seconds.

"I could smell you coming," he says with a love-struck smile.

I curl my lip a bit. "Um, thanks."

"What brings you by my sweet leather-clad heroine?"

His sappy adjective-laden verses turn my stomach every time, but I'd never tell him. "I need a favor."

"Anything, just name it!" he snaps to attention.

"I need a police scanner."

He frowns. "A police scanner? What do you..."

"Do you have it or not?"

"I have a couple of them."

"Can I borrow one?"

He goes behind the counter and slides the glass back on the display case. Pulling out a metal box, he digs into his pocket for the key and opens the box.

I peer over to look inside the box. "The small one. Can I borrow that one?"

He hands it over to me, still unsure whether he should. "I'm not responsible for whatever you choose to do with it and if someone were to ask where you got it you are to say Louis J. Clarkson the third."

"Who the hell is that?"

"Just some jerk who used to pick on me at summer camp," he explained with a smile.

"Don't worry about it. I'll bring it back in a few days." I tucked it into my pocket and headed out. "Thanks, Gibson!"

It's a shame Gibson wasn't taller, darker and handsome because I'd most likely have a "thing" for him as well. He's truly a nice guy with a big heart and has helped me out of a good share of jams, but I just can't get past the dorkiness.

I climb up to one of the rooftops and take out the scanner. Turning it on, it begins to crackle to life. I hear various voices barking out locations and descriptions, but none of the voices belong to Reese. I know he's on duty because I watched him go to work. Okay, so I followed him for a little while, sue me.

After about fifteen minutes I hear a call go out about a murder suspect spotted in a parked car a few blocks away.

Sure enough, Reese's voice answers the call.

I'm on my feet and already jumping roof to roof to make it over there before he does. Let the games begin!

I find the parked car and notice the man in the passenger seat looking awfully nervous. He's slouched down in the seat a bit and definitely keeping an eye out for the cops.

I jump off the building and come slamming down onto the hood of the car, staring right at him through the windshield.

I wink at him and he starts to panic, sliding over into the driver's seat and reaching for the keys that are in the ignition.

Quickly, I come around by the driver's side, reach inside and grab his wrist so he can't start it. "Uh uh uh," I warn him.

He hits me in the face with his elbow but I drag him towards me and pull him out through the window. Shoving him down on the ground on his stomach, I yank his arms behind his back and smile as he yelps in pain. Some murder suspect he is, he's not even putting up a fight.

Headlights shine on me as Reese pulls up and gets out. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Picking up more trash," I answer.

Reese shakes his head and slaps the cuffs on the guy before hauling him up. "I told you to let me handle..."

"AAAAAHHHHHH!" I hear a male voice screaming to my right. I whip my head around and see the exact same man I had just pinned to the ground - his twin brother. Then I hear gunshots.

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

"NOOOOOOOOO!" the man yells. "LET HIM GO!!!!"

One more shot.

BLAM!

Then silence.

My world comes back into focus as I realize that Reese has just shot the deranged man shooting at us. Smoke puffs from the barrel of his gun before he tucks it back into the holster.

I'm on the ground along with the cuffed guys who's now crying like a little girl. "Where's my brother?" he screams.

"You okay?" Reese asks me as he goes over to the man's body and feels for a pulse.

"Yeah," I say as I stand up. "You didn't have to push me."

Reese sighs heavily as no pulse is found. He hangs his head for a moment, shaking off the event that just unfolded and then stands up.

He hauls the cuffed guy up, ignoring his screaming and crying, and puts him in the back of his car.

"I have to call this in so you better..." he stops and looks at my arm. "Dammit, you were hit."

I look over at my upper arm and shrug at the bleeding wound. "Nah, just a scratch. It's nothing."

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his keys, pulling one of them off the ring. "Go to my apartment and wait for me."

"Huh?"

"I know about you and the fear of hospital thing and I sure as hell don't want you walking around bleeding to death so go. I'll be there as soon as I can get someone to cover the scene for me."

I take the key and look at it. Not sure why. Maybe wondering if this is all really happening.

"Go, before half of New Gotham's finest show up."

I ran off down the street, still wondering if this was real.

:: Huntress? ::

"What?"

:: I have a report of shots fired on...::

"Anderson Ave. I know I was just there. Reese has it covered as usual."

:: Everything alright? ::

"Yeah. Listen, can you send Dinah out to cover the rest of my shift. I need some time to clear my head. This whole Reese business is messing with me. I'm gonna see about having a talk with him to clear the air."

:: I'd rather not send her out but I can't afford having you out there without your head in the game. Go ahead. I'll catch up with you tomorrow. ::

"Thanks." I turned the comm off and removed it, shoving it in my jacket pocket. Barbara knew how to override the "off" feature and I certainly didn't want any distractions.

I got to Reese's apartment and slipped inside. There was no need to look around because I'd been there once before. Nothing happened, of course, just a beer, some talk and good-bye.

I sat on the floor in the darkness of the room. I didn't want to get blood on his couch. It's a lot easier to clean up from the hardwood floor. I guess I've had enough wounds to know this.

It didn't take him long to show up, and when he did he was surprised to see me sitting in the middle of the room when he flipped on the lights.

"You okay?" he asked, fearing that I'd fainted or something.

"Fine, just waiting for you."

"Come on, let's get you into the bathroom." He helped me up and led me to the bathroom where he had me sit on the toilet seat cover.

He helped me get my jacket off - not an easy task. "Ow!" I hissed as I slid my left arm out of the sleeve.

"A scratch, huh? That's more than a scratch," he pointed out as he tossed my jacket into the tub.

I turned my arm and looked at the wound. He was right, there was no denying it. "Okay, so maybe I should upgrade it to a graze instead of a scratch."

"Mmmhmm."

"Ow!" I gasped as he wiped up the blood and pressed on the wound.

"Sorry, but you don't want it to get infected and have your arm fall off do you?"

"Not really."

"Then stop being a baby."

He kneeled down beside me and I could feel the heat from his body radiating from him. I could also smell his cologne. Nothing overpowering, it was just right and just enough to take my mind off the pain.

"You got quiet all of a sudden," he said as he cleaned it up a bit more and wrapped it up.

"Just trying to concentrate on anything but the pain."

As he applied the tape to the dressing, he got a little more closer. "I'm sorry I shoved you so hard. I didn't mean to hurt you." His eyes locked onto mine and it kicked up the butterflies in my stomach.

"You didn't hurt me."

"I'm glad this was it," he said as he absently rubbed my arm near my elbow, "because it could have been worse. I don't..."

"Shhh," I said as I placed my finger over his lips.

He didn't move away, just moved towards me, putting his mouth over mine.

It was like being electrocuted - all these tiny shockwaves of excitement rushing through me as he kissed me and then slid his tongue into my mouth. Most men slobber but Reese was a pro, he gently caressed my tongue with his and not once did he shove it down my throat. I was in heaven.

His kisses left my mouth and moved towards my neck, right smack dab on my pulse point. Shivers ran down my spine as I wrapped my arms around his neck, pulling him in closer to me, taking in his scent.

"Let's move this elsewhere," I whispered to him, knowing full well that he'd get the hint.

And he did.

He led me into the bedroom, sitting me down on the edge of the bed.

I licked my lips in satisfaction as I watched him unbutton my shirt and slip it off me, stealing little kisses as he did it.

Then he went for my leather pants.

He gently pushed me backwards so I was lying down and then pulled off my boots. He went for the button and zipper of my pants and with a good yank he got them off me and tossed them to the floor.

He smiled as he did a little strip tease for me, stripping off everything but his briefs. His eyes never left mine the entire time which was erotic as hell.

I just about melted when I saw his black briefs, but it's the hefty bulge that really caught my eye. It gave me some info about what I was in for but still kept a bit of mystery at the same time.

He pulled me back up into a seated position and reached around me, working on the clasp of my bra. Like a pro, he unhooked it and tossed it, allowing my breasts to fall free. He wasted no time in cupping them with his hands, squeezing and rubbing them, running his thumb around my nipples and making them hard as steel bullets. Then he took my left nipple into his mouth, rubbing it with his tongue in a circular motion and sucking on it slightly.

A moan escaped from me as I put my hand on the back on his neck, guiding his head around my breast. I closed my eyes and enjoyed the sensation of his tongue having it's way with my taut nipple.

His right hand moved down my stomach and latched onto my panties. And it wasn't long before those were off as well.

Leaning me back onto the bed, he moved over to my right breast as he slid his hand between my legs, rubbing my inner thigh. Not sure if he knew it but he was driving me wild. So wild, I spread my legs open for him, inviting him in.

His hand moved up my thigh and made it's way to the center of it all, sliding his middle finger up and down and then dipping inside me, teasing me. I gasped softly, but it was out of pure pleasure.

He took his mouth away from my breast and moved back to my mouth where we kissed deeply for several minutes. Still, his hand and fingers worked their magic down below.

I moved my hands down his muscular stomach and instead of attempting to pull down his briefs, I slid my hand down inside the waistband and helped myself to what I wanted. He let out a soft grunt as my hand wrapped around his manhood and pulled it up and out of his briefs. Then I started stroking him, slowly.

"Mmmm, Reese," I whispered as he continued to pump his thick finger in and out of my scorching center.

"You ready?" he asked me.

I nodded and he took his manhood from me, placing the tip at my entrance. Slowly, he began to sink inside.

He was thick and long and clearly the biggest man I'd ever been with so accepting him was a challenge at first. But I soon relaxed and enjoyed the feeling of him filling me up. And boy did he ever!

He pulled back just as slowly as he had entered and then slid back in a little faster, building momentum.

It wasn't long before he was pumping like a champ at just the right speed. Each thrust into me drove a shiver down my spine and a throbbing sensation of need between my legs.

I clamped down on him and arched my back as he drove into me, his hands on my hips pulling me into him. His head tilted back and his eyes closed as he enjoyed the feeling of being inside me, feeling my warmth with each stroke.

His little grunts and groans were turning me on, as was the sweat beading up on his strong chest.

It wasn't long before I was nearing my climax, and by the look on his face he wasn't far off either.

"Faster," I demanded. Not that I wanted it to end but there just comes a point where you full-on want it.

He complied with a sly smile and pumped faster. He even thrust a little harder which made me bite my lower lip in reaction to the pleasure he was bringing me. He thrust so hard that our session was now considered "fucking" rather than "making love" because it was so primal.

I gathered up the sheets in my hand and tugged on them as I felt that tremendous feeling rush through me. "Oh God, Reese," I exclaimed as the feeling raged out of control and then began to calm.

He pulled out and stroked himself to a quick finish before collapsing beside me, taking me into his arms. "That was incredible," he said as he licked his lips and breathed hard.

"Mmmhmmm," I said with a smile.

We laid there for a while, hours actually, completely naked and holding each other.

I have to say, this is the first time I've had sex with a guy and not left immediately afterwards. Maybe this "thing" with Reese might work.

~ FIN