

tempest in a teapot

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by [evanescent](#)

Summary

At last, Alfred looks at him with something akin to mercy. “Frankly, I think Master Rayner is a fine young man, and I’m sure you will think so, too, once you meet him, Master Bruce. I fail to see the problem.”

Bruce can’t believe Alfred is making him say that, but, through the gritted teeth, he speaks, “You know who he is... associated with.”

When it becomes clear he isn’t going to elaborate, Alfred raises his eyebrows again. “Ah, you mean Hal Jordan, sir?”

Bruce suppresses a shudder that goes through him. “Don’t mention his name out loud, Alfred. It was bad enough I saw him today and found out *from him*.”

...

In which one Bruce may be *just a little* biased when it comes to his children dating people associated with his not-friends. (It's not a good kind of a bias.)

Notes

me: i have like seven other batman wips i should not write this ridiculous idea that came upon me out of nowhere
inner me: how about you do it anyway

i was writing the last scene when i saw the news about carrie fisher and got really sad. i hope the ending doesn't fall too flat? and please let me know if you catch any mistakes

(special shoutout to anna for always talking with me about all those batfam fic ideas i rarely end up writing/finishing. bet you didn't expect this one to actually happen lmao)

edit: translation in chinese, courtesy of ninenin, available [here](#)!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

By the time Bruce gets home, he's already having a pretty nasty headache. And he has a feeling it's only going to get worse.

He's in his study when Alfred comes in with tea, as requested. Bruce takes off his reading glasses and puts them down on the newest Wayne Enterprises contract he's been checking through. He carefully observes his butler as he speaks up in a low, even voice, "Did you know."

Alfred, seemingly unphased, just arches one brow at him. "About what, sir?"

"Who Jason has been seeing recently," Bruce says, slowly breathing through his nose. "As in. Dating, I suppose," he clarifies, probably needlessly. Alfred watches him in a way that tells Bruce he's fairly amused because of his obvious internal struggle.

"That would be Kyle Rayner, I suppose," Alfred answers nonchalantly after a beat. Bruce does his best to glare.

"So *you* did know," he states, sounding just a little too much like a petulant child. He sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose. "Who else knew? Dick? Tim and Cass, too?"

Alfred tilts his head to the side slightly. "And Master Damian. Actually, the last time Master Rayner came over, he brought him a teddy bear. Master Damian seemed torn between insulted at being gifted with a child's toy and pleased as it was a rather lovely teddy bear."

Bruce can't help but stare. "He did— he's already been here?" he asks, disbelieving. Alfred's words suggest it happened more than once, enough times for Kyle Rayner to earn himself a right to be called "master" by Alfred. And that, among other things, implies he somehow got *Alfred's* approval.

The situation is worse than Bruce suspected.

At last, Alfred looks at him with something akin to mercy. "Frankly, I think Master Rayner is a fine young man, and I'm sure you will think so, too, once you meet him, Master Bruce. I fail to see the problem."

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And, as on cue, Bruce's phone chimes, indicating a new text. He picks it up and isn't surprised at all to see who sent it.

From H. Jordan, 3.28 pm: *sooo, you seemed pretty freaked out when i mentioned kyle and jason earlier. i admit i was shocked too but hey, they're adults and all, it's cool :-)* take it easy bruces, see ya next sunday xx

Bruce knows his lips press into a thin line at the stupid nickname Hal uses to annoy him. "He claims to be alright with their relationship, but I take it he's been out of loop as well and is actually thrown off balance," he tells Alfred, opening a drawer of his desk and dropping the offending phone in there.

Alfred looks at him for a long moment. "This is rather petty of you, Master Bruce."

Bruce stares back, unblinking. "I have no idea what you're talking about, Alfred."

The butler sighs and takes a seat in the chair on the other side of the desk. "Sir, If I may remind you," he starts patiently, "you reacted in a similar fashion back when Master Dick started dating Roy Harper."

"These situations are totally different, though," Bruce protests immediately. He knew Alfred would bring them up. "Dick and Roy are the same age and have been friends for years before they got together. They're raising a *daughter* now, for God's sake. Meanwhile, how long has Jason even known this boy? How did they meet? Is this serious?"

"All those points and questions are fair and valid, Master Bruce," Alfred states. "But, for some reason, you left out the fact that your sons are dating people associated with your college..."

"Don't call Jordan and Queen my friends," Bruce says stiffly.

"...acquaintances," Alfred finishes, fixing him with a look. Bruce relaxes slightly, that is, until Alfred continues, "Acquaintances whom you consider rivals even after all those years – which is fair in Mister Queen's case, I suppose – but it doesn't stop you from spending your free time with them at least once a month."

"You know it's Clark and Diana who insist –" he starts, but thinks better of it; he had this discussion with Alfred in the past and never came out quite as right as he would have liked to. As the facts stand, he indeed attends monthly get-togethers with his friends from college, many of them being his actual friends. Instead, he decides to approach the subject at hand. "I dislike them, but I came to... tolerate Oliver, first for Dinah's sake, and later because of Roy and Dick," Bruce explains grudgingly. "Hal, however..."

"Master Bruce," Alfred chastens, "you shouldn't transfer your personal animosity towards Mister Jordan on his friends and associates. Which is something you tend to do, as John Stewart and Guy Gardner would probably agree with me."

On principle, Bruce feels the need to point out. "I get along with John just fine now."

"If you say so," Alfred replies and stands up. "It may be futile, but let me share a piece of advice with you, sir. Do not act hastily and try not to come on too strong. I know you just want what you consider best for him, but when Master Jason decides to talk to you – which will probably happen sooner than later now, considering this turn of events – you should keep an open mind."

Bruce is silent for a moment. "Fine words, Alfred, as usual," he says at last. "Thank you."

...

Jason is home for the weekend and on Saturday morning, he's the last one to come down for breakfast, loudly announcing his presence.

"Morning, Alfie," Jason calls cheerfully, passing the butler in the doorway of the dining room.

"Cass. Timmers. Short stuff," he greets his siblings, passing them sitting by the table as he comes to stand next to Bruce. He's smiling viciously as he says, "Dad *dearest*," and drops a pile of files so big it almost ends up knocking over a glass with Damian's juice which earns Jason a glare and a hiss from his youngest brother. He ignores him. "I found them outside my room this morning. The fuck are these?"

Bruce, not having batted an eye, answers, "Profiles of nice and handsome single gentlemen I found you might be interested in checking out."

"And, let me guess, none of them have ties to Hal Jordan. Or Oliver Queen, for that matter, and other of your 'not-friends'," Jason says, making quote marks in the air.

Bruce nods. "Well put."

"As usual, I'm thrilled to see you acted against my advice, sir," Alfred comments drily, bringing a pot of fresh coffee as Jason throws his hands up.

"I don't know whether to be angry or laugh," he states. "This is the kind of controlling, invasive shit you do and ask us not to talk about on breakfast shows."

"Which doesn't stop us from mentioning it, anyway," Tim adds, pouring himself a second cup of coffee. At least, Bruce hopes it's just his second. "But, for some reason, people rarely believe in it."

Jason snorts. "Yeah, because it's not like rich people have crazy ideas, right?" he says and turns his attention back to Bruce. "So. I take it you know about Kyle."

"I found out from Jordan," Bruce replies flatly. Jason makes a face at that and runs a hand through his hair.

"Well, sorry about that, but this is *precisely* why I didn't want to tell you," he counters. "Jesus, I haven't been around that much when Dick and Roy pulled their heads out of their asses and got serious, but you did something like this back then, too, didn't you?"

"He did," Cassandra confirms. "And some other things. Dick used to yell a lot."

Jason crosses his arms over his chest and glares. Bruce doesn't relent, but decides to explain himself.

"I'm just concerned, Jason. How old is he? How did you meet him? How long has he known Jordan? Is he living in this hell house with him, Stewart and Gardner?"

"Oh my God, you're unbelievable." Jason shakes his head and puts a hand over his heart. "It saddens me so, so deeply that you don't approve of my boyfriend, I could cry," he deadpans with a grin.

Bruce winces and massages his temples for a brief moment. "Somehow, it was easier back when you had a crush on Donna," he reminisces. "Even though you would not stop with embarrassing pick-up lines that made me and Diana cringe."

“You can’t just go and mention that time out of the blue,” Jason says defensively, cocky attitude suddenly gone. “I was young and stupid enough to listen to Dickie,” he adds, all but throwing himself into a free chair. He leans back in it a little. “But it’s funny you mentioned Donna, since we met because of her.”

Bruce straightens subtly in his seat; he’s finally learning something. “Is that so,” he says, taking a sip of his coffee. “A work friend of hers?” he asks carefully.

“Yes and no,” Jason replies, waving a hand. “He sometimes helps her out with photos for her studio. He’s a senior, studies Graphic Design.”

“He’s quite decent,” Damian states unexpectedly. “At traditional art, at least.”

Suddenly the fact that Damian, out of all people, seems to accept Kyle makes more sense to Bruce.

“He’d be touched to hear that. He still doesn’t believe me when I tell him you don’t actually hate him,” Jason says. Damian only makes a *tt* sound in response. Turning back to Bruce, Jason adds, “And, another funny thing, he and Donna actually dated for awhile. Such a small world, isn’t it?”

Of course they did, Bruce thinks tiredly and decides to once again change his strategy. “Would you two be willing to come to dinner?”

Jason raises an eyebrow. “If you think some fancy ass thing in formal wear, then hell no.” He pauses, seems to consider. “I could agree to a casual lunch at the Manor,” he offers.

“Really?” Bruce wasn’t expecting Jason to agree, let alone throw in his own idea.

“Whatever, old man, the cat is out of the bag now. It’s better than you being sulky and overbearing from the shadows.” Jason shrugs and proceeds to steal one of Tim’s pancakes for himself. Normally, it would be a reason for a fight to break out, but he and Cass are currently busy, as Bruce notices just now.

“And this one?” she asks, showing Tim one of the files Jason brought.

“Oh, I know him, he’s that cute intern at WE,” he says, glancing over the page. “But aw, he’s allergic to dogs, that sucks.”

Cass tilts her head. “I didn’t know you want a dog.”

“Well, I’m not saying I do, but you can never know, so.” Tim’s answer is vague and he picks up another file, fumbling with it as Cass observes him carefully.

Suddenly, Damian stands up. “I refuse to participate in this circus of a meal any longer,” he announces. “I will be in the yard sketching, do not disturb me.”

“As you wish, Master Damian,” Alfred says mildly.

Passing by Tim and Cassandra, Damian pauses for a moment and peers over their shoulders. “This one looks like Drake when he doesn’t leave his room for two weeks and lives only on noodles and energy drinks,” he comments, ignoring Tim’s, *Hey, that’s not true!* and Cassandra’s, *I sort of see it.* He shoots Bruce a flat look. “Honestly, Father, I would have expected better of you.”

Bruce blinks, feeling somewhat affronted, while Jason laughs loudly, almost choking on his food. “Oh, you dragged him, it was beautiful,” he approves.

Damian scrunches up his nose. “Ridiculous, all of you,” he states, his final words, before stomping off like an angry ten-year-old.

...

“So,” Dick starts and Bruce can hear clinking and muffled voice-over in the background, “is this a social call or an ‘I can’t believe you didn’t tell me your brother is dating my frenemy’s associate’ call?”

Bruce makes a face. “It’s not really a good way to describe this situation.”

“Sure it is,” his son chirps. “Really though, I thought nothing would beat me and Roy, but damn, Hal’s friend and housemate, Jay really upped this one on me.”

“Why does it sound like you and Jason have a competition about whose relationship choices will give me a bigger aneurysm,” Bruce doesn’t quite ask.

“No idea, it’s totally not true. Hang on a second.” Bruce can hear Dick walk, there’s another voice in the background. After a moment, he picks up the phone again. “Sorry, Lian got excited about a penguins documentary.” Bruce is about to speak up, but Dick adds, “And no, this is not an invitation to buy her a real penguin for birthday. Pretty sure that’s illegal.”

“This is not what I was about to say,” Bruce protests.

“*Riiight*,” Dick drawls out, not convinced at all. “Anyway, what can I tell you, I don’t know Kyle that well, but he seems like a nice guy, Donna’s always spoken fondly of him. He’s good friends with Wally and Connor, actually. What a small world, right?”

Of course he is, Bruce thinks tiredly and drums his finger on the table. “Thank you for telling me this, but I, for one, am tired of getting second-hand information about him and would like to form my own opinion.” Dick hums in acknowledgment. “That leads me to asking, would you and Roy like come to lunch this Sunday?”

The silence that falls on the other end tells Bruce Dick didn’t expect this question. “Is this for Jason’s comfort? Or your own?” his son inquires finally.

Bruce only grumbles in answer. Dick snorts.

“Sure, wouldn’t miss that by any chance,” he agrees. “I will be after a night shift and Roy’s schedule is clear. I think Mia wouldn’t mind coming to watch Lian.”

“No word of it to Queen, though.” Bruce isn’t sure if Roy and Oliver are on speaking terms at the moment, so he adds, “Or Dinah, for that matter.”

“B, I like to have fun, but I’m not actually suicidal,” Dick states, sounding both faintly amused and totally serious.

...

Half an hour into lunch, Bruce has to admit: Kyle Rayner isn’t what he expected.

First of all, he seems genuinely *nice*, the kind of person Bruce rarely meets these days. He’s polite, but not stiff, albeit somewhat nervous, and Bruce has to wonder if he’s the cause for this. (“You often intimidate people without even meaning to,” Tim told him once, and Dick nodded, elaborating, “It’s just the way you carry yourself and, you know, the fact you’re super rich? It

tends to put people on edge,” and Jason added, “Yeah, or maybe it’s just your face.”) Kyle is handling himself well, though; Bruce thinks the fact he has met everyone but him at least once before helps a little (he isn’t bitter about that anymore, alright). What’s more, it doesn’t come out forced; it feels almost natural when he gets a civil reply from Damian about art supplies he uses, asks Cassandra about her ballet lessons and briefly discusses some anime with Tim. Dick and Roy tease him like responsible adults they certainly are, and only laugh when Jason tells them to “finally shut their big, fat mouths.” (Bruce is pretty sure he’d flip them off, if it wasn’t for Alfred popping in and out of the room every now and then.)

And this brings another point: how Kyle and Jason act around each other. Being honest, if Bruce didn’t know better, he’d say they’re ready to start fighting at any given moment, with all the passive-aggressive banter they exchange. It makes him wonder how badly they had to not get along at first if that’s how it is now. However, Bruce knows Jason well enough to notice subtle things; the fact he’s relaxed and comfortable with casual touches, cursing just a little less than usually and trying not to try too hard and make this all overwhelming for Kyle. In turn, Kyle loosens as the time passes and he does not hold himself back as much when he scolds Jason, and can maintain eye contact with Bruce for longer than five seconds. Looking at it from this perspective, Bruce would risk and go as far as to say they’re good for each other.

He is, once again, thrown off balance. Is this really Kyle Rayner, one of Hal’s friends? Bruce is almost as surprised as when he found out Connor is Oliver’s biological son. (He still doesn’t quite believe it most of the time.)

But, thinking of Jordan.

“I heard you currently live at Hal’s place,” Bruce says, going for casual and failing, considering how the mood at the table changes.

“Oh, here we fucking go,” Jason mutters under his breath and takes a long sip of his tea.

Kyle clears his throat and answers, “I do. I owe him for that, renting even the lousiest apartment would probably cost me more than living with Hal and the others.”

“That’s nice of him,” Roy comments, shooting Bruce a look, almost like challenging him to disagree. Bruce doesn’t take the bait, though; he knows Roy pretty much considers Hal family. “Can’t imagine how much mess the four of you make, though. And I live with Dick.”

“Shut it, Harper, at least you didn’t have to live with him *and* Tim.” Jason shakes his head in mock horror. “The chaos, I still have nightmares.”

Tim looks like he’s about to protest, but Alfred says mildly, “A fair point,” and he just closes his mouth and coughs loudly.

Kyle chuckles. “It’s not that bad, we spend most of our time out of the house, anyway.” He rubs the back of his neck. “I tend to be messy when working on something, my mom used to chasten me for that all the time.”

“She doesn’t live around here, does she?” Bruce asks carefully.

“Oh, no, she lives in L.A.,” Kyle replies, a fond smile on his face. “I don’t have any siblings and my father was never in the picture, so it was only me and her in our small apartment. She’s very important to me.”

It gets quiet after that and Kyle seems embarrassed by the silence his words brought. Dick,

however, chooses this moment to stage-whisper, “This was a final strike. You can practically see Bruce mentally beating himself up for every bad thing he thought about you *before* even meeting you.”

Some heads whip around to look at Bruce, the others giggle and Damian clicks his tongue in mild irritation. *Sometimes Dick really knows what to say and when to say it*, Bruce thinks, telling himself to relax and smiling slightly. He sees Cassandra tap Kyle on the shoulder and tell him something quietly. He seems surprised, but he smiles at her and nods.

In this moment, Bruce allows himself to think the rest of lunch will go rather smoothly. Then Alfred comes in to stand by his side.

“Master Bruce, if I may ask you for a moment,” he says formally.

Bruce raises an eyebrow, but gets up nonetheless. “Excuse me, I will be right back,” he tells them before following Alfred out of the room and into the main hallway. Once there, his mood immediately sours.

“For the record, I tried to stop them,” Dinah states, leaning against the wall next to the open front door. She looks amused and exasperated. “Hello, Bruce.”

“Dinah,” he addresses her shortly before he drags his gaze to the other two unexpected guests. “Queen. Jordan.”

“Brucie, good to see you,” Oliver calls with a shit-eating grin. “It’s been awhile.”

“Yes, we just came back from our get-together with the rest,” Hal adds; like usually, he’s wearing his pilot jacket. “Which you couldn’t attend, since you said you have other plans, sadly.”

“And, from what I gathered, Roy and Dick had some plans for this day, too.”

“And that’s a funny thing because Kyle also mentioned being busy today,” Hal finishes, cocking an eyebrow. “And I thought, ‘Can this be...?’ but then I was like, nah.”

“Yet here you are,” Bruce notices gruffly. “Both of you.”

“Well, am I wrong, though?” Hal crosses his arms over his chest and tilts his head to the side.

“Wait, don’t answer that, I just saw Kyle’s jacket on the coat stand. God, even your coat stand is so extra, don’t you have any modesty, Bruce?”

Dinah snorts softly at that. Bruce resists the urge to pinch the bridge of his nose. Or punch something. Or someone.

“There’s no way this is not ending in a fistfight,” Cassandra announces quietly, like she’s reading Bruce’s mind. He looks over his shoulder, not surprised to see everybody watching them from the doorway with varying levels of interest.

“Tim, please put away your phone,” Bruce says, his eye twitching. “There is nothing to record.”

“You’d think so,” Tim mumbles, barely audible, as Oliver calls, “Roy, son!” which has Roy making a face. Dinah detaches herself from the wall and comes over to greet them, which gets a more enthusiastic reception.

“Do you see this, Kyle?” Hal asks, gesturing around. “Ask yourself, do you really want to be a part of this? I mean, I guess there are some perks of dating Bruce Wayne’s son, but is the sex really

worth all this madness?”

Dick gasps at that and covers Damian’s ears, which leads to Damian trying to shove his hands away and accidentally hitting Tim in the process. Kyle mutters something in Spanish and facepalms. Jason is grinning like it’s Christmas time.

“I say Hal ends up with a black eye,” he comments cheerfully. “Anybody betting some broken bones?”

Bruce is about to put an end to this in a civil way – just tell them to leave, like he should the moment he saw them – but then Oliver just *has to* butt in with, “Wayne, you call that junk you keep on your driveway a car? Frankly, I’m *appalled*,” and Bruce decides he really, really had enough.

(Later, when it’s all over, he overhears Jason say, “Rich people are wild,” to which Kyle replies, just a little incredulous, “Jason, *you are* rich, too.”)

End Notes

casualties after the fight: two black eyes, one broken nose, split knuckles, ollie being grounded bc dinah decides she can't take him (and hal) anywhere

as for (in theory) a jaykyle fic there was sorta little of jaykyle in it, so have some scenes that could not make the cut

kyle: i feel like your kid brother doesn't like me

jason: are you kidding? you had a civil conversation about art for like three minutes and he didn't try to bite you even once. it says a lot. plus, you brought him a teddy bear and he actually liked it. the hell?

kyle: didn't you say he likes toys?

jason: damian hates most of toys on the principle of them being for kids. i was just messing with you, i didn't think you'd actually go through with it

kyle: remind me why am i dating you

-

jason: my old man doesn't approve you

kyle: wait, what? but he didn't even meet me yet-

jason: no you don't understand, this is great :3c

kyle:

kyle: anyway hal worries if you have such a turbulent dating history as your father and older brother

jason: i can't even argue with him on that

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