

Tora woke up to the sound of knocking on her door. It was her third day being a member of the New Titans and she still hadn't gotten a handle on the new timezones or the early wake-up times. Still, today it was fine, the group had agreed that they would call off the early morning routine to take a break. Which probably meant it was later than it felt. A quick check of the alarm clock on her nightstand confirmed her guess.

The young Norwegian woman stood up from her bed and stretched, working the soreness from her limbs. She wasn't a stranger to physical activity by any means, but the intense training and the double dose of sparing the team had done the day before had left their mark, literally in a few places. After double-checking to make sure she was presentable and crossing her dorm-like room, she opened her door to see M'gann standing in the doorway.

"Morning Tora, I hope I didn't wake you up?" She asked with a smile

"It is fine, it was getting too late to be sleeping anyway," She admitted. "What is happening?"

"Well breakfast is on the table, but it's just muffins so you can eat whenever," The Martian explained. "But I wanted to let you know that Kyle is home! Well, he is home, but not this home. He got back early this morning and is spending time with his guardians. But after that, he is coming here, probably in the next few hours."

"Oh, I am looking forward to meeting him," She responded, smiling at her teammate and new friend. "I will be out soon."

M'gann nodded and left after a few words of goodbye, leaving Tora alone to work through her morning routine. As she made her way through her morning ablutions she thought about the conversation she had had with M'gann the previous day, about the nature of her psychic abilities. While Tora understood that M'gann wouldn't do anything to her, the idea that someone could read her thoughts and she would have no idea... was unnerving.

Thankfully M'gann understood and took the time to explain how it worked, including how the mental communication that the team used when they needed to keep quiet. It was reassuring to know that it wasn't anything more than a surface scan and that she wouldn't have to guard her thoughts when they were all connected.

She wasn't sure how Warren dealt with the deeper connection, especially after M'gann explained some of what he had been through.

They were cute together though.

Once she was done getting ready and dressed in casual clothes she stepped out of her room and straight into Robin. She stumbled back but managed to stay standing, if barely. Robin barely looked affected which was surprising considering his size.

“Oh! I... I am sorry!” She said. “I should have been paying more attention.”

“Don’t worry about it, Batman would have my head if he realized I let you bump into me in the first place.” The young hero assured her. “He is big on situation awareness.”

“Well... I’m sure he would understand?” She responded, not quite sure what to say.

“Oh, yeah, sure, he definitely would,” Robin said sarcastically, laughing and shaking his head. “Oh did M’gann tell you...”

“That Superboy is returning today? Yes, she mentioned it.”

“Great!” He said, walking around her before stopping and turning. “Wally is in the library I think, Kaldur is out for a swim, and Warren and M’gann are down by the grotto. In case you were wondering.”

“Thanks, I’m just going to have some breakfast.”

“Alright...Well... enjoy your breakfast!”

Robin responded and left, giving her a small wave as he stepped into his own room, which wasn’t far from Tora’s. The cryokinetic stood in the hall for a moment before shaking the encounter off and heading into the living area, smiling as she found a small pile of muffins covered by a paper towel. She took two for herself and headed out of the living room, plopping down on the couch to eat them.

They were a bit sweet for a breakfast, sweeter than she was used to at least. Chocolate chip muffins were not her first choice, but they were still very good. By the time she was done Warren had stopped by the kitchen to grab a bottle of water.

“Morning, how are the muffins?” He asked as he sipped, leaning against the cabinets with a towel hanging around his neck.

“Umm... they are good!” She responded, the large man catching onto her pause.

“Sensing a solid “but” there,” He added with a friendly smile. “Not a fan?”

“They are very good!” She assured him. “I just don’t have very much of a sweet tooth.”

“Ah, gotcha. Well, it’s hard to cater to everyone when we are making breakfast for the group, but there are always eggs in the fridge, your free to make your own breakfast.”

If it wasn't for the reassuring smile, Tora would have assumed he was annoyed with her. As she stood to put her plate in the sink she remembered something.

"Someone mentioned a sign-up sheet for making meals?" She asked. "Where is that?"

"On the other side of the fridge," Warren answered, pointing towards the metal appliance. "M'gann and I are covering for the blank spots so just take one of those. There isn't a lunch because that usually feeds for yourself."

"I'm not the best cook, but I've learned a few dishes from my mother," Tora explained, filling in a few of the blank squares with her name.

"Well, M'gann and I both actually enjoy cooking, so it's basically just spreading out responsibility and clearing up our schedules a bit," He explained, before pushing off the counter he was leaning on. "Alright, I'm going to go shower, I'll see you around."

Tora nodded, watching the slightly older hero walk away, leaving her alone in the room. For a moment she wasn't sure what to do with her free time, before realizing that their base leader had just set a pretty good example. Even on their day off, he was still working on refining his powers. Which, honestly she didn't know much about beyond what she had seen and faced during their sparring.

Making a mental note to ask about his geokinetic abilities later, the young woman headed into the large main area of the cave. She made her way to the large pool of water off to the side of the large open room. When she was close she stopped, turned to the wall, and took a sturdy stance. After a moment she pushed her powers out, feeling the coiling cold energy she had been born with push from her hands and blast the floor with ice. She worked her way up to create a thick wall of solid ice before stopping.

Then, after a moment of pause, she started melting the ice back down to water. It was an interesting sensation to melt the ice instead of forming more, almost as if she was uncoiling the energy inside herself, though she was pretty sure she wasn't just undoing her powers, considering the number of times she had used this ability to clear her driveway and sidewalk of snow.

Her powers were always just there, and what little research she had done into them had come up blank. What she did know was that she was somehow gathering water from around herself to use in her ice. She knew this because if she created too much in a sealed environment, eventually making more would get harder and harder.

That said, even in the driest settings she had always been able to summon *some* ice, it just got a lot more difficult.

Once the wall of ice was gone, she immediately made another wall, starting the process of melting it again. The water runoff from her practice trickled down into the nearby pool of water, thankfully keeping the mess from spreading. On her fourth melting, she heard footsteps behind her. She finished her current wall of ice before turning to greet Robin.

“Pretty impressive,” Robin said with a smile. “Are you timing yourself or...?”

“Uh... no,” She admitted sheepishly. “I am simply pushing my ability to melt as fast as I can.”

“Well... timing it would let us track any improvements,” Robin pointed out. “Kinda like timing how fast you run. Make another ice chunk, and I’ll time you on my phone.”

Tora remade, melted, remade, and melted a large chunk of ice several times while Robin kept track of how fast she was able to make it through. After three chunks he spoke up.

“I just realized, the size of your ice chunk is changing each time, we need a way to guarantee they are the same size...”

With a quick search through the base and some help from Warren, who turned one of the boulders near the pool of water into a makeshift bowl with some rather impressive punches and movements, Tora and Robin measured her melting speed a half dozen more times.

“Okay, so even with the amounts being the same, there is a lot of variation in how fast you're melting your ice,” Robin explained, showing off his phone, which had all the times listed. “It's not as wide of a deviance as when you weren't controlling how much ice you made, but it's still there.”

“What does it mean?”

“Well... it could just mean your ability fluctuates. Or it could mean there is an element of randomness to them,” He explained with a shrug. “Or it could be that you're influencing them and you don't know how yet. There may be a trick to melting ice and so far you are just brute forcing it. That's just a guess though, you're the expert in your powers.”

“The randomness doesn't feel right,” She said, shaking her head. “I suppose there might be...a trick of some kind?”

“Well just keep it in mind when your working on it,” Robin said with a smile. “You might-”

The voice of the Zeta-Tube echoed through the cave, the interior of the teleportation device slowly spinning up, charging in preparation. With a flash of light, Superboy is deposited in the cave, stepping forward out of the tube.

The other members of the team came out of the woodwork, with Wally zipping out last, the fastest one in the team and somehow he was the last one in the main room. Warren clapped the newly arrived hero on his shoulder, welcoming him back. Kyle gave everyone a small smile.

“Kyle, this is Tora Olafsdotter, she is Ice,” Kaldur said, gesturing to the newest member.

“Nice to meet you.” He said, reaching out to shake her hand, which Tora took. “I’m sorry I was away.”

“It’s okay, no one gave me any specifics but it sounded important.”

Kyle raised an eyebrow and looked at the rest of the team, getting shrugs in response until M’gann spoke up.

“It didn’t feel right talking about it without your permission.” She explained, getting a small smile and a nod in return.

“I was with Superman, undergoing tests and treatments, as well as discussing my brother, Match,” He explained simply.

“Brother? Superman has *two* kids?” Tora asked, her eyes going wide.

“No, we are clones, made without his permission,” Kyle explained. “I... I am fifty percent human and fifty percent Kryptonian, while my brother is one hundred percent Kryptonian.”

“How is Match?” Warren asked, his face solemn.

“He is still in stasis,” Kyle responded, shaking his head. “Superman’s Kryptonian technology was able to diagnose his issue, but couldn’t do anything to stop the progress of his... instability.”

“That’s awful,” M’gann said, covering her mouth in shock. “Is there really nothing that could be done?”

“Your uncle already sent a message to Mars, but he didn’t sound very hopeful. Kryptonian DNA is apparently much denser than human or Martian DNA. It makes it more resistant to mutations but... also makes it much harder to fix when it breaks down.”

“Well... eventually someone might come up with something,” Warren said. “Maybe the League could ask if Atlantis has a magical treatment...”

Everyone looked at Kaldur, who shrugged.

"I have seen the healers of Poseidonis mend injuries that I would have thought impossible, but sadly it is not within my realm of expertise. I would suggest you make the recommendation to Superman."

"I will," Superboy nodded, looking at Warren. "Thanks for the idea."

"Thank M'gann, she got me thinking of other places that might be able to help," Warren said with a shrug.

"Wait, did you say treatment?" Robin asked. "Everything alright big guy?"

"I'm great now, but before I was... aging faster than I should have been. Enough that in forty or so years I would have really started to fall apart. But the treatment worked so I'm fine now." He assured everyone, a small smile on his lips. "Basically Cadmus used human DNA to stabilize the Kryptonian. But they did a horrible fucking job, and had no idea what was worth leaving in and what wasn't"

Everyone gasped when he said he would have been aging faster, M'gann rushing forward to give him a hug, while Warren squeezed his shoulder in support. Kyle looked at the geokinetic and nodded.

"I'm not surprised. According to Batman a lot of what they were doing was guesswork," Robin explained. "Kinda throwing things at the wall and seeing what stuck. No offense."

"Well.. either way, Jor... The computer was able to use something they used to stabilize Kryptonian half-breeds before they became isolationists," Superboy explained with a shrug. "I spent two days unconscious in a healing pod, getting the two halves smoothed out and reorganized. Now instead of my DNA being more or less random, it's all neatly set."

"That's good to hear Kyle. I am glad you were able to receive the treatment you needed," Kaldur said with a smile.

"Well... that's not all I got..." Superboy explained, before gently lifting off of the ground.

Everyone but Tora, who didn't know he couldn't already fly, gasped as the teen floated, a bit unsteadily, into the air. He kept going up, swooping around the room before landing a bit roughly on the ground behind them.

"Not bad, right?"

"Superboy! That's incredible!" M'gann said happily, lifting off and flying around to stand in front of him, the rest of the group just turning to watch.

“Is that all you got back?” Wally asked, getting a look from Kaldur and Warren before adding. “Cause it’s fine if it is...”

“No, as far as we could tell I have most of Superman’s abilities, just at around fifty percent power,” He explained. “Still working on cold breath and x-ray vision though. Superman thinks I’ll get them eventually when I get older. He didn’t get all his abilities at once either I guess. Apparently, I need to be careful of sneezing now...”

“Kyle, this is amazing, congratulations,” Warren said with a big smile on his face.

“Thanks. I just wish the treatment could have worked on Match, but too much of his DNA is corrupted.”

“With any luck, we will find a way to treat him in the near future,” Kaldur responded. “Until then, we are all glad you, our friend, are now healthy.”