

The team gathered quickly as I called out for them, most of them not far from the main space. Batman waited silently as everyone arrived before finally starting to explain his mission.

“Around four pm today Black Canary and Green Arrow responded to a disturbance nearby one of their patrols. Upon investigating they discovered an android, destroying what appears to be a random target chosen to get attention.”

Video feed popped up behind him, showing a tall, muscular, and obviously artificial construct fighting the two League members. Its legs were painted green, its “hair” an orange-red, and the rest a sort of off-skin tone. None of the colors looked organic. As it fought, its jaw opened inhumanly and blasted the heroes with a scream, partially tearing apart the car they were hiding behind.

“An android? Was it fully sentient?” Robin asked. “T.O Morrow maybe?”

“Good guess Robin, but no, it doesn't appear to be one of his designs. Preliminary examinations by Red Tornado and Green Lantern indicate that it is a non-sentient creation of Professor Ivo.”

“But Ivo is dead,” I said, recalling the file I had skimmed not long ago.

“So we believed. We haven't ruled out that this might be a copycat, someone stumbling across an old creation, or someone having purchased this from Ivo before he died.”

Batman explained, turning slightly to tap on his projected keyboard before the video continued. Suddenly the android was fighting Superman as well, and easily holding his own.

“Not yet fully understanding the situation, Black Canary and Green Arrow called in reinforcements, which almost proved disastrous,” Batman explained, the video feed continuing as the robot fought off several League members at once, using their own powers. “The android was capable of copying the abilities and skills of those around him. He easily matched the abilities of Superman, Wonderwoman, Green Lantern, and Martian Manhunter. The only weakness it showed was an inability to utilize more than one powerset at a time. It took eight members of the League nearly four hours to finally take him down. ”

“Wait wait wait, side note here, more than half the League was fighting a threat... and nobody thought to tell us?” I asked, turning away from the screen to face Batman. “I know that in this specific circumstance, adding us to the mix would have been like trying to put a fire out with dry wood, but we should have at least *known* that this was happening.”

Batman returned my look for a long moment, before nodding.

“A fair point. For future threats of this scale, the New Titans will be informed, as long as you recognize that until you have furthered your training your involvement is the last resort.”

We all nodded, Batman, nodding in return before focusing back on the projected screen.

“While the safest thing to do would have been to immediately incinerate it, we have several concerns. A method of mimicking such a wide variety of powers is extremely dangerous, we need to study it in the hopes of finding a way to stop it in the future. If this is Ivo, or perhaps an apprentice, then they will most likely be able to replicate their work eventually.”

The screen changed to a projection of a map, showing dotted lines connecting to three separate Star Labs locations across the country.

“A compromise was reached. As secretly as possible the android was disassembled and immediately sent to three separate Star Labs locations.” Batman explained. “Its right arm and left leg have been completely destroyed after a quick scan showed that they were identical to their opposites.”

I nodded along, appreciating the wisdom of needing to understand the threat but also prevent it from coming back to haunt you as best as possible

“Your mission is to escort a single truck as it makes its way from where the android was finally defeated, all the way to a nearby lab,” He explained, the map showing a new path. “This truck will be loaded with weighted crates, each one with a tracking device embedded inside it.”

“A trap to lure out whoever sent the android,” Kyle said, Batman, nodding in confirmation.

“Yes. Your goal is to put up a convincing enough fight if anyone tries to acquire the parts, before letting them escape. Since the deployment of nonsentient assets usually means the mastermind prefers not to engage in combat personally, any attack will most likely be done through more assets, especially if our fears of a copycat or apprentice are true,” He confirmed before continuing. “You will follow the tracker until it arrives at the destination, apprehending those responsible. Wonder Woman, myself, and Superman will all be on site as back-up, but your track record speaks for itself. This is your mission, and we will wait for you to call for us to engage.”

Kaldur looked around at all of us, before looking back to Batman and nodding.

“We are ready.”

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We took the Zeta-Tube out of the mountain and got onto a series of motorcycles, of all things. We would have taken Bioship, but we were saving that for after the fake parts were

taken so we could follow them while they were stealthed. They would meet us at the sight, Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman already on board.

The motorcycles, which were apparently experimental auto-driving, transforming vehicles worth more money than I had seen in my entire life, were fast, easy to drive, and accelerated at a rate that made my feet tingle.

I was already trying to form a cohesive argument that would convince Batman to let me keep it when the mission was over.

It took us about twenty minutes to arrive at the site, a broken and destroyed neighborhood. There were dozens of firefighters, paramedics, and policemen walking around, helping people and keeping the area safe. There were quite a few League members patrolling the area as well, helping where they could. More than one building was nothing but rubble, and rescue crews were slowly working through it. I almost stopped to get out and help when my communicator buzzed.

“Don’t stop. Superman already did an x-ray scan of the area, all living civilians have already been rescued,” Batman informed me. “Focus on the mission.”

I took a deep breath and nodded, knowing he was already watching us from Bioship. M’gann reached out and mentally hugged me, her own solemn sadness leaking through.

When we reached the site we parked the motorcycles to the side and climbed off, following behind Kaldur as we did. Tora, who had been riding with our leader because she didn’t know how to drive a motorcycle, looked particularly upset by the destruction. I put my hand on her shoulder and gave her a nod when she turned to look.

“The League and response teams have this handled. The best thing we can do right now is get the thing that did this as far away from these people as possible. The Star Labs will know how to keep it safe.”

She nodded and stood a little straighter, her face filled with determination. The group made their way to the final crater, where Black Canary and Green Arrow were waiting. Black Canary had a bandage around her left arm, while Green Arrow was looking around furtively. Hawkman and Hawkwoman were guarding the truck that we would be escorting. The vehicle was clearly armored, reminding me of a long militarized bank truck, with four wheels on each side.

“Is everything ready?” Kaldur asked once Black Canary turned to acknowledge us.

“Yes, the parts are disassembled and inside the truck,” She said. “Are you-”

“What!?” Green Arrow asked loudly. “I can’t hear you, my ears are ringing!”

Black Canary let out a long, defeated sigh, shaking her head and elbowing her partner in the ribs. He grumbled next to her, rubbing the spot she had poked.

“Green Arrow got a sonic blast straight to the face when we first started fighting the android. His hearing will come back. Eventually”

“What!?”

“Until then he will be making this joke at every opportunity.” She said, once again elbowing him in the ribs.

The hero coughed something along the lines of “worth it” before finally staying quiet.

“Are you sure you can handle this?” Black Canary asked, after giving her partner a look. “This android represents a significant threat, there is no shame in admitting it would be over your head.”

*“She is staying in character,”* I sent to M’gann. *“Hook us all up and make sure no one snaps at her and gives the game away”*

I could feel the communication connection forming between everyone, just in time to stop Wally from firing something back.

“We can handle it,” Kaldur insisted, letting just a hint of petulant child work through into his speech. “We can handle anything.”

*“And the Oscar goes to...”* Robin said through the connection.

For a split second Tora broke enough to let a smirk through before she regained control. Kaldur talked to Black Canary to get a few more details of our “mission” before we all returned to the motorcycles, waiting for the truck to leave. Tora, who had ridden in with Kaldur now sat with Robin. After a few minutes, the driver climbed into the driver's seat and started the truck up. Not long after that, the truck pulled away, and we followed behind.

*“Superboy, Kid Flash, Robin, get into position up in front, ahead of the vehicle. Give them an excuse to go slow, but keep it reasonable.”* Kaldur ordered, all three of the young heroes giving brief mental acknowledgment before pulling away and ahead of the truck. *“The rest of us will follow from behind. Keep your eye out, but try not to look too competent.”*

We followed behind the truck for a while, leaving the city behind after the first half hour. Kid Flash and Robin talked openly through the coms, drumming up background noise that the rest of us occasionally contributed to. The real, mission-related conversations took place mentally.

We drove along with the armored vehicle for a while, long enough to pass through the city outskirts, through the surrounding suburban areas, and all the way to the rural farmland.

“Since when did people grow *corn* so close to the east coast?” I asked, watching another farm pass by.

“Skarn... why would we have any idea about where corn is grown?” Wally asked, shaking his head.

“... Fair point I guess,” I admitted, turning away from the fields as they whipped by, just barely catching sight of a green glow hidden in the corn.

*“Heads up,”* I said mentally to the whole group. *“There was something hiding in the last field. We might have company soon.”*

*“Rodger. Kyle, M’gann, you know your roles, everyone else get ready.”*

It didn't take long for the source of the green glow to show itself... or rather themselves. Dozens and dozens of small, flying humanoids, each one around two or three feet tall, blasted past us. They had various glowing green parts, including two large eyes, and were obviously mechanical. Around two dozen latched on to the truck itself, while the remaining three dozen attacked us.

“What the hell! Are these robot monkeys?” Wally asked, dodging his motorcycle to the left to avoid a blast of green energy coming from the eyes of one. “Holy shit!”

“And why are they laughing?!” Robin added, flicking out a birdarang to destroy one of them. *“Wow, careful everyone, they go down pretty easy!”*

“Focus on the ones trying to break into the truck!” Kaldur shouted, lashing out with a water whip to cut down two more robots.

I flicked out my hand, revealing that it was covered in stone under my uniform, chunks of which hurtled out to punch through a group of robot monkeys, two of which exploded.

“Fuck! They hit my bike!” Superboy said, before continuing mentally *“right side!”*

Superboy rolled off of his bike, tumbling a bit and using his flight just enough to position himself perfectly... right in front of the right side tires. With less than fifteen feet between him and the truck, the truck immediately ran him over. His bike tumbled off to the side, encouraged out of the truck's path by M'gann.

While this was happening the rest of the team steered clear, taking out another dozen flying robots, but keeping their attack hesitant and unwieldy. When Kyle slipped under the truck, the right side tires running over him, M'gann again mentally reached out and popped all four tires as they ran him over. The truck swerved, the driver losing control of the vehicle at the sudden loss of all the tires on one side. Kaldur, who had moved to the right side when Superboy called out which side he was going under, swerved to avoid Kyle as he emerged from under the armored truck.

This was, of course, on purpose, and he used the swerve to skid off the road in into a cornfield. He tumbled a bit as the bike hit the dirt and decelerated, but his Atlantean durability meant he wouldn't be hurt beyond a few bruises and scrapes. Kyle would suffer just as little after being run over by the truck, though his outfit would be a bit roughed up.

The truck swerved more, over correcting and spinning out, the driver forced to hit the brakes to keep from completely losing control and rolling the vehicle. The monkey robots took advantage of this immediately, swarming the roof of the truck, giggling all the while.

The rest of the team stopped with the truck, attacking the monkeys with ranged abilities. I jumped up onto the roof, Robin quickly following suit. I smashed two more of the robots, watching as Robin took down one and smacked another, managing to cut off its arm but leaving it still flying around.

*"Leave the one missing an arm alone!"* Robin called out. *"It's got our backup tracker!"*

The group sent back various acknowledgments. I punched forward, taking out another pair of robots with a blast of rock chunks, just in time for six of them to blast out from inside the truck, carrying one of the crates. A few seconds later another set blasted out, quickly followed by the remaining swarming robots. The rest of the monkeys formed a protective screen behind the loaded-down ones, preventing us from hitting any of them with ranged attacks. Still, we managed to destroy another six robots before they were out of anyone's range. Robin mimed a small tantrum, throwing his helmet into the cornfield before running his hand through his hair and putting his hand to his ear like he was talking through his communicator. Tora rushed back to Superboy, who was still playing possum, while M'gann ran back to where Kaldur had gone off-road.

I made my way to the front end of the vehicle and checked on the driver, who was wearing a five-point racing harness and helmet. He gave me a subtle thumbs up, which I nodded in confirmation, but reached in to mime checking his pulse. We continued to play it up for another few minutes, before finally stopping.

*"Well done everyone. I believe that was a solid performance,"* Kaldur said as he guided his motorcycle out of the cornfield, M'gann walking with him. *"Batman, any thoughts?"*

"It was well done," Batman responded. "Though a bit dramatic. I assume you planned it telepathically?"

"Yes, it makes subterfuge that requires precise timing much easier to coordinate," Kaldur responded.

As our combat leader talk to Batman, Bioship decloaked and landed beside the road as we all guided our motorcycles off of the road as well, including the one that was scratched and banged up from Superboys dive. Batman made no attempt to comment on the damaged equipment.

We quickly piled into Bioship, which was actually a bit cramped with three more people inside. Still, Bioship created more seats and we quickly buckled in, M'gann taking her place in the driver's seat. I could feel it as we lifted off and cloaked, picking up speed in the direction of the monkeys.

"Okay, Bioship is easily keeping pace with the robots, they aren't going very fast," M'gann assured us. "Thank you for giving Bioship the tracking tech Batman, I think she wants to create one for me so she can find me anywhere on the planet."

Batman didn't respond, simply nodding while focusing on the screen Bioship had made for him, one that displayed the tracking device that was implanted in the crates. We followed for a while, just over ten minutes before Batman finally spoke.

"They are headed for the rail line." He said confidently. "They are planning on intercepting one of the trains."

"Not a bad way to escape the area," I admitted. "Especially if its long-distance freight."

"Well with the tracker they won't be getting away," Wally pointed out. "Should we go on ahead, intercept the train early?"

"Too much of a risk."

"We cannot risk it."

Batman answered and Kaldur answered at the same time, the former looking to our combat leader and nodding, letting him have the floor.

"They may have orders to travel on the train and leave further along the line. Or they may change direction at the last moment or may discover the tracker while onboard the train," Kaldur said. "We follow them until the tracker informs us they have opened the crate, then we attack. Just like we planned."