

Author's Note: *Aiden Maxwell is eleven-years-old and he is a Phase 2 graduate of the Urban Predator program that was operated by the CIA and ultimately terminated by Fusion. For background, see Chapter 243: Urban Predator of my story Forsaken as well as my story The Fusion Ultimatum. Aiden was rescued by Fusion and sent to Gotham to live with Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle.*

Thursday, May 12th, 2016

Wayne Manor, Gotham

Bruce

The boy was very quiet and he had generally kept to himself since his arrival.

We had been back from France for two days, yet the boy had barely spoken and he had taken his meals in his bedroom. Admittedly, he had been wide-eyed at the sight of his new home and the enormous bedroom that he had been given. While he was openly stunned by his obvious change in fortune, I was wary. The kid was a trained killer, despite his only being eleven-years-old.

How did I feel having a young killer in my home? I had killed . . . on more than one occasion. Aiden had been taken at a young age, according to his file, and the kid had been taught to fight, to maim . . . and ultimately, to kill. Cat, of course, she saw nothing wrong, but then I knew her views on killing. Me; I only killed when it was *absolutely* necessary. . . There was one more thing – at that moment in time, the boy did not know what Selina and I did when we went out at night. . .

For now, the boy would get the benefit of the doubt and we would trust him.

Aiden

The past few days had been like a whirlwind.

Eight days, previously, I had been on the *Cummings Delight*, a massive, ultra-luxurious yacht being treated like a worthless piece of shit that somebody had brought in on the bottom of their shoe. I had attempted to thwart an attack by *Fusion* and I had actually fought the famous *Psyche*! Then, after the yacht was sunk by *Fusion*, I was thrown overboard like so much trash where I was then rescued by a cute blonde girl called Stephanie who turned out to be *Psyche* herself – if I had had my wits about me, I might have asked her to marry me. . .

Then, a couple of days later, I was whisked away on an executive jet and treated like a prince. I was even more stunned to be *met* at the foot of the aircraft stairs by a Rolls Royce, no less. The driver was also the butler, apparently, and he was called Alfred Pennyworth. We drove through the outskirts of Gotham – I was *not* impressed by what I saw. However, I *was* impressed by my new lodgings – Wayne Manor – which even the word ‘extravagant’ struggled to cover.

The flight had been long, so I had been shown to my new bedroom – I’d seen smaller gymnasiums! It was suggested that I rest until dinner, which would be at seven-thirty that night. There were even new clothes for me, in the wardrobe, which I was told should do until I could be taken shopping the following day. They left me on my own and I felt so overwhelmed that I was ashamed to admit to crying my eyes out on the bed.

Talk about rags to riches. . .

Selina

Dave had explained to me exactly what Aiden was trained to be – I was initially very shocked to hear that something like that actually existed; mind you, it sounded just like something which might have actually come out of Gotham!

The boy was cute, but he had not said much so I could not really judge him. I could sympathise with him, though and I had heard him sobbing as Bruce and I had walked away from his room. I knew how difficult it was to move into somewhere new, but I also knew that we would all be there to help him.

As for whether the boy would join Batman and Catwoman, we would just have to see.

The Kitchen

Bruce

“What’s that, you have there, Alfred?”

“The boy’s file, Master Bruce, it’s all in here. Did you know that he ‘enjoys making a fool of himself’? You two should get right along. . .”

Alfred laughed and so did Selina.

“Funny!”

“Also, he ‘can be cocky and often needs to be put in his place’ – he’s right up your street too, young Miss. . .”

I laughed as Selina scowled.

“Give me that. . .” Bruce ordered.

Alfred passed over the file with a grin and he went back to preparing dinner.

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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Birth Name: Aiden Edward Hutton

Date of Birth: December 14th, 2004

Place of Birth: New York City

Nationality: Swedish-American

Sex: Male

Phase 1

Date of Commencement: January 28th, 2013

Age at Commencement: Eight

Date of Completion: June 8th, 2015

Given Name: Aiden Maxwell

Status of Family: Deceased during identity reassignment

Training Commentary

Weapons Training: Level 1 (Advanced)

Explosives: Level 1 (Intermediate)

Martial Arts: Level 1 (Intermediate)

Close Quarters Combat: Level 1 (Intermediate)

Computing and Communication: Level 1 (Intermediate)

Phase 1 Educational Curriculum: Level 1 (Standard)

End of Phase 1 Notes

The boy has shown an aptitude to violence and has been known to show aggression towards his fellow Predators. Initially, he was quiet and withdrawn. He took a few months to show that he had the required aptitude for being trained as a Predator. The initial indoctrination phase was accomplished without any issues and Aiden is deemed suitable, both academically and qualification wise to proceed to Phase 2 training. While his academic scores have not been exceptional, they are perfectly adequate for his intended purpose and for his age range. He has excelled at Weapons Training and the boy has a good eye on the range. His more physical training has been slow, mainly due to his physical size and upper body strength – this should improve as the boy gets older.

Phase 2

Date of Commencement: June 8th, 2015

Age at Commencement: Ten

Date of Completion: <BLANK>

Phase 2 Codename: Nightwing (to be issued on completion of Phase 2)

Training Commentary

Weapons Training: Level 2 (Advanced)

Explosives: Level 2 (Standard)

Subversion: Level 1 (Standard)

Martial Arts: Level 2 (Intermediate)

Close Quarters Combat: Level 2 (Intermediate)

Computing and Communication: Level 2 (Advanced)

Phase 2 Educational Curriculum: Level 2 (Standard)

End of Phase 2 Notes

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Phase 3

Date of Commencement: <BLANK>

Age at Commencement: <BLANK>

Date of Completion: <BLANK>

Training Commentary

Weapons Training: <BLANK>

Explosives: <BLANK>

Subversion: <BLANK>

Martial Arts: <BLANK>

Close Quarters Combat: <BLANK>

Computing and Communication: <BLANK>

Sexual Exploitation: <BLANK>

Phase 3 Educational Curriculum: <BLANK>

End of Phase 3 Notes

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That evening

The Dining Room

“Much better!”

The boy blushed as he walked into the room.

“Took me a while to find you all; this place is enormous!” Aiden offered.

“I still take wrong turns,” Selina responded with a laugh.

“Please, Aiden – sit down next to Selina,” Bruce said, indicating the chair beside Selina

Aiden hesitated.

“She doesn’t bite, Master Aiden,” Alfred advised the boy.

“Not hard, anyways,” Bruce quipped and Selina grinned.

“More than I wanted to know, Master Bruce,” Alfred grimaced as he made for the kitchen.

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“So, is your room okay?” Bruce asked.

“It’s enormous. . .”

“This place takes some getting used to – I used to be a gutter rat, until I fell for Bruce’s charms. This place is the safest building in all of Gotham. You also have friends here, Aiden,” Selina said soothingly.

“Thanks – all of you. This is taking some getting used to and I apologise now, if I ever come out as being even remotely, ungrateful,” the eleven-year-old responded. “May I ask some questions, please?”

“A polite boy. . .” Selina chuckled. “I thought Bruce was bad – now I have another toff to deal with!”

Aiden and Bruce both blushed as Alfred chuckled.

“Please continue, Aiden,” Bruce invited.

“I’m aware that Gotham is not exactly America’s number one city – it may be among the biggest, but it is also the most corrupt.”

“That is all very true,” Bruce replied.

“Alfred left me some reading material – I read about your parents, Bruce – I’m very sorry. I know a bit about what’s it like to have no parents. You, too, Selina?”

“Yeah – my parents are not around no more,” Selina confirmed.

“What will I do? What will I be? Am I going to school?”

“To be honest – we have no idea,” Bruce replied honestly. “We never planned on having a little kid moving in.”

“I’m not ‘little’ – I’m a *Predator*.”

“A *Predator*?” Selina asked innocently. “What’s that?”

“You telling me you don’t know – somehow I can’t believe that you took me in without knowing at least that,” Aiden replied cautiously.

“Okay, Aiden, cards on the table,” Selina offered. “We know what a *Predator* is. We know what training you have had. We know the sort of thing you were trained for.”

Selina and Bruce saw Aiden’s expression.

“We are not going to judge you, Aiden. Your training was forced upon you and you had no choice but to comply. We will only judge you on what you do from this moment on. Your past is not today,” Bruce said to the boy.

“Thank you. I’ve been fretting about that from the moment I was taken aboard Ocean Vigilante. I was worried that I would not be accepted for what I was. I was worried that my past would destroy any hope I had for a new life; a normal life.”

“I hate to put a downer on your plans for a normal life, young man, but Wayne Manor and those delinquents who call it home, are anything but normal.”

Bruce scowled and Selina burst out laughing. Aiden just appeared confused.

Two days later

Saturday, 14th May

Bay Side, Gotham

“You sure about this?”

“Yes, Bruce, I am,” Selina replied confidently.

“Do I get a vote?” Aiden asked as he glanced around the darkened street, unease etched in his face.

“No, you don’t,” Selina replied much to Aiden’s annoyance. “Bruce – pick us up in two hours; we’ll call you.”

With that, Selina hauled Aiden out of the Rolls Royce and she slammed the door.

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“What are we doing?” Aiden asked.

“I thought we could go for a nice evening stroll,” Selina replied.

“What – in this city?”

“What’s the worst that could happen?”

“We could get fucking killed!”

“Yes – that *could* happen, in all honesty. But aren’t you a cold-blooded killer with skills up the wazoo?”

“Just because I can, doesn’t mean I like it.”

“A fair response.”

No further conversation was exchanged as Selina led Aiden deeper into some of the seedier, but not all that dangerous, portions of Gotham – she had no intention of getting the boy killed on his first night out.

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“I don’t like this,” Aiden complained.

“Come on – show some back bone.”

“I can show way more than you, bitch.”

“Not bad,” Selina chuckled as they walked along Southwest Ninth Street.

The two young teens did not attract much attention. There were richer pickings that night for those out to gain a little cash. They saw their first mugging on the corner of State Street and Southwest Eighth Street. Selina said nothing, waiting for Aiden to comment on the scene before them. She saw his expression harden.

“Shouldn’t we do something?” he asked.

“Like what? Call the cops?”

Aiden scowled at Selina who smiled.

“Go get ‘em, cowboy!” she suggested.

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Aiden ran forwards – not announcing his intentions as he ran at the two muggers and their prey. The muggers, two men in their early twenties, were intent on stripping their prey, a woman in her mid-forties, of everything valuable. Neither of the muggers saw the boy running out of the darkness towards them; they were too intent on their heinous activity.

The *Predator* attacked out of the darkness, kicking the first mugger in the head. Aiden did not await any response, he attacked the other man just as hard and fast. Selina was very impressed by the skills being displayed before her but rather than intervene, she just watched from a safe distance as Aiden continued his attack. He held nothing back – there was no sound from him, just yelling from the two muggers. Their victim had run the moment attention had been taken away from her, so she was safe – unlike her attackers.

The first one was unconscious on the ground, blood spreading from a vicious looking head wound. The second man was fighting for his life – despite his attacker being only eleven-years-old. Aiden kicked and punched until the man joined his criminal colleague on the ground. Only then did Aiden stop, take a deep breath, and walk back towards Selina.

“That felt good,” he commented.

Selina smiled as they headed deeper into the city.