the cure for loneliness

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/910.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Slash (M/M)
Fandom:	Batman - All Media Types
Relationship:	Tim Drake/Ra's al Ghul
Characters:	Tim Drake, Ra's Al Ghul, Janet Drake - Mentioned
Additional Tags:	Modified Canon - Supernatural Elements, Mythical Creatures, Bunyips, Bunyip Tim Drake, Bunyip Ra's Al Ghul, Shapeshifting, Creature Transformation, Creature Courtship, Non-Human Characters, Age Difference, Possessive Ra's Al Ghul, Protective Ra's al Ghul, Touch-Starved Tim Drake, Lonely Tim Drake, Grief/Mourning, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Romance, Fluff, Male Pregnancy, Pregnant Ra's Al Ghul, Mpreg, Mpreg because I say so, Happy Ending, Tim Drake is 21 as He Should Be in Canon, a bit older when he has the baby, Getting Together - Freeform, Developing Relationship
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-11-02 Words: 1,660 Chapters: 1/1

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by dontaskjustlook

Summary

Tim discovers he's not the only Bunyip out there.

He certainly hadn't expected the other one to be Ra's al Ghul.

Notes

Prompt #55 from the Batcest Halloween 2026 event: Tim keeps finding himself going back to Ra's, the only other Bunyip he's ever met since his mom died. What happens when he finds out he's carrying the next generation of Bunyips thanks to the older man?

I was thinking about this, and I just found the idea of Ra's being the pregnant one funny. That's all.

P.S. I don't know much about bunyips. I hope my interpretation isn't too inaccurate. Sorry if it is!

See the end of the work for more notes

Since his mother's death, Tim had felt completely alone. He missed her. He missed the water. The freedom of sneaking out with her at night, making their way to the river hidden deep within their property, where they could spend a few quiet hours together.

It was something he had never been able to share with anyone else.

He still had his adoptive family, his friends, and his siblings, but none of that could fill the space she'd left behind. There was a part of himself he'd never been able to share with anyone, something that had remained hidden ever since his mother died.

Finding Ra's had been both a blessing and a curse.

Everything about the man went against Tim's principles. Against the rules Batman had taught him, the ones that had somehow managed to keep him alive all these years.

Getting caught up in Ra's's games had only been the beginning of his ordeal. With Bruce gone, lost somewhere in time, Tim had little choice but to accept the older man's help, however reluctantly.

It sounded cruel to think of it that way, but that was how he'd felt. He'd lost much of his new family practically overnight, and Damian's arrival had only made things worse, taking his place at Dick's side.

He didn't blame them. Either of them. But it had been another wound he'd had to learn to live with.

He'd never felt more alone, and he couldn't understand why Ra's kept insisting on being part of his life. Why he was so determined to keep Tim by his side, trying to convince him to stay and lead the League with him.

Much less why the older man was so intent on making Tim his partner.

There was nothing particularly special about him that could explain such persistence.

Until he discovered the truth.

What he'd found wasn't a Lazarus Pit. The water lacked that eerie green hue that always sent shivers down Tim's spine, as though even magic itself were uncomfortable with its own existence.

No.

This water was clear, sunlight filtering down through it and illuminating the small waves that lapped against the surrounding rocks. A lake hidden deep within a cave, warm and clean, untouched by the corruption he'd come to associate with Ra's's waters.

Tim could hear the gentle splashing against the stone.

It felt like home.

And perched on one of the rocks farther inside the cave was a beautiful Bunyip.

Tim could hardly believe what he was seeing.

Another one. Another creature like him, when he'd spent so many years believing there were none left for him to find.

And of all the people it could have been, it was Ra's.

Tim didn't want to believe either of those things. That another Bunyip had been so close to him all this time, or that the creature before him was the very man who'd spent months trying to draw him into his life.

But he couldn't deny what was right in front of him.

He would have recognized those piercing green eyes anywhere. The same eyes that had watched him so intently, as though they could see straight through him, now looking back at him from the face of a magnificent creature.

Centuries of knowledge and experience seemed to live behind that gaze. Everything Tim had ever wanted was right there in front of him. And he ran away.

He hadn't been ready to face Ra's. Not then. He knew he'd have to eventually, but he needed time to process what he'd seen, to make sense of a discovery that had turned everything he thought he knew upside down.

Ra's al Ghul was a Bunyip.

And Tim wasn't nearly as alone as he'd believed.

When they saw each other again, Ra's said nothing about what had happened. He didn't need to. The look in his eyes was enough.

His touches became bolder after that, his hands lingering on Tim's shoulders or back a little longer than necessary. He found excuses to let their arms brush together, seeking contact whenever the opportunity presented itself, seemingly confident that Tim would allow it.

And the worst part was that he was right.

Tim did allow it.

What began as small gestures gradually became something more. Ra's grew increasingly comfortable entering Tim's personal space, undeterred by his reactions. He never asked permission, never apologized for getting too close. He simply continued, making himself an increasingly familiar presence in Tim's life until Tim could hardly remember what it had been like without him.

One afternoon, when Tim couldn't find Ra's anywhere, his thoughts returned to the cave where he'd first discovered the older man's true nature.

Perhaps Ra's had gone there again.

Before he could think better of it, Tim turned and headed straight for the cave. His heart was pounding so hard that he could hear it in his ears, and his hands wouldn't stop trembling.

He heard the Bunyip's deep call before he reached the lake.

The sound echoed through the cave, sending a shiver down his spine with every step he took. He didn't think he was running, but he wasn't entirely sure he wasn't, either.

It was calling to him. Drawing him closer. Claiming him.

By the time he entered the cavern, Tim could barely catch his breath. His eyes immediately found the creature perched on the same rock as before, far across the water. Too far away for him to reach on foot.

For a moment, he simply stood there, staring.

Then he raised a hand to the clasp of his cape.

The Bunyip watched him intently as he undid the fastening, following every movement until the cape slipped from Tim's shoulders and fell to the ground.

Tim drew a deep breath, as though he'd finally freed himself from something that had been constricting his chest.

The rest of his suit followed, each piece abandoned on the rocks until he stood completely naked before Ra's.

He let the older man look at him.

Then, with Ra's watching, Tim began to change.

His body bent forward, lowering him onto all fours as his spine lengthened and his proportions shifted. There was no pain. There never had been. The transformation was as natural to him as breathing, even after all the years he'd spent hiding it.

His fingers shortened and broadened, dark webbing stretching between them as small claws took the place of his nails. Thick fur spread across his skin, covering his arms, his back, and eventually the rest of his body.

His neck lengthened, his face pushing forward as his jaw reshaped into a narrow muzzle. Two long, sharp fangs emerged from his mouth, and a heavy tail extended behind him, settling against the stone.

When the last changes were complete, Tim lifted his head.

Ra's was still watching him from across the lake.

For a moment, neither of them moved.

Then Ra's let out another deep, echoing call.

Tim answered by plunging into the water without a second thought.

This felt like home now.

Tim's footsteps echoed through the long hallway as he paced back and forth, unable to keep still. His nerves were stretched to their limit, and he'd taken to worrying at the nonexistent nail of his thumb, glancing repeatedly toward the door that had remained closed for the past several minutes.

How much longer could Ra's possibly take?

Every passing second only made his anxiety worse. More than once, he nearly turned toward the door to pound on it and demand answers from the older man. Each time, he barely managed to restrain himself before resuming his restless pacing.

What Ra's had told him only minutes earlier kept circling through his mind.

Tim hardly dared to believe it. Hope had taken hold of him, tightening around his chest until he could scarcely think of anything else.

It was a possibility he'd never allowed himself to entertain before. Whenever the thought had occurred to him, he'd dismissed it as foolish, something he had no right to expect.

And yet, from the moment Ra's had first mentioned it, that hope had begun to grow.

Little by little, it had become harder to ignore. Now it threatened to overwhelm him completely, leaving him terrified of how much it would hurt if everything he'd dared to imagine turned out to be impossible after all.

The sound of the door opening brought his thoughts to an abrupt halt.

Tim turned.

Ra's was standing in the doorway, holding the test in one hand. There was a broad smile on his face, and the look of such open affection in his eyes that Tim momentarily forgot how to breathe.

“It's positive,” Ra's said. “I'm pregnant.”

A sob escaped Tim before he could stop it.

He crossed the distance between them and threw himself into Ra's's arms, clinging to him as the older man caught him and held him close.

Tim buried his face against Ra's's chest, his shoulders shaking with little, hiccupping sobs. Tears streamed down his cheeks, but he couldn't bring himself to care. Ra's stroked his hair, keeping him close as Tim struggled to contain the sheer joy of it all.

He wasn't alone.

He would never be alone again.

Not with Ra's beside him and their child on the way.

He wished his mother could have been there to see it. More than anyone, she would have understood what this meant to him. She would have celebrated with him, shared his happiness, and known exactly why he couldn't stop crying.

“Thank you,” Tim whispered against Ra's's chest. “For everything.”

Ra's hummed softly, his fingers moving through Tim's hair. “Anything for my beloved.”

Tim tightened his arms around him, unwilling to let go just yet.

His heart felt so full he hardly knew what to do with himself.

For the first time in a long while, Tim felt whole.

He was exactly where he belonged.

And, more importantly, where he wanted to be.

End Notes

Thank you for the kudos. For commenting. Just for reading. I truly appreciate it all

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