Birds Of A Feather Flock Together

by enchantment

Summary

Penguin and Dovina are getting married and villainy’s finest is in attendance, including the Legion of Doom. Their presence ensures that the wedding reception is not only one that everyone will remember but one that the newlyweds would love to forget.

Notes

Author’s Note: Completely AU but hopefully still enjoyable. I tried to stick with 70s villians to match the show but there’s a whole hodge-podge of villainy in here, 50 in all, both speaking and honorable mention. :) I was reading my Batman Annual # 11 and I remembered how much I loved Penguin and Dovina Partridge’s love story and then I watched some Challenge of the Super Friends. Between the two, I had to wonder what a super villain wedding would be like and that’s how this story came about. There are lots of villains that you’ll see who would never interact or even still be alive, but I just wanted the story to be fun. And did you know that there once another Toyman for a brief time named Jack Nimball? I did not know that. Special props to my daughter, Jenna, who mentioned that Captain Cold hates to be mistaken for Mr. Freeze and the idea of toy helicopters.

“Alright, everyone, please come in but be sure to maintain an orderly fashion,” urges the Clock King vehemently. “Everything has been running perfectly on time so far so let’s not ruin it now!” His tone becomes impatient when he begins to notice some guests dawdling at the end of the line. “Keep up, people! We only have another thirty seconds to go and...yes! We did it!” He smiles good-naturedly at everyone. “Terrific job, everybody! Now, have a good time and enjoy yourselves until I have need of your attention again. Go on now, time’s a wastin’!” Visually shuddering in dismay, he inwardly grouses, *What a horrid thought!*

Lex Luthor passes the Clock King with a nod of acknowledgment before turning his attention back to the Riddler. “I still can’t believe that Penguin actually got married.”

“Why not? He’s always dressed for the occasion.” He looks disparagingly at Lex’s normal garments. “Some of us,” he indicates himself wearing his bowler hat and green jacket covered with question marks over his regular attire while twirling his question mark cane, “know how to dress for success.”

Lex barks out a laugh. “If it’s success in dressing like a fool then congratulations, you’ve succeeded!” Spinning around to face the other Legion members, Lex makes an announcement. “Legion of Doom, I need your attention! As you know, this is a party being attended by some of the most elite villains in our time so while you’re out there having fun, try and make some new contacts, eavesdrop on a few enterprising schemes and most importantly, don’t embarrass me!”

“How me embarrass, Luthor?” quizzes Bizarro.

“With your grammar skills for one. Alright, everyone, off!” dismisses Lex with a wave of his hand.

“Relax, Luthor,” purrs Cheetah on her way past him, “let your hair down for once.”

A snarl moves across Lex’s expression before he shakes off Cheetah’s dig and he takes a seat at a nearby table along with Brainiac and much to his surprise, Toyman. “I’m surprised that you decided to sit with the big boys, Toyman, what with your pining after Cheetah.”

“I’m attempting a different approach,” he notes with an indignant sniff. “I’m biding my time.”

“Nobody has that much time, not even Vandal Savage!” replies Lex with a chuckle.

“Where is Savage?” questions Brainiac. “I had heard that he was on the guest list.”

“He decided not to come,” Lex replies blithely. “He said that when you reach his age, if you’ve seen one wedding then you’ve seen them all.”

As the rest of the Legion of Doom explores the reception, Cheetah and Giganta give a passing glance to Star Sapphire and Harley Quinn at the empty bar. “That was nice of you to offer to DJ while the Royal Flush Gang sets up their instruments,” compliments Star Sapphire.

“Anything for Mr. J’s bestest bestie!” she chirps while looking through her box of cds.

Star Sapphire leans over the counter for a better view of Harley’s music choices. “Who knew the Royal Flush members were also such a great band?”
Harry giggles at a private joke. “Yeah, especially with their new lead guitarist, the Gang’s new Ace!” She sidles up alongside her companion and whispers, “Did you hear who he is?” Star Sapphire shakes her head in the negative and Harley continues, “It’s Ace Frehley!” she squeals in excitement.

Star Sapphire stares back at her in shock. “Ace Frehley from KISS? How did they get him?”

Harley leans on the bartop and offers her a look that states the answer is obvious. “With a lot of money, baby.”

Sapphire looks over her shoulder and then back at Harley. “And he’s not worried about being around so many,” she lowers her voice and leans in close to Harley, “unsavory characters?”

“Nah, he’s fine,” assures Harley before pausing a moment to reconsider her words. “I mean… well…he’s fine as long as he thinks that it’s just a costume party and that we’re not the real thing.” She leans in close again. “We just won’t tell him that, will we?” she winks conspiratorially.

A gravelly throat clearing behind them lets them know that they’re no longer alone and they turn around to find themselves facing Darkseid. “Excuse me, ladies, but I would like to make a musical request.”

“Well, hello, Mr. Grey!” greets Harley cheerfully. “Let me guess,” she turns around and quickly rummages through her box for the perfect selection. “How about a little Pink Floyd?” she asks while waving her Dark Side of the Moon cd in the air.

Darkseid’s first response is to level her with a deadly stare before heaving a sigh and replying, “Yes.”

“I knew it!” boasts Harley as she hands him the cd to choose which songs that he wants to hear.

*Talk about music to soothe the savage beast,* muses Star Sapphire as she leaves the two to their own devices. On the way to join Catwoman and Poison Ivy at their table, she offers a commiserating smile to Giganta and Cheetah for their assigned babysitting duties.

Cheetah’s gaze travels over the room. “Have you seen him yet?”

Enlarging herself a few feet and then shrinking back down, Giganta replies, “Yes, he’s over in the corner talking to Killer Frost.”

Cheetah’s expression becomes one of distaste. “I don’t see why we’re the ones stuck monitoring Black Manta’s alcohol intake,” she complains as they begin to move through the crowd to reach their prey.

“It’s our penance for taking a spa day while the rest of the Legion was having to fight off the Super Friends,” reminds Giganta. “Besides, Lex doesn’t want another embarrassing incident where Manta tries to impress the ladies with his Darth Vader impression.”

Cheetah grunts in agreement. “As if all of the rejections that he receives aren’t humiliating enough.”

They soon come to a stop at the refreshment table and casually make their way to the end to eavesdrop on Black Manta and Killer Frost. Their gaze simultaneously slides over to the couple just as Black Manta attempts to use his powers of persuasion. “That’s why water and cold work so well together to make ice. You take a little water, add a little cold and then you just chill.”
“I’m sorry that I can’t echo,” she taps her finger on his metal helmet, “your sentiments, but your pick-up lines have left even me cold. I’ll see you around.”

“I’ll catch you later!” he calls out to her retreating back and then takes up a relaxed pose leaning against the wall with his arms crossed over his chest.

The women continue to fill their plates as Giganta murmurs, “I’ll give you ten to one odds that he’s smiling underneath that helmet.”

“You know me better than that, Giganta,” admonishes Cheetah. “I never take a fool’s bet.”

Giganta laughs softly and then tilts her head to indicate Harley and Darkseid. “It looks like Harley has made a new ally, quite impressive.”

“Hmmmmph,” scoffs Cheetah. “I’m more impressed that Harley’s carrying on a conversation with Darkseid and he hasn’t killed her yet.” Her gaze travels over the room’s occupants and she notices Penguin heading over to Lex’s table and smiles to herself. *Here comes the groom.*

Lex turns to Brainiac as he spies Penguin approaching their table. “Don’t forget what you’re supposed to say to Penguin.” When Brainiac simply stares back at him in silence, Lex gives a frustrated sigh. “You remember, we discussed it last night when we were working on that device! You’re going to say, ‘My con-,” he slowly prompts.

“My condolences?” suggests Brainiac with a trace of uncertainty.

“Never mind,” orders Lex, “just don’t say anything. And remind me to run that maintenance check on you that you’ve been requesting.”

“Greetings everyone,” Penguin addresses everyone with a wide smile. “I hope that you’re all enjoying yourselves!”

“Yes, we’re having a fine time, Penguin, thank you.” affirms Lex as he shakes his hand. “The ceremony was as beautiful as your bride and the reception has been impeccable.” His smile suddenly changes to a smirk as he notes, “However, I think the most exceptional part of the festivities is the way you finagled all of your friends to help you set everything up for the big day.” He ticks each villain off his fingers as he names them. “Poison Ivy for floral decorations, Mr. Freeze for ice sculptures, the Pied Piper for the music, Crazy Quilt for lighting and Weather Wizard to ensure a perfect day.” He arches an eyebrow as he gives Penguin a knowing look. “Not to mention the fact that you charged all of us for parking, per person, per vehicle.”

Penguin’s smile turns into a full-blown grin. “Wak, wak, wak,” he chuckles with glee. “Quite unorthodox, I know, but with the addition of a wife…well, let’s just say that I find the need to feather my nest.”

Lex merely shakes his head in amusement until Penguin’s bride, Dovina Partridge, now Dovina Cobblepott, walks over to their table to join her husband. “Mrs. Cobblepott, I haven’t yet had the pleasure,” Lex takes her hand and kisses it. “I’m Lex Luthor, and these are my associates, Brainiac and Toyman. We’ve known Oswald for a long time and may we offer our heartiest congratulations.” His smirk returns as he teases, “And since we’ve known Oswald for such a long time, I’d advise to keep my eye on him if I were you.”

Dovina releases a trill of laughter while Penguin glares at Lex. Ignoring his jibe, Dovina concentrates solely on her husband as she coos, “There’s nothing to worry about there, I can’t seem to take my eyes off of him.” She turns back to the others and announces, “And I know who you
and your cohorts are Mr. Luthor. Now, I would like to keep things friendly between us, but I have
to make one thing absolutely clear. Although any friend of Oswald’s will always be welcome in
our home, be assured that not only will I be keeping an eye on him to ensure that he’s keeping his
promise to forsake his life of crime but that the other eye will be on the cutlery. Capiche?”

Toyman slaps his knee in merriment. “Well, it looks like she has you sussed, Lex, old boy!” He
then turns to the newlyweds and declares, “I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to the
two of you, I must admit that I’ve never seen Penguin look happier!”

“Wak, wak, wak! It’s all due to my bountiful bride, I assure you,” proclaims Penguin as he gazes
down at Dovina and the rest of the world seems to fade away.

“Whoever thought that two people who share a passion for ornithology and became pen pals
would end up finding the one person in this whole wide world that they were meant to be with?”
she quizzes rhetorically as she stares lovingly into Penguin’s eyes.

“Not me,” mutters Lex with a sad shake of his head as he imagines all of the schemes and heists
that Penguin will be missing out on while he’s married to Dovina. He was always such a devious
planner, so meticulous with every detail of his foulest plot, so sad. Oh well, at least she seems like
a nice woman. And with any luck, it won’t take him long to learn his lesson to sneak out and fly
the coop before she clips his wings permanently.

“Incidentally, dear, I came over to let you know that the photographer wants to take some pictures
of us outside the reception hall,” she informs Penguin sweetly.

“Of course, my pet, of course!” he acquiesces instantly. “Please excuse us, Gentlemen, but I don’t
want to keep the little lady waiting.” With a tip of his hat, he takes Dovina’s hand and rests it over
his arm to escort her out of the reception in grand fashion.

Once they’ve departed, Lex inquires, “Speaking of pets, how is Pavlov doing?”

“Quite well,” replies Brainiac. “With my guidance, he is running through a variety of mazes, far
more than the average lab rat.”

Toyman does a double take and stares back and forth increduously at the two men. ‘Wait a
minute, are you telling me that you have a pet and that it’s a lab rat?’

“Yes,” states the android in his usual monotone, “it was Luthor’s idea. He believes that procuring
an animal and placing it in a scenario in which I was forced to provide nourishment and interact
with it might give me a finer appreciation for the mundane tasks that humans perform in everyday
life.”

Lex’s mouth twitches in his attempt to contain his laughter. “It’s true, Toyman, and you should see
Pavlov at dinnertime, he loves his little bell.”

Toyman glances between the two with a slight disbelieving shake of his head. Scientists, sheesh!
And they say that I have a twisted sense of humor.

“Good afternoon, gentleman,” greets Ultra-Humanite from behind Toyman. “It’s good to see you
again.”

“And you,” returns Lex while Brainiac and Toyman merely give nods of acknowledgement.

Ultra-Humanite’s face twists into an expression of disdain as he stares down at the android’s
everyday attire. “Honestly, Brainiac, this is a wedding. Even Grundy wore pants.” He lifts his
glass and tilts it towards the front doors where he sees Solomon Grundy talking to Blockbuster. “Well, speak of the devil. Now there’s an interesting couple, did Grundy bring a plus-one?”

“I was unaware that we had that option,” remarks Brainiac, “there was no mention of it on the invitation.”

“I see that you still haven’t been programmed for sarcasm.” He takes a sip of his drink and spies Granny Goodness and Kalibak walking past Grundy and Blockbuster. “Why are they here?”

“They’re having a recruitment drive,” answers Lex in a mocking tone. “Come and see the universe while you conquer it!” He laughs derisively. “Like that hasn’t been tried before. Anyway, I heard that Granny Goodness is going to make her pitch when Dovina throws her bouquet. She believes that will be the most opportune time to talk to a large group of women about becoming a Female Fury.”

Ultra-Humanite grunts in amusement. “Just further proof that Granny isn’t just another pretty face. Although if things don’t work out to her satisfaction, her trip doesn’t need to be a wasted one.” His eyes dart to Grundy and Blockbuster playing Rock, Paper, Scissors while Bizarro mimics Blockbuster’s moves behind his back to give Grundy the edge. “She can always cast her net for a consort.”

Brainiac’s computerized mind instantly calculates the chances of such an instance actually occurring and quickly arrives at a conclusion. “I am unable to conceive of such an occurrence. Surely, even ones such as they,” he motions to Blockbuster, Grundy and Bizarro, “must have certain standards.”

The four villains continue to watch as Grundy drops his fist onto Bizarro’s head for giving him the wrong gesture for their final play while Blockbuster repeatedly pumps his fist in a show of victory. Knowing that the other three table’s occupants are the greatest geniuses of their time and that the three they are watching are the complete opposite with super-strength, Toyman observes, “This would be the definitive example of brains before brawn, gentlemen, brains before brawn.”

Noticing Ultra-Humanite staring down at him as if he had forgotten he was there, he adds, “Or in your case, both!”

“A most astute and accurate observation,” compliments Ultra-Humanite. “Unbelievable that it came from you.”

“And here I thought you weren’t supposed to speak any evil,” grumbles Toyman under his breath.

Ultra-Humanite gives him a hard stare and growls, “What was that?”

Catching sight of Lex’s and Brainiac’s cautioning gaze, Toyman decides to keep his next smart-aleck remark to himself and instead substitutes, “I was just wondering when they were going to serve the cake.” Ignoring Ultra-Humanite’s suspicious gaze, he nonchalantly turns his gaze to the cake where he sees Black Manta arguing with Sinestro. And now I’m wondering what the two of you are doing with the cake.

“Sinestro! What do you think that you’re doing?” questions Black Manta in outrage.

He turns around licking the frosting from his lips and uses his fork to pick up another bite while using his ring to cut another slice. “What does it look like I’m doing, Manta? I’m having my cake and eating it too!”

“You’re not supposed to cut the cake!” groans Black Manta. “That’s a tradition for the bride and
Sinestro brushes off his comment and proceeds to cut more slices. “Are you telling me that we’re expected to just stand around and watch them cut the cake?”

“It’s a symbol of their new life together,” explains Black Manta as he winces while another slice is cut.

“How boring is that?” comments Sinestro off-handedly. “And that’s really all that they do?”

“They also smush the cake in each other’s faces…” he trails off finding that explanation lame even to his own ears.

“Smush?” Sinestro finally looks up with interest as the Terran word is unfamiliar to him. “What does that mean?”

Black Manta imitates picking up a slice of cake and pushing it into Sinestro’s face. “You know, *smush.*”

“Oh, please,” scoffs Sinestro, “I’ve seen Penguin and Dovina, I have serious doubts that they’d allow any food to go to waste, especially cake.” He cuts another slice. “Besides, they’re taking too long and I’m hungry now!” He takes another bite of cake with a satisfied hum. “And I honestly had no idea, we don’t have such strange customs in my universe.”

“Like what, manners?” quizzes Black Manta with a disgusted shake of his head.

Sinestro merely looks back at him with mild disdain. “How very droll. I don’t know why you’re so upset when I can just hide the missing pieces with my ring.” He lifts his fingertips to his mouth and sucks off the frosting. “You know, Qwardians don’t have treats such as these. Funny, isn’t it? Especially considering that Canary Cream frosting is so *sinfully* delicious.” He offers a plate to Black Manta along with a wide grin. “Not to mention, I’m giving you the slice with the white chocolate dove. I found them next to the bride and groom wedding toppers that were also made of white chocolate. They were delicious too.”

Black Manta’s sigh echoes as he points to his head. “You seem to have forgotten about my helmet. I won’t be able to eat the cake.”

Perturbed, Sinestro rests his chin on his fist as he contemplates the problem. “I dare say that I did…however, no worries!” He uses his ring to create a food container. “There you are, one nice and fresh piece to go.” He passes a piece of cake to Scarecrow as he passes by and notices that Black Manta has yet to take the container sitting on the table. “What’s wrong now?” he asks irritably while ensuring that he has enough slices for all the Legion members.

Black Manta huffs, “What happens if Penguin and Dovina cut on that side of the cake or your ring’s power wears off? You’ll be sorry when you ruin their wedding day.”

“Don’t be so dramatic, Manta,” he advises. “Besides, weddings and receptions aren’t for being sorry, that’s saved for the actual marriage. And don’t give me that look,” he chastises, “you know as well as I do that happiness is like cake. Too much of it will make you sick.”

“How very sentimental of you,” he replies flatly.

“I’ll have you know that cake’s not the only sweet thing in my life.” Sinestro tosses a wink to Silver Swan as he hands her a slice of cake. “Thanks for helping me to fool with the Riddler, my dear.”
Black Manta watches as Silver Swan blows a kiss to Sinestro as she heads to her table. “Why are you messing with Riddler?”

“Why not?” He looks over to Black Manta, arms crossed over his chest and staring him down, still awaiting to return to their previous conversation. “Alright,” admits Sinestro, “granted, the only rings that I’m used to exchanging are when I fight Green Lantern but I do have the utmost respect for the state of matrimony.”

“Really?” he inquires, his tone dubious.

“Yes, of course, the rate of a divorce settlement is worth far more than I could ever hope to accumulate from a lifetime of theft,” he declares as he cuts a few extra slices before using his ring to mask the damage.

Black Manta nods in agreement. “That’s why I’m still single.”

That’s not the only reason. Sinestro smirks to himself as he hands out cake to Captain Cold and his sister, Golden Glider, when they walk by as they’re leaving the dance floor. “So, then you’re living by that old rule that there’s always more fish in the sea?”

“Yes, but unfortunately, I always end up with the barracudas,” he shares with a sigh.

“Is that the reason for your sudden infatuation with Killer Frost?” asks Sinestro with a sly grin.

“Trust me, Sinestro, from what I’ve heard, she’s anything but a cold fish.” They both laugh suggestively until a blast of cold ice shoots past them and freezes the cake into a solid block of ice. She steps closer into their personal space, furiously glaring at them, and refusing to leave until a thick layer of frost forms over Black Manta’s helmet and Sinestro’s shoulders. “My bad,” apologizes Black Manta while handing her a slice of cake. As he watches her go, he muses, “For a woman that’s supposed to be so cold, she is smoking hot!”

Sinestro uses his ring to melt the frost off the them both before making a platter to place the remaining plates of cake. “Regardless, she’s very fortunate that she didn’t ruin any of our cake or she would definitely be getting her just desserts.”

He finds himself only half listening to Sinestro as he views the now frozen cake. “Let’s go, Sinestro,” he urges as he scans the room for Penguin and Dovina. “We definitely don’t want to be here when the happily married couple discovers what you’ve done.”

“What I’ve done?” he balks in offense. “Excuse me, but it was your harlot who decided to give the cake a final frosting!” Giving an indignant sniff, he adds, “However, in lieu of your love life or total lack thereof, we can give your paramour a free pass this one time and just blame Mr. Freeze.”

Speaking of said villain, Killer Moth calls out from across the room, “Hey, Victor! How’s it going?”

Captain Cold turns around in answer to face Killer Moth. “I’m Captain Cold, you, idiot! I wear a parka and he wears an airtight helmet. How hard is that to differentiate?” He shakes his head in disgust before adding, “Good to see Cameron, though,” Surveying the room full of guests, he nods approvingly. “There’s quite a showing of villains here today.”

“That’s for sure,” notes Heatwave as he watches Ra’s Al Ghul and the Gentleman Ghost walk past them. “Eclipso’s over there sitting in the shadows and a few minutes ago I saw Ambush Bug pop in.”

“He didn’t invite him,” comments Heatwave with a shrug, “but you know how it is when it comes to weddings. There always has to be a party crasher.”

The Captain scans the room for Captain Boomerang. “Say Mick, where’s Digger hiding out? When I heard how many Rogues were invited, I was sure that he’d turn up. You know how much he loves a good party.”

“You just missed him, but don’t worry,” he assures him with a smile, “he’ll come back around sooner or later, he always does.”

Turning back to his best friend, both Captain Cold and Heatwave walk over to the enormous pedestal before them and study the ice sculpture.

“Come on, Len, give up the goods. What’s your personal opinion?” inquires Heatwave.

“It’s not bad…a touch egocentric if you ask me,” he opines as he examines Mr. Freeze’s giant ice statue of Penguin and Dovina with a critical eye.

“Penguin gave him the specifics so, honestly, what else can you expect?” he notes in all fairness. He glances sideways at his friend. “Are you bothered that he didn’t ask you?”

Knowing he’s referring to the statue, Captain Cold smiles and shakes his head to indicate no. “Not at all. You have to remember that Penguin and Victor go way back. However, I was surprised that he asked Weather Wizard to ensure a pleasant atmosphere for the big day.”

“Well, it was an outside ceremony and there’s nobody better than Mark,” praises Heatwave. “Although, I thought it was a bit shady when it started to rain and Penguin just happened to have his new umbrella line with him for sale.”

Captain Cold’s grin widens. “Yeah, but you know that Dovina refused to marry him unless he went straight.” He shares a knowing look with his old friend. “He sure found a crooked way to go about it though.”

Heatwave remembers all of the villains gathering for the wedding and chuckles softly. “You have to admire his business acumen. He cleaned up like a bandit when he sold his Complete Coverage line to Two-Face, one of every day of the week for each personality.”

The Captain nods in agreement. “I tell you, Mick, that is one shrewd bird. He didn’t even have to offer a two for one sale.”

The men’s conversation is interrupted when the Trickster pops us behind them. “Greetings, gentlemen. Speaking of birds, Len, I noticed your lovely sister taking a spin on the dance floor. She cuts quite the figure eight,” he outlines the number’s shape with his hands to indicate Golden Glider’s hourglass figure, “and she obviously hasn’t inherited the family cold front,” he ends with a waggle of his eyebrows. “Sorry, man, I know that she’s your sister and all… but talk about the Wonder Twins!”

“Hey, watch it James! Lisa’s like a sister to me!” warns Heatwave.

Captain Cold takes on a menacing stance. “Yeah, and I’m very protective of her, so why don’t you put any ideas that you may have for her on ice,” he suggests casually before shooting him with his ice gun. He steps forward to rub away some of the frost to view the Trickster’s shocked expression. “Hey there, James, I don’t think that you’ve ever looked better. What do you think,
Heatwave moves closer to inspect his frozen associate. “Exquisite as a painting, Len. Definitely something worthy of being in the Rogue’s Gallery,” he notes as he clicks his glass in approval against Captain Cold’s to offer his compliments.

Across the room, Toyman has caught up with Cheetah and upon hearing the rattling sound coming from his Crackerjacks, tips it out to take hold of his prize. Taking hold of the toy diamond ring, he quickly slides it onto her left ring finger. “A perfect fit!” he cries in delight. “Perhaps this will encourage you to try harder to catch the bouquet!”

Before Cheetah can respond, Sinestro flies over them to drop off Grundy and Bizarros’s slices of cake as the two men watch Toyman and Cheetah’s exchange. Bizarro’s face scrunches up in confusion. “Why Cheetah feeding ring to Toyman?”

Grundy shakes his head in bewilderment. “Stupid Cheetah! That’s what making Toyman choke! She should feed him cake like Grundy and Bizarro are eating.”

“You sure am right,” agrees Bizarro. “And they call us, stupid! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!”

Briefly wondering what Solomon Grundy and Bizarro could be laughing at, Catwoman soon turns her attention back to the villains sitting before her. “Gentlemen, I don’t see the point of wasting a perfectly good song.” She and Star Sapphire display their best smiles. “We just want to dance.”

“I’m sorry, my dear,” apologizes Sinestro as he picks at his cake slice, “but I simply can’t allow it. Dancing in my arms equates to falling for my charms and I’ll never be the type to give a woman a ring.”

The women look at each other with hopeless expressions. Star Sapphire attempts the next request. “And how about you, Scarecrow? I can’t imagine that you’re afraid to dance.”

“No, but I am afraid of commitment. You know how it is,” he notes, his hand motioning with a wave of indifference, “at first, it’s just one dance and then one dance leads to another. All too soon, it’s meeting the parents and picking out nursery themes.” He holds his hands up as if telling them to back off. “I’m sorry ladies, but I just can’t take the chance.”

“Wow,” murmurs Star Sapphire in amazement at Scarecrow’s paranoia. When he puts the fear into something, he really goes all out. “Tell me, Scarecrow, do you happen to know a good psychologist?”

“Absolutely!” he crows with obvious pride. He reaches into his pants pocket and hands her his card. “Just be sure to call me before nightfall, I prefer to save that time for my criminal activities.” He reaches over and taps the card. “And special discounts for criminal associates.”

“No, thank you,” announces Catwoman as she plucks the card from her friend’s hand and gives it back to Scarecrow. “Sorry, Jonathan, but if Sapphire ever needs to see a good psychologist then I’ll recommend her to Harley.”

“That quack?” he jeers in a loud voice, just short of yelling. “She put the Har in charlatan.”

Poison Ivy, never one to allow her best friend to be insulted, immediately chides, “And like your beloved crows, you put the caw in lost cause!” She glances sideways at the Riddler watching her. “What?”

“How would you like a trip on the light fantastic?” he quizzes with his most endearing grin.
“That line doesn’t work for Dr. Light and it won’t work for you,” she returns smoothly.

“Oh, come on, Pammy,” he urges. “What’s one little dance? If you’re lucky, I might even let you plant one on me.”

“Nice try, Ed, but I don’t care to waste my time with a man who only answers me with a question,” she remarks with a laugh.

Withdrawing his attention from Ivy, Riddler releases a bored sigh and stares off into the crowd until a tap on his shoulder from the Mad Hatter draws his attention. “I’m ready to play again!” chimes the Mad Hatter. “Now, let’s see, I believe it was my turn!” He twiddles his fingers together as he looks up at the ceiling. “Oh, yes! I remember now! What do a writing desk and a Raven have in common?”

“Poe wrote on both,” replies Riddler, still scanning the room for some excitement.

“Wrong!” sing-songs the Hatter. “Because there’s a B in both!” He points at the Riddler and challenges, “Your turn!”

Riddler lazily drums his fingers on the table as he searches for a suitable riddle and then smirks when the perfect one comes to mind. “What falls but never breaks?”

Mad Hatter becomes still and silent as he ponders the puzzle before his face suddenly lights up in delight. “Ni-,” he begins to proclaim his answer as Riddler swivels in his chair and focuses his full attention on him.

I don’t believe it but I think that the old boy is actually going to answer this one correctly! Riddler leans forward in his chair as he waits with baited breath for him to finish his answer to the riddle. He’s actually going to say night!

“Niagra, the obvious answer is Niagra Falls!” he chirps merrily. “Did I win? Did I win?”

“Sure, Hatter,” Riddler concedes wearily, “you won.” He tips his hat in acknowledgment. “Congratulations, my hat’s off to you.”

The Mad Hatter’s cheerful expression instantly changes to one of horror as he clutches his own hat with both hands to ensure that it stays on his head. “Who in their right mind would want that?” He narrows his eyes at the Riddler, his gaze full of suspicion. “I used to like you, Riddler, but now I’m full to the brim with disgust!”

“Okay, then,” mutters the Riddler with a quick wave of his hand and an overly exuberant shake of his hat in the air just to further irritate the departing villain.

“Poor Ed,” notes Poison Ivy as she throws her arm over his shoulder and uses one of her vines to place his hat back onto his head before tweaking his cheek, “it seems now you repel both women and men.”

“Ha, ha, ha,” he replies sarcastically, “very funny.” He turns back to the women and offers them his most irresistible grin. “Well, ladies, now that you can have my undivided attention for the rest of the party,” he eyes them expectantly as he straightens his tie, “who wants the honor of being my escort for the evening?” He looks at each of them in turn. “How about you, Ivy? Shall we take time to smell the roses? Or what about you, Star Sapphire, care to be the crowning jewel on my arm?” His tone becomes cajoling when he sees Catwoman twitch her lips in amusement. “Come on, Selina, be a pal! I’m not asking for all nine lives, just one night of fun! A little dinner, a little dancing…a little playing Cat and Riddler?”
“Sorry, Ed, but I prefer cats, not dogs,” she retorts before excusing herself with Star Sapphire in tow.

“Oh, look,” observes Poison Ivy ribbingly, “now you’re back to repelling women.” She blows him a kiss over her shoulder as she catches up to the other two women.

The men simply stare after them for a few moments before simultaneously shrugging and huffing, “Women!”

“But what women,” relents the Riddler as he continues to watch them leave. “They’re such beautiful little enigmas, packaged up in a mystery box with puzzle wrapping paper and a little riddle bow,” he ends with a dreamy sigh.

Scarecrow leans towards Sinestro and murmurs, “I think I’m beginning to see why they left,” as Sinestro gives a slight nod and hums his assent.

The last strains of Tears of a Clown float through the air as Harley notices Bizarro approaching the DJ section to make a request. “Bizarro want to hear Superman song by WAZ.”

“Your wish is my command,” she announces with a flourish as she pulls out a cd and inserts it into the player. She giggles softly as she watches him dance as he snaps his fingers to the song and especially brightens up when he hears the lyric, ‘I’m no Superman,’ before all falls silent when the cd is ejected without warning.

“Oh look, there’s a scratch,” observes Lex after thoroughly inspecting the disc and then snapping it in half. “That’s too bad,” he declares with a mock pout before walking away in peals of laughter.

“Maybe Bizarro should have picked that Flashdance song, ‘I’m a Brainiac’?” he quizzes as he stares down at the remains of the disc. “That funny, me no see a scratch.”

“Yeah, I don’t think that really matters now.” She sweeps the broken disc into a trash can behind the counter. “And that’s ‘I’m a Maniac’, Sweetie, a maniac.”

“Harley Quinn not so bad,” he reassures her with a comforting pat on her shoulder. “Don’t be so hard on yourself.”

“Gee, thanks,” she states flatly. “What a shame though, I really liked that song.” She stands there considering her options until her eyes suddenly alight with inspiration and she slaps the bartop in excitement. “I’ve got just the song to stir this crowd up!” She heads over to her box of cds and rifles through them until she finds exactly what she’s looking for. Quickly sliding in the cd, her smile begins to fade as a hush falls over the room when Bonnie Tyler’s ‘Holding Out for a Hero’ blasts through the room and then just as instantly screeches to a halt. “Hey! What gives? Where did all of the music go?”

She swivels around to see the Joker dropping the cd back into the box. “Harley, dear, I don’t believe that the guests appreciate the fine art of sarcasm the same way that we do,” he informs her quietly as he gestures towards the crowd.

Harley glances over her shoulder to find the entire room glaring at her. “Oh yeah,” she realizes with a nervous giggle, “I guess not.”

The Joker proceeds to take her hand and wrap it around his arm as he leads her away from the crowd and out of the hall. “Penguin and Dovina are taking some pictures outside and as I stood there watching them together, I realized instantly that I needed you by my side.”
Harley squeals in delight while she squeezes his arm. “Really, Puddin’?”

“Of course, my dear. It was at that exact moment that I realized that I needed you to keep the sun out of my eyes.” He hands her one of Penguin’s umbrellas. “Here you go.”

“Aw, Puddin’,” she grumbles resignedly.

Deciding to follow them, Bizarro heads out the exit with them while softly singing, “I’m a Brainiac, Brainiac, on the floor…” He nods his head approvingly. “Oh yeah, Bizarro’s version is definitely better.”

Lex watches Bizarro exit the hall. He’d better not cause any trouble. Turning back to Ultra-Humanite, he pastes on a diplomatic smile. “It’s been great seeing you again, Ultra-Humanite, and we’ll be sure to take your suggestions under advisement.” Once the villain departs, Lex releases a groan. “I thought he’d never leave. Ugh, I hate these out of town get-togethers.”

Gorilla Grodd takes a sip of his banana daquiri and offers a small shrug. “What can you do? These days, you have to network to keep the lines of communication open. Otherwise, you’re out of luck when the need arises for a particular super-villain’s expertise.” Grodd happens to notice Giganta standing alone at the refreshment table and excuses himself from the table.

Checking on the whereabouts of the other Legion members, Lex releases another groan as he sees Cheetah and Catwoman at a table together. “Why can’t those two just stay away from each other? They never get along.”

Cheetah and Catwoman watch as Sonar approaches them, his expression full of curiosity. “I’m surprised to see the two of you together. Your personalities are so similar that I would think that would make you natural enemies.”

“Not that old stereotype,” moans Catwoman. “I’ll have you know that Priscilla and I are women who have made a reputation for ourselves and for that fact alone, we’re not petty or insecure and so have nothing but the highest respect for each other.” Properly chastised, Sonar offers his apologies and then hurriedly takes his leave. “I am so tired of people expecting us to be so catty.”

Cheetah leans in close with a nod of agreement before displaying a mischievous smile and lowering her voice to share a bit of gossip. “You know, Sonar told me earlier that he recently fought Batman and at the end of their battle, he had Batman begging for release.”

Catwoman laughs outright. “Oh, please! Begging, really?” She gives a snort of disgust. “Maybe for the bathroom. You know how Sonar loves to prolong things. He’s so dramatic, always has to make some noise.” She smiles softly as her gaze travels over the room. “I miss this, seeing everyone outside of work, it feels like old times.”

“I was actually surprised when you accepted Penguin’s invitation,” comments Cheetah before taking a sip of her drink. “Since you’ve been on the straight and narrow for the Bat.”

“We’re off and on again more than a light switch,” replies Catwoman with a sardonic smile. “Besides,” she adds with a heartfelt grin, “you leave the job, not your friends.”

“I hear that,” concurs Cheetah with a clink of her champagne glass against Catwoman’s own.

“So how have things been going for you, Priscilla?” She tries to keep a straight face as she asks, “Anything I should know about you and Jack? I saw him try to give you a ring earlier.”

Cheetah gives her a mild glare of rebuke. “There’s definitely nothing going on between Jack and
myself, I can assure you.” She takes another sip from her glass. “Believe me, he is the last man that I would let toy with my affections.”

Catwoman playfully inquires in a catlike tone, “You mean he’s not purr-fectly wonderful?”

Pointing a claw at her, Cheetah orders, “Don’t do that, Selina, that’s not funny! Not when it comes to him!” Their silent truce lasts for all of thirty seconds before they break out into laughter. “I’m so glad that you came today, it’s been far too long…I’ve missed you.”

Catwoman’s grin is full of warmth as she places her hand over Cheetah’s and gives it a squeeze. “I’ve missed you too.”

“How sweet,” comments Sinestro as he flies overhead and drops off a small plate of cake between the two women. “Here’s something sweeter.”

They both stare down at the cake until Catwoman removes the whip hanging off her belt and gives it a slight flick. “Oh no, he only left one slice.” Another flick of her whip sounds in the air. “And we both know that cake is the only thing that I’d fight you for.”

“Then it’s such a shame that you’re going to lose,” retorts Cheetah as she unsheathes her claws, “as you’ve been out of the business far too long.”

“We’ll see about that,” promises Catwoman as they begin to rise from the table until Cheetah nudges her to show her Scarecrow depositing his piece of cake onto a nearby table before heading over to the crowd gathering in front of the band.

Cheetah swiftly looks around her before walking over to grab his cake and take it back to their table.

“Priscilla!” admonishes Catwoman with a laugh. “I’m shocked, he’s your teammate!”

“Trust me, he won’t even notice,” she insists before taking a bite of cake and purring with delight. “Who can eat cake through a sack cloth mask anyway?

The Royal Flush Gang begins playing ‘Everybody Wants to Rule the World’ and the crowd goes wild. Riddler can even hear Scarecrow shouting above the din, “It’s a Tears for Fears song, they’re my favorite group!”

Riddler’s just about to dig into his slice of cake when a sultry voice purrs into his ear, “Riddle me this…”

A roguish grin splits across his face and he straightens his hat and tie before turning around to face Silver Swan and Stompa.

“There you go,” chirps Silver Swan as she gives Stompa an encouraging pat on the back before walking back into the crowd on the dance floor.

“Thank you, Silver Swan!” calls out Stompa to her retreating back before spinning back around to face Riddler with a huge smile. “Hello, Riddler. Stompa likes riddles too,” she shares as she reaches past him to pick up his cake and swallow it down whole. She holds her arms out to him. “Stompa will hold Riddler tight while Riddler tries to figure a way out.”

Bug-eyed, Riddler steps away from the fatal femme and desperately casts his gaze around the room seeking help for his current predicament. Fortunately for him, his silent plea is answered in the form of an extremely strong set of vines that wrap around Stompa and lift her up and away from
“Sorry, Stompa,” declares Poison Ivy in a voice laced with steel, “but he’s all mine.”

Anger fills Stompa as she rips the vines apart with ease. “Stompa will fight you for Riddler! Stompa not afraid of you!”

“No?” counters Ivy with deadly calm. “Then how about Granny Goodness, are you afraid of her? You see, I’m pretty sure that she wants her Female Furies focusing on fighting off warriors, not hormones.”

The Female Fury in question pales at the mention of Granny Goodness before casting a wistful gaze at the Riddler. “Stompa has to go now. Goodbye, Riddler. Maybe you can riddle me later.”

Riddler grows even paler at the mere suggestion but a flood of color soon appears to fill his cheeks in relief when Stompa storms off to the other side of the room. He turns to Ivy with a grateful smile. “Now, there’s an offer that I can gladly refuse.’

Ivy drapes an arm around his shoulder and whispers in his ear, “You…so…owe…me,” punctuating each word.

“Believe me, I know.” He kisses her cheek in appreciation. “Thanks, Ivy.”

“What are old friends for?” She flicks her hand in the direction of the dance floor. “How about that dance?”

Riddler’s grin is completely genuine as he takes hold of Ivy’s hand and leads her onto the floor. “The pleasure is all mine.” As he places his arm around her waist, he muses, *However, everyone knows that it’s business before pleasure. * “So, you hear about any good heists lately?”

“You mean besides the one that I just pulled off for you?” she inquires with an impish smile.

He laughs aloud and then draws her tight against him. “That one will always be my favorite,” he murmurs into her ear as they dance past Grodd and Giganta.

Giganta eyes the passing couple inquisitively. “I wonder what’s going on there?”

“None of our concern, I’m sure,” observes Grodd as he ignores the dancing duo. “Not that I won’t be forced to hear about it later. Riddler is anything but discreet when it comes to women.”

“I thought discretion was the better part of valor,” quips Giganta.

“He’s definitely discreet when it comes to valor,” he points out with a chuckle. Surveying the banquet hall, he nods his approval. “I’m surprised that the wedding reception has been so tasteful. I wouldn’t have expected that from a human who insists on squawking like a bird.”

Giganta laughs and offers him a knowing look. “Says the gorilla who talks like a man.”

The beginnings of Grodd’s half snarl instantly morphs into a grimace. “Touche’.”

“Excuse me,” pipes up a voice from behind Grodd, “but do you mind if I cut in?”

They turn slightly in their dance to view the Mirror Master. With visible discontent at being interrupted, Grodd responds, “Yes, in fact I do mind a great deal. As you can see, Giganta is already dancing with me.” He moves them away from Mirror Master. “Go bother someone else.”
“Nice monkey suit, Grodd,” replies Mirror Master as he moves over to stand alongside and keep step with Giganta as Grodd attempts to twist her away from him, “but I’m asking Giganta for a dance, not you.”

“No thanks, Sam,” she defers as Grodd continues to lead her away from the interloper. “I’m always worried that you’re going to use one of your mirrors to look up my skirt.”

“Yeah, but can you blame me?” he questions with an obvious leer. “You’ve got legs that can go on forever!” He stares off into space for a moment as he imagines her growing to her ultimate fifty feet and then adds, “Literally!”

“My patience, your lifespan…” trails off Grodd in a grumble as both Giganta and Mirror Master look at him in bewilderment. “You’ll have to excuse me, I was simply compiling a list of things that don’t go on forever!” He turns to Mirror Master with his fangs bared. “Now leave us alone!”

“You just don’t see the big picture, Grodd,” insists Mirror Master as he removes a compact mirror from his pocket and catches the light from above to flash in the gorilla’s eyes and blind him. Grodd growls and bats the mirror away with his hand, forcing Mirror Master to take a step back and shout out to the rafters, “Alright, Crazy Quilt, that’s enough! Thanks, Buddy!” The beam of light instantly fades and the Mirror Master gives one last plea. “Come on, Giganta, give a guy a break! Besides, when I see the two of you dance together, I feel as though I’ve fallen through the looking glass.”

“That does it!” snarls Grodd as he reaches out to grab the Mirror Master and haul him up so close that their noses are touching. “Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who’s the most breakable one of all?”

He gulps audibly. “Do I really need to guess?”

Grodd’s only reply is to toss Mirror Master across the dance floor until he crashes into one of the hall’s pillars and crumples into a heap on the floor. Giganta turns back to Grodd with a sympathetic gaze. “I’m sorry that you had to get in touch with your savage side, I know how you hate that.”

“Yes, normally I prefer to remain civilized as you would expect from one of my stature.” He twirls her around and dips her, quickly pulling her back up with a feral grin. “However, at least it served its purpose, as it gave Mirror Master some time for reflection.”

Leaning against the pillar that Mirror Master hit, Captain Cold stares down at his fellow Rogue with a sad shake of his head. “What have I told you, Sam? Stay away from the women, they’re nothing but trouble.”

“Hey!” protests Golden Glider who is leaning on the other side of the pillar, “I take offense at that.” She and her brother both bend down to pick up Sam when he starts groaning. “Didn’t anyone ever tell Grodd that breaking Mirror Master brings seven years of bad luck?”

They drag Mirror Master over to an empty chair and prop him up before heading over to the buffet table for a few snacks. Without warning, Golden Glider breaks out into laughter. “Lisa, you know I love your sense of humor but your joke wasn’t that funny.”

“It’s not that, I just noticed that Gorilla Grodd, the Ultra-Humanite and Monsieur Mallah are all here.” She looks over at him expectantly. “Don’t you get it? They’re like the Three Monkeyteers!”

“I dare you to say that to their faces,” he remarks with a smile until he notices her wilting
expression. “What’s wrong, little sister?”

“What’s wrong, little sister?”

“Watching Penguin and Dovina’s take their vows, seeing all of the couples around us…it’s just reminding me how much I miss Roscoe.”

He pulls her into a side hug and offers his reassurance. “Don’t worry, Lisa, nothing keeps the Top down for long. He’ll be back out of the joint before you know it!”

She stares downcast at the floor before looking back up at her brother. “I know, but still I have to wonder…will I ever have the marriage and children that I always dreamed of?”

Captain Cold’s expression of comfort suddenly becomes stern as he questions, “What’s making you think that? Is he not being honorable with you?” His tone lowers to a growl. “Do I need to give him the talk?”

Golden Glider’s countenance is a cross between mortification and outright amusement. “Simmer down, big brother! Roscoe is always a perfect gentleman with me.” She then adds with a wink, “At least in public,” causing the Captain to give a scowl. “It’s just that he’s in and out of jail so often that I don’t see how we’re ever going to start a life together that doesn’t end in conjugal visits!”

“Honey, that’s something that you’re never going to have to worry about! You know how it is in this business, you only stay in it long enough to make the big score so that you can retire in style!” He tightens his hand around her shoulder in encouragement. “And you know that you’ll be right by Roscoe’s side once he accomplishes that. Just give it time, Sis, and you’ll have it all! A safehouse to hide in and as for the kids, they’ll have the best of everything that the three of us can provide.” His expression grows smug as he notes, “Not to mention the best uncle ever known to mankind. With me around, the little ones will never know the suffering of a melted ice cream cone!”

She responds by laughing in that carefree manner of hers that he has always loved so much and throws her arms around him to hug him tightly and kiss his cheek. “Thank you, Len, you always know what to say to make me feel better!” They begin to move off and explore the rest of the party when Captain Cold unexpectedly grabs hold of her arm and steers her away from the direction of the still frozen Trickster. She stares up at him curiously. “Why did you do that?”

He jerks his head in the direction of his frozen pal. “James seems to melt a little bit faster every time you walk by, I don’t want to take any chances.” Positive that her brother’s kidding, she glances back over her shoulder and becomes slightly unnerved when the Trickster winks back at her.

Engrossed in conversation, the siblings don’t notice Scarecrow as he continues to pilfer the table containing the guests’ presents. He does freeze in place however when he hears Gorilla Grodd’s entertained booming tone behind him. “That’s odd, I thought it was the buffet that we were supposed to be sampling, not the wedding gifts.”

Scarecrow appears affronted as he rallies to his own defense. “Is it my fault that they simply leave them lying here unattended? There’s only so much willpower that a man can be expected to have in the face of such temptation.” He reaches for some candlesticks and stuffs them into his shirt forcing some straw to fall out onto the floor.

“Candlesticks? Are you planning a game of Clue?” He notices the spilt straw on the ground and warns, “Careful, Scarecrow, if they find the gold candlesticks on you and the straw that you’ve left behind, you’ll have to come up with a very clever cover story. And I have serious doubts that even
this group will believe that Rumplestiltskin taught you how to spin straw into gold.”

“Haven’t you heard, Grodd? There’s nothing to fear but fear itself,” he comments off-handedly as he continues to pick up gifts and give them a hearty shake.

“That and an angry mob,” replies the gorilla with indisputable logic.

Scarecrow pauses in mid-theft. “Good point. I suppose that I could always claim that you discovered alchemy?” he poses hopefully.

“If you do,” he growls out as if in threat, “then I want half. Hmmm,” he murmurs as his eyes travel over the table, “I’ve been looking for a crystal vase for Giganta’s birthday. Have you happened to come across one?”

“Not yet, but keep looking, there’s bound to be something suitable.” He and Grodd continue stuffing the more interesting items into Scarecrow’s shirt. “Just stay away from the Joker and Harley’s present,” he advises sagely, “I could swear that I heard it ticking.”

Upon hearing that bit of advice, Sinestro hurriedly swerves away and continues flying on until he lands near Lex’s table. “Luthor, it may be best if we gather the Legion and depart as soon as possible.”

Abruptly alert, Lex demands, “Why, what’s going on? Are the Super Friends here?”

“No,” he denies urgently, “but a fight may be about to break out outside the reception hall.”

Toyman peruses the hall. “I don’t see any trouble. What could possibly be wrong?”

“Penguin and Dovina became extremely upset at having their wedding photos interrupted when they noticed that Solomon Grundy was feeding rice to the doves that were released at the ceremony.”

“Well, they would be, wouldn’t they? Especially being bird lovers.” observes Toyman. “I understand that the consumption of rice causes a bird’s stomach to swell up which in turn causes it to explode.”

Lex waves his hand dismissively. “That’s a myth and Penguin should know better. So, what’s the real problem?”

“The problem is that Bizarro pointed at Penguin and Dovina’s bellies and asked, and I quote, ‘Why am you so upset? Is that what happened to two of you?’ Sinestro’s tone loses all mirth when he adds, ‘Neither Penguin or his bride took very kindly to that observation.”

Toyman laughs with maniacal glee. “Excellent! Every wedding should end with a fight to the finish, to prepare the happily married couple for what’s to come!”

His high-pitched laughter instantly ceases when Cheetah arrives with Giganta alongside her and informs them, “Even when the Joker is heading off to the Hall of Doom with one of his infamous gas canisters?”

“What?” howls Lex. “Why on Earth is he doing that?”

“He’s Penguin’s best man,” answers Giganta. “He said that Penguin shouldn’t have to take such an offensive comment lying down as he should save that for the honeymoon. Then he pulled out a canister and yelled, ‘This one’s on me!’ , and headed over to the Hall.”
Lex turns to his android friend and begins issuing orders. “Brainiac, you find Black Manta and go straight to the Hall of Doom. Since neither of you need to worry about holding your breath, you can vent out the Hall if he’s already set off the canister.”

Brainiac rises from the table and inquires, “What will the rest of you be doing?”

The grin that slowly spreads across Lex’s face is pure evil. “We’ll be getting our revenge!”

“Heeheeheehee!” laughs Toyman in delightful anticipation. “What devious plot are we cooking up?”

“A death ray of doom?” queries Sinestro as his ring creates a miniature example.

“Giganta squashing Joker?” suggests Riddler with a feral grin as he smashes his fist into his palm.

“How about an ambush by Cheetah?” submits Toyman as he waggles his eyebrows at the villainess and purrs, “My favorite kind.”

“Don’t forget to include Toyman in your scheme,” insists Cheetah.

Toyman claps his hands wildly. “Yes, indeed! And what part should I play?”

Cheetah displays her claws and growls, “The victim!”

Lex ignores them as his mind sifts through the possibilities until he comes upon the perfect plan. “Excellent suggestions, everyone! Especially yours, Cheetah, but mine of course is far, far better. It’s not only much crueler but will also have the long-lasting effect of the Joker remembering not to mess with the Legion of Doom!”

“It sounds perfectly evil, Luthor,” approves Cheetah. “Exactly what is your plan?”

Lex smiles at his own cunning. “It’s absolutely brilliant in its simplicity. Cheetah, you and Giganta go over to Harley and inform her that the free bar isn’t the only thing that the Joker’s been hitting on,” as he jerks his thumb in Silver Swan’s direction where she’s trying her best to avoid Dr. Psycho’s attentions.

As the women leave to talk to Harley Quinn, Lex’s gaze travels over the room until his eyes alight upon the Joker entering the room. The Clown Prince of Crime’s grin is wide with expectancy as he strides over to Lex’s table.

“Hello, Joker. Having a good time?” Lex asks casually while noting the female Legion members are each taking turns to whisper in Harley’s ear.

“What can I say? It’s been a real gas!” he replies with his usual maniacal laughter. Laughter that is instantly cut short by Harley’s resounding screech of, “What?!? I’ll kill him! Joker, where are you?”

Joker’s fearful visage sets off Lex’s own laughter and Joker’s anxious gaze suddenly becomes one of fury. “You!” he accuses while pointing a finger at Lex. “You’re responsible for this, aren’t you?” Keeping his eyes trained on Harley as she quickly weaves through the crowd in search of him, he begins taking backwards steps and hastily threatens, “This isn’t over, Lex! You’ll pay for this!”

Lex leans back nonchalantly in his chair while bearing an expression of sheer smugness. “Superman’s been threatening me with that old chestnut for years. Take a number, Joker.” His
smile maliciously widens when he notes that Harley has finally spotted her prey. “Oh look, it seems that your number’s up!”

“Joker!” yells Harley, her voice silencing the entire reception hall, “I hear that you want to make time with someone. Well, how about making some time for me?” she shrieks before pulling out her mallet and chasing a very fast retreating Joker.

Toyman watches them head outside and contemplates, I wonder where she keeps that thing. I’ll have to ask her.

The gossiping murmurs throughout the hall once again fall silent as the band takes a break for the Clock King to make an announcement. “Your attention, please, everybody! Penguin and Dovina will be opening their gifts in five minutes so if any of you need to powder your nose or visit the gentlemen’s room then please go now.” He starts to exit the stage when he bolts back to the microphone again and reminds, “That’s five minutes people, not four! Thank you!”

Riddler, Grundy and Bizarro all return to the table as Grodd and Scarecrow share a nervous glance. “Not that I care,” mentions Grodd in a blasé tone, “but isn’t the human tradition to open the wedding gifts in the privacy of the newlywed’s home?”

Lex barks out a laugh. “Are you kidding me, Grodd? With a criminal contingent of this size? Penguin and Dovina are definitely playing it smart, shake everyone down for any missing gifts before the culprits leave with all the swag.” He laughs heartily. “Can you imagine anyone stupid enough to try and steal anything from those two and expecting to get away with it? Why if someone was caught, they’d be hung out to dry!”

Scarecrow trembles at the thought. Hung out to dry? Scarecrows hate that!

“Mark my words,” assures Lex, “there’s nobody idiotic enough to try anything tonight.” He looks around the table. “So, what did we get them?” Everyone remains silent. “Well? Why isn’t anyone saying anything?”

“Because none of us bought anything,” admits Sinestro. “We thought that you were taking care of the gift selection.”

“You imbeciles!” rages Lex. “Are you telling me that we have nothing for Penguin and his bride?”

“I have a ring,” declares Toyman sullenly in a gravelly voice while aiming a glare at Cheetah, “but it won’t be ready for a while.”

Scarecrow shuffles his shirt around, making a few clinking noises. “I have some candlesticks around here somewhere…” he offers while Grodd eagerly nods his head and bares his fangs in what one could only assume was an encouraging grin.

Lex eyes them both warily before growling, “I don’t even want to know! Unbelievable! We have absolutely nothing to offer the bride and groom. This is even worse than being caught stealing presents!”

“Good to know,” mutters Scarecrow under his breath.

“Shut up, Scarecrow!” orders Lex. “Unless you’ve hidden a transportation device in there, I don’t want to hear another word out of you except for how to get out of here!”

Toyman pipes up, “I have some toy helicopters that we could use to escape!”
“That’s a terrible idea,” opines Cheetah.

“You never like my ideas,” Toyman complains with a pout.

“That’s because I don’t like you,” she returns with a serene smile.

“That’s enough children, don’t make me separate you!” Lex pulls a small device out of his pocket. “And I have just the particle extractor I need to ensure that the separation is permanent.” He turns to Captain Cold. “I saw you talking to the Trickster earlier. Do you think that he would help us create a diversion?”

Captain Cold glances over his shoulder at the now partially frozen villain. “Normally, he’d be more than willing but I don’t think that he can accommodate you just now. He can barely lift a finger.”

“I can see that,” snaps Lex while glaring at the Captain. “Although, I don’t particularly care for the finger that he’s lifting.”

“Hey, blame Mr. Freeze,” protests Captain Cold, “I’m completely innocent!”

“That’ll be the day,” mutters Lex. “Come on, everyone, think of something! How can we get out of here undetected?”

Murmurs of various ideas surround the table until all is quiet when the last person anyone would suspect not only provides an answer, but the perfect one. “Grundy overhear Clock King tell Crazy Quilt that lights turn down to signal Penguin and Dovina soon open gifts. Why not sneak out then?”

All eyes remain locked on Luthor while he simply stares back at the behemoth and contemplates his answer. That actually makes sense. Look at the big oaf standing there and wearing that smug grin. That is if he knows what smug means and you can call that a grin.

Bizarro cocks his head towards Grundy and congratulates, “Luthor speechless. That mean that Grundy had good idea,” and fist bumps Grundy.

As the lights dim, Luthor gestures for the Legion to follow him to the exit. They’re only a few yards away when they hear the Trickster’s voice from the shadows. “What’s the hurry, everybody? The party’s just starting.”

Bizarro and Grundy simultaneously reply, “Black Manta drunk again,” and, “We forgot to feed the alligator.”

Noting Trickster’s skeptical expression, Captain Cold offers, “We just heard that my soon to be brother-in-law broke out of prison and we have to go pick him up.” He shrugs his shoulders helplessly. “You know how it is with family, they always come first.”

“Oh, I see,” acknowledges Trickster in a mocking tone as he rubs his arms for warmth. “And here I thought that you were trying to sneak out and avoid the wrath of the happy couple that you so richly deserve.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” scoffs Lex as he keeps an eye out for any angry members of the wedding party heading their way.

The Trickster holds his hands up as if in a gesture of surrender. “Don’t get me, wrong, you guys. I love your work!” His impish grin grows as he shares, “I wasn’t idly wasting my time while I’ve
been in the deep freeze. I’ve been keeping track of all your little mishaps during the reception.”

He aims a particularly malicious grin at Lex. “Or should I say misdemeanors?”

“Misdemeanors?” repeats Lex as the anger lacing his tone begins to grow. “As in plural?” He spins around to face the rest of the Legion. “What have you fools been up to?”

“Take it easy, Lex,” assures Trickster with a wide grin. “I don’t want to spoil your fun. At least, not if it’s worth my while.”

“What do you want, James?” questions Captain Cold with an impatient tone.

“How about a date with your sister?” The Trickster closes his eyes and releases a dreamy sigh. “I swear that girl makes me feel as though I’m walking on air,” he remarks as he twirls into a swoon before proceeding to walk upwards in the air with his gravity-defying shoes.

“No way, not going to happen” refutes the Captain, arms crossed over his chest in an attempt not to strangle his fellow Rogue. At least not in front of witnesses.

“Fine,” concedes the Trickster with a pout as he drops back down onto the ground. “Then how about some of the loot that Grodd and Scarecrow pilfered? I want a cut.”

“How about an upper cut?” counters Captain Cold.

Lex’s gaze directs an incredulous gaze at the Trickster. “Are you honestly trying to shake down the Legion of Doom?”

“Gentlemen, please,” interrupts Cheetah before the Trickster can reply, “there’s no need to fight.” She hands him a large roll of bills. “I believe that this will be sufficient to buy your silence?”

He unrolls the cash and flips through the stack of cash as he counts it. “A thousand bucks? Thank you, Priscilla,” he acknowledges with a bow as he places a kiss on her hand. “It’s nice to know that there is still honor among thieves. Consider me the keeper of all your secrets,” he promises as he mimes zipping his lips and then hurriedly spins around to walk off above the crowd before she can change her mind.

Captain Cold turns to Cheetah in disbelief. “What on Earth did you pay him for? We could’ve easily taken him.”

“Oh, but we did take him,” she purrs with a cat that ate the canary grin. “I picked his pocket while he was blackmailing us.” She holds up a packet of folded money and adds, “And now we’ve also been reimbursed for parking.”

The Legion chuckles low in approval as Toyman claps softly to avoid attention. “Is it any wonder that she’s the girl of my dreams?”

Cheetah eyes him in disregard. “Keep dreaming.”

Not to be daunted, Toyman musters his most charming smile. “You know that I will,” he readily assures her as he hands her Dovina’s bridal bouquet that he had found unattended. “Purr-chance to dream?”

Turning away from him in exasperation, Cheetah asks, “Shouldn’t we be leaving?”

Giganta cocks her head towards Cheetah and intones, “You know, they say that one wedding brings another.”
“My congratulations to you and Grodd,” hisses Cheetah.

Giganta’s smile immediately falls flat. “That’s not funny.”

“It’s a little funny,” observes Grodd with an amused smirk as he walks past them.

“Just remember to stay calm, everyone,” instructs Lex as they continue walking towards Penguin’s security, Clayface and Big Sir. “The Hall of Doom is right around the corner.”

Scarecrow leans in close and whispers to the Riddler, “I noticed that Clayface isn’t that big a fan of marriage.”

“Tell me about it,” he returns in a hushed voice. “Did you see all the faces that he kept making during the wedding?”

“Hey, Riddler!” bellows Clayface. “Where are all of you going?”

Everyone comes to a dead stop while Riddler answers, “They’re going to open the wedding presents in a few minutes so we need to go and get our gift out of the Hall of Doom.”

“And it takes all of you to do that?” questions Clayface suspiciously.

“Well…we made sure that it was worth Penguin’s weight in gold, so…yeah, all of us!” replies Riddler coolly. “See you soon, buddy!”

“Very smooth, Riddler,” congratulates Lex. “You actually did something right for once.” He turns his head to encourage, “We’re almost home free everyone, the Hall of Doom is just around the corner and -”

Lex’s voice immediately cuts off as he hears, “Hello, Luthor.”

“Superman,” growls Lex with a sneer. “I’d know that pontificating tone anywhere.” His gaze travels over the rest of the Super Friends as he notes Penguin and Dovina hiding behind their limousine, just out of the heroes’ sight. “This place is hidden by a perception filter; how did you manage to find us?”

“An anonymous source tipped us off to your exact location,” replies Batman with a broad smile. “But that would make it an inside job!” protests Lex. “Who would possibly betray us?” Lex’s answer comes in the form of a raspberry from the Joker who is currently sitting on the ground, bound by ropes conjured by Green Lantern’s ring. Catching sight of Joker’s two black eyes and a furious Harley trying her best to lengthen Wonder Woman’s lasso long enough to kick her beloved’s shins, Lex exhibits a huge grin and declares, “It was worth it.” Bringing his left hand up, he pushes a button on his glove and teleports all the Legion members including the Hall of Doom away to their swamp while his voice echoes throughout the parking lot. “Sorry, Super Fools, but did you really think that we would go anywhere without having an escape plan already in place? I guess that means that the Joker’s on you!”

His laughter trails away as the Legion and Hall of Doom instantaneously appear in the swamp. While everyone breathes a sigh of relief, Lex snarks, “I hope that like the Penguin, the Joker enjoyed his last day of freedom.” His expression grows more arrogant as he speaks to the villains. “Perhaps this will show the sides of both good and evil, once and for all, that the Legion of Doom can never be trifled with as long as we stand together. What Luthor has brought together, let no Super Friend tear asunder!” He throws his head back in maniacal laughter and upon realizing that no one else is joining in, he stops and looks around the clearing to find everyone gone except
Brainiac. “Where did everybody go?”

Brainiac gestures to the Hall of Doom. “They went into the kitchen. Apparently, Sinestro is in the possession of a great deal of wedding cake.

Lex merely stares back at him for a moment before shrugging his shoulders and deciding, “I could do with something to eat.”

“Black Manta and I were watching the reception on the monitors while we vented the Hall of Doom. I knew that you had the teleporter device that we had worked on together. Why did you not use it earlier?”

They start heading towards the Hall of Doom while Lex explains, “You know as well as I do that using a transport of that magnitude meant that it could only be used once. Besides, how else would we escape the Super Friends? We were bound to run into them sooner or later.” They’re just about to enter the Hall of Doom when Lex pauses at the threshold and realizes, “Wait a minute! When did they cut the cake?”

The End

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