An Offer He Couldn't Refuse
by Kayliana

Summary

Harley wants Joker, Joker wants Batman, and Batman wants none of it. But several children's lives hang in the balance, and Joker promises to release the hostages unharmed... on one condition. Cracktastic hilarity ensues.

B/J SLASH aka BatJokes. (Crossposting from ffnet... finally. First chapter originally published in 2010)

Notes

Link to my original posting: https://m.fanfiction.net/s/5949174/1/An-Offer-He-Couldnt-Refuse
The Proposition

Chapter One: The Proposition

Batman knew something wasn't right when he saw the batsignal lighting up the Gotham skyline—the cops still thought he was a murderer, and would never ask for his help this blatantly. He snuck up to the roof of the MCU anyway, sticking to the shadows as he silently approached the modified searchlight. Peering around a corner, he saw someone casually leaning against the side of the batsignal—one of the last people he wanted to see right now.

The Joker.

And, naturally, the bastard was standing in the one spot on the entire roof where Batman couldn't sneak up on him. He was wearing his usual makeup and purple trench coat, its pockets probably stuffed full of knives. The Joker was looking around in the darkness, tapping a finger impatiently and licking at his scars.

Trying to suppress his apprehension about whatever kind of twisted games and mindfuckery were about to ensue, Batman stepped into view.

Joker's eyes immediately riveted to him.

"Well, it's about fucking time," Joker snapped, stepping away from the searchlight and towards his—heh—better half. A half-second later the irritation evaporated and Joker burst into laughter.

Batman remained silent, crossing his arms in a very We Are Not Amused manner.

A few seconds later, Joker regained his composure, still chuckling, and said, "It is, though—if you say yes." He licked his lips, raising his eyebrows at the vigilante.

"What are you talking about?" Batman growled.
"I've got a, uh, proposition for ya—"

"I don't negotiate with terrorists."

"That's too bad," Joker said, licking his scars, "I guess I'll just tell Harley to kill all the hostages—" he pulled a cell phone from his pocket and dramatically dialed a number. He started to bring the phone to his ear but a batarang shot out and sliced it in half.

Joker watched the broken pieces clatter to the ground, then glared at Batman and irritably started, "Ya know—"

"What hostages?" Batman interrupted.

"Well I had a video in there," he gestured vaguely at the broken phone, "but I guess now you'll just have to take my word for it—a bus full of kids, uh, disappeared today during a field trip."

Batman produced his own cell phone and instructed, "Give me the memory card."

"Oh, aren't we clever," Joker mocked, digging the card out of the ruined device.

Batman held out his hand silently. The Joker stepped forward, placing the tiny card in Batman's gloved hand and letting his own hand linger longer than necessary, his thumb stroking along Batman's. Batman tensed and pulled away, staring suspiciously at the Joker, who just smirked.

Batman switched out the memory cards and pulled up the video—it was short and choppy, but it showed Harley behind the wheel of a school bus, wearing a gas mask and waving childishly. Then a purple-gloved hand entered the frame and tossed a smoking canister into the bus—Batman really hoped that was just sleeping gas. A familiar but slightly distorted laugh erupted as the children panicked and quickly lost consciousness. The bus started up, and the radio blared a few lines of Alice Cooper's School's Out, then the video ended.

"Where are they?" Batman growled.

"Oh, they're safe—for now."

Knowing he would probably regret it, Batman asked, "What do you want?"

Joker licked his scars. "Same thing I always do—you."

Batman stared. Surely he didn't mean—

"The deal is: for every night you spend with me and Harley, I'll release a hostage, and I won't even torture 'em. How's that sound?"

"What exactly are you asking for?" Batman asked, hating himself for it.

Joker chuckled. "You a little slow tonight, Bats? I want you and me and Harley to have a three-way. Do ya need me to draw you a picture?"

"You're serious?" Batman asked incredulously.

"I'm never serious…but yeah."

Batman stared at his nemesis, his mind infuriatingly numb. "If I agree—"

"I'll release one kid every time."
"Every time?"

"How many are there?"

Joker shrugged. "I didn't count 'em."

"Joker," he growled.

"You saw, a bus-full. And not a short bus, either."

Batman sighed. "And if I refuse?"

"I kill one every day, 'til I run out or you change your mind."

He'd figured as much. He looked away from the Joker's disturbingly eager expression as he tried to find some way out of this—but he knew there really wasn't one. He couldn't refuse, knowing that children would die as a result.

Batman sighed—this had *Disaster* and *Years of Therapy* written all over it.

"Alright," he finally said. "I'll do it."

"Goody," Joker grinned. "Let's go!"

"What—right now?" He'd hoped he would at least have some time to try to get used to the idea of having a three-way with his archenemy. Or to figure out where the kids were hidden, and avoid it altogether.

"Yeah, where's that batmobile of yours?"

"It's not called that," he grumbled, but he led the Joker to where he'd hidden the tumbler anyway. He opened the door, growling, "Don't touch anything."

Joker held up his hands in a show of mock-innocence and climbed in, still smiling and thinking *this is gonna be fun!*
A/N: This chapter is a lot funnier if you're familiar with Lady GaGa's song *Bad Romance* … you'll see why. (if you *haven't* heard the song, well, that's what the internet's for, lol )

Enjoy! :)

Chapter Two: Bad Romance

Naturally, Batman's instructions to not touch anything in the Tumbler were cheerfully ignored.

"What's this button do?" Joker asked as Batman started the engine.

"Leave it alone," Batman growled.

Joker pushed it anyway, and the Tumbler's lights blazed on, revealing their location to anyone who might happen to be watching.

"I said not to—"

"Oh, lighten up—what's this one do?"

"Don't push that!"

He did, launching one of the Tumbler's missiles into the alleyway in front of them, where it obliterated a dumpster.

"Heh, whoops." Joker craned his neck, trying to see if he'd managed to barbeque any bums. While he was distracted, Batman reached over and slapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists. Joker glanced at them and said, "Ooh, kinky. But pointless." He could pick the lock in less than a minute.

"Are you going to tell me where we're going?" Batman demanded.

"Just, uh, head for the south side of the Narrows," he said, surreptitiously retrieving a lockpick from his jacket pocket and going to work on the cuffs.

Batman steered the Tumbler out of the alley—luckily there weren't many cars on the road at three in the morning. He headed for the Narrows as the Joker had instructed, staring straight ahead at the road and doing his best to ignore the man beside him, who was trying his best to keep Batman's attention.

"Hey, let's play Twenty Questions!" Joker suggested.

"Let's play Shut The Fuck Up," Batman snapped.

Joker scowled at him. "Ya know, you really should be *nicer* to me—we *are* fuck-buddies now."

"Not by choice."

"You *could* ve said no—there's always a choice, Bats."

Batman steadfastly ignored him—he refused to get sucked into another philosophical debate.
After a few moments of silence, Joker looked around the Tumbler and asked, "Didn't I blow this thing up?"

"It's a new one."

"Oh."

With a microscopic click, the handcuffs snapped open.

"Do you have a radio in here?" The Joker asked.

"No."

"Liar," he said, reaching with a newly-freed hand for the knob—Batman wasn't surprised, but he had hoped it would take him longer to pick the lock.

Joker flipped the radio on, surfing through the stations one at a time, muttering, "No… no… crap… ugh, god no… eh… no… Ooh, perfect!"

He cranked up Lady GaGa's *Bad Romance* to a near-lethal volume that rattled the windows.

*I WANT YOUR LOVE AND I WANT YOUR REVENGE*

*YOU AND ME COULD WRITE A BAD ROMANCE*

"This can be our song!"

"Turn it down!" Batman shouted, as they sped past the Major Crimes Unit building, nearly flattening some unfortunate spectator on the sidewalk.

*I WANT YOUR LOVE AND ALL YOUR LOVER'S REVENGE*

*YOU AND ME COULD WRITE A BAD ROMANCE*

"What? I can't hear you!" Joker yelled back, smirking.

Batman reached over to turn it off himself, and the Joker promptly cuffed Batman's hand to the steering wheel.

*CAUGHT IN A BAD ROMANCE…*

——

Commissioner Gordon had stepped outside of the MCU station to try to figure out where that explosion had come from. *Mystery solved,* he thought when he saw Batman's car-tank-thing speeding towards him. Gordon leapt backwards when it got a little too close to the curb, and he was surprised to hear deafening music emanating from the vehicle as it zoomed by. Gordon puzzled for a minute over the weirdness of Batman cruising around with the stereo blaring like a teenager. The song sounded vaguely familiar—one of those pop singers his kids were obsessed with, he was sure of it. It came to him after a second, and although he was alone on the sidewalk he said aloud, incredulously, "Batman listens to *Lady Gaga?*"

——

"God damn it!" Batman roared over the blaring music, straining uselessly against the handcuffs—he couldn't reach either the radio or the Joker with his free hand without wrecking the Tumbler in the process.
Joker just ignored him and turned the radio up even louder.

**WANT YOUR BAD ROMANCE**

**CAUGHT IN A BAD ROMANCE**

Batman steered the Tumbler with his knees while his free hand searched through his utility belt for the handcuff key.

"This is the best part!" Joker said as the beat shifted, smacking Batman's arm to get his attention. Then Joker started pumping his fist in the air and tossing his head to the music like a head-banger, his green curls whipping wildly around his face.

**RAH RAH, AH-AH-AH, ROMA RO MA MA, GAGA OOH LA LA, WANT YOUR BAD ROMANCE**

Joker sang along—or, at least, he tried to. He must not have heard the song very many times, judging by the way he got half of the words (if they could actually be called *words*) wrong.

Batman stared, a sharp exhale of disbelief escaping him. He wanted to stay angry—he really did—but somehow he couldn't stop the completely unwanted smile that twisted his lips. He wondered vaguely whether he was going crazy, or if he had already been there awhile and was just now realizing it.

Joker, who had been watching out of the corner of his eye the entire time, smirked and stopped thrashing around. "I *thought* you'd get a kick outta that," he said, reaching over and giving Batman's cheek two quick pats. The smile abruptly died.

"Don't touch me," Batman said, forcing his face back into a neutral expression—he honestly couldn't remember the last time he'd *really* smiled, instead of just faking it for the parasitic socialites he had to endure as Bruce Wayne. He thought it was a particularly sick joke that the one to finally put a smile (albeit a tiny one) on his face was his mass-murdering archenemy, especially since he was the same one who had made him so miserable in the first place.

Batman remembered the handcuff key, and quickly unlocked himself, just in time to turn off the radio as the final chorus of rah-rahs finished.

"You should smile more," Joker said, "and I *don't* mean that in a I'm-about-to-slice-your-face-open way."

"You should lay off the crack."

"I'm not on crack, I'm just funnier than you."

"That's clever," Batman replied sarcastically, "you should put that on a t-shirt."

Joker raised an eyebrow. "Ya know, Batsy, I've never seen you this...snarky," he licked at his scars, and said, "I like it."

Batman realized a little late that the line between his personas had indeed worn very thin in the resultant shock of making this 'deal with the devil'—*Bruce Wayne* was supposed to be the one with the witty repartee, not Batman—*he* was supposed to be silent and violent. But it seemed like every time he encountered the Joker, the madman found some new way to shatter his already-fragile stability and push him to the edge, in one way or another.
"What can I say," he mumbled. "You bring out the worst in me."

Joker grinned, and took it as a compliment—Batman realized this, and resolved to shut the hell up for the remainder of the drive.

He stared out the front window while the buildings they passed became more and more ramshackle the farther they ventured into the Narrows. They passed a brick building with a hideous blue unicorn painted on one wall, and Joker said, "Take a left at the next light."

They turned onto a street that looked like the aftermath of a bombing-run—crumbling buildings shed bricks into the streets—and the slum's helpful denizens had in turn pitched some of these bricks back through the windows, shattering the glass in the few that weren't boarded up. The dark sidewalks were scattered with what looked like lumps of rags, but what were actually homeless people huddled up in search of nonexistent warmth.

"Slow down, we're close. Turn right—down that alley."

"People are sleeping in there," Batman protested.

Joker raised an eyebrow. "We're in a tank. I fail to see the problem."

Batman ignored him, and went down the next alley instead, which luckily did not have hordes of homeless people hunkered down in the middle of it.

"Just park here, we can walk," Joker instructed impatiently.

Batman parked the Tumbler, and the two of them climbed out.

"Come on," Joker said, smoothing the wrinkles out of his suit and peering out of the alley, ensuring that the street outside was deserted. "It's, uh, that one," he pointed to a nondescript three-story brick apartment building that looked empty and ready to collapse. "I think."

"You live here?" The place didn't look fit for cockroaches.

"I do tonight—now, come on. Let's not keep Harley waiting."

Joker grinned, grabbing Batman's hand and trying to pull him along, but Batman stopped walking and said, "You've got the kids in that deathtrap?"

Joker gave him a sardonic don't-be-an-idiot look. "No."

"But if Harley's in there, where are the children?"

"That would be telling," Joker said. Batman glared at him, so he added, "They're fine, Bats, stop worrying about it. Now, come on!"

Joker dragged him across the street and through the crumbling apartment building's entrance.

"So, Harley's actually okay with this?" Batman asked as the pair of them headed up a treacherous stairwell—Harley had never struck him as the type that liked to share.

"Hmm, what? Oh, yeah, yeah, sure. She's fine." He led Batman out of the stairwell and into a dingy hallway on the top floor, heading for the room at the end of the hallway.

"Really?" Batman said dubiously.
Joker sucked his teeth loudly, then said, "Mmmm, well, I might have uh, forgotten to mention, um… all of this."

Batman stopped in his tracks. "You didn't even tell her?"

Joker ignored him, flinging open the door to the apartment and stepping through, dragging Batman along behind him and calling, "Harleeey, I'm ho-ome!"
A/N: Just to clarify—I'm kinda sorta using bits from the "Mad Love" comic as part of these three's history and as a basis for Harley's characterization. If you haven't read that one, there are a few spoilers ahead.

Chapter Three: Domestic Disputes

Despite Batman's protests, Joker dragged him through the doorway and into the run-down apartment.

The place was a disaster—broken furniture was strewn across the floor, and everything appeared to be coated in a thin layer of dust. Small trails of mouse droppings littered the floor. As Batman observed his surroundings, his mental calculation of the likelihood of contracting some kind of disease from this experience increased substantially.

"Harley? Where are ya?" Joker called.

From behind the closed door of the bedroom, an annoying voice sing-songed, "In here, Puddin!'"

He gritted his teeth at the despised nickname.

"Puddin?" Batman teased.

"Shut it, Batshit," Joker snapped back, but he smiled a little as he led Batman to the door. Somehow, it didn't bother him as much when Batsy said it.

Joker motioned for him to stand off to the side of the doorway, where he would be hidden from view. Joker didn't want to give the surprise away too soon—timing was everything, after all. He caught Batman's eye, put a finger over his lips in a shhh gesture, then smirked and opened the door.

"Harley, I've told you not to call m—" he stopped, taking in the sight before him and blinking a few times.

Harley was sprawled on the bed, wearing a flimsy red negligee that left little to the imagination. That, however, was not what stunned him—it was the room. In contrast to the rest of the building, this one room had been fixed up and furnished quite impressively, and there wasn't a hint of dust anywhere. The lingering scent of fresh paint stung his nostrils.

"Like it, Mistah J?" Harley asked, looking thoroughly pleased with herself. "I got your favorite colors."

Actually, she had gotten almost every color, but there was slightly more purple and green than anything else. The bedspread was a dark purple, the pillowcases were green, and a couple of floor-lamps with green lampshades stood in opposite corners of the room. The walls were painted purple as well, although Harley had splattered them with a little of every other color too, a la Jackson Pollock. A few other random oddities graced the room, including a furry pink beanbag, an assortment of ugly throw pillows featuring pictures of very somber and creepy looking cats, and a gigantic purple lava lamp. To top it all off, on the floor there was a large kitschy rug designed to look like a giant joker card.

"Went a little overboard, didn't ya?" he said. True, he had told her to fix the place up a little when
he'd left to meet Batsy, but he'd only meant for her to sweep up the mouse shit—he hadn't expected her to go all *Martha Stewart On Acid* on him. The whole room looked like a rainbow threw up on it.

Harley shrugged and smiled flirtatiously. "Well, I want our first time together to be special."

At this, Batman's eyes widened in surprise—he caught the Joker's eye and mouthed *First time?* Batman thought it was bad enough that the Joker hadn't told Harley about this in the first place, but to spring it on her when she's expecting some kind of romantic first time between the two of them?—even Bruce Wayne had never been that big of an asshole. Joker responded with a microscopic half-shrug, still trying not to give away Batman's presence.

He looked back at Harley and grinned. "It'll be special, all right." Harley grinned back, and Joker continued, "I brought a, uh, *surprise.*" He didn't add *for you,* since it wasn't for her—no, Batsy was there for *him.*

"Ooh, I love surprises Mistah J," Harley giggled. "What is it?"

"I'll give you a hint," he said, then chucked a batarang in her general direction—Batman checked and, yes, one was missing. *When did he manage that?* Batman wondered, as the batarang flew past Harley's head and embedded itself in the wall behind her.

Harley said, "Eeek!" and twisted around to examine the batarang. "Batman?" she said, puzzled. Then her eyes lit up and she said, "Ha! I was wonderin' why you're in such a good mood tonight—didja finally kill 'im?"

Joker rolled his eyes and sighed. "Harley, don't be a dumbass. I don't wanna kill him."

"But Mistah J, you said—"

"I *say* a lot of things, Harley, it doesn't mean that they're *true.*"

Harley ignored that, preferring not to think too hard about what else he might've lied about, and said, "So, what's the surprise?"

Joker glanced over at Batman and his grin widened—it stretched his scars uncomfortably, but he barely noticed. His hand shot out and closed around Batman's wrist, and he tugged Batman into view, shouting, "TA-DAH!"

Harley shrieked, using one hand to yank a blanket up to cover her near-nudity and the other hand to retrieve a gun from the nightstand drawer. "What's *he* doin' here?" she demanded, staring at Batman with a mixture of fear and hatred, aiming the gun at his face. She blamed Batman for ruining her imagined fairy-tale life with her Puddin', and she had told Batman as much in their previous encounters.

Batman's hand subtly moved towards his cache of batarangs, but Harley said, "Uh-uh, don't move!"

Joker stepped in front of Batman, blocking Harley's line of fire and glaring at the hench-wench, his eyes radiating a terrifying, stormy rage.

"Mistah J, what are you d—?" Harley started, but Joker lunged forward, closing the distance between them, and he twisted the gun out of her hand, not caring if he broke a few fingers in the process. Joker threw the gun aside, and Batman uneasily watched it sail out of the broken window.

Joker backhanded Harley and closed a hand around her throat, growling, "What did I tell you last
Last time referring to Harley's misadventure in which she'd tried to kill Batman herself, to impress her Puddin'. Batman had only escaped because he convinced her to call Joker, who had immediately rushed to the scene and freed Batman after furiously tossing Harley out of a five-story window.

"Joker," Batman growled, taking a warning step towards the pair.

"Do me a favor and stay outta this, Bats," he replied, turning his attention back to Harley. "Now, what did I tell you?"

Harley struggled a little, trying unsuccessfully to keep the fear out of her eyes—Mistah J looked almost as angry as he had that night—and she managed to squeak out an answer, "—that...he's—yours."

"Exactly," Joker said. "He's mine. You pull that shit again and I'll be more creative than just throwing you through a window. Understand?"

Harley blinked back tears and nodded. Joker nodded too, mocking her.

"No, ya see, I don't think you do," he said venomously, licking his scars.

Joker's hand tightened around her throat, and he failed to notice the shadow of movement behind him.

"That's enough," Batman said in his ear, reaching around and firmly closing his hand over the Joker's wrist. "Let her go."

Joker shuddered and his eyes briefly slipped shut, although he maintained his grasp on Harley's neck. He leaned back against Batman, craning his neck to look up at the Dark Knight. Joker smiled, and said, "Make me."

Batman squeezed the Joker's wrist, clamping down on a tendon and forcing the hand to involuntarily slacken enough for Harley to pull free. She fell back down onto the bed and tried to catch her breath. Joker laughed as Batman twisted his arm uncomfortably and shoved him down on the bed as well—but Joker held on to Batman's arm and used the momentum to bring Batman down with him—right on top of him.

"Ha ha, let's get started, shall we?" Joker said, his hands roaming over Batman's armored chest. "Don't be gentle," he said, tracing a finger around the bat symbol almost reverently.

Batman shoved the Joker's hands away and jumped up from the bed, putting an acceptable distance between them and trying not to freak the fuck out.

Joker sighed in frustration.

"Are you gonna be like this all night?" he snapped, scowling at Batman.

Harley sat up, rubbing her sore neck and looking at Joker in confusion. "Whaddya mean, all night? Puddin', what's he doing here?"

Joker snickered and replied, "He's gonna be doing me and you, pretty soon."

Batman rolled his eyes.
"What?" Harley's expression was cautious, and her eyes had the blank look of someone who knew exactly what was going on, but whose mind would rather shred itself to pieces than accept the truth.

Joker gave Batman a can-you-believe-this-chick? look, then said, "Okay Harley, I'll talk slow and use small words—those kids we took? They're hostages. And they get to live if Batsy here keeps his end of the deal and has a threesome with me and you."

Harley stared, barely registering his condescending tone as she tried to rearrange his words to spell out a different meaning—one that wasn't completely insane. She opened her mouth to speak, but it took a few tries before she could manage actual words. "Th—this is a joke—right, Mistah J? I mean, it's—it's a joke, isn't it?"

She stared at him with a desperate, forced half-smile, her eyes begging him to agree.

Instead, he pointed at himself and deadpanned, "This is my serious face."

"But—but," Harley stammered, looking lost and shell-shocked. If she hadn't tried to kill him so many times, Batman might've felt sorry for her. "But you said that we were gonna pick out one of them kids to raise as our own!"

Joker's brow furrowed, and he gave her a sidelong disbelieving glance. "And you believed that? Honestly, Harley, can you really not tell when I'm being sarcastic?"

Harley stared at him, her lip trembling as she struggled to form words.

"But—"

Joker gave her a scathing glare and said, "What, are you gonna cry now? You're the one who's always jabbering on about wanting to consummate our relationship," he said, making air quotes and spitting the phrase out as if it burned his tongue.

She stared at him, her expression caught somewhere between disbelief and desperation. "But not like this! I just want you," she pleaded.

"All of me?" he asked. Harley nodded emphatically, her eyes lighting up with hope, and Joker continued, using an irritated tone that an impatient parent might use when explaining something ridiculously simple and self-evident to a child, "Well, you can't have all of me without him… Understand?"

Harley's face fell, and she stared at him, blinking a few times and furrowing her brow in confusion.

"Of course not," Joker muttered, more to himself than to her. She also didn't understand that she could never really have any of him—he belonged to Batman.

Batman watched the exchange in silent disbelief—he understood. The Joker was obliquely talking about the supposed connection between them again. Almost a year ago, in that interrogation room, the Joker had told Batman that he completed him. Batman had told himself, each time the echoes of those words returned to haunt him, that that painted criminal was just trying to unnerve him, that he hadn't really meant it—but now, Batman wasn't so sure. The Joker could've demanded anything in exchange for the captive children, and this is what he asked for?

Furthermore, as far as Batman could tell, the Joker hadn't even involved the police or the media—whatever game he was playing, whatever point he was trying to prove, it wasn't for the public—it was apparently just between them.
At first, Batman had been convinced that this was all part of some sick strategy to humiliate him—and he had been okay with that, because at least that had made sense. Now, however, he couldn't quell the nagging suspicion that, in some twisted way, the Joker actually cared for him—and that possibility unnerved him more than anything.

"Mistah J—" Harley started, grabbing Joker's arm and fighting back tears.

Joker yanked his arm free and snapped, "If you're just gonna be a whiny bitch all night, then leave. Me and Batsy can manage just fine without you."

He winked at Batman.

Both Batman and Harley's faces transformed into identical expressions of horror, and Harley protested, "No, I'll do it—I'll stay!"

"Well then quit complaining!"

Harley sulked, leaning against the headboard and pouting. Directly or indirectly, it seemed like Batman was always stealing her Puddin's attention, always distracting him and coming between them. Goddamned Bat-freak, she thought viciously, glaring at Batman, why won't you just leave us alone! We'd be happy together if it wasn't for you, always ruinin' everything!

Joker glanced at her and said, "If you're sticking around, go make us some coffee—I hope you thought to steal a coffeemaker too, while you were, uh," he gestured at the room's furnishings, "redecorating."

Harley nodded. "Yeah, I got one." She knew all too well how he got if he went too long without a coffee fix—last time she'd forgotten a coffeemaker he had massacred his entire crew and shoved her down three flights of stairs.

"Go make some then," Joker snapped, waving his hand dismissively.

Coffee addict? Bruce thought, Well, that explains his teeth. Because smoking is socially unacceptable, so it couldn't possibly be due to that.

Harley beamed and said, "Sure thing, Puddin," happy for an opportunity to please him. She climbed off the bed and headed for the door.

When she thought Joker wasn't looking, she rammed her shoulder into Batman as she passed him, glaring daggers. Joker saw, but merely chuckled and taunted, "Oh, look—she's jealous."

Harley clenched her fists and bit her lip as she stormed out into the kitchen.

When she was out of earshot, Batman asked, "Was that really necessary?"

"Yeah."

Batman glanced at the empty doorway, crossing his arms. "You shouldn't provoke her," he warned. "I wouldn't put it past her to poison the coffee."

"Nah," Joker said dismissively. "She wouldn't. She's got these delusions that me and her are gonna get married and have kids and all that nonsense—ha, can you imagine?" he cackled. Sure, she was helpful in some of his schemes, and they had fun causing mayhem sometimes, but as for settling down with her someday—? Yeah right.
But, having a totally devoted self-proclaimed girlfriend had its perks, and Joker was certain that no matter how angry Harley got, she wasn't stupid enough to try to poison his coffee—Batman's, on the other hand…

"I'll, uh, be right back," he told Batman, heading for the kitchen.

Batman watched him go, a little disconcerted by the fact that he'd just had a casual, nonviolent conversation with his arch-nemesis.

Alone now, Batman leaned against the wall and closed his eyes, taking a deep breath and trying to relax and gather his wits. Part of him was still hoping that he would wake up in his penthouse and discover that this was all just some demented and horribly fucked up nightmare. The other, more realistic part was telling him to get a hold of himself—he had to do this, there wasn't any way around it that wouldn't result in a busload of dead kids, so there was no point in wallowing in denial and pretending it wasn't happening.

He sighed, mentally berating himself for giving in so easily—why hadn't he asked for a few days to consider the offer? Or demanded that Joker release all of the children first, and then apprehended both him and Quinn? It was all the Joker's fault—Batman could never think straight in the presence of that damn lunatic.

*What the hell,* Batman thought, *if I have to do this, I might as well give it my best.* Half the time, he played the role of a playboy billionaire and a lord of sex and decadence—he could let Bruce Wayne drive tonight. It would feel strange to play that role with the mask on, but he was pretty sure he could manage. Joker thinks he's punishing or humiliating me by making me do this, Batman reasoned. *But I'll turn the joke around on him—I'm going to do this, and I'll make myself enjoy it. I refuse to let him win.*

A series of loud crashes from the next room interrupted Batman's thoughts. His eyes snapped open, and he hurried through the doorway to see what was going on.

He entered the kitchen, where Harley was on the floor, along with the remains of several destroyed dishes and a puddle of coffee. Joker towered over her, shouting, "And just *how* do you 'mistake' Ex-lax for sugar?"

Joker threw the bottle of laxatives at her.

"I'm sorry, Mistah J—I thought it'd be funny!" she explained, nursing a split lip. *And we were all out of arsenic,* she added mentally.

"Leave the fucking jokes to me," he snarled, hauling her up by her hair and shoving her towards Batman. "I'm really starting to lose my patience with you, Harley. Now, apologize to Batman."

"What?" she crowed.

"You heard me. Apologize," he ordered, his tone deadly.

Harley turned to face Batman, gave him a death-glare, and muttered an unconvincing, "Sorry."

"*What?*" she crowed.

"You heard me. Apologize," he ordered, his tone deadly.

Harley turned to face Batman, gave him a death-glare, and muttered an unconvincing, "Sorry."

"No, no, no—," said Joker, "Like you *mean* it."

Harley gritted her teeth, and when she spoke, her tone was dripping with saccharin and strychnine. "I'm *really sorry,* Mr. Batman. I didn't mean nothin' by it, and I'll never *ever* do it again."

Joker ignored her obvious sarcasm, and said, "Now lick his boots."
"But—!

"That won't be necessary," Batman interrupted, giving Joker a stern look. "You've made your point."

"I'll be the judge of that. Lick his boots, Harley."

"No, don't," Batman countered.

"Why are you taking her side?" Joker demanded. "She was trying to slip a shitload of laxatives in your coffee!" Joker giggled a little in spite of himself—it was kind of funny. But, nothing ruins the mood quicker than explosive diarrhea.

Sick of delaying the inevitable, Batman mentally sighed and decided, *let's just get this over with.*

"I'm not taking sides—" he said, slipping into his charming playboy persona and making eye contact with Joker before looking him up and down very obviously, and continuing in a lower, more seductive tone, "I'm just wondering why you keep stalling."

He smirked, and both Joker and Harley stared at him with wide eyes and mouths dropped slightly open in shock.

"I mean," he continued, starting to turn away, "I'm starting to think you don't really want this."

A half-second later he heard footsteps rapidly approaching behind him, and he tried not to smile at the fact that his ruse was working. Joker slammed Batman's back against the wall, pinning him there, his hands planted on the wall on both sides of him, and his face only inches away from Batman's.

Joker tilted his head, staring at Batman for a long moment. "Who the fuck are you and what did you do with Batman?"

Batman smirked and purred, "What do you want to do with him?" He leaned forward slightly and glanced down at Joker's scarred mouth, then back up to meet his eyes in a silent challenge.

Joker stared back, a little surprised at this turn of events—he'd thought he would have to be more, uh, persuasive with Batsy. Batman was giving in a little too easily—unless…maybe this wasn't exactly Batsy he was dealing with.

"What, uh, what're you doing?" Joker asked, unconsciously licking at his scars.

Batman licked his own lips in response. Slowly. "Isn't it obvious?" He tilted his head down and gave him the patented Bruce Wayne 'come-hither' look, which had never once failed to get its recipient into bed.

Perhaps the effect was ruined by the mask, because Joker smiled a humorless smile and said, "Yeah, actually, it is. Knock it off."

"I don't know what you're tal—" Batman started, but Joker promptly punched him in the jaw.

"I don't want whoever you pretend to be under that mask," Joker growled. "I. Want. Batman."

"Fine!" Batman growled, the anger he had been so carefully holding back finally escaping him. He aimed a punch at Joker's face—Joker dodged it, but while he was distracted Batman landed a roundhouse kick that sent the Joker stumbling backwards, laughing.
"That's more like it," Joker said.

Batman lunged forward and seized the Joker by the lapels of his jacket, mercilessly shoving him against the wall. Joker was very pleasantly reminded of that night in the interrogation room, and he struggled a little, just so Batsy would press closer to keep him still.

Batman drew back his fist for another punch, but the Joker suddenly looked over Batman's shoulder and angrily commanded, "Don't you dare!"

Batman whirled around just in time to catch the wooden chair-leg Harley had swung at his head. He glared at Harley; she met his eyes and giggled nervously. Batman yanked the chair leg out of her grasp and threw it across the room.

"Damn it, Harley!" Joker said, wriggling free and furiously starting towards her—how dare she interrupt them! Harley squealed a little and hid behind Batman, who grabbed both of Joker's wrists and tried to hold him still.

"What?" Harley cried. "You were fightin'!"

"Has it occurred to you," Joker snapped, worming a leg around behind Batman and aiming an awkward kick at Harley, "that maybe we like fighting!"

"Enough," said Batman, releasing Joker and holding up a palm to each of them in a settle down gesture. Joker glared at Harley; Harley glared at Batman; Batman warily looked back and forth between the two, feeling like he'd somehow wandered into the strangest episode of Jerry Springer ever. "Can we just get this over with?" he said.

"Batsy," Joker scolded. "Why so serious?"

Batman glowered at him and remained silent.

Unfazed, Joker smirked and said, "That's okay, I know how to make some smiles," winking at Batman.

Harley's jaw dropped—she had (unsuccessfully) tried that exact line on him once. Un-fucking-believable, she thought, he stole my line and used it on Batman! Harley huffed angrily and stormed back into the bedroom, leaving the pair to stare each other down in the living room.

After a long moment, Joker solemnly said, "You can still walk away, you know, if you've changed your mind. I'm not gonna force you."

"But you'll kill those kids if I back out," Batman bitterly replied.

"Well, yeah. But it's your choice."

"That's not a choice at all."

"Sure it is," Joker protested. "Just because you don't like the result of a choice doesn't mean it isn't a choice."

"But you knew what I would choose."

Joker shrugged, "That's your own fault for being too predictable … just think of this as another opportunity to, uh, sacrifice yourself for others—we both know how much you love that."

Meanwhile, after only a few seconds of sulking in the bedroom, Harley crept back into the
doorway to eavesdrop—she was still furious with the both of them, but she couldn't stand not knowing what they were out there saying or, god forbid, doing. Neither of them noticed her.

Batman stared at Joker for a few eternal seconds before finally asking the question that had been bothering him all night. "Why are you doing this?"

Joker licked his scars, actually looking uncomfortable for a second before he replied, "Me? I'm just trying to, uh, spice things up a bit—get you to bend your precious rules. I don't care what you choose—either way, I get you to finally loosen up a little."

Batman stared at him silently, not quite believing him.

In the doorway, Harley breathed a sigh of relief—of course it was all just part of a plan to break Batman. Ha, I was gettin' all worked up for nothin', she assured herself, of course Puddin' ain't actually attracted to Bat-brain—heh, what a stupid idea. She hated herself for being so insecure, but for a while there she had actually been worried that she had some competition. Although, the way they kept staring at each other like that still made her a little uneasy.

Harley abandoned her post at the doorway and climbed back into the bed, wanting to look sexy for Mistah J when he came in. She wasn't crazy about this whole threesome thing—especially with Bat-freak—but, if it was what Mistah J wanted, then she'd gladly do it for him. She would do anything for him.

In the other room, Joker finally broke the staring contest and asked, "So…you staying, or what?"

What choice do I have, Batman thought, but in the interest of not bantering in circles, he simply nodded.

Joker grinned and extended his hand like an old-fashioned gentleman, telling Batman, "Come on, then," and waiting for Batman to take it.

Batman glanced down at the proffered hand—his first instinct was to slap it away or do one of his ninja nerve-strikes, but he hesitated—he had a feeling the Joker was expecting that. Too predictable, am I? Batman thought, reaching out and seizing the Joker's hand in his own and defiantly meeting his eyes—only to find the Joker wearing a smug, amused smirk. Damn it, he silently swore—somehow the Joker had managed to manipulate him without even saying a word.

This is going to be a long night, Batman mused as the Joker chuckled and pulled him into the bedroom.
Chapter Four: Proof

Harley immediately perked up when the two men entered the bedroom, leaning against the headboard and staring at Joker with the most intense, sexiest look she could manage. But Joker didn't even glance at her—he was too busy leading a reluctant Batman towards the bed, walking backwards so he didn't have to take his eyes off of Batsy. When Joker's legs bumped into the bed he sat down on the edge of it, with Batman still standing in front of him.

"So, how do you get this batsuit off, anyway?" Joker asked, running his hands over said batsuit, starting at Batman's chest and slowly trailing lower. Harley stared, feeling a sudden twinge of jealousy and wishing Mr. J would touch her like that.

Batman grabbed both of Joker's wrists, halting their movement before they could get too far south, and said, "Before anything is going to come off—" Joker snickered but Batman ignored it "—I want proof that those children are okay."

Joker groaned. "Why must you be so difficult all the time?"

Honestly, though, Joker had been expecting this. He was actually a bit surprised Batman hadn't played this card sooner—perhaps Batsy wasn't quite as unwilling as he seemed? Joker smiled a little at that happy possibility.

"I mean it, Joker," Batman said. "I want proof, or nothing's happening here tonight."

Joker raised an eyebrow. "You're cock-blocking yourself, do you realize that?" Batman just continued to glare at him. "Okaaaaay, fine," Joker said, sighing exaggeratedly. "Give me the phone."

Batman retrieved the cell phone from his belt and handed it over. Joker dialed a number, and put the call on speaker as it started to ring.

"Who do you got watchin 'em?" Harley asked—not that she really cared, she just wanted to remind Mistah J that she was there.

Joker shot an annoyed glance in her direction and snapped sarcastically, "Brockfucking Samson."

"Oh. Is he new?" she asked obliviously.

"Shut up, I'm on the phone."

"You two are so adorable when you bicker," Batman quipped.

"Don't make me stab you," Joker teased, but he chuckled and hooked a hand into Batman's belt, pulling him closer.

Batman tensed. "What are you—?"

"Sit down," Joker patted the bed next to him. Batman just looked at him for a second, deliberating, then he finally took a seat next to Joker, who immediately snaked his arm around Batman's waist, leaning against him in a thoroughly disconcerting manner. Batman started to push him away, but was distracted when, after the fifth ring, someone finally answered on the other line.
"Hello?" said a male voice.

"Yeah, it's me," Joker said. "Put one of the kids on the phone, tell 'em Batman wants to talk to 'em."

"Which one?" the henchman asked.

"I don't care, just pick one," Joker snapped.

"Sure thing, Boss," the man said. "Hang on a sec."

There was a pause, and Batman listened attentively for any background noise that might give away their location. He didn't hear anything useful. Meanwhile, the Joker still had an arm around Batman's waist, and he began slowly rubbing his hand across Batman's armored abs.

"Stop that," Batman muttered, still trying to listen for clues.

"Shhh!" said Joker, continuing the caresses.

"Did you just shush me?"

"Shhhh!" Joker repeated, enjoying the chance to irritate Batsy.

Harley, on the other hand, was feeling left out again. She gave up on the sexy pose she had struck, since no one was looking at her anyway, and she crawled across the bed behind Joker and started to rub his shoulders, while Batman tried to ignore both of them and focus on the phone.

Joker's first instinct was to push Harley away like he always did whenever she got too touchy-feely, but instead he relaxed into her touch—one thing that could be said in her favor was that she gave damned good massages. Her fingers expertly worked his shoulder muscles, and his eyes slipped closed as he let out a moan that would've sounded right at home in a porno.

Batman's head snapped up at the noise, and he stared at Joker with a very what-the-fuck look on his face.

When Joker opened his eyes and saw Batsy staring, he grinned and made another exaggerated hooker noise.

"Oooohhh, yeaaah," he moaned, staring straight at Batman and inching his hand on Batsy's abs slowly lower.

"Stop that!" Batman protested in a voice that was a few octaves too high, swatting Joker's hand away from his groin.

"Why?" Joker purred, his teasing hand crawling back towards Batman. "Does it bother you?" Joker asked, emitting another small moan and sliding his hand slowly up Batman's leg. "Do you find it erotic?" he taunted, drawing the words out and rolling them around his tongue for maximum effect. "Are you getting aroused?" Joker said, licking his scars and trying not to grin when he saw Batman's eyes following his tongue's movement.

Batman stared at the man in front of him, only halfway listening to his taunts. Up until now he had been in a state of comfortable denial, but now it was finally starting to sink in—he was going to have sex with the Joker. It was really going to happen—it had to, or those children would die. It was as undeniable as the hand creeping along his thigh, and Batman was a little disturbed by how little the inevitability actually disturbed him. He caught himself staring as the Joker's tongue swept across scars and lips, and Batman idly wondered what greasepaint tasted like.
"Uh, Earth to Batman," Joker said, waving a hand in his face.

Batman immediately grabbed the Joker's hand out of instinct, but even after his brain caught up with his reflexes and he realized it wasn't an attack, he didn't let go. Instead, he examined the hand clasped in his own, his gloved thumb tracing over small irregular patchworks of scars as he wondered how they'd gotten there. But as his fingertip ghosted over the tiny scars, they yielded no answers, remaining as mysterious in origin as the man whose body they decorated. And mystery was something that Batman had always found irresistible.

Batman was here because had to be…but…that didn't mean that he couldn't take charge of the situation and do it his own way. And if he allowed himself to enjoy it, just a little bit, well—Joker never had to know, right?

His eyes flicked up to meet his enemy's, and whatever quip Joker had been about to fire at Batman died on his lips.

*Holy shit,* Joker thought, wondering for a second whether he was seeing things, because—Batman was slowly leaning towards him, and there was no trace of trickery in his eyes this time, only a beautifully wicked curiosity that had Joker frozen to the spot as Batsy leaned in closer and closer—

"Boss? Ya there?" the henchman's voice suddenly ripped through the silence, blaring out from the cell phone.

Batman froze, only inches away. Joker's mouth twitched into a forced half-smile and he caught Batman's gaze, his eyes screaming at the Bat to ignore the fucking cell phone. Joker finally overcame his paralysis and started to lean forward, but Batman promptly pulled away, seeming to snap out of a trance.

"Answer it," Batman quietly ordered, looking away at the floor and mentally raging at himself, *why the hell did you do that?*

Joker growled, the noise beginning low in his throat and quickly growing into a frustrated roar of "*WHAT?!*" to the henchman on the other line.

"Uh, I got a kid here," the man replied, sounding hesitant after the Joker's outburst.

"Put 'em on," Joker snapped, smacking Harley's hands away when she tentatively started massaging his shoulders again.

When Harley saw Batman leaning in towards Mr. J she had frozen in abject horror, unable to do anything except stare with her jaw dropped—she had wanted to stop him, but it was like watching a car wreck and she couldn't make herself look away. *Now* she was glaring daggers at Batman, who barely glanced at her, as though he had forgotten she was even there. *How DARE he try to make a move on my Puddin',* she silently fumed.

"H-hello?" a small voice emanated from the cell phone.

Batman's attention snapped back to the phone—it was a little girl on the other line, not much older than nine or ten from the sound of it.

"Say hi to Batman," Joker instructed in a falsely cheery voice, before bitterly adding a mumbled, "*you little fucker,*" which earned him a stern look from Batsy. But few things pissed Joker off more than bad timing, and he made a mental note to kill that henchman later—they had been *sodamn close!*
"B-Batman?" the little girl whimpered.

"I'm here," he answered. "Are you okay?"

"I'm scared," she whispered.

"Speak up, doll," Joker chimed in, "we can't hear you."

The girl didn't respond.

"Are you there?" Batman asked. "Are you hurt?"

"I-I'm okay," the girl finally replied, sniffling.

"It's going to be all right," Batman assured her. "What's your name?" he asked.

Joker bit his lip and tried not to laugh when the girl answered, "R-Rachel."

Batman glared at Joker, barely repressing the urge to slam his fist into Joker's face. You bastard, he seethed, equally disgusted with Joker and with himself—he had almost kissed that monster only seconds ago—voluntarily.

Batman forced himself to look away from Joker, and he managed to quell his anger long enough to force himself to tell the girl, "You're going to be okay, Rachel—I promise." Saying those words hurt more than Batman had expected.

"I wanna go home," the little girl wailed, sounding near tears. "Please, I don't wanna stay here anymore, it's scary, I want my m—"

"That's enough of that," Joker declared, hanging up the cell phone in mid-wail. "You've got your proof, so—"

"Give me back my phone," Batman interrupted curtly.

Joker handed it over, and Batman tucked it safely away in his utility belt while Joker continued, "As I was saying—" but he paused when Batman promptly drew his fist back for a punch. Joker closed his eyes and smirked, waiting for the collision of fist and face. Batman hesitated, he had intended to punch Joker in the face, but apparently that was too predictable. So at the last second he redirected the blow and hit him right in the balls instead.

Joker's eyes flew open with a "Oof!" and he sank to the floor. A groan escaped his lips and quickly turned into breathless laughter.

"Weren't expecting that, were you?" Batman gloated.

Joker just laughed.

Then a shrieking mass of limbs took a flying leap at Batman's head, nearly knocking him over in its fury. "How dare you!" Harley shouted, pounding her fists ineffectually against Batman's armor. I want kids someday, you stupid bat! she thought furiously. Batman caught her by the arm and used her own momentum against her, tossing her out of the way.

In between giggles, Joker called out from the floor, "Now you have to kiss it and make it better, Batsy."

Harley immediately volunteered, "I'll kiss it better, Puddin!" and rushed to his side.
"Stop that!" Joker demanded as Harley's fingers scrabbled for his zipper.

"But I wanna—"

"I said stop it!"

Joker grabbed her wrists to still her movement, but she smirked and said, "I don't *need* my hands, Puddin," ducking her head down and attempting to unzip his pants with her teeth. Batman smirked a little, watching the scene with amusement.

"I'll yell 'rape,' Harley, I mean it!" Joker scooted backwards on the floor, trying to evade her, but she had climbed on top of his legs, pinning them to the floor, and his hands were occupied with keeping Harley's hands still—he was stuck. He glanced over at Batman and said, "A little help here?"

Batman crossed his arms and said nothing, trying not to laugh.

"Oh, don't be like that, Bats!" Joker huffed, a few tendrils of green hair falling into his face as he struggled to dislodge the very persistent hench-wench.

Maybe I should...nah, let him squirm, Batman decided. Besides, he thought, he looks kinda hot like that.... ...wait—WHAT? Batman resisted the urge to smack himself in the face, and fell into a mental mantra of *I did NOT just think that, I did NOT just think that, I did NOT just think that...*

Joker finally managed to wriggle a leg free, and he used it to push Harley away, then he quickly got to his feet before she could react.

"Mistah Jaaa-aay!" she whined.

Joker glared at her silently and raised his index finger towards her as a warning. The furious look on his face shut her up immediately.

*I just wanna make him happy,* Harley thought, sulking. *If he would ever just LET me, I know I could make him forget all about Bat-brain.* But then her eyes lit up as she had a sudden idea for winning back Mr. J's attention—but she was going to need a few supplies. She quietly headed for the doorway to the rest of the apartment, hoping she could find what she needed in the other room.

Joker brushed the hair out of his face and turned back to Batman, who had a mildly freaked-out expression on his face, which Joker chose to ignore.

"Anyway," Joker said, "as I was saying before I was so rudely *assaulted,*" he shot a quick glare at Harley as she scampered through the doorway into the other room, leaving the two alone in the bedroom. "You got your proof, so I think you ought to return the favor."

Batman blinked. "What?" The man in front of him—who he most definitely had NOT just thought of as *hot*—wasn't making any sense.

"You've been acting weird all night, Bats. Not like yourself," Joker licked his scars, and Batman very deliberately kept his eyes averted. "I mean, for all I know, you could be one of those ridiculous Bat-posers," he said, but there was a smile hiding behind his eyes. "So I want proof that you're the *real* Batman."

"You know it's me," Batman growled, in no mood to play these games.

"Prove it," Joker retorted.
Batman scoffed, thinking *this is ridiculous.* "How?"

"Hmmm," said Joker, feigning puzzlement. He brought the tip of his index finger to his mouth, resting it on his lower lip while he seemed to consider. After a moment, he sucked the very tip of his finger into his mouth, lightly closing his teeth on it and keeping his lips slightly parted, swiping his tongue over the digit while he kept pretending to be deep in thought.

Batman stared. *What the—?*

"You really are shameless, aren't you?" Batman said.

Joker closed his lips around the finger and pulled it out of his mouth with an obscenely wet pop. "I don't know what you're talking about," he insisted playfully.

*Bullshit,* thought Batman, *he knows exactly what he's doing... and it's definitely NOT turning me on a little.* Just like Batman was most definitely NOT imagining Joker's lips wrapped around a certain part of his own anatomy.

Batman cleared his throat and said, "Uh—what kind of *proof* do you want?"

Joker licked at his scars, and demanded, "Tell me what I said to you back in that interrogation room."

"You said a *lot* of crazy things that night—you'll have to be more specific."

Joker's eyes narrowed, and he snapped, "Your exact response was *You're garbage who kills for money,* if that refreshes your memory."

Batman's eyes widened slightly as he realized what Joker wanted him to say. *Holy shit,* Batman thought, *he really DID mean it.* Which made saying it back seem more daunting than it should have been—made it seem less like a triviality and more like it meant something.

Batman glanced at Joker, briefly meeting his eyes before looking away again. He took a deep breath and mumbled the three words almost inaudibly.

"What was that?" Joker prompted, taking a step closer. Perhaps it was silly of him, but he wanted—no, *needed*—to hear him say it. The fact that it was *coerced* from Batman's lips wouldn't lessen its truth.

"You complete me," Batman repeated, looking his enemy right in the eyes.

For a second, no longer than a heartbeat, Joker just stared at him, having momentarily forgotten how to breathe—then he lunged forward and shoved Batman back against the wall, his hands seizing Batman's face and pulling him into a violent kiss.

Batman froze as Joker's lips crashed against his own—his entire body tensed, and his hands shot up to seize Joker's hands. He fully intended to pry them away—but somehow he couldn't compel himself to dislodge the force of nature ravishing his mouth. One part of his brain was telling him to shove Joker away, but another part urged him to fight for control of the kiss, and part of him didn't even care anymore, while yet another part of his mind was dancing around in circles screaming *La-la-la-this-isn't-happening... so naturally* Batman kissed him back.

Batman's eyes slipped shut as he stopped resisting and just let it happen, reveling in the taste of chaos. Batman's gauntleted hand tangled into green hair, pulling the infuriating criminal closer as the pair assaulted each other not with fists and knives, but with lips and tongues and teeth. When
Joker's tongue brushed against Batman's lower lip, the vigilante didn't even hesitate to part his lips and let him in, matching the criminal's fervent motions with equal intensity.

Joker moaned when Batman's tongue brushed against his own—he had anticipated that Batman would react with shock, and maybe punch him in the face—but Batsy was kissing him back, and that beautiful actuality had Joker's pants suddenly feeling much too tight.

*Instant erection: just add Batman,* Joker thought, unintentionally giggling a little.

"What's so funny?" Batman asked breathlessly, opening his eyes and gazing inquisitively at the madman.

*Shit,* Joker thought, immediately regretting the laughter.

"Nothing—don't stop," Joker said, but the spell was broken and Batman regained enough of his senses to pull away from the intoxicating psychopath and attempt to catch his breath.

There was a momentary silence filled only by heavy breathing and pounding heartbeats and Batman's mind screaming something incoherent along the lines of *Okay, that was really amazing, but seriously, WHAT THE FUCK!*

Then Joker suddenly giggled again.

"What?" Batman demanded.

"You, uh, got a little—" he gestured towards the lower half of Batman's face.

Mortified, Batman wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, scowling when his hand came away smudged with red and white.

Joker chuckled and said, "You missed a spot," reaching up and wiping the smudges of paint and lipstick off of Batsy's chin. The motion was almost—tender—and both of them paused, simultaneously reflecting on just how *Twilight Zone* this night had become.

Joker licked at his scars, looking a bit uncertain, and began, "Ya know, Bats, I, uh—"

But whatever he had been about to say was interrupted by a sudden shout from the other room.

"Hey Puddin', I got a surprise for ya!" Harley sing-songed, sounding supremely pleased with herself.

Joker grimaced, abandoned whatever he had been about to say, and instead finished his sentence with "—I'm really getting tired of her."

Batman smirked—for once they could actually agree on something.

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**A/N:** If you knew who Brock Samson is, you're awesome :D If you didn't get that reference, go watch *The Venture Brothers,* because it's seriously a hilarious show :)

As always, reviews are very much appreciated! XD
Chapter Five: Harley's Surprise

Batman's mind was still reeling from the earth-shattering kiss, and he was caught between wanting to pretend it never happened and wanting to do it again as soon as possible; it was like a drug wearing off, only he couldn't seem to decide whether he wanted to sober up or take another hit.

"Didja hear me, Mistah J?" Harley called from the other room, "I said I got a surprise for ya!"

Harley's announcement pierced Batman's thoughts as well as his eardrums, snapping him fully back to reality. Sober it is, then.

He realized he was smiling a little at something Joker had said, and promptly forced himself to stop, putting on a poker face instead.

*The goddamn Batman doesn't SMILE!* his mind yelled at him absurdly, *especially not at the goddamn Joker! And the goddamn Batman definitely doesn't kiss the goddamn Joker...and even if he does kiss the goddamn Joker, he definitely doesn't enjoy it, or want to do it again, EVER, goddamn it!*

His thoughts raced recklessly on, gaining momentum now that a mental dam had apparently broken, unleashing certain things he had tried to repress but was now finally beginning to acknowledge—by way of denial, of course.

*Batman is not attracted to men—he's as straight as a... really straight thing—and he's especially not attracted to the Joker. Batman does NOT get hard sometimes while fighting Joker, does NOT have occasional pornographic dreams about the Joker, and has definitely never had images of Joker pop up in his mind whilst assfucking some random female model in the penthouse. And Batman was most definitely NOT halfway considering throwing Harley out the window himself and fucking Joker senseless right then and there!*

But after a few seconds of imagining all the things that he vehemently did *not* want to do, he realized that a certain appendage of his was calling bullshit and straining against the armor of the Batsuit.

*Oh.*

*Shit.*

He...*did* want this?

*No. No, no, nonononoNO!*

Dismay turned into panic as his denial kicked into overdrive and scrambled for another explanation with its dying breath. *No, I don't want this, because this isn't happening—this is a dream, a nightmare, a hallucination, the seventh circle of Hell—but whatever it is, it's NOT HAPPENING.*
But Batman's back was still pressed up against the wall, and Joker was still right there in his face, and he could hear Harley's excited footsteps skipping closer to the door, and the undeniable reality of the situation suddenly became claustrophobic. He couldn't deal with it anymore; he had to get out of there.

Joker had also been dazed by their liplock, although without any hetero-freak-outs or long mental rants that involved referring to oneself in the third person, and he noticed a little too late that Batsy looked ready to lose it in the un-fun way. That would be completely unacceptable—sure, Joker wanted Batsy to be a little off-guard tonight, but there's a huge difference between fashionably ripping one's jeans and carelessly shredding them to pieces—but that was a horrible metaphor, because Joker would much rather there be no pants involved at all when it came to him and Batsy.

Batman felt like he was going to start hyperventilating any second now, and he tried to calm down using one of the many meditative breathing techniques in his repertoire; it helped a little, but he still needed to get the hell out of there before he did something crazy, like acting out one of those steamy dreams he'd been trying so hard to forget about.

His eyes darted around and landed on the batarang still stuck in the wall above the headboard, where Joker had thrown it earlier. Stuck. Like Batman was stuck in this insane extortion scheme. Not a helpful thought.

He looked towards the door, but that was no good, because Harley would be coming through it any second now, which left the half-busted window as the quickest escape.

Joker noticed Batman's eyes flicking towards the exits and muttered, "Oh no you don't." He pushed Batman back against the wall, pressing against him in an attempt to hold him there. Batman was about to throw him off when Joker brought his knee up and carefully but insistently rubbed it against Batman's groin—which normally would've had no effect whatsoever through the armor of the Batsuit, but it was impossible to ignore the delicious pressure against the preexisting hard-on Batman had been trying to will away. Batman sucked in an involuntary gasp at the sensation as Joker leaned forward and whispered, "I'm not finished with you yet."

Joker's gaze flicked down from Batman's eyes to his still-parted lips and he started to lean in again. Batman suddenly realized just how close the footsteps from the other room had gotten, and he panicked at the thought of anyone seeing him and his worst enemy like this—Batman's superpower was denial, and even after everything that had happened tonight, he could still probably manage to convince himself it had never happened if he really put his mind to it, and as for Joker, well, if Joker ever mentioned this night in a future encounter Batman could always write it off as nonsensical rambling; if someone else actually saw this, though—someone outside of their two-man universe—all hope of Batman even pretending to repress it would be lost. Batman panicked and shoved Joker back to put some distance between them, then punched him in the jaw for good measure, sending him sprawling to the floor just as Harley appeared in the doorway.

Harley had been grinning and carrying something furry, preparing to shout surprise, but the sight of Batman punching her Puddin' for no apparent reason wiped the smile right off of her face. "Mistah J!" she yelled, dropping the object and rushing to his side. "Are you okay, Puddin?"

Batman took the opportunity to try again to will away his erection while Joker and Harley were distracted. He wiped his mouth again, too, just in case there were any lingering smudges of makeup.

"Would you get off of me?" Joker demanded, pushing Harley's hands away when she tried to check him over for injuries and help him up. He got to his feet by himself, scolding her proffered assistance and muttering, "I'm fine, quit—" he trailed off and stared at her for a few seconds, then
demanded, "What are you wearing?"

"Oh, do ya like it?" Harley asked, standing up straight and doing a little twirl to show off her new look. "Sexy, huh, Mistah J?"

She had traded the see-through negligee for an ultra-skimpy cop costume that looked like it had been stolen from the set of some low-budget cliché porno; it consisted of a tiny navy blue pleated skirt, a pair of black, strappy, ridiculously high heels, a police hat perched on top of her usual red and black jester's cap, and a short-sleeved blue button-up shirt with the top three buttons ignored in order to showcase her breasts, which were jammed into a lacy purple ultra push-up bra. A fake badge was pinned to the shirt, and she wore a black leather gun belt—complete with a lube-filled water pistol in the holster, a set of furry handcuffs, and an absurdly long black dildo designed to look like a nightstick.

Batman and Joker stared at her in disbelief, exchanged a brief glance, then looked back at Harley's latest fashion disaster.

"Wanna cop a feel?" Harley stage-whispered to Joker, giving him a sultry look.

Joker stared at her for a few seconds, decided not to waste his breath informing her that that pun was an insult to the intelligence of anyone over the age of six, then said, "Out of everything you could've picked—what made you think either of us would be remotely turned on by that?" he gestured at her porno-cop getup.

Privately, Batman had to agree—it was hard to think of cops as sexy when they were constantly trying to shoot and capture him. But on the bright side, his erection was gone now.

Harley's face fell. "But—but the nightstick vibrates! See?" she said, removing it from the belt and turning it on. "And it plays music!" She pressed a different button and it started playing the theme to Cops.

BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS—WHATCHA GONNA DO? WHATCHA GONNA DO WHEN THEY COME FOR YOU—BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS

"Do ya know what I wanna do with this?" she asked playfully.

"I know I want to beat you to death with it," Joker snapped. "Give me that thing!" He grabbed it out of her hand and took a swing at her with it, but she back-flipped out of the way, giggling, mistakenly under the impression that he was kidding. But rather than chase her around with it like they were in some x-rated Three Stooges skit, Joker just threw the obnoxious vibrator out the window, not even bothering to switch it off first. "Was this idiocy supposed to be our surprise?" Joker demanded.

"Only part of it, Mistah J," she said, returning to his side and looking like a kicked dog eager to win back his approval, "the rest of the surprise is—" she leaned in and whispered something in Joker's ear, using her most seductive voice.

Joker rolled his eyes and said, "Well it's not a surprise now."

A slow smile spread across Harley's lips, and, unfazed, she brought a hand to her mouth in a mock Did I Say That Out Loud manner. "Oops." Surely giving Mistah J a little time to anticipate what was coming would heighten his enjoyment… at least, that's what Harley thought as she gave him her best bedroom eyes.

"And it's not even very original," Joker continued, not at all impressed. "I mean, seriously, Harley,
you used to be entertaining, but lately you've been about as much fun as anal seepage."

As usual, Harley's selective hearing blocked out the insult and reinterpreted Joker's words much too literally. Her eyes went wide, and she furtively replied, "Uh, Mistah J, if you're having problems with that, I think I got some tampons you could try—" Joker stared at her in disbelief; Batman tried very hard not to choke on his suppressed laughter; Harley rambled on obliviously, "I can go get 'em if you wanna try it—"

"I don't want your fucking tampons!" Joker shouted, "It was a figure of speech!"

"Alright, alright," Harley said, holding her hands up in a pacifying gesture and stepping back towards the doorway. "Jeez, I was just tryin' to be helpful."

Joker tried for a moment to glare a hole through her, then glanced at Batman and muttered, "I don't have anal seepage."

*I will NOT laugh*, Batman commanded himself, mashing his lips together in a firm line and trying to keep a straight face. *I will not laugh, I will not laugh, I will not la-ha ha ha ha—*

Batman clamped a hand over his mouth, but a few chuckles escaped anyway. Joker watched him, and some of his irritation dissolved at the sight of the trying-not-to-laugh expression on Batsy's face. He still felt like stabbing Harley though, his plans be damned.

Harley reached down and picked up the furry object she'd dropped a minute ago, brushing off some dust and checking it for damage.

"What is that?" Batman asked after regaining his composure.

"A suicide bomb, if we're lucky," Joker muttered, crossing his arms and licking at his scars.

It looked like a faceless alien Furby; it was covered in blue fur, and was about a foot tall, although half of its height was made up of its bendable eyestalks. The other half was a fat, pear-shaped body with enormous feet and tiny little t-rex arms.

"It's an iPals…speaker…thing," Harley said. "See?" She pointed to a kangaroo-esque pouch on the thing's body, and indeed, there was an iPod Touch tucked inside. "It has speakers for eyes."

"Did you steal that from a five year old?" Batman asked.

"Of course not!" Harley snapped, sounding offended. "She was at least twelve, and a total bitch anyway. Anyway, that was like two whole days ago, I'm sure her rich daddy already bought her a new one."

Batman chose not to comment, but glowered at her disapprovingly.

Harley fiddled with the iPod for a moment, looking for the right song. When she found it, she set the…thing down on the floor by the doorway and said, "Okay—ready, Mistah J?"

"Knock yourself out."

Harley grinned, knelt down to push a button on the iPod, then quickly scampered out of the room, staying just outside the doorway.

"What is she doing?" Batman asked warily.

"You'll see," Joker said, not looking terribly excited. He sat down on the edge of the bed and
motioned for Batman to sit down beside him. "But if she comes back with tampons, I'm gonna bludgeon her with that fuckin' Furby."

Batman smirked and sat down on the bed by Joker. But his smirk turned into a frown as something occurred to him; Joker's obvious lack of enthusiasm for Harley's surprise and his apparent complete lack of attraction to her as anything other than a pawn in his schemes made Batman suddenly realize that his shock over the night's events had prevented him from asking the most obvious question of all—

"Why is she even here?" he muttered into Joker's ear, taking care to speak softly so Harley wouldn't overhear. It seemed clear now to Batman that Joker only had eyes for him, and it would've made a lot more sense for Harley to be guarding the kids instead of playing the third wheel.

"I have my reasons," Joker muttered back, though he looked pleased (and a little relieved) that it had finally occurred to Batsy to ask.

"Which are?"

"Not your concern."

"Joker—"

"Shhh!" he hissed, smiling a little.

"Don't start that again, I asked you a question."

"And I evaded it. Try to keep up, darling."

They both quieted when Harley blindly reached an arm back into the room and grabbed the Furby monster—she had forgotten to turn up the volume when she hit play the first time. She fixed her mistake, hoping Mistah J hadn't noticed, then hit play again and set it back on the floor.

"Now what is she—" Batman started, but he was interrupted by a sudden eruption of pop music from the iPals speaker.

Joker groaned, recognizing the song instantly—ever since the damn thing came out, Harley had been calling it Their Song and singing it to him nonstop at the most inappropriate of moments, like while he was trying to record a new video threat for Gotham, or while he was on the toilet. She'd played it and sang it to him so many times that he had the damn thing memorized against his will, and it was really getting on his last nerve.

Harley reappeared in the doorway and strutted into the room, crossing one high-heeled foot in front of the other to the beat. She sashayed to the center of the room, then stopped at the exact moment that there was a pause in the music, grabbing the police hat off her head and whipping it at Batman's face like a Frisbee. He caught it easily, and gave her a sarcastic look that silently said, really?

Harley ignored him—she didn't want him there, and she certainly wasn't going to acknowledge the bat-erloper who was intruding on her and Mistah J's special night. Sure, she'd been with plenty of other guys, but Mistah J was The One, and she'd be damned if she was going to let Batface ruin their first time together. She'd show 'em both who Mistah J really belonged with.

The beat started back up and the lyrics blasted out of the furry speaker as Harley started gyrating her hips and running her hands over herself in a manner that was probably supposed to be sexy.
“HEY! OVER THERE!”—the song blared, and Harley pointed to Joker—“PLEASE FORGIVE ME, IF I’M COMIN’ ON TOO STRONG—”

If? Joker thought sarcastically; the line was accompanied by Harley licking her lips and running her fingertips up her thigh, teasingly lifting her skirt a few inches.

Batman stared—she was…stripping? Or at least she was trying to—the song was too fast for that, and her attempts to keep up with the beat ended up looking more seizure-ish than sexy.)

HATE TO STARE, BUT YOU’RE WINNING, AND THEY’RE PLAYIN’ MY FAVORITE SONG!

Still dancing, Harley helpfully pointed to the creepy alien-Furby speaker, which was indeed playing it, and continued to do so, much to Joker’s annoyance. Where was a hand-grenade when you really needed one?

SO COME HERE, LITTLE CLOSER—Harley danced closer to Joker, completely ignoring Batman's presence—WANNA WHISPER IN YOUR EAR—Harley dipped her face down next to Joker's, and then licked his ear.

Batman found the action inexplicably offensive, and narrowed his eyes at Harley, who was still pretending he didn't exist.

"Harley! Gross," Joker said, wiping his ear off.

She assumed he was just good-naturedly teasing her, so she smiled and kept dancing.

MAKE IT CLEAR—LITTLE QUESTION—WANNA KNOW JUST HOW YOU FEEL—

No, you really don’t, Joker thought to himself, his hand aching for a knife. Or a chainsaw. Or a flamethrower—he wasn't picky.

Harley spun around, her tiny pleated skirt briefly flying up as she did, then struck a pose for the chorus, planting her legs wide apart and leaning with her weight on the left leg. She thrust her left fist straight up into the air, and mimed holding a microphone with her right, singing loudly and dramatically into it.

"IF I SAID MY HEART WAS BEATING LOUD, IF WE COULD ESCAPE THE CROWD—SOMEHOW—" she glared over at Batman on the word "crowd," and at every "if" she swished her hips and used her fake-microphone hand to undo a button on her shirt. "IF I SAID I WANT YOUR BODY NOW, WOULD YOU HOLD IT AGAINST ME?" With her shirt hanging halfway open now, Harley twirled over to where Joker sat on the bed and ground her hips uncomfortably close to his face.

"CAUSE YOU. FEEL. LIKE. PARADISE—AND I NEED A VACATION TONIGHT—" Harley did a little hula dance movement, then whirled around waving her arms in slow, dramatic arcing motions— "SO IF I SAID I WANT YOUR BODY NOW, WOULD YOU HOLD IT AGAINST ME?"

She held her own body against Joker, grinding her miniskirt-clad ass against him. Joker did not appreciate her apparent attempt to use him as toilet paper, and he promptly shoved her away.

After hearing this song against his will about a million times, Joker knew that there was approximately a seven-second pause until the next verse would start, which was more than enough time to decide that he'd had more than enough of Harley stealing the show and not even doing a very good job at it. Batsy wasn't looking too happy either—and that wouldn't do at all—so when
Harley danced back towards the edge of the bed where the two arch-nemeses were perched, Joker stuck out his foot and tripped her.

She fell to the floor with a surprised yelp.

What the—? Batman thought, but he didn't get any further than that, because Joker promptly pounced on him and straddled his lap, planting his knees on the bed on either side of Batman's legs.

"What are you d—?"

Joker cut him off, singing along to the song.

"HEY! YOU MIGHT THINK—THAT I'M CRAZY—" Joker rolled his eyes—why would anyone think that?— "BUT YOU KNOW I'M JUST YOUR TYPE—" Joker leaned in close, his face only a breath away from Batman's, and licked his own lips while roaming his hands up Batman's chest armor to his shoulders, swaying his hips in a slower rhythm deliberately incongruous with the beat—it was a horrible song to try to strip to, he didn't know what Harley had been thinking. "I MIGHT BE, LITTLE HAZY—" Joker pronounced it as the song did, mangling the word into something like heys-eye, and making sarcastic jazz hands as he did, "BUT YOU JUST CAN NOT DENY—"

Wanna bet? Batman thought. But his eyes were glued to the tantalizing man in his lap.

"THERE'S A SPARK, IN BETWEEN US, WHEN WE'RE FIGHTING ALL NIGHT LONG—"

Joker started taking liberties with the insidious lyrics, rewriting them to apply to him and Batsy. "I WANT MORE," Joker's hands left Batman's shoulders and travelled lower, straight down his chest and abs, and came to rest on the topmost part of his thighs, "WANNA SEE IT," Joker flicked a quick suggestive glance down at Batman's groin before meeting his eyes again and smirking. "SO I'M ASKING YOU TONIGHT," he took a deep breath and prepared for the finale.

"IF I SAID MY HARD-ON'S THROBBING LOUD—IF WE COULD ESCAPE THE COPSOMEHOW," Joker nodded towards Harley in her budget-porn getup, who was staring incredulously at the two of them from the floor, "IF I SAID I WANT YOUR BAT-COCK NOW—WOULD YOU HOLD IT AGAINST ME?" Joker's hands crept higher up Batman's thighs towards his groin, but Batman grabbed and stilled them there awkwardly. "CAUSE YOU FEEL LIKE. YOU'VE GOT NINE—INCHES NEEDING ATTENTION TONIGHT!" Joker slipped his hands free and moved them back to Batman's shoulders, pressing himself closer, his chest against Batman's, and his mouth right next to where Batman's ear was hidden beneath the mask; Batman wasn't sure what to do with his hands, so he let them rest lightly on Joker's hips. Joker smiled a little and sang, "SO IF I SAID I WANT YOUR BAT-COCK NOW—WOULD YOU SHOVE IT UP IN ME?"

Joker leaned back just far enough for his half-amused stare to meet and lock with Batman's half-defiant one—the other half of each expression was lust, and there was nothing halfway about it.

The song's beat dropped and slowed into a sexier, more strip-appropriate segment, but the self-appointed stripper was frozen on the floor with a horror-struck stare fixed on her very distracted audience.

What. The. FUCK?

She tore her eyes away from the pair just long enough to grab the Furby monster and kill the music, hoping that the abrupt silence would snap them out of it and make them stop doing…whatever the hell it was that they were doing. No such luck. Harley cleared her throat with a very loud and
They ignored her and kept staring at each other like they were both pretending to have heat-vision powers, and they were having a contest to see who could set the other on fire first. Harley didn't like it one bit—she didn't understand why she was left out of this ring of fire, a virtual icicle for all the attention she was getting.

Well THIS oughtta heat things up, she thought, unbuttoning the rest of her shirt and adopting a woe-is-me southern belle voice as she cried, "Oh no! Wardrobe malfunction!" She struck a pose, trying to look sexy and disheveled, and waited for the two men to give themselves whiplash trying to catch a glimpse of her 'naughty parts'...which never happened, because the pair remained apparently oblivious to anything except each other. Of course, it was kind of impossible to really have a wardrobe malfunction while stripping, since it was just going to come off anyway—but still, Harley was insulted that they didn't even pretend to care.

"Mistah Ja-aaaay!" she finally whined, taking off one of her stilettos and petulantly tossing it at him—not hard enough to do any damage, just enough to get his attention. The shoe thumped him in the back and fell harmlessly to the floor.

Joker finally broke the staring contest, rolling his eyes with an irritated sigh. He leaned forward, and for one crazy, panicked second Batman thought Joker was going to kiss him again, right there in front of Harley—but Joker only leaned his forehead against Batman's for a split-second before pulling back and twisting around so he was sideways in Batsy's lap instead of facing him. Now that he could do so without breaking his neck, Joker glared at Harley and said, "Is there a problem?"

"Why—?" she paused, near tears, as she realized that she didn't know how to end the question. *Why are you ignoring me? Why are you sitting in your archenemy's lap like he's a goddamn throne or something? Why do you keep staring at Bat-brain like that? Why did you even bring him here? Why are you acting like you don't love me anymore?*

But then she saw the frustrated, longsuffering look on Joker's face as he gazed at her from Batman's lap, and she realized...he was doing it...for her! He was enduring the nauseating presence of his archenemy, and even pretending to be attracted to him for her! It was a test—a test of her loyalty, her creativity, her determination, and her willingness to fight for him. Of course he was never going to just give her what she so desperately wanted—he was going to make her earn it. That was it! She just had to try harder.

"Oh, Mistah Jaaaaay! I get it!" Harley squealed, and with her newfound understanding of Mistah J's motives, she grabbed the iPals thingamajig and skipped off into the other room, determined to crank it up a notch and earn his affections with an even better song and dance—figuratively and literally.

Joker turned to Batman and said, "She doesn't get it." Joker reluctantly left Batman's lap and picked up Harley's abandoned stiletto and called, "You forgot your shoe!" He hurled it through the doorway after her, and there was a squeal of pain from the other room.

"I'm okay," Harley called.

"Too bad," Joker muttered; she had actually thrown her fucking shoe at him—she was lucky to still have the use of her legs.

"You don't have to be so cruel to her," Batman said, feeling a little sorry for her despite himself. "She's obviously devoted to you, for some crazy reason."
Joker raised an eyebrow. "Sympathizing, are we? Ohhhh, right—you know what it's like to be blindly obsessed with somebody who'll never be what you want them to be." Batman glared, silently warning him not to go any further—but of course, as always, Joker did. "What was her name?" he continued, "Ruby? Rudolph? Oh yeah, Ra—"

Batman was off the bed in an instant; he closed the distance between them and shoved Joker roughly against the wall. "You don't get to talk about her," he growled.

"Then let's talk about you," Joker said. "Despite your, uh—" he rubbed the spot on his jaw where Batman had punched him earlier, "—momentary relapse, you seem a lot more enthusiastic about our little deal than you let on at first."

Maybe so, but Batman would never admit it, and he wanted to wipe that arrogant little smirk off of Joker's face, so he growled, "I'm only here because I have to be."

"No, nononono—you don't. You don't have to do anything—we've been over this, darling. You have a choice—either spend a night of debauchery with your bestest enemy, or don't. If I choose to kill a bunch of kids because you refuse, well, that's on me, not you. That wouldn't be breaking your precious rule."

"That's bullshit and you know it."

Joker stared at him for a moment, then licked his scars and said, "You wanna know what I think?"

"Not really."

"I think that somewhere, deep inside, underneath all of that repression, you want this as much as I do...You're not here for the kids, you're here for me."

"I'm here to stop you," Batman growled.

"Oh, is that what the teenagers are calling it these days?" Joker said suggestively.

Batman ignored him. "You killed Rachel."

Joker rolled his eyes—it always came back to Rachel. Rachel, Rachel, Rachel. "Roasty, toasty Rachel," Joker giggled a little and Batman furiously raised a fist. "Nonono, wait—" Joker held up his palm, and to both their surprise, Batman did, leaving his fist hovering half-cocked in the air between them. Joker licked his scars and continued, "Alright, you're still sore about her, I can see that—but come on, Bats, did you really want to waste your life chasin' after somebody who's never gonna feel the way you want 'em to? I mean, look at Harley—it's pathetic."

Unimpressed with this line of reasoning, Batman drew his fist back again, thinking, he doesn't know shit—she was going to wait for me.

Joker saw Batman preparing to punch him and blurted, "She was gonna marry Dent."


Joker shook his head. "I've never lied to you—I might've, uh, told the truth backwards at times, but I never lied."

Batman remained silent, and Joker's eyes flicked up to meet his stare.

It sounded like post-modern bullshit to Batman until he thought about it for a second—the Joker
had given the right addresses in the interrogation room, he just switched them around—and despite knowing that Joker's lying was practically pathological to the world-at-large, Batman couldn't think of any instance when Joker had outright lied to him. It was astounding, and disturbing, and didn't bear further thought, because Batman sensed that if he looked too far beneath the surface of it, he wouldn't like whatever it meant.

"She was really going to marry him?" he finally asked.

"Yup."

"How do you kn—"

"I, uh, had a third phone on their little party-line, off-location, and it recorded their whole sappy little conversation."

Batman stared blankly at the wall above Joker's shoulder while his thoughts ran in circles—she said she would wait for me, she said she would wait, she said she would...she... betrayed me.

"And then what were you gonna do? Hmmm? Crash through the church window and growl 'I object'? Stalk them for the rest of your life? Put a burning bag of guano on their porch every night and ring the doorbell?"

Batman barely heard the Joker over the sounds of his own delusions crashing down around him—he had held Rachel on a pedestal, had believed that she was his one last chance for a normal life. But she was never mine—I never HAD any chance of having a normal life. And now he was left without even the ability to believe he could've had a normal life—he was left without Rachel, without the possibility of normality, without any end in sight to his duty as Batman—so what did that leave him with?

I'm left with...

His eyes and attention returned to the Joker.

...this.

"She was a distraction, Batsy. So the way I see it," Joker drawled, "I did you a favor."

They stared at each other in silence.

An hour ago, Batman would've knocked the Joker unconscious for daring to say that—now, he just stared at the man in front of him as he tried to piece his own thoughts back together. He lowered his fist and rested his hand on Joker's shoulder; it was an unconscious action; there was simply nowhere else for it.

After a few seconds under Batman's silent and eerily calm gaze, Joker said, "What? Is there something in my teeth?"

"Did you mean it?" Batman finally inquired, his eyes locked intently on Joker's.

"Mean what?" Joker asked uneasily; Batsy's voice had a lot less rawr than usual, and a little bit of something that stank vaguely of vulnerability—and that, coming from Batsy, was just wrong.

"You said that we would do this forever—did you mean it?"

You damned-well better mean it—you're all I have left now.
For a long moment, Joker just stared back at him.

Finally, he answered, "I've never lied to you, Bats."

Batman continued to stare at him, his mind going about a million miles an hour. It felt like a missing puzzle piece had finally clicked into place, and he started slowly nodding his head, never breaking eye contact with Joker. He could do this, if it meant that he wouldn't be alone. He was still sane enough to consider the idea of any kind of normal relationship as ludicrous, but as long as Joker would be there, to fight, to fuck, to keep his purpose from fading into irrelevancy… then Batman could do this without completely hating himself. And there were still those hostages to save, of course.

"Okay," Batman said quietly.

And that was all it took for the inches between them to disappear. The first kiss had felt like a bomb going off; the second felt more like a promise, especially since it was Batman who initiated it this time. His lips captured Joker's, but slower than before, more deliberately; his tongue sought Joker's, meeting it with forceful but tortuously slow motions. One of Batman's hands found its way into Joker's hair, the other trailed down towards the waistband of his pants; Joker's left hand gripped the back of Batman's neck to pull him closer, and the right hand migrated south to rest on Batsy's armored ass. Joker quickened the kiss, and had the presence of mind not to make any erection jokes this time. He felt Batman let his guard down a little, and took the opportunity to reverse their positions, pressing Batman against the wall instead.

Batman didn't seem to mind the reversal. He growled a little, low in his throat, and nipped at Joker's bottom lip with his teeth.

"Mmmmm," Joker moaned, biting Batman's lip just a little bit harder in response.

Batman's hands slid to Joker's chest, and without a thought he grabbed the lapels of the trench coat, pulling it off Joker's shoulders, wanting it gone—there were too many layers between them. Joker chuckled a little, and disentangled his arms from the jacket's sleeves, letting it fall to the floor. Joker's heart was pounding like a jackhammer, and he'd bet that he could feel Batsy's doing the same, if all that pesky armor wasn't in the way.

But before either man could attempt to disrobe further, they were interrupted by something that sounded like the breathless hiccup of a very large mouse.

Batman and Joker slowly unglued their lips from each other, and after sharing an uneasy look they turned to investigate the source of the disturbing noise.

Oh, fuck.

Harley stood in the doorway, still in full porno-cop regalia, her face frozen in a comical expression of pure horror. Her eyes were bugged as wide as humanly possible, and her jaw was dropped, her mouth hanging open in what might've been a silent scream. She had a white-knuckled death grip on the eyestalk of the iPals monster, and even from across the room it was clear that she was shaking slightly, though it looked like she had forgotten how to breathe.

*Mistah J was... She couldn't even make herself think the word for the atrocity she had just witnessed, and she couldn't tear her eyes away from the smears of her Puddin's makeup all over Batbrain. Those smudges of red and white around Batman's mouth seemed to be laughing at her, taunting her with what she'd never had.*
He's never kissed ME like that, Harley mentally whined. He's never kissed me AT ALL.

Joker watched her with amusement—irritated though he was at being interrupted yet again, this was… interesting. He felt Batman tense against him, and turned his head to find a deer-in-the-headlights expression on the Dark Knight's face...his makeup-smeared face, which Joker neglected to mention this time; he kind of liked the look of his colors on Batsy.

She saw, Batman thought irrationally, frozen to the spot, somebody saw and now it's real.

Joker rolled his eyes at the both of them, then leaned forward and gave Batman another quick yet very insistent kiss. Batman blinked, surprised, but he kissed back briefly, still disturbed by the fact that they'd been seen, but not disturbed enough to say no to the newfound pleasure of that scarred mouth—especially since there would be no denying it and no going back now. Joker pulled away and met Batman's eyes, his amused expression telling the vigilante snap out of it. Then he looked towards Harley, licking his lips to savor the taste of his bat, and giving her a pointed look that said yes, that REALLY just happened.

Joker chuckled a little, and said aloud, "Surprise!"

Harley looked even more horrified than before. She was even starting to turn a little blue, holding her breath in an attempt to fight down the vomit that was threatening to spew out Exorcist-style at the sight of her Puddin' doing...THAT...with Batface. Twice.

Joker rolled his eyes and said, "Breathe, Harley."

It took her a few tries, but after heaving a few empty gasps like a suffocating fish, she managed to suck in a breath. And another, and another and another, but the air made her want to throw up. So did the image that was now permanently seared into her brain; it kept popping up like a whack-a-mole, making her wish she had a sledgehammer so she could bash her own brains in just to make it stop—or better yet, so she could bash Batman's brains in.

She tried to speak, but all that came out was another ridiculous squeaking sound. She tried a few more times, but only managed a tiny squeak each time.

Joker glanced at Batman and muttered, "I think we broke her."

Harley was in shock. When she'd walked in on them, she'd been too horrified to even think. Or move. Or breathe. Her mind had ground to an abrupt halt, and she could do nothing but wait for it to be over. She was too traumatized to look away, but this was no mere car wreck unfolding, this was like watching a flaming jumbo jet smashing into an elementary school. Twice, because he'd done it again. He'd looked right at her and done it again.

But the look he'd given her was nothing compared to the one she saw on his face when he looked at Batman; she recognized it easily enough—it was the same one she wore whenever she looked at Mistah J. His flippancy towards her was just a flesh wound, she was used to it—but that look on his face when he looked at Batman, that was a rusty machete straight through her heart.

After an infinity of milliseconds, Harley's mind latched on to the only lifeboat available to her fast-sinking sanity—her one true delusion that she and Mistah J unconditionally belonged together, and suddenly it all made sense to her—why Joker had never slept with her or even kissed her, why he ignored her advances in favor of schemes that always boiled down to Batman, why he didn't 'just shoot him'—it wasn't killing Batman that Mistah J was obsessed with, it was Batman himself. Batman had poisoned his mind like a drug; it was an addiction that Mistah J had no control over, and even though Harley knew he undoubtedly wanted to quit and be with her forever, Batman—
just by existing—would never let him. *Batman's ALWAYS been the problem*, she thought furiously, *he's always been what makes Mistah J do all this crazy stuff...it's not Mistah J's fault... but we can never be together while Batman's around to get in the way...*

She knew what she had to do.

She had to break Mistah J's addiction by removing the drug—permanently.

She should've just finished Batbrain once and for all when she'd had him dangling over a tank of piranhas—she shouldn't have let her need for Mistah J's approval override her duty to do what was best for him. He didn't realize how poisonous his obsession with Batman was, but *she* did, and it was up to her to save him from his own twisted addictions. He would hate her at first, but someday he would understand, and with Batman gone, Mistah J would realize how much he needed her—and *then* they could finally be happy together, forever.

But first, she had a certain overgrown flying rodent to exterminate.

Harley's love was blind, and so was her hatred, more or less, because when she looked at Batman all she could see were those goddamn makeup smears that made her want to stick Batman's face in a vat of acid until every single microscopic trace of Mistah J was burned off of his self-righteous undeserving skin—*whoa there Harls, calm down*, she told herself, *breathe, focus, wipe the crazy off your face...*

She tried to force a smile onto her face to allay any suspicion as she took a few steps forward, using every ounce of her self-control to move slowly, casually, projecting forth the picture of innocence. But she wasn't as convincing as she thought, because what Batman and Joker saw as she lurched towards them was a woman on the edge of insanity with a murderous gleam in her eyes and her teeth bared in a grimace; one of her eyes was twitching, and she was gripping the eyestalk of the alien Furby so hard that her hand shook. She was ready to snap, and she was aimed right at Batman.

Batman saw the look in her eyes and he knew there would be no defusing this, not after what she just saw. He didn't want to hurt her, but she had murder in her eyes and a score to settle, and the chances of a peaceful resolution were less than zero.

"Let me handle this," Joker muttered to Batman, stepping in front of him to block Harley's progress. "Harley, dearest, just what do you think you're—*oof!*"

_Forgive me, Mistah J_, Harley thought as she kicked Joker right between the legs and shoved him sideways onto the bed, _I'm doing this for you...for US._

*If I get hit in the balls ONE more time*, Joker thought, _somebody's gonna die._

Batman spared a quick glance as Joker fell onto the bed looking pained and pissed off but amused nonetheless—neither of them had seen _that_ coming.

Batman returned his attention to Harley, analyzing the situation—he had the obvious advantage of strength, but Harley was _fast_, and she had the reckless self-disregard born of insanity, which made her dangerous.

Harley watched Batman watching her, her eyes fixed once again on those goddamn red and white makeup smears that made her want to claw Batman's face open with her fingernails and peel his skin off until the only red and white left on his body came from his blood and his shattered fucking skull. She was going to make sure he never touched her Puddin' again.
Joker pulled himself up into a sitting position, still sore but smirking a little, wanting to watch how this played out. Harley would be trying to do as much damage as possible, while Batsy would be trying to disarm her with as little damage as possible—it would be either funny or painful to watch, but either way, Joker didn't want to miss it. All he needed was some popcorn to snack on.

Harley charged forward and raised the iPals speaker, preparing to swing it as hard as she could at Batman's head.

Batman blocked it with his forearm, and the ridiculous thing dropped to the floor; the jolt made the iPod Touch shuffle to a random song, skip half of it, and blare out something that sounded like Care Bears having sex.

Batman grabbed Harley's wrist—she landed a side kick to his ribs, but it had little effect through the armor—and Batman twisted her arm around behind her back, pinning her to the wall and keeping her in a hold that would break her arm if she struggled. Mind your surroundings—he had learned that from Ra's al Ghul; you can subdue a person by controlling just one fourth of their body—he had learned that from Chuck Norris… that, and how to slam a revolving door.

"There you go Batsy, now spank her!" Joker called through his laughter.

But Harley wasn't giving up that easily—she slammed her head backwards, bashing Batman's face as hard as she could. The mask took most of the blow, but a tiny crunch told him that something inside the mask had been damaged; he didn't have time to wonder what it was, though. He took an instinctive step backwards, keeping Harley's arm pinned but unfortunately giving her more room to maneuver. Harley made a noise somewhere between a growl and a shriek, then lifted her leg and slammed her foot backwards into Batman's knee. That hurt, even through the armor, and in response, Batman shoved her forward until her legs were trapped between the side of the bed and his own legs. One of his hands was busy keeping Harley's arm under control, and the other reached for the set of handcuffs he kept in his utility belt.

Watching from the bed, Joker started a slow, sarcastic clap—whether at Harley for failing at the lamest assassination attempt in the history of history, or at Batman for taking so long to subdue her, it was unclear.

Harley was furious. She stared at Mistah J with tears in her eyes—she had failed him. She had failed to destroy the object of his addiction, and now they would never be together… unless… maybe there was still a way she could destroy Batman in Mistah J's eyes without killing him…

Here goes everything, she thought.

Batman thought it was over with, but before he could finish cuffing her, Harley's free hand shot up, reaching blindly behind her and grasping one of the pointy ears of Batman's mask. Joker froze in mid-clap; Batman abandoned the handcuffs he was reaching for, but it was too late to stop her.

Harley gripped the ear and gave an almighty tug, yanking the mask off and triumphantly throwing it on the bed in front of Joker.

Now he'll see, Harley thought desperately, under that stupid mask, Batman's just a man, not a hero, not a symbol. He's nothing.

Harley stared anxiously at Joker, searching for any sign of approval in his eyes. With her back pinned against Batman she couldn't have looked at his face even if she wanted to, which she didn't. She didn't care. All she cared about was breaking his hold over Mistah J.
Batman stared in horror at the empty cowl lying on the bed. So did Joker.

At the same instant, their eyes flicked up to stare at each other instead.

Joker didn't want to look, but he had to. He couldn't not look. And what he saw was... surprisingly funny—Bruce Wayne, billionaire and playboy extraordinaire, with a line of black kohl under his eyes and smudges of Joker's own lipstick and greasepaint smeared all over his mouth, his hair thoroughly mussed, and a mortified expression on his face like someone had just walked in on him fucking a goat.

Somewhere in the back of his mind, Joker was seeing in hindsight every little clue that he had somehow failed to put together—and had, in fact, stopped trying to put together after he'd decided long ago that it was more fun not knowing who was under the mask. In the front of his mind, however, he wasn't seeing anything except red, because—how. Fucking. DARE. She?

Joker tore his eyes away from Ba—from Bruce—and turned his gaze instead on the henchwhore who had dared to de-mask his Bat. HIS Bat.

"See, Mistah J? He's just a guy in a bat suit—I'm the one who loves you. I'll always love you. So now you can stop this nonsense with Batman and we can be together forever—right, Mistah J?"

Harley pleaded.

Fuck the plan, Joker thought, no goddamn reacharound.

He glared at her, his lips slowly curling up into a grin as he started to chuckle.

Harley took this as a good sign and beamed. "I knew you'd understand, Mistah J!"

Joker just laughed harder. He was still laughing when he reached back and wrenched the gleaming batarang out of the wall above the headboard. He was laughing harder still when he pressed its sharp edge against Harley's bare throat, his other hand grabbing the back of her neck to hold her still.

"You wanna know what's so funny, Harley?" he asked, his tone deadly, despite the occasional chuckle still slipping out. "I actually believed that you had potential."

After about two seconds, the terror in her eyes told him that she finally realized he was not joking this time—but something in his eyes must've signaled that he was just about to make her neck smile, because Bat-Bruce's free hand shot up and grabbed Joker's hand around the batarang, pushing it a few inches backwards, safely away from Harley's jugular.

Joker growled and looked into that face that he had never wanted to see.

"Don't," said Bruce-Bat, "Let me."

Joker blinked. WHAT? LET you? Let you WHAT? Break your rule for HER?

Bruce saw the astonished look on Joker's face and realized he'd been misunderstood.

"Let me handle this," he clarified. "Put that down," he asked, nodding towards the batarang clenched in both their hands. Both of them ignored Harley's tearful whimpering.

Bruce briefly considered threatening to not go through with their deal if Joker killed her, but he knew Joker would call his bluff because Joker knew he would never let those children die. So instead he locked eyes with Joker, silently asking for this little bit of... trust? Compromise? He
wasn't sure what exactly he was asking for, other than the absence of a bloodbath.

The shock of thinking that Batsy was considering breaking his rule had dialed down Joker's homicidal rage a bit, and he thought over Bruce-Bat's request… Request. Not demand. One demands things from inferiors—requests are for equals.

Huh, Joker mused, tilting his head slightly and licking his scars, keeping his gaze locked on the familiar eyes of his other half, Batsy's finally starting to get it.

That was progress. And besides, he could always kill her later.

"Alright then," Joker said, opening his hand and letting the batarang clatter to the floor at their feet, "handle it."

Joker almost would've sworn he saw Bat-Bruce give him a microscopic half-smile.

In an impressive blur of motion, Bruce released Joker's hand and Harley's arm, and hooked his right arm around Harley's neck with his elbow underneath her chin and his arm pressing against both sides of her neck. His left hand pressed the back of her head forward into the hold.

In less than ten seconds, Harley was unconscious, but Bruce held her in place for another twenty, just to be sure. Then he let go of her neck and handcuffed her before letting her limp form sink to the floor.

"Wow. That was kinda hot," Joker said, smirking.

"What do we do with her now?" Bruce asked, ignoring the mask-less proverbial elephant in the room.

"Hmm," Joker pretended to check his pockets, "damn it, I left the wood-chipper in my other pants."

"I'm serious."

"There's a closet in the other room."

"That'll do," Bruce said.

Their eyes met again, then Bruce looked down at his empty mask still lying on the bed. Joker followed his gaze, turning and picking up the mask almost reverently.

He turned back around to face Bruce-Bat, raising the mask.

"Can I—?"

Bruce blinked, a bit surprised at the request. But Joker had obliged him by not killing Harley, so what the hell. He nodded once.

Joker stepped over Harley's unconscious body, closing the gap between himself and Bruce-Bat. He lifted the mask up over Bruce's head then began to lower it, slowly and carefully bringing it down until Bruce Wayne disappeared and all that was left was Batman.

"Better?" Batman asked.

"Much. Now, let's take out the trash—" he shot a hateful glance at Harley "—and do what we came here for, shall we?"
This time, Joker was positive he saw Batman smile.

Long-ass A/N: I know Batsy's kinda emotional-rollercoaster all over the place, but keep in mind that this experience has been one massive explosion of a mindfuck for the poor guy. And it's not over yet *winkwink* ;)

BTW, I actually have that iPals monster :) It's nowhere near as creepy as a Furby, though.

The "Hold it Against Me" mini-rewrite is all my own doing. If you want to spread it around or add to it, by all means, go for it, but give credit where it's due, please and thankya :) … Oh, and the "Care Bears having sex" is how I describe the vocalization that happens around the 2:50 minute mark in Britney Spears' "Gimme More" I was originally going to have a part 2 to Harley's stripfail adventure to that song, but I changed my mind :P (Oh, and for the sake of a stating-the-obvious disclaimer: all songs mentioned in this fic are the property of their respective owners, and I am not making any money from their use. No copyright infringement is intended, blahdy fuckin blah)

And last but definitely not least, THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH for reading, reviewing, alerting, favoring, and otherwise supporting my work. And two great big special public THANK YOUS go out to Jean_C_Pepper for providing me with encouragement and fandom-related stuff to do to keep my brain from atrophying ;) , and to my wonderful brilliant Batwife, KitCat Italica, for being the best, most supportive friend through a truly hellacious part of my life, for putting up with all of my angst, for encouraging my writing, and for her constant motivation. Thank you so much, hon, idk what I'd do without you :) *insert a million heart symbols that FF won't allow* 3333 33 3 3333 33 3333 33 33333 333 3

Stay tuned, peeps, the best is yet to come ;) Pun most definitely intended ;D
A/N: *JUST TO CLARIFY* Personally, I'm convinced that Joker figured out Batman's identity at some point during TDK; however, for the purposes of this story, he didn't.... Also, I'm pretty sure I've already mentioned somewhere that this story is taking place roughly a year after TDK, so TDKR has no effect whatsoever on this story. In fact, let's just forget TDKR exists for now…

Anyway, on with the present, (NSFW!) chapter.

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Chapter Six: The Main Attraction

Batman caught himself smiling again and forced his face back into a neutral expression, hoping Joker hadn't noticed. Batman had been off his game tonight even before the catastrophic de-masking, and in his mindblown, shocked stupor at Joker's proposition, he had already handed Joker plenty of gift-wrapped ammunition; he certainly didn't need to make it worse by smiling every two seconds—he had a little pride left, after all.

Batman snuck a glance at Joker, who was staring at him like Batman had broken his brain. Served him right. At least now they were even in the mind-shattering-revelations department.

Batman could practically see the smoke coming from Joker's brain as he tried to come to terms with Batman being Bruce Wayne; Batman didn't know how much Joker already knew about Bruce's life, or how many new ways this info might allow Joker to play him, but he felt it was best to cut that train of thought off as soon as possible—derail the damn thing and toss in a couple of grenades for good measure.

"So," Batman said, "we don't have to have a big psychoanalytic discussion about this, do we?"

Because honestly? Batman was really starting to freak out about it, now that the shock of the de-masking had worn off and the distraction of dealing with Harley was gone. The Joker knew his identity, and holy shit, nothing good could come of that.

Joker blinked. It took him a second to process what Batman said, and another few seconds to say, "I, uh," lick "suppose we can save that for next time."

"Good." There was going to be a next time, holy fuck. And holy fuck there was going to be a this time—but before there could be a this time… "You want to give me a hand with this?" Batman gestured at Harley unconscious on the floor. Not that he needed help—he just needed a distraction for Joker so he didn't start plotting.

Joker raised an eyebrow. "Seriously? She's like ninety pounds soaking wet."

"Harley wet is the absolute last thing I want to think about."

"Wow." Not even a chuckle. "Are you proud of that one?"

Batman ignored him, reaching down to grab one of Harley's wrists. He dragged her through the doorway and into the other room, hoping that he'd managed to get Joker's thoughts away from his newly revealed identity.
No such luck.

"You know," Joker said, leaning against the doorframe with his arms crossed, "I always wondered why the host of Harvey's fundraiser wasn't even there when I showed." He smirked. "And, heh, when I couldn't find Harvey, I was gonna take Brucey hostage instead."

Batman scoffed, amused. "You were going to try."

Joker tilted his head, licked his scars. "No, that's the thing—you couldn't have really fought me in front of everybody without your mask, not without raising some pretty big suspicions."

Fuckingshitgoddamnit, that was exactly the road Batman didn't want Joker's thoughts to go down.

Batman sighed, stopped halfway to the closet and turned to face Joker. "Look, just because you know who I am now—" he stopped. Blinked. Smiled. "You know who I am now."

"Yeah, we've established that."

"Don't you think that that's much better leverage than hostages?"

Joker's eyes narrowed. "We made a deal."

"We can make a new one. Let all of the children go."

Joker shook his head. "You're all about throwing yourself under the bus for other people—you'd rather let me out of you than let me kill those kids."

Well, obviously, but, "In the long run, protecting my anonymity means I can save more people," Batman argued. "So let the damn kids go. If I back out of the deal, you can tell the whole world my name."

Joker pretended to consider it for all of two seconds.

"You're forgetting, Batsy," Joker said, smirking. "I don't like to share."

Batman lost his grip on Harley's wrist and it thunked to the floor. Because, unless Batman's hearing was damaged, Joker just confessed that the reason Batman's identity wasn't good enough leverage wasn't because Batman didn't care enough about it, but rather because Joker cared too much about it to out Bruce? What the fuck?

And what was with Joker's automatic assumption that Batman was going to break the deal once the hostages were free? Oh wait, right—he would do that, because he did NOT actually want to be here, and he was NOT counting the seconds until he could tear Joker's clothes off, and he was NOT hard enough to cut diamonds right now, and he was NOT…oh, fuck it, what's the use of denial at this point? All the water's dried up anyway.

"No, you're forgetting, Joker," Batman practically growled, crossing the room, hooking his hands into the top of Joker's pants and pulling Joker against him. "I'm not going anywhere."

Joker's eyes slipped shut and he shivered a little at Batsy's tone, and then Batsy's lips crashed against his, and Batsy's tongue was in his mouth, and Batsy's hands ripped his vest open, and what were they arguing about again?

But then there came a whimper and a small scuffling noise from the floor—Harley was stirring.

"Oh, for fuck's sake!" Joker shouted, grabbing a knife out of his pocket.
"No!" Batman grabbed Joker's wrist. "You're not killing her."

Yet. "Then choke her out again!"

"If I do that too many times, the lack of blood flow to the brain could cause permanent brain damage."

Joker snorted. "Like anyone would notice."

Batman tilted his head a bit, wordlessly ceding the point, but said, "Hold her still. I have something better." He pulled a small vial from one of the pockets on his utility belt. Joker held Harley's handcuffed wrists behind her back while she squirmed around and groggily tried to stand.

"Cyanide?" Joker sounded hopeful.

"Chloroform. Give me a rag or something." He carefully took the stopper out of the vial. A few seconds later, something soft collided with his face. "What—?" He snatched the cloth away from his face and curled his lip in disgust. "Really?" Pinched between his forefinger and thumb and held away from his body like a smelly diaper was Harley's lacy purple thong.

Joker waved a hand dismissively. "Oh, don't look at me like that—I just made her year." Indeed, Harley was staring at Joker with shocked adoration on her face, as well as a creepy hybrid expression between a grin and a jaw-drop. Maybe Batsy was right about that brain damage stuff. Joker reached out and pushed her chin up. "Close your mouth, Harley. Drooling from both ends is just rude."

Gross. Anyway."Hold her still." Batman dumped some chloroform into the thong and pressed it to Harley's face until she passed out.

Joker let go of her arms and let her body slump to the floor. "How long will that knock her out?"

"It's diluted, so, about thirty minutes, give or take."

Joker grabbed Harley by the tendrils of her jester cap, dragged her to the closet, shoved her inside and locked the door, breaking the world record time for the obscure sport known as Lock That Bitch UP.

"Thirty minutes? Let's not waste 'em."

Batman tensed a little as Joker rushed toward him, but caught the man when he literally jumped into Batman's arms, wrapped his legs around him, and proceeded to devour his mouth.

"Let—mmph—let go," Batman demanded in between kisses. Bastard was heavy.


Batman staggered over to the bed, throwing Joker onto it and pouncing down after him. Joker let out a breathless laugh but it was muffled by Batman's lips attacking his own.

"Mmm—question," Joker said when they paused for breath. "How much of this suit can you leave on?"

Batman smirked. "Why? You got a Kevlar fetish?"

"If I do it's your fault… So?"
"Well, all I really need to take off," he reached down and unhooked something, "is this."

Joker glanced down and stared at the vaguely triangular piece of armor in Batman's hand, and where it came from, and then he was laughing. Full on, bust-a-gut, make-your-cheeks-sore, ROTFLMAO laughing.

"What?" Batman demanded.

Joker could barely form words through his laughter. "What is that, a rape panel?"

"What? No! It's for when I have to pee."

Joker just laughed even harder, thinking of how priceless it would be if someone stumbled across Batman pissing in an alley in between crime fighting endeavors. "It's okay Batsy, I get it now," Joker choked out through his chuckles, "carrying chloroform, the handcuffs, that thing—" he schooled his face into a very serious expression and said, "Are you secretly a rapist?" Then he ruined it by busting out laughing again.

Batman rolled his eyes and got out his explaining-things-to-a-kindergartener voice. "I have chloroform so I can subdue and relocate suspects for interrogation." The dumbass at the end was silent.

"Oh, interrogation," Joker purred, running his hand up Batman's arm. "You mean foreplay, right?"

"No."

"Bullshit. You were two seconds from ripping my clothes off in that interrogation room, and everybody knows it."

"I was two seconds from ripping your throat out."

"Po-tay-toe, po-tah-toe."

"Shut up or I'm starting without you."

Joker smirked. "You're not helping your case there, Mr. Rape Panel."

Batman rolled his eyes, grabbed a handful of Joker's shirt, and shut him up the only way that worked—by kissing him until they both ran out of breath. Batman took the opportunity to undo Joker's belt and pants, tugging them down and off—and somehow managing to not be surprised that the crotch of Joker's boxers was decorated with a giant bat logo in a circle. Like the bat-signal.

Batman chuckled. "Subtle."

"Subtlety's boring."

Joker slipped a hand inside Batman's black boxers and wrapped his hand around Batman's erection, pulling it free, giving it a good stroke, and smiling when Batman moaned into his mouth.

Joker pulled away and said, "Edge of the bed. Move."

Batman eyed him suspiciously but gave him the benefit of the doubt, moving to sit on the edge of the bed.

"Good Batsy," Joker said, following him and dropping to the floor between Batman's legs.
"What are you—oh!" Batman gasped when Joker's mouth closed around his dick. "Fuck."

It felt beyond amazing, but hello, this was his notoriously unbalanced arch-fucking-nemesis who might suddenly decide that it would be hilarious to bite Batman's dick off.

Batman grabbed a handful of green hair and pulled Joker off of him, holding him still, leaving a mere inch of space between Joker's lips and Batman's erection. Joker's eyes flicked up to meet Batman's, while his tongue swiped at his scars.

"Problem?"

"I—um…"

Joker read Batman's face, and his eyes narrowed. "You don't trust me."

Batman huffed. "What do you expect? You blackmail me into this, and—"

Joker stretched his tongue across the inch of space between them and slowly licked the tip of Batman's cock with the tip of his tongue, never breaking eye contact. Batman's eyes slipped shut and his grip on Joker's hair tightened. "Fuck."

Joker smirked.

Batman met Joker's eyes again, then finally loosened his grip on Joker's hair and pulled his face closer. Joker licked a stripe up the underside of Batman's cock before taking nearly the whole thing into his mouth and sucking hard.

"Jo—" Batman stopped himself, barely, and let out a breathy moan instead. Too late though—Joker's eyes flicked up to meet his, and Batman knew he'd heard. Joker rewarded him by moaning around his length and taking him in a fraction deeper.

There was no denying it, Batman was in ecstasy right now. But if this lasted much longer, Batman wouldn't. Last, that is. So he said the first thing that popped into his head in an attempt to slow things down a bit.

"You're a hypocrite," he blurted.

Joker went still, then pulled away and glared up at Batman. "Excuse me?"

Batman flashed a cocky smile. "You said to never start with the head. Remember?"

Joker made a noise halfway between a scoff and a laugh, his breath ghosting over Batman's cock. Then he went back to doing wonderful things with his tongue.

And maybe that was going a bit too far, because Joker scraped his teeth along Batman's dick—just a little past the wrong side of rough—as a warning.
"Ah—kidding, jeez! It's not a chew toy!"

Joker laughed around him, and the vibrations nearly sent Batman over the edge right then and there.

He gripped Joker's hair and pulled him back, losing his patience completely and growling, "Get up here, now."

"Mmm," Joker licked his lips and said, "make me."

Batman growled, seized Joker by the arms, hauled him into the bed, and slammed him down on the mattress so hard he bounced. Joker grinned, loving every second of it.

Batman leaned over him, capturing his lips in another furious kiss. After a long moment, Batman started to sit up, intending to remove Joker's boxers—but a cloud of feathers flew up when he moved, and he realized that the blades on his gauntlets were shredding holes in the down comforter. He slid them off, baring his hands and forearms, and threw them on the floor, ignoring Joker's chuckling.

Batman ripped Joker's shirt open but didn't remove it or the vest. He slid his now-bare hands up Joker's exposed chest, then tangled them into Joker's hair as he pulled him in for another bruising kiss.

Batsy's hands on his skin felt amazing, and Joker was starting to rethink his whole keep-the-Kevlar-on request, but it was a little late for that now. Batman's fingers hooked around the waistband of Joker's boxers and tugged them down. Joker helpfully lifted his hips and watched Batsy throw his boxers across the room, and he actually stopped breathing for a moment when Batsy surged forward and spread Joker's legs and—stopped short. Damn it.

"Condom?"

"Drawer," Joker answered, flicking his eyes toward the nightstand.

Batman reached over and yanked the drawer open. He wasn't expecting the large, dark green bottle that rolled up from the back of the drawer, and when he picked it up to examine it, he smirked at the label.

" 'J&B'?"

Joker glanced at the bottle of scotch and shrugged, licking at his scars. "Seemed appropriate."

"Planning to get me drunk and take advantage?" Batman teased.

"Don't need to, apparently."

"You calling me easy?"

Joker snorted—after everything he'd done just to get Batsy here? "Hardly. Gimme that."

Batman handed over the bottle, then fished a condom out of the drawer and put it on while Joker took a long swig of the scotch.

"Mmmm," Joker half-growled, enjoying the burn as it went down, and taking another drink. "Want some?"

Batman glanced at the proffered bottle and deliberated for a second; technically, he was kind of on
the job right now, but what the hell—he was about to fuck his archenemy on the job, so what harm could a little booze do? He downed about two shots' worth—just enough to loosen up a little, no need to get crazy—then set the scotch back on the nightstand and grabbed the bottle of lubricant from the drawer.

Joker's eyes were glued to the bottle in Batsy's hand, and the click of the lid snapping open seemed deafening.

Both men paused for a second—Joker lying back on the bed, propped up on his elbows, and Batman on his knees between Joker's spread legs—and their eyes met for a surreal holy shit this is really happening moment. It was far too tense and quickly getting awkward, so Batman broke the moment by holding the bottle up and squeezing a huge glob of lube onto Joker's erection, just to toy with him.

Joker hissed and flinched a little. "That's cold, jackass."

"Is it?" Batman said innocently, the ghost of a smirk on his lips. "Shall I warm it up for you?"

He leaned down, watching Joker's eyes widen in surprise and lust as Batman's face slowly inched closer to his erection. Batman licked his lips, flicked his eyes up to meet Joker's, opened his mouth, and...exhaled warm breath against Joker's length without touching it, before catching Joker's eye again and moving his face away.

"Fuckin' tease," Joker muttered, his pupils blown wide with desire.

Batman smirked; the bastard had been playing with him all night, and now it was Batman's turn to torment Joker until neither of them could stand it any longer.

"What's the matter?" Batman murmured, running his hands along the back of Joker's thighs, pressing the criminal's legs up toward his chest. Then Batman teasingly traced the tip of his cock along Joker's entrance, then dragging it up and briefly nudging against Joker's balls before moving away, still not touching Joker's erection. Joker growled low in his throat and twitched his hips up in search of contact, but Batman pressed his palms to Joker's hips to hold him still.

He had planned on making Joker literally beg for it before he touched him, but the scotch had kicked in and Batman felt pretty damn amazing and it seemed stupid to hold things up any longer.

"C'mere," Batman said, and he didn't need to ask twice. Joker sat up, so they were now both on their knees facing each other.

Batman met Joker's gaze, cupping his face in one hand, and very slowly, very deliberately shifted forward and finally slid his own erection against Joker's. Batman's eyes slipped closed as he tried not to moan, but Joker took the opportunity to wrap his arms around Batman's neck and capture his lips in a fierce, desperate kiss. One of Joker's hands snuck down to slide along their aligned erections, and one of Batman's hands joined it; for a few glorious moments they stroked each other in tandem and made out like their lives depended on it.

Then Batman slid his hands up to Joker's shoulders and pushed him down, flat on his back. Their eyes locked and a silent agreement passed between their heated stare—it was time.

Batman grabbed the bottle of lube again, squeezing some into his hand and slicking up his throbbing erection, using the excess to coat his fingers.

He leaned down, settling himself over Joker's body.
"You done this before?" he asked breathlessly.

"Nope."

It was a testament to how far gone both of them were that neither even thought to make any ass-virginity jokes.

Batman leaned in, catching Joker's lips and using his tongue to distract Joker from what his fingers were about to do. Batman waited until he felt Joker relaxing into the kiss, then he slid the first slick finger inside.

Joker grunted against Batman's lips, but it was more from surprise than pain, and he didn't break their kiss. He didn't mind being on the bottom this time—in fact, he probably would've dropped dead from shock if Batman had suggested the other way around—and he really didn't care what they did, as long as it was him and Batsy.

Batman slid his finger most of the way out, then pushed it back in, swallowing Joker's moans as he adjusted to the feeling of Batman preparing him. Joker laughed a little but by now Batman knew better than to be offended. After a moment, Batman added another lubed finger, sliding them in and out, stretching Joker's entrance with scissoring motions.

Joker fidgeted a little and said "Somebody knows what he's doing." He sounded breathless, but still managed that mocking tone that irritated the crap out of Batman. "You've done this before." It wasn't a question.

"Yeah," Batman agreed. Joker's eyes narrowed dangerously, and Batman quickly elaborated, "With girls."

Joker laughed. "Bet they loved that," he said sarcastically.

Batman smirked. "You'd be surprised," he said, recapturing Joker's lips with his own.

When he added the third finger, Batman's free hand wandered down to stroke Joker's erection.

"So," Joker said in between kisses and moans, "am I—mmmnh—the first guy you've ever—"

"Yes," Batman said, cutting him off with a kiss. "Congratulations. You want a trophy or something?"

Joker giggled against Batman's lips. "How about a statue of us in flagrante, right in the middle of Gotham Square?"

"Yeah," Batman laughed, nibbling at Joker's bottom lip, "I'll get right on that, pull a few strings, call in some favors. It'll be here by Thursday."

Distracted, Batman shifted the angle of his fingers slightly—purely by accident—and Joker arched into his touch. "Fuck, Batsy," he gasped. "Do that again!"

Batman obliged, twice, making a mental note about the angle and swallowing Joker's moans and smiling at how thoroughly he was making Joker fall apart. He withdrew his fingers, deciding Joker was prepped enough, and rubbed a little more lube over his erection just to be safe.

"Just fuck me already!"

Batman scoffed. "Excuse me for being considerate."
"Just do it, I don't care if it hurts—I wanna feel you for a week," he said, biting Batman's lower lip and reaching down to grasp Batman's erection and guide it to his entrance. "C'mon, I want it rough," he growled, shoving Batman's chest like he was trying to pick a fight, then grabbing Batman's face and pulling him back in for a bruising kiss. "I want you to fuck me so hard I'll walk wrong for days," he whispered against his lips.

And here Batman had thought he couldn't possibly get any harder.

He growled a little, grabbing the Joker's shoulders and shoving him flat on the bed.

"Knees up," he growled, grabbing Joker's legs and bending them towards his chest before he even had time to comply. Batman crawled forward between Joker's legs, positioning his erection at Joker's entrance. He nudged it forward a fraction, pressing teasingly at the hole. Joker wrapped his legs around Batman's waist and tried to pull him closer.

Joker caught his eye again. "C'mon, Batsy" he repeated.

Batman took a deep breath, and in one quick thrust he slid into Joker's tight heat. Chest to chest, he leaned down and swallowed Joker's gasp with a kiss; even with the preparation, Batman knew this had to be uncomfortable the first time, and no matter what Joker asked for, Batman wasn't going to hurt him on purpose…much.

Joker's arms encircled Batman's armored chest, pulling him even closer. He latched onto Batman's bottom lip and bit it hard enough that Batsy wouldn't try moving anything anytime soon—not because of the pain down below, which actually wasn't as bad as he'd expected, but because Batman was inside of him and on top of him and all around him and it was the best thing he'd ever felt. He wanted to savor this moment and catalogue it in his memory for the rest of his life because what could ever measure up to this?

Batsy's armor was hard and cool against his chest, tempering the fire of Joker's body heat. He had Batsy's lip prisoner between his teeth, and Batsy's cock filling him inside, and Batsy's right hand tangled in his hair, and Batsy's left hand carefully stroking up and down his side. He had everything, and Batsy was everywhere, and it was glorious but dear god it was almost too much, like staring into the sun.

Joker finally released Batman's abused lip and kissed him deeply, tentatively rocking forward as Batman let out the filthy moan he'd been holding in ever since pressing inside his enemy.

It shouldn't be this good; this was the Joker—the mass-murdering psychopath who destroyed lives and plunged Gotham into chaos on a regular basis, who kidnapped a bus full of children to get Batman here in the first place—and it was obscene that it should feel this amazing to be inside him.

"Move," Joker said, finally detaching his tongue from Batsy's long enough to form words. "Quit treating me like I'm going to break."

Batman rolled his eyes, barely refraining from snapping then quit acting like it. He nipped at Joker's lip before slowly pulling most of the way out and thrusting back in hard and fast. "That better?" he asked, fighting the urge to moan like a porn star at how mindblowingly perfect it felt slamming into his enemy like that.

"Fuck, yes," Joker moaned, his hands twisting into the bed sheets.

Batman set a brutal rhythm, never ignoring Joker's gasps of "more" and "harder" and "faster"
Joker reached down to stroke himself, but Batman caught his hands and pinned them down beside Joker's head, entwining their fingers. Joker growled in frustration, but Batman growled back, "No—just from me," and kissed him deeply as he shifted his thrusts to the angle he'd discovered while preparing Joker, and started pounding into that special spot every time. Joker threw his head back in ecstasy, clutching Batsy's hands in his own and rocking his hips up to meet each thrust.

Batman was close to losing it, but he wanted to make sure Joker came first. He wasn't sure why—maybe it had something to do with their rivalry, or maybe the combination of being slightly buzzed and engulfed in the tightest ass he'd ever stuck his dick into just made him really generous in bed—he didn't know or care. But he was pretty sure he knew exactly what would do the trick.

Batman pulled out and paused for a second—just long enough to get Joker's attention. When Joker's eyes met his, Batman leaned down and whispered "You complete me," in his ear, bit his earlobe hard, and slammed back in at that perfect angle.

Joker moaned as his orgasm sent shocks of ecstasy through every nerve, and his release splashed across Batman's armored abdomen. Batman wasn't far behind—seeing Joker come undone like that, feeling Joker shuddering beneath him, his inner muscles clenching and contracting even tighter around Batman's cock—Batman managed a few more thrusts before he was spilling out inside of Joker and everything was bliss.

Neither of them moved right away; they laid there in silence and tried to catch their breath. Batman hadn't even pulled out yet. He started to, but Joker turned his head and suddenly they were nose-to-nose and sharing breath, and for a moment they just stared at each other.

"So," Batman said, breaking the silence before it could turn awkward, "was that worth all the trouble to get me here?"

Joker grinned and snaked a hand behind Batman's neck to pull him down into a kiss that left them both breathless again. "Damn straight it was," he said.

Batman rolled his eyes at the choice of words and said, "Can I have my dick back now? Cause I'm kind of attached to it."

Joker chuckled and let go of Batman so he could pull out. Batman tucked himself back into his boxers and rolled over to lie on his back beside Joker, who made no move to recover any of his clothing. Small bruises were already showing on Joker's hips, where Batman's fingers had gripped him.

Batman didn't want to be caught staring, so he turned his head, and was reaching for the bottle of scotch on the nightstand before he even consciously decided to. He took a drink, then offered it to Joker.

"Drink?"

Joker took a drink and handed it back. Batman was lifting the bottle to his lips for a second time when Joker said, "Isn't there a law against drinking with your rape panel open?"

Batman was glad he hadn't already taken another drink, because it would've went up his nose and burned like hell when he snorted and burst out laughing. Joker laughed too, and after a few seconds of digging, he managed to find the so-called rape panel among the sheets.

"Found it," he announced, sitting up with a slight wince. "Crisis averted," he said, placing the panel
in Batman's lap and trying to figure out how it reattached. "How d'you—?"

"Give me that." Batman swatted Joker's hands away and reattached the panel himself.

"Ah, I see," Joker said, smirking a little before finally moving to reclaim his boxers from where they were hanging on the lava lamp. "I'll remember that next time you have me up against a wall."

Batman frowned and took another drink of the scotch. Was that what this was—some sort of convoluted recon? In some future fight, would Joker go _oh look, Batsy has me cornered, let's pop open that armor and distract him with a blowjob_? And speaking of future fights, how was Batman ever supposed to strike him or hold him down without remembering how amazing it felt to be inside of him? Maybe that was Joker's goal all along.

"I hope you're not under the delusion that I'm going to stop throwing your ass in jail whenever you terrorize my city, because of _this_," Batman said, as Joker climbed back into the bed wearing those ridiculous bat-signal boxers.

Joker's eyes narrowed a bit. _His_ city? But that was an argument for another time, so he replied, "As long as _you're_ not expecting _me_ to turn into some born-again do-gooder." He smiled. "Besides, I think we've found something _better_ to do with my ass that's more fun for both of us."

Batman didn't reply, but he didn't refuse when Joker leaned in for a brief kiss.

"I think you have a phone call to make," Batman said against his lips.

"Hmmm?" Joker was so close that when he went after his scars, he ended up licking Batsy's lips along with his own.

"You're going to release one of those kids now. Right?" Batman added, more of a threat than an actual question.

"Of course," Joker said. "I'm a man of my word."

Batman chuckled. "A broken record is what you are."

Joker shoved him, but without any real force behind it. "Give me the phone."

Joker swiped the scotch off the nightstand and took another drink, waiting for Batman to hand over the cell phone. When he did, Joker dialed the number and waited while it rang.

"Put it on speaker," Batman said.

Joker ignored him, keeping the phone to his ear. He suddenly furrowed his brow and smirked a little.

"What?" Batman asked.

"I dialed wrong—it's a Chinese place. You hungry?"

"Give me that," Batman snapped, lunging forward. Joker held the phone out of reach, but Batman was going for the bottle of scotch. "I think you've had enough." He twisted the cap onto the bottle and shoved it back in the drawer.

Joker rolled his eyes—he was perfectly fine, thank you very much—before standing and moving out of Batsy's reach. "Yes, I _would_ like to place an order—ten thousand egg rolls and a side of rice, deliverable to Commissioner Gordon, at the Major Crimes Unit building downtown. He'll pay cash.
By the way, there's a bomb in your kitchen. Yeah. Buh-bye."

"Stop fucking around and make the call," Batman said, starting to get irritated.

"All right, all right," Joker said, pulling up the call history and selecting the number from earlier rather than trying to dial it again from memory. "Keep your pants on—" he pushed send, "Or, ya know, don't," he waggled his eyebrows at Batsy, eliciting that little half-smile he loved to put on Batsy's face. Joker even put the call on speakerphone without making Batsy ask again.

"Hello?"

"Brocko, how's it hanging?" Joker greeted, pacing at the end of the bed. Batman's gauntlets had ended up on the floor there, and Joker kicked one over to Batman, who scowled a little but put it on. The other, Joker picked up and slid onto his own arm, just for the hell of it, holding it in front of his face and flexing his fingers, smiling slightly.

"Boss? That you?"

"Obviously," Joker said, rolling his eyes and tossing Batman an exasperated look that said, henchmen these days. "Ya know the little girl I talked to earlier? Rachel? Let her go, unharmed, and—just cause I'm feeling generous, give 'er a thousand bucks. For emotional trauma or whatever. Kay?"

Batman glanced at him in surprise.

There was a long pause, then the henchman cautiously asked, "Is everything okay, Boss? You seem—different."

Joker chuckled. "That's cause I just got spectacularly laid, and everything's kinda awesome right now."

Another pause. "I thought you were with Batman?"

Batman paled and started silently gesturing and mouthing something Joker didn't bother to pay attention to. Joker smirked and waved a dismissive (and gauntleted) hand at Batman.

"I don't pay you to think, Brock. Just let the kid go."

"Okay, Boss," the henchman agreed, then added petulantly, "and my name is Gary."

"Whatever, Steve," Joker said, and hung up.

He glanced back at Batman, who still looked unnerved. "I wasn't going to tell him," Joker said, rolling his eyes before glancing around the room. "Where are my pants?" Batman had most of his armor back on, but Joker was still just in his boxers and one of Batman's gauntlets.

"Never mind that," Batman said, moving to the edge of the bed. "Come here."

Joker appraised him warily before deciding to comply. As soon as he was in reach, Batman grabbed Joker's hips and pulled him down into his lap for a very deep and thorough kiss. Joker moaned a little and wrapped his arms around Batman's neck.

"Thank you," Batman murmured, so quiet that Joker almost didn't catch it. His hands rubbed Joker's lower back as Joker pulled back slightly to meet his eye.

"You thought I'd renege?"
"I thought you'd throw in some sick, last-minute twist once you got what you wanted."

"The night's still young," Joker teased.

Joker removed Batman's gauntlet, and held it up for Batman to slide his own arm back into. Ta-da, Batsuit complete.

"Good," Batman replied, "then you have time to answer a few questions."

"Such as?" Joker raised an eyebrow. He didn't move from his perch in Batman's lap; he rather liked it there.

"Was this ever really supposed to be a threesome?"

"Course not," Joker scoffed.

"Then why tell me that? And why have Harley here?"

Joker half-shrugged, licking at his scars. "To, uh, kill two birds with one rocket launcher. Figured you'd agree quicker if there was a girl involved. And Harley needed to get over her stupid delusional crush on me—guess I gave her too much credit thinking she could take the damn hint."

"I thought you wanted her to be head over heels for you?"

"When I needed a way out of Arkham, sure. But after that—have you ever, I dunno, rewired a lamp or something, but you overdo some part of it and then you plug it back in and the light bulb explodes?" he asked, miming an explosion with his hands.

Batman smiled a little, and it wasn't at all because he found Joker's animated gesturing endearing.

"So you brainwashed her too well, and now she's more trouble than she's worth?"

"Mmm. She used to be useful, but now all she does is try to 'seduce' me," he shuddered.

"Like you don't love the attention."

"There's attention, and then there's waking up to her at the end of my bed watching me sleep and touching herself until her fingers get all pruney."

"That's—ugh."

"Yeah."

A pause.

"Ugh!"

"I know! And people call me creepy."

"Why haven't you killed her already?" Batman blurted. "I mean—not that I'm suggesting it, but, you know," he trailed off awkwardly.

"Ehh," Joker shrugged, "I dunno—she's like the kid you'd have cause you think it'd be fun, and it'll turn out just like you, and you'll get a tax deduction—but then you realize it was a shitty idea and start wishing you'd had an abortion instead."

"That's horrible."
"I know—I didn't even get the tax deduction!"

"You don't pay taxes."

"Prove it."

"Hey Joker?"

"Hmm?"

Batman smirked. "Shhhh!" he hissed, and leaned forward to silence those lips with his own. It was supposed to be a quick kiss, just to shut him up—no, really—but neither of their tongues had gotten that memo.

Batman caught a sudden whiff of gasoline, and irrationally wondered whether Joker wore a dab of it like cologne. Seemed like the kind of thing he'd do. But that didn't make sense—Batman would've smelled it earlier.

Batman pulled away and opened his mouth but Joker interrupted.

"How 'bout round two, hmm? Let's go."

There was a click from somewhere behind them, and their heads turned in unison.

"The two of you ain't going anywhere," Harley snarled from the doorway, a gun in one hand and a lighter in the other, "except hell!"

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A/N: Heads up: the next chapter will be the last one, unless I go completely insane and decide to extend the story.

Thank you to everyone who has read, reviewed, faved, followed, and generally supported this story!
The Appropriate Response to These Situations

A/N: Enjoy the finale! :)

Chapter Seven: The Appropriate Response to These Situations

It might have been funny, if Harley hadn't been so enraged—the way Mistah J and Batface whipped their heads around in unison with identical, stricken, deer-in-the-headlights expressions. But any humor was cancelled out by the smell of sex in the air and the way Mistah J was perched in Batfuck's lap like he belonged there—and she'd seen that kiss just now. She'd heard that new, sickeningly intimate undertone to their banter. She'd woken up in the dark to the sound of them fucking from clear across the apartment while she fought against post-chloroform gogginess and tears and her own trembling fingers to finally pick the locks on her handcuffs and the closet door with the pin on her Officer Nasty badge. She'd heard them talking about her, mocking her, while she grabbed a lighter and a gun and quietly poured out a spare can of gasoline Mistah J had left lying around. And nothing about this situation was funny anymore.

"Harley, darling," Joker greeted, trying for cheerful but landing in apprehensive. "How long ya been standing there?"

"Long enough, you bastard." She kept the gun aimed at the two of them and started absently flicking the top of the lighter open and closed.

Very, very slowly, Batman reached for a batarang with the hand Harley couldn't see—he wasn't sure if Joker could talk his way out of this one. Joker noticed Batman's movement but thankfully didn't draw attention to it.

"Harls," Joker started, his tongue swiping at his scars.

"Save it," she snapped. "I'm through. I ain't gonna stick around to be the kid you wish you'd aborted."

Joker smirked. "You sure? Cause I've got some great dead baby jokes."

"Don't you fucking laugh at me!"

"I wasn't—no, Harley," he took a deep breath and his smile grew impossibly wider, "I am so proud of you."

The murderous expression on Harley's face slowly gave way to confusion. "What?"

"This is what I wanted—you, standing up for yourself, standing up to me."

Harley blinked and repeated, "What?"

"I mean, do you have any idea how annoying and clingy and dependent you were?"

Harley glared at him and flicked the lighter back open.

"Not helping," Batman muttered.

He concealed a batarang in his hand, but waited for now; Harley had the gun trained on them,
ready to shoot at the slightest movement, and Batman wasn't eager to find out just how vulnerable to bullets this lighter armor really was. For now, he would wait and hope Joker could distract Harley and give him a chance to use the batarang.

"So all of this," Joker continued, "was your wake-up call. Well," lick, smirk, "yours and Gotham's."

"Gotham's?" Harley asked. She'd known Mistah J long enough to recognize the ask-questions-so-I-can-explain-my-evil-plan gleam in his eyes, and despite her fury, part of her still desperately craved an explanation for this madness—one that kept her at the center of Mistah J's affections instead of Batface.

"Gotham," Joker announced, "has been watching everything happening in this room, live—on every channel—for the past hour or so. Courtesy of a hacked satellite signal and a hidden camera." He waved cheerfully at the opposite wall, then smirked patiently and waited for it to sink in.

Batman paled and nearly dropped the damn batarang—the past hour, during which he'd been unmasked, and he'd fucked his archenemy and thoroughly loved it, and he'd kissed him and joked around and had drinks with him and started to maybe even trust him a tiny bit and holy fuck…just…fuck.

Harley's mouth slowly morphed from an O of surprise into a delighted grin.

"You genius," Harley breathed, tried to hold in her laughter, "you've ruined him!"

She lowered the gun now, giggling—she understood now, why Mistah J had been acting so strange, and why he'd tricked her, and it was so totally worth it: Batman was utterly finished, de-masked and debased on live television, and now he would finally be out of their lives so they could be together forever. Mistah J had won.

When Harley lowered the gun and looked away laughing, Joker finally looked back at Batman with a triumphant smirk and—oh.

He promptly froze, his smirk disappearing—the look on Batman's face was nothing short of murderous, and he was gripping that batarang like he wanted nothing more than to stab Joker in the face with it. Joker actually got chills, and giggled before he could stop himself—he really should say something; it was just that Batsy genuinely looked ready to murder him, and it was simultaneously terrifying and turning him on a little.

Batman growled, grabbed Joker's throat with one hand and hauled him to his feet; he turned so Joker's back was towards Harley, who gasped and raised the gun again. But she was too late to get a clean shot at Batman now that he was using Mistah J as a human shield.

Well, shit, Joker thought.

"You bastard," Batman seethed. "Give me one reason I shouldn't fucking castrate you."

Oh, so that's where Batsy's other hand was—pointing that very sharp batarang at a very sensitive area. One of Joker's hands had automatically grabbed the one Batsy was currently trying to choke him with; his other hand now very carefully reached for the hand holding the batarang.

Batman narrowed his eyes in warning as Joker's hand crept towards the batarang—but Joker only rubbed Batman's gauntleted hand in a parody of a caress before repeatedly tapping his fingers against it, his eyes glancing down then back up to meet Batman's furious gaze. Ten minutes ago, Batman might've found Joker's nervous tic endearing—now, he just wanted to crush his throat like
an empty soda can. After everything that bastard had spouted about completing each other and being meant to do this forever, and I've never lied to you, Batsy—and all along it was one big fucking lie designed to humiliate him in front of the entire city. And the worst part of it all was that the bastard had actually made Batman care about him—trust him almost—just to turn around and betray him. His hand tightened infinitesimally, and Joker choked out a word.

"Be..cause…"

Oh, right—he had asked the clown a question.

"What was that?" Batman growled, loosening his grip slightly.

Harley watched on in horror, biting her lip. She kept the gun aimed at them but didn't dare shoot at Batman for fear of hitting Mistah J.

"Because," Joker started to whisper, but Batman was having none of that.

"Speak up!" he ordered venomously, "your fucking audience can't hear you."

Joker's eyes flashed, and although his finger kept tapping against Batman's hand, he looked more irritated than nervous now. And that just made Batman angrier, because what fucking right did he have to be irritated? It wasn't him who had just been made a fool of with the whole city watching…Jesus, what if Alfred had been watching?

"Because you loved it and you know it," Joker snapped, much louder.

Batman growled—how dare he, when it was all a lie, all a big fucking joke.

But Joker kept talking. Of course he did—the audience was waiting after all. "You loved it when I shoved you down on that bed, and tied your wrists to the headboard, and tapped your ass like a beer keg. Didn't you?"

Joker pointedly glanced down at the word tapped, then caught Batman's eyes and raised his eyebrows.

Wait…what?

None of that had actually happened, which would be obvious to anyone who'd actually been watching…but not to Harley.

Batman's fury flickered out as he suddenly realized that he was being very, very stupid—that wasn't a nervous tic, it was Morse Code. Because every costumed hero and villain alive knew Morse Code—it was a goddamned prerequisite.

Batman mentally kicked himself, and started paying attention to the rapid tapping.

….no…ca…m…era…d…umb…a…ss…now…pl…ay…a…lo…ng…di…str…a…ct…her…

Oh, you brilliant, psychotic bastard, Batman thought, repressing a sigh of relief; he quickly tapped back got it, and tried to act as homicidal as he'd felt a moment ago.

Batman growled and spun his captive around so Joker's back was pressed flush against Batman's chest. He quickly replaced his hands—one around Joker's throat, the other holding the batarang near his groin. Batman kept his eyes on Harley, who looked terrified but kept the gun pointed at him. He kept his head very close to Joker's so she wouldn't dare take a shot.
"You know what?" Batman snarled into Joker's ear, loud enough for Harley to hear every word. "You're right. I did love it." He nipped at Joker's ear. "I don't even care who saw. I loved the way you tied me up and teased until I begged you to fuck me into the mattress like a filthy whore." He felt rather than heard Joker's sharp inhale—kinky bastard was probably loving this. "In fact, I loved it so much I think I might..." he trailed the sharp edge of the batarang along the waistband of Joker's boxers "...take a souvenir."

Joker let out a nervous, breathless chuckle. "Heh, there's uh, no need for that... How about I tell you where the rest of the hostages are, you let me go with all my original parts, and we call it even?"

"Better talk fast," Batman said, trailing the batarang lower while Harley watched in horror.


"Harley," Batman said, nodding towards the nightstand.

"Harley!" Joker snapped when she didn't move. "Get the damn key!"

She jumped and headed for the nightstand, keeping a wary eye on Batman as she did, even though the bed was between them. She kept the gun aimed at him as she blindly opened the drawer with her other hand and felt around, looking more and more nervous when she didn't feel a key.

"Hurry up!" Joker snapped.

Harley bit her lip and finally took her eyes off Batman to look in the drawer, and that second of distraction was all Batman needed.

One hand shoved Joker safely out of the way, and the other threw the batarang at the gun in Harley's hand, knocking it to the ground. Batman leapt across the bed towards her, pinning her to the floor and reaching for his spare set of handcuffs. He cuffed one wrist, but somehow that lighter reappeared in Harley's free hand and she quickly lit it and tossed it into the gasoline puddle in the doorway.

"Run, Mistah J!" she shouted as Batman cuffed her other hand, pulled her roughly to her feet and led her away from the flames. Luckily, Harley hadn't spilled much gasoline in the bedroom, so the flames mostly stayed in the other room...for now.

Joker rolled his eyes at Harley. "You never learn, do ya?" She stared at him, confusion turning back to rage as she realized he'd fooled her yet again. Joker calmly picked his purple trench coat up from beside the bed and put it on over his bare chest. "And you," he said, rounding on Batman. "We've really got to work on those trust issues of yours. You could've had her cuffed five minutes ago."

"Wh—"

"You believed that bullshit about a live camera feed? Really?"

Batman glared at him. "It's exactly the kind of thing you would do."

"Not to you."

Batman stared at him, and might have even come up with something profound to say back, but Harley chose that moment to crouch down and knock him to the floor with a leg sweep, then
pounce on him like a rabid animal, swinging her handcuffed fists at his face.

Batman blocked her flailing arms and threw her to the ground beside him.

Joker growled under his breath and finally decided that enough was enough, and Batsy would just have to get over it. Joker stalked over and seized the chain of Harley's handcuffs, dragging her awkwardly to her feet and ignoring her snarled stream of protests and insults. He crossed the short distance to the wall and spun around, timing Harley's momentum *just* right—then he let go with a gleeful shout of "Officer down!" as Harley toppled out of the broken window with an aborted shriek.

Joker turned around and received a disapproving glare as Batman got to his feet.

"What? It was either the window or the, uh, crematorium," he nodded towards the doorway—flames had overtaken the main room of the apartment and spreading into the bedroom. The window was the only way out now. "Speaking of which—I had a *little* bit of dynamite stored across the hall, so we should probably—*oof!*" Batman's eyes widened and he grabbed Joker around the waist and launched both of them out the window, aiming for the roof of a parked car and trying to make sure he took the brunt of the landing himself; it was only three stories, but Joker wasn't wearing armor—he was barely wearing *clothes*.

Joker laughed all the way down, his trench coat flapping in the wind. He grunted at the force of the impact, but grinned and caught Batman's eye as they lay on the crumpled roof of the car. "Can we do that again?"

The sky chose that moment to explode above them; Batman automatically rolled over on top of Joker to shield him from falling bricks and glass. His ears were ringing with the explosion, and something heavy landed dangerously close to them, smashing in the car's windshield, and burning debris was raining into the street—and in the midst of it all Joker's lips found and claimed his, and Batman kissed him back, and it was chaos and it was beautiful and it was fucking perfect.

At least until…

"*Batman?*"

He froze, then unglued his lips from Joker's and glanced over to see a familiar—albeit thoroughly traumatized—face. Joker followed his gaze, grinned, and drawled, "*Evening, Commissioner.*"

Gordon had just struggled to his feet from the sidewalk, where another motionless body was laying—it was Harley, either dead or unconscious. Quiet music was coming from somewhere nearby, along with a buzzing noise; after a second of detached observation, Batman realized it was just that stupid musical nightstick dildo. The music sounded much weaker, as if the fall or the nearby explosion had damaged it somehow.

*Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do, whatcha gonna do when they come for you…*

"Gordon…What are you doing here?" Batman asked, climbing off of Joker and the battered car as nonchalantly as he could manage. Joker sat up and stretched, popping his back as he did.

"Me? What's *he* doing here?" Gordon shouted, pointing at Joker. "What the hell?"

"It's exactly what it looked like," Joker piped up, hopping to the ground and casually leaning against the car. He made quite the picture there, wearing only his bat-signal boxers and his purple trench coat, which hung open to expose his bare chest. His makeup was smeared off in places and his hair was a train wreck, but somehow he made it look good—not that Batman was staring, or
"CPR," Batman blurted to Gordon, tearing his eyes away from Joker. "That's what it looked like, and that's what it was. Because…explosion..." he trailed off awkwardly.

"Is that so?" Gordon asked, almost hysterically, eyeing the massive red and white smudges all over Batman's face. "Where are his pants?"

"They…exploded?" Batman said—because, technically, they did.

"They caught on fire first," Joker added helpfully, "but it was a really big lie."

"What?" Gordon demanded shrilly.

Joker scoffed. "No sense of humor."

"Gordon, focus," Batman snapped, after pulling himself together. "Why did you come here?" Had he perhaps found the hostages and rescued them already?

Gordon looked back and forth between Batman and Joker, then shook his head and finally seemed to collect his thoughts. "I—your tank almost ran over me earlier blaring pop music; it seemed suspicious so I went back in the office, and I found out the bat-signal had lit up tonight so I checked the security footage, and saw you and him on the roof...we didn't have any audio, but judging by your body language, you looked really disturbed. I thought you were in danger so I tracked the reports of 'Batmobile' sightings and unusual explosions to here and I rushed straight over. Just got here. I heard a strange noise and by the time I realized it was just that thing—" pointing at the nightstick dildo "—Harley Quinn fell out of the sky on top of me. Then you two came crashing out, and that explosion, and, well" he spread his hands, palms up, as if to say and here we are.

"Well, I…appreciate the effort," Batman said awkwardly, "but I've got this handled."

"Oh, clearly," Gordon said, leveling Batman with a critical, suspicious look.

Joker didn't appreciate Gordon's attitude. "Hey Commish, you got any egg rolls left? I could use a couple hundred."

Gordon turned on him, furious. "That was you? They made me pay for all of that crap! Side of rice," he scoffed. Joker just smirked. "So am I taking this bastard into custody, or what?" Gordon asked, turning back to Batman.

"You can't."

Gordon's eyebrows shot up. "Why not?"

"It's…complicated...We have an arrangement."

Gordon studied Batman for a moment. "I will never believe that he's secretly one of the good guys. So have you gone dark side now, or what?"

Joker laughed. "Yeah, come on over, Batsy—we have cookies. And—other things," he added, and this time when he licked his scars it was downright obscene.

"Thought you liked me incorruptible," Batman said, an involuntary smile tugging at his lips.

"True," Joker said, eying him up and down. "Besides, cookies would ruin your figure."
"WHAT IS HAPPENING?" Gordon shrieked, likely seconds away from tearing out his own hair.

Harley saved him the trouble, leaping up from her supposed 'unconscious' state and knocking him out with the butt of the gun Joker had thrown out earlier. Her hands were still cuffed, but it didn't slow her down any. She shoved Gordon's collapsing body at Batman, who caught him on instinct and thereby lost the chance to draw a batarang; Harley aimed the gun at Batman, holding it in both hands, and said, "Don't move. And you shut the hell up," she tossed at Joker when he started to speak. The gun wavered a fraction as she seemed to consider shooting him, but ultimately she kept it aimed at Batman. Joker mimed zipping his lips and throwing away a key, with a knowing smirk on his lips and a sharp, dangerous glare leveled at Harley.


Batman's eyes narrowed. "They're innocent, Quinn."

"You're not!" she screamed. "Somehow you stole him from me, and now, those kids are gonna die because of you. And before they do, they're gonna know that Batman chose to fuck their kidnapper instead of saving them...Don't either of you move," she repeated, backing away and keeping the gun on him. She backed away slowly until she reached the corner, then took off running down a different street.

Batman immediately set Gordon on the ground and made to follow her but Joker grabbed his arm, "Batsy, wait."

"Come on! We can get there first in the Tumbler."

He dragged Joker forward a few steps; Joker stumbled a little, trying to hold Batman back.

"Okay, first off—I am not your fucking sidekick. And second..."

"Second, what? We're wasting time—she's going to kill them!"

"They aren't there!"

Batman stopped trying to drag Joker down the sidewalk and turned to face him instead, silently demanding an explanation.

Joker continued, "That particular storage unit is rigged with explosives. If she tries to break into it, she's gonna need an apple stuck in her mouth afterwards." At Batsy's unamused stare he elaborated, "You know, as in roasted pig?" Still no chuckles. "Cause she's dressed like—" Joker sighed. "Never mind. Point is, the kids aren't there, so chill."

Batman looked slightly relieved at this. "But if the explosion doesn't kill her—she knows your other hideouts, right? Other storage spaces and warehouses? You saw how angry she is—she'll kill them if she finds them. You have to let them go."

Joker bit his lower lip. "Batsy—"

"Joker, please," he said, "I'm not going to break our deal! Look, there are—what, thirty seats on a school bus? Two kids to a seat? Let them go, however many there really are, and we'll call it sixty—sixty nights. Hell, you could cram three kids into a seat if you tried, we'll call it ninety nights just don't let Harley kill them!"

Joker's eyebrows skyrocketed briefly before his expression became unreadable.
Batman stepped closer and lifted a hand to Joker's cheek, tracing the painted scars, "And, honestly, we don't even need the deal anymore...Earlier, when I said I loved what we did...that part wasn't bullshit." Joker looked away at the ground, and Batman's hand slid from Joker's cheek to his chin, tilting his face back up and forcing him to meet Batman's eyes. "Tell me where they are," he murmured.

Joker met Batman's gaze for a long moment, studying his face, before finally laughing humorlessly and saying, "Fine."

"Thank you," Batman exhaled, pulling Joker forward into his arms, but Joker had other ideas. He crashed his lips against Batman's, kissing him with everything he had, acting for all the world like a condemned man savoring his last meal.

"Calm down," Batman said, pulling back after a moment, "there's—mmph—plenty of time—mmmm—for this later."

"Somehow, I doubt it," Joker said, releasing Batman and taking a step backward.

Batman tensed, and very cautiously asked, "What did you do?"

Joker avoided his eyes.

"Tell me you didn't...are they..."

"I didn't kill them, if that's what you're getting at," he snapped.

"Joker, where are the hostages?"

"There are no hostages, okay!"

Batman blinked.

"What?"

Amazing how one word could sound so deadly.

"Well, there were, but...I let them go already—before I even turned on the batsignal...And they, uh, never really knew they were hostages in the first place."

"You...but...that video?"

Joker thought it was promising that Batsy wasn't throwing punches yet, and explained, "Those kids were from some acting camp, on a field trip. I kinda pretended to be a regular guy and paid their teacher a ridiculous amount of money for them to 'act' in my oh-so-avant-garde independent film about Gotham's, uh, celebrity criminals." He licked his scars and shrugged. "Harley drove us all to a warehouse, then I told her to fuck off, and I let the kids leave without her ever realizing it was staged."

"And...that little girl? Rachel?"

"Paid her too. That henchman—Brock or Jose or whatever the fuck his name is—he's her dad. I told her what to say ahead of time. And I think her real name was Lisa."

"But, that—what if I'd refused?"

"I knew you wouldn't."
"What. If. I. Had. Refused?"

Joker shrugged. "I could've found more kids somewhere. They're not exactly rare, ya know."

"You—you…I don't even…that…"

Joker backed up a few steps, nearly tripping over Commissioner Gordon, who was stirring back into consciousness.

"So …you… I… I just…" Batman stammered, before simultaneously finding his voice and his rage, and bellowing, "I JUST FUCKED MY ARCHENEMY TO SAVE HOSTAGES THAT WERE ALREADY FREE?"

"I know you did," Joker said, smirking a little, "I was there, it was awesome."

Gordon, upon hearing this exchange, promptly un-holstered his gun and knocked himself back out.

Batman advanced slowly and menacingly towards Joker.

Joker backed away, his hands held up in a calming gesture.

"Now, Batsy, don't be like that—remember the amazing sex? No more amazing sex if you kill me!" he called as Batman chucked a batarang at his head.

"You lying—" Batman chucked another batarang and Joker dodged it, "—manipulative—" he finally ran out of batarangs, and instead seized Harley's abandoned nightstick dildo from the ground and hurled it at Joker, "fucking psycho!"

Joker licked his scars, still backing up to stay out of pummeling distance, and said, "Now, I'll give you the manipulative psycho part, but I didn't lie."

"You lied about everything!" Batman shouted, rushing forward to finally close the distance between them and slam Joker's back up against a lamppost.

Joker winced at the impact but didn't struggle. "No, I told the truth backwards." Batman growled, but let him continue. "The deal was, we would have mindblowingly awesome sex, and I would let the hostages go free—I just happened to let them go first. Doesn't make me a liar."

Batman glared at him for a long moment, bringing both his temper and his breathing back under control with extreme difficulty. Technically, he supposed Joker had a point—not that Batman agreed with his funhouse-mirror logic, but he knew that if he tried to argue semantics Joker would just talk circles around his sanity, so he let it go for now.

He locked eyes with Joker for a moment of the loudest silence he'd ever heard.

Then, finally, he just said, "Why?"

It was the big why, and he wanted a real answer this time.

Joker studied him for a moment, then gave it to him.

"You needed a little push. This, uh, tension between us? I've felt it since our very first fight, and I think you have too—you just didn't want to, so you ignored it, buried it under your 31 flavors of denial, and hoped it would go away if you hit me hard enough."

Guilt momentarily flickered in Batman's eyes before he replied, "I only hit you when you deserved
Joker smirked and waved a hand dismissively. "That's what they all say...But anyway, call me impatient but I *really* didn't want to wait another thirty years for your repression *et cetera* to work itself out, so, I went all-in on this one and pushed you headfirst into what you wanted all along—and you *know* that, underneath whatever rage you're feeling. You can hit me and rationalize and run away all you want, but you know it's true. Look me in the eye and call me a liar—I dare you."

It was tempting; he could beat the shit out of him and go back to pretending there was nothing between them—Batman was almost pissed off enough to try it...but, damn it, he also saw Joker's point. Batman never would've acknowledged the intense chemistry between them—let alone given into it—if Joker hadn't dragged him kicking and screaming into...whatever it was that they had now. And perhaps he could use their...*whatever it was*... to keep Joker too occupied to do anything *too* unforgivable anytime soon.

Besides, the fact that a busload of children hadn't *actually* been locked up, terrified, in a warehouse somewhere all this time made Batman a little more inclined to be forgiving. He was still angry about the deception, oh yes, but he could keep his fists to himself for now—after all, he had found a much more rewarding way to let off steam.

Batman took one more deep, calming breath, and lifted his hand—Joker tensed, perhaps expecting a fist to the face, but the hand merely seized a handful of green hair and tilted Joker's head back.

"Not a liar," Batman conceded, leaning in to tease his lips against that spot on Joker's exposed neck that made him squirm so beautifully. "But, you know...manipulative psychos who trick me have to be *punished*."

Joker couldn't see Batman's devious smirk, but he felt it against his neck and heard it in Batsy's voice, and he grinned in triumphant relief—his gamble *hadn't* ruined everything after all. Hell, things had turned out even better than he'd hoped for.

He hooked his fingers into Batman's utility belt and pulled him closer. "Well that's, ah, only *fair*."

The wails of distant sirens pierced the night, slowly moving closer.

"Gonna spank me in front of the firemen?" Joker asked, waggling his eyebrows.

"Actually, I was thinking we could get out of here and find somewhere private to steam up the Tumbler's windows."

"That works too," Joker said. Batman loosened his grip on Joker's hair, and Joker took the opportunity to capture Batman's lips in a hungry kiss.

Funny how only hours ago, Batsy would've knocked him out after all of this instead of greedily kissing him back. A line from something by Dickens occurred to Joker—*the spirits have done it all in one night*—and he found it amusingly appropriate. Except, you know, replace the *spirits* with the Joker. And he was pretty sure there wasn't any gay hate-sex in *A Christmas Carol*.

The sirens kept getting closer, and Joker finally broke away from the kiss and started purposefully striding away, thrusting his index finger in the air and shouting, "To the Batmobile!"

Batman let him go for a few steps before calling, "Other way."

Joker spun on his heel and headed the opposite direction without missing a step. Holding back a smile, Batman caught up with him, heading back towards the burning building where they'd
started.

Gordon was awake again and slowly getting to his feet, but he froze when he saw the pair approaching.

Joker kept his distance, only pausing long enough to say, "Do I need to waste my breath on threats, Commissioner?"

"Don't worry," Gordon said, wearily shaking his head, "not even my therapist will hear about any of this."

"Good man," Joker said, continuing towards the alley across the street.

Batman hesitated a moment, glancing at Gordon and opening his mouth as if to explain.

Gordon waved him away. "I don't want to know. Just go."

And Batman did.

He caught up to Joker at the entrance of the alleyway, grabbed him, then spun him around and pinned him against the wall, where the two of them proceeded to make out like horny teenagers.

"Don't mind me," Gordon said to no one in particular as the pair unglued their faces and melted into the shadows, "I'm just going to go home and scrub my eyeballs with bleach and sandpaper."

Seconds later, Gordon heard the Tumbler's powerful engines roar to life before it sped away, and he realized that he really didn't want to be the only person around for questioning when those sirens got here.

He climbed into his unmarked cruiser—significantly worse for the wear after having two outlaws and a cinder block crash-land on it—and ignored the police radio, which was blatting about another explosion over on Boyle street.

He recalled something that the late Commissioner Loeb had once said, and decided that it definitely applied tonight—although, Gordon wasn't sure if there was an appropriate response to this particular situation. Nevertheless, Gordon was going to go home, have a vat of whiskey, and try to forget any of this ever happened.

And he would definitely not be explaining to his wife why he was late for dinner.

A/N: Aaaaand, that's it. Hope you all enjoyed the ride. Thank you so much to everyone who has read, reviewed, favorited, and/or followed this story—You guys make it all worth it.

~Kayliana
**A/N:** Perhaps you noticed a certain (tiny) dropped thread in chapter 5; well, this was what it was supposed to lead to, except I ultimately decided that the idea just didn't fit into the flow of the actual story. So, consider this a deleted scene, or an "Easter egg" of sorts; it doesn't really add anything to the plot, it's just an amusing little tidbit from Alfred's p.o.v. with a huge helping of dramatic irony, spanning chapters 5 and 6…

Shortly after Harley walks in on Batman and Joker making out then attacks Batman in chapter 5…

"There you go Batsy, now spank her!" Joker called through his laughter.

But Harley wasn't giving up that easily—she slammed her head backwards, bashing Batman's face as hard as she could. The mask took most of the blow, but a tiny crunch told him that something inside the mask had been damaged; he didn't have time to wonder what it was, though.

**BONUS CHAPTER: Stop Me If You've Heard This Before...**

Alfred was having a perfectly dull night. His butlering duties were finished for the night, so all he was really doing was waiting for Master Wayne to return from his…extracurricular activities. Hopefully not in need of stitches or minor surgery—there was only so much Alfred's nerves could handle.

Before leaving, Master Wayne had assured him that it was unlikely to be a busy night—a routine patrol, he had called it. Alfred wasn't so sure—after all, that painted fiend had escaped from Arkham for the second time six months ago, and things had been just too quiet. Master Wayne had run himself ragged searching for the clown, but after three months without even the smallest hint of his whereabouts, Master Wayne had finally resigned himself to the fact that the Joker had, perhaps, done something rational for once and disappeared. And surely Alfred was only imagining the barest hint of disappointment in Master Wayne's expression when he'd shared his conclusion with Alfred.

Alfred made himself a cup of tea, and was just settling down in his favorite chair to watch a bit of telly before bed when the mobile phone rang. The emergency phone, which Alfred never let out of earshot, and which only one person could call. Not that that person ever did unless he was mortally wounded—Master Wayne would sooner drag himself bleeding through the front door and stitch himself up in secret than ask for help. Any time he called the emergency phone, it was serious.

Clamping down on the panic that rose up in a torrent, Alfred answered the phone.

"Master Wayne?"

There was no need to worry about revealing Batman's identity by calling him that; the call was made from a mechanism inside Batman's mask, and could only be activated by Master Wayne's voice. No one else could possibly access it.

There was no answer, and Alfred's worry increased tenfold.

"Master Wayne, are you hurt?"
He strained his ears and thought he heard the sounds of a struggle.

"Master Wayne?" he repeated more urgently. "Can you hear me?"

No answer. Then, after a moment, an odd sound reached his ears. Was that...clapping?

Then, there was a distorted rustling sound, a quiet gasp, then a long moment of silence. Then, finally a voice.

"See, Mistah J? He's just a guy in a bat suit—I'm the one who loves you. I'll always love you. So now you can stop this nonsense with Batman and we can be together forever—right, Mistah J?"

*Oh dear.* Harley Quinn. Speaking to the Joker. About de-masking Batman. This was bad.

And now the Joker was chuckling, which was never a good thing. Harley exclaimed, "I knew you'd understand, Mistah J!"

Joker kept chuckling, and all Alfred could think was that this was very bad. Was Master Wayne unconscious—was that why he hadn't answered? But Alfred was certain he'd heard a struggle, and the Joker and Harley were unlikely to be fighting each other in the presence of an unconscious Batman, right?

Alfred jumped up from his chair, keeping the cell phone pressed to his ear. Something had gone terribly wrong, and Master Wayne clearly needed his help, and for that, Alfred needed to use Master Wayne's so-called Batcomputer to track his location.

The Joker spoke up for the first time. "You wanna know what's so funny, Harley?" he asked, his tone deadly, despite the occasional chuckle still slipping out. "I actually believed that you had potential."

Alfred blinked. That certainly didn't sound good. Perhaps Joker and Harley had been fighting after all? But where was Master Wayne in all of this, Alfred wondered as he entered Batman's lair—the temporary Batcave, with its eerie all-white walls—and approached the huge supercomputer.

There was a sudden gasp from Harley. The Joker growled. Then, after a moment, a third voice spoke up.

"Don't... Let me."

Alfred nearly cried in relief—that was unmistakably Master Wayne. Alfred had never been happier to hear Batman's (as Alfred teasingly called it) caveman growl.

But...why had he ignored Alfred's questions all this time? And what exactly was he talking about? Harley Quinn was crying and sniveling in the background, and Alfred wasn't sure if that was a good thing.

Alfred pulled up the program to access the emergency tracking beacon in the Batsuit, but nothing showed up. *Bloody hell.* The tracking device must have been damaged in a struggle—and, it dawned on Alfred, perhaps the emergency communication device had been damaged too? Because Alfred could hear everything on Batman's end, but apparently Master Wayne couldn't hear him. Perhaps Master Wayne hadn't even intentionally called him?

Master Wayne's voice returned. "Let me handle this," he requested. "Put that down."

Alfred hadn't heard any other voices, so logically, Master Wayne had to be addressing the Joker. If
so, he was being oddly civil to his archenemy, Alfred mused.

There was a pause, then, finally, "Alright then," Joker said, also sounding remarkably civil and somber. There was a brief clatter of something metal hitting the floor. "Handle it."

Another small scuffle—Harley's whimpering ceased, and Alfred could only assume that the sudden *thud* was her hitting the floor.

Alfred nearly hit the floor himself at Joker's next words.

"Wow. That was kinda hot," Joker said. He sounded like he was grinning.

Dear lord, surely the lunatic wasn't *flirting* again? That always sent Master Wayne into a violent fury. Alfred waited for the sound of a fist knocking the clown out, but strangely, it never came.

"What do we do with her now?" Master Wayne asked, apparently ignoring the Joker's provocation. That was odd.

"Hmm, damn it, I left the wood-chipper in my other pants," the madman joked.

"I'm serious."

"There's a closet in the other room."

"That'll do," said Master Wayne.

There was another pause, then Joker, sounding uncharacteristically nervous, asked, "Can I—?"

Alfred had no idea what the man was asking for, but Master Wayne must've silently acquiesced to whatever it was, because after another pause he asked, "Better?" Master Wayne's voice sounded much closer and clearer than a moment ago, and Alfred deduced that he must've put the mask back on.

"Much," Joker replied, sounding much more like himself. "Now, let's take out the trash and do what we came here for, shall we?"

Alfred's brow furrowed. Master Wayne and the Joker were...cooperating? But towards what end, and why? And why on earth had Harley Quinn been—apparently—fighting them? Since when did Harley Quinn do anything other than trip over herself in her enthusiasm to please the Joker? Going against his wishes was unheard-of for her, so why..?

Everything about this was confusing.

Alfred frowned and decided to sit back and listen for any clues to Master Wayne's location or goal—there wasn't much else he could do, really.

After a moment, Master Wayne spoke again. "So...we don't have to have a big psychoanalytic discussion about this, do we?"

"I, uh, suppose we can save that for next time," Joker replied.

*Next time?* Had Master Wayne somehow secured the Joker's cooperation for some kind of mission? What on earth could possibly compel those two to work together? And how was Master Wayne going to handle the fiend knowing his identity?

"Good...You want to give me a hand with this?"
Alfred listened intently, hoping for a clue as to what the two were collaborating on.

"Seriously? She's like ninety pounds soaking wet."

"Harley wet is the absolute last thing I want to think about."

Alfred's lip curled in distaste. Honestly, Master Wayne. Gutter humor? Haven't I taught you better than that?

"Wow. Are you proud of that one?"

Master Wayne didn't reply, but Alfred heard the sound of something being dragged across the floor, and guessed it was Harley.

After a moment, Joker said, "You know, I always wondered why the host of Harvey's fundraiser wasn't even there when I showed...And, heh, when I couldn't find Harvey, I was gonna take Brucey hostage instead."

Master Wayne made a noise somewhere between a laugh and a scoff, and said, "You were going to try."

"No, that's the thing—you couldn't have really fought me in front of everybody without your mask, not without raising some pretty big suspicions."

Oh dear. Things certainly weren't looking good in the secret identity department. Alfred could only imagine the kind of trouble the Joker was bound to cause now that he knew who Batman was under the mask. Alfred made a mental note to upgrade the security systems as soon as possible, and perhaps hire a small militia.

"Look, just because you know who I am now—" Master Wayne paused; then, triumphantly, he repeated, "You know who I am now."

"Yeah, we've established that."

"Don't you think that that's much better leverage than hostages?"

Finally, Alfred thought, a reason for this madness. He listened intently, hoping for more information about the hostages.

"We made a deal," Joker retorted, displeasure audible in his voice.

"We can make a new one. Let all of the children go."

So the Joker kidnapped children in order to ensure Batman's cooperation with...what, exactly? The puzzle pieces slowly clicked together, but several pieces were still missing. Alfred kept an eager ear pressed to the phone for more information.

Joker didn't like Master Wayne's suggestion. "You're all about throwing yourself under the bus for other people—you'd rather let me out you than let me kill those kids."

"In the long run, protecting my anonymity means I can save more people," Master Wayne argued. "So let the damn kids go. If I back out of the deal, you can tell the whole world my name."

Good man, Master Wayne, Alfred commended his effort.

Joker, unfortunately, wasn't impressed with Master Wayne's logic. "You're forgetting, Batsy,"
Joker said, "I don't like to share."

And there it is, the Joker's unnerving possessiveness towards Master Wayne. But—surely the madman wasn't implying that...that he would actually keep Master Wayne's secret?

There was a silence, and Alfred was sure Master Wayne was as stunned as he was.

Finally, Master Wayne said—no, growled, "No, you're forgetting, Joker," there were urgent footsteps, a quiet, surprised inhalation. "I'm not going anywhere."

Alfred's eyebrows drew together in confusion. Clearly he had missed something. And...what on earth was that noise? It was very...wet...and somehow familiar—he just couldn't quite place it in this context. Before he could figure it out, there was another noise—a very feminine whimper accompanied by a scuffling sound.

The wet noises ceased.

"Oh, for fuck's sake!" Joker shouted.

What the—?

"No! You're not killing her," Master Wayne growled.

"Then choke her out again!"

Oh, of course—Miss Quinn was awake...And, the Joker wanted to kill her? Why?

"If I do that too many times, the lack of blood flow to the brain could cause permanent brain damage."

Joker snorted. "Like anyone would notice."

Alfred wondered for the hundredth time why the poor girl stayed with that animal—he did nothing but use and demean her. And...why wasn't she part of whatever scheme the Joker had roped Master Wayne into? Neither of them seemed to want her around.

"Hold her still. I have something better."

"Cyanide?" Joker asked, sounded hopeful.

"Chloroform. Give me a rag or something." There was a pause, a muffled fwump sound, and Master Wayne said, "What—?" there was a brief pause, and he sounded utterly repulsed when he spat, "Really?"

Joker replied with a cavalier, "Oh, don't look at me like that—I just made her year." The response gave Alfred no clues as to what he was missing. Then Joker said, "Close your mouth, Harley. Drooling from both ends is just rude."

Drooling...from both...ugh! Alfred's face twisted in disgust as he got that one. Just what the world needed—more gutter humor. Clearly, this was where Master Wayne learned it. Alfred wasn't pleased about the Joker's perverted sense of humor rubbing off on Master Wayne.

Master Wayne's only response was a terse, "Hold her still."

Alfred's imagination supplied him with an image of Batman using the chloroform on Miss Quinn. He still wasn't sure why she was apparently not on the same side as the Joker and Master Wayne in
whatever this endeavor was.

"How long will that knock her out?" the madman asked.

"It's diluted, so, about thirty minutes, give or take," Master Wayne answered.

There was a sudden clamor of footsteps, a dragging noise, a door opening and slamming shut.

"Thirty minutes? Let's not waste 'em," Joker said.

Then came the sound of more pounding footsteps that grew louder as they presumably approached Master Wayne.

Alfred tensed, wondering whether that madman was about to attack Master Wayne.

A soft, involuntary grunt escaped Master Wayne, and Alfred wondered if the Joker had struck him. Then there were more of those odd, wet noises.

"Let—mmph—let go," Master Wayne ordered—although it seemed like his mouth was otherwise occupied.

_His mouth was_—? Alfred's brain seemed to stutter to a halt as he realized exactly what that wet noise sounded like. Lips. _Snogging_. But Master Wayne wouldn't be—


_Bed_? Alfred's brain full-on exploded. Master Wayne and the Joker were _snogging_ and there was a bloody _bed_ in the room and they were…oh god.

The sound of a muffled _thump_ along with bedsprings creaking met Alfred's shell-shocked ears, followed by quiet laughter that was quickly stifled by more of that wet noise.

Alfred couldn't make up his mind whether to throw up or run screaming and check himself into Arkham, so he compromised by remaining glued to the spot in shock.

"Mmm—question," the Joker said when they paused for breath. "How much of this suit can you leave on?"

"Why? You got a Kevlar fetish?" Master Wayne, god help him, sounded like he was _smiling_.

"If I do it's your fault… So?"

"Well, all I really need to take off…is this."

There was a click as Master Wayne presumably—_this can't really be happening_—removed part of the Batsuit.

Alfred didn't have long to be horrified, however, because the Joker's sudden earsplitting laughter jolted him out of it.

"What _is_ that, a rape panel?" the Joker cackled.

"What? No!" Master Wayne sounded supremely offended at the suggestion, and Alfred shared the sentiment, despite his traumatized state. "It's for when I have to pee."

The Joker laughed again, and said, "It's okay Batsy, I get it now—carrying chloroform, the
handcuffs, *that* thing—" his voice grew serious and he asked, "Are you secretly a rapist?" Then the lunatic resumed his insane laughter.

"I have chloroform so I can subdue and relocate suspects for interrogation." Alfred couldn't help but be proud of Master Wayne's mastery of the British art of calling someone an idiot using only the tone of one's voice. Alfred *had* managed to teach him some actual wit after all.

"Oh, *interrogation,*" the Joker said in a very—Alfred shuddered—*seductive* tone. "You mean *foreplay,* right?"

"No."

"Bullshit. You were two seconds from ripping my clothes off in that interrogation room, and everybody knows it."

"I was two seconds from ripping your throat out."

"Po-tay-toe, po-tah-toe."

"Shut up or I'm starting without you."

*Oh dear god.* Master Wayne sounded like an entirely willing—and *eager*—participant in this insanity.

"You're not helping your case there, Mr. Rape Panel."

Master Wayne chose not to respond—not with words, anyway. There was more of that wet kissing sound, along with a metal clinking noise that could be a belt buckle being undone, followed by the unmistakable sound of a zipper, then the soft rustling of clothes hitting the floor.

Master Wayne chuckled at something, sarcastically saying, "Subtle."

"Subtlety's boring," Joker replied. There was a moan, then Joker said, "Edge of the bed. Move."

There was a short pause full of creaking bedsprings as Master Wayne presumably complied, then Joker said, "Good Batsy," and there was a faint *thud* as if something dropped to the floor. Something—or someone…Had Master Wayne come to his senses and knocked out the painted madman?

"What are you—*oh!*" Master Wayne gasped. "*Fuck.*"

*That* would be a resounding *no* to the coming-to-his-senses question. And there was more of that wet noise, except it sounded different somehow. Then it abruptly stopped.

"Problem?" the Joker asked.

"I—um…"

"You don't trust me," the madman accused, sounding more irritated about it than he had any right to be. Who in their right mind *would* trust the Joker?

Master Wayne huffed. "What do you expect? You blackmail me into this, and—*Fuck.*"

There was more of that wet noise, but Alfred ignored it—*blackmail*, his mind gratefully seized that idea. *Master Wayne had been blackmailed into this—whatever it was. Of course.* Hadn't Master Wayne mentioned hostage children earlier?
Alfred sighed in relief—Master Wayne was only snogging the Joker in order to save captive children. He wasn't actually enjoying it—

Master Wayne promptly shot a hole in that theory by nearly moaning the criminal's name before he stopped himself.

"Jo—ohhhh," Master Wayne moaned as the wet noises continued.

After a moment, Master Wayne blurted, "You're a hypocrite," and the wet noises abruptly stopped again.

It finally occurred to Alfred to wonder how Master Wayne managed to say anything at all if he had been—as the wet noises suggested—snogging the Joker.

"Excuse me?" Joker asked, sounding inexplicably offended.

"You said to never start with the head. Remember?"

Oh dear god, that wasn't snogging, Alfred realized, his jaw dropping in surprise and disgust.

The wet noises resumed and Master Wayne moaned again. Alfred tried very hard not to think about what he was listening to.

"Damn…Finally found a way to shut you up though. I think you missed your calling." The Joker must not have liked that insinuation, because Master Wayne hissed and hastily said, "Ah—kidding, jeez! It's not a chew toy!"

The Joker's resultant laugh sounded muffled—and unfortunately, Alfred now knew exactly why. His treacherous imagination even supplied him with an unfortunately vivid image—Master Wayne, wearing most of the Batsuit, sitting on the edge of a bed, and the Joker on his knees in front of him, with his mouth wrapped around his—

"Get up here, now," Master Wayne growled, mercifully interrupting Alfred's mental horror show.

"Make me."

From the sounds of it, Master Wayne did; there was a loud creak and thwump as someone was thrown onto the mattress, giggling. Something muffled the giggles, and as the only thing Alfred heard from either man was inarticulate moaning, he felt safe in his assumption that those wet noises really were from snogging this time.

Nevertheless, it was obvious from the sounds of the moans and kisses and heavy breathing that things were quickly heating up.

Alfred hadn't heard a single thing that would help him locate Master Wayne. In fact, he'd heard plenty suggesting that Master Wayne didn't need or want to be rescued, God help him.

Seconds later, Master Wayne spoke up again, asking the Joker, "Condom?"

At least he's being safe, Alfred thought in a detached sort of way.

"Drawer," the Joker replied.

Alfred wrenched the phone away from his ear and threw it to the floor. That was it. That was his limit. Master Wayne had just asked the bloody Joker where he kept his condoms. Alfred could not, would not, listen to any more of this.
He stared at the cell phone on the floor as if afraid that it would jump up and bite him.

After a moment, he took a deep breath and turned back to the Batcomputer. He would do something useful, and he would put this insanity out of his mind.

He would…call Commissioner Gordon! Of course. He might be able to track down the hostages Master Wayne was bedding that lunatic to save.

Alfred pulled up the Commissioner's cell number and used the Batcomputer to call it—Master Wayne had done some kind of technical wizardry on it to make it impossible for anyone to trace calls or eavesdrop on or record conversations. It also automatically disguised the caller's voice on Master Wayne's end.

After a few seconds of ringing (during which Alfred glanced at the cell phone on the floor and tried not to think about what was happening on the other end of that line), the Commissioner finally answered, sounding weary.

"Hello?"

"Commissioner Gordon?"

"Who is this?" Gordon asked, suspicious of the distorted voice.

"Don't hang up. I'm an associate of Batman's."

"…I'm listening."

"If you don't already know, the Joker was responsible for the missing children today. Batman is…dealing with the Joker, and you should take the opportunity to look for the hostages while the Joker is…er…occupied."

Gordon, bless his soul, didn't ask for details.

"Hold on a sec," he said.

Alfred heard the sound of computer keys clacking for a moment.

Gordon's voice returned. "There haven't been any reports of missing children today…nothing at all that looks like the Joker's handiwork. Are you sure your information is correct?"

"I overheard the two of them talking about hostage children—"

"No mention of a location?"

"No."

"Number of hostages?"

"They didn't say."

Gordon sighed.

"I suppose it won't hurt anything if I tell you I'm already trying to find Batman and the Joker. The Batsignal lit up tonight, and when I rolled back the security footage, I saw the two of them talking—couldn't hear anything, but Batman looked incredibly disturbed and the Joker looked like Christmas came early. They left together. I'm looking into Batmobile sightings, trying to track
them down."

Alfred had a fleeting impulse to call Gordon off—God forbid he find them and walk in on whatever debauchery Master Wayne was getting up to with that madman—but before he could make up his mind one way or the other, Gordon made a sudden triumphant noise.

"Ha! Another reported sighting…if I can get a third sighting with an approximate time, I'll have a direction and can follow their path…I need to get off of here, unless you know anything else?"

"No," Alfred said, "but—if you find them, don't mention this call or anything about hostages. It might get the children killed."

"Why—?"

Alfred interrupted, making it clear the conversation was finished. "Good luck, and—be careful, sir."

"Of course," Gordon said, and hung up.

Alfred sighed, ending the Batcomputer's phone program.

He glanced over at the mobile phone on the floor—was it still connected, or had it hung up when he'd thrown it?

He was almost too afraid to pick it up and check.

How long had he been talking to Gordon? Alfred tried to calculate whether they would be—he shuddered—finished by now.

*Only one way to find out.*

He stood, walked up to the seemingly innocent cell phone, and gathered up every ounce of his courage before bending to pick it up.

He straightened, and took a deep breath before hesitantly putting it to his ear.

*Heavy breathing and a growling moan and skin repeatedly slapping against skin and "Fuck, Batsy—harder!"*

Alfred blushed—actually blushed—and threw the phone down again.

He stared at the detestable thing, stunned.

Finally he pulled himself together, tore his eyes away from the damnable phone, and walked away. Listening to more would only further scar him for life.

*Besides, Master Wayne is clearly on top of things*—Alfred flinched at the double-entendre and rephrased his thought. *Master Wayne obviously has the situation in hand*—bloody hell, that wasn't much better. Alfred gave up, sighed, and headed for the elevator.

He had half a mind to wait for Master Wayne to return, demand an explanation, and then give him the mother of all talking-to's, but he just didn't think he could survive it. Especially on the off-chance that Master Wayne didn't come home alone.

No, Alfred thought a vacation sounded like a bloody brilliant idea right now.
He'd earned it.

A/N: Well, there you go :) Poor traumatized Alfred.

So, do you guys possibly want more of these little sequel-ish snippets from the same storyverse, or are you all like "No. Story's over. Let it die with dignity." ?

Please review...doesn't have to be fancy. I'd be thrilled if you simply copy/paste your favorite part of any (or every) chapter into the review box and put a smiley face by it. Helps me know which parts went over best with you lovely readers...You could also do the same with your LEAST favorite parts and add a brief explanation of why you don't like them, so I'll know what might need to be reworked.

The aforementioned edits are done, btw. Not a ton of changes, except Batman is less OOC in ch2, and Harley's nightstick dildo is now musical. It plays the theme song to the COPS tv show. Fun times.

As always, thank you for reading/reviewing/favoriting/following/BEING AWESOME :)

And, if anyone cares, here's my AOHCR soundtrack...Some of these songs have nothing to do with the plot or even the pairing, they just helped me zone out and get in the right mood(s) to write this :) I'll put little asterisks by the ones that are actually good B/J songs on their own.

Bad Romance – Lady GaGa (had it on repeat for this bonus chapter)
Hold It Against Me – Britney Spears (chapter 5, obviously)
Shut Up – Nick Lachey
Crazy On You – Heart
Wango Tango – Ted Nugent, from the Live and Out Of Control album disc 2 (yes he's an asshole whackjob irl but I love this one song for the lulz... I can't even listen to this without cracking up laughing near the end... "Now look for a garage... Do you see a garage? Wait a minute...Hey! There's one up ahead—the damn thing's open! Ahhh! Get in there!")
*Miserable – Lit
Breathe On Me – Britney Spears (I had this on repeat while writing chapter 6. Sexy freaking song :)

Figure You Out – Nickelback
*Over and Over – Three Days Grace
*I Hate Everything About You – Three Days Grace
Addicted – Saving Abel
Gimme More – Britney Spears
Lovegame – Lady GaGa
Toxic – Britney Spears
Ooh La La – Goldfrapp
I Almost Told You That I Loved You – Papa Roach
Freakshow – Britney Spears
*Addicted – Kelly Clarkson
*Sick Love Song – Motley Crue
Gasoline – Britney Spears
Lie To Me (Denial) – Red
Tainted Love – Soft Cell
I Wanna Be Bad – Willa Ford

I'm basically saving the good stuff for the sequel. :D
Little Smirk – Theory of A Deadman (this one's more applicable to Harley's attempts at revenge)
*Love The Way You Lie – Eminem and Rihanna (if you ignore the gender differences, this one's
good for B/J and ANY codependent love/hate relationship)
Chacarron Macarron – La Yanta (this song is NONSENSE. No, seriously, there are no words. It
sounds like the drunkest drunk to ever drink. If you ever need to just burst out laughing, pull this
up on your iPod. I swear. Instant chucklefest. I DARE YOU to try to keep a straight face listening
to it.)
Bonus Chapter: If The Tumbler's A-Rocking...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A/N: Timeline-wise, this one picks up right after chapter 7.

Also, parts of it are NSFW, and/or NSFC. C being class. Don't read porn at school, kids.

Warnings/tags for this chapter include: somebody's wasted, pharmaceutical plot device, Joker is a drama queen, buzzed driving is drunk driving so don't do it because you're not Batman, weird arguments, sorry if you were rooting for bondage, #AndThenItDevolvedIntoPorn.

So, basically, it's the same cracktasticness you've come to know and love.

Enjoy :)

______________________________

BONUS CHAPTER 2: If The Tumbler's A-Rockin'...

Fire trucks and cop cars were swarming like ants around the inferno Batman and Joker had left behind, turning the streets of the Narrows into a sea of flashing red and blue lights. There was a very real risk of getting into a Smokey-and-the-Bandit-style chase with a conga line of cop cars behind him, but Batman avoided that by carefully sticking to the alleys and keeping the Tumbler in stealth mode as he headed for their next destination.

Still, the overabundance of lights and sirens made what should've been a four-minute drive take fifteen. Although, five minutes of that delay were because Joker decided to pop open Batman's 'rape panel' while he was driving, which resulted in an attempted blowjob, an embarrassing crash into a street-sweeper, and…

"C'mon Bats, this stopped being funny ten minutes ago."

Batman glanced over, smirking. "Not from where I'm sitting."

Joker was on his knees in the passenger seat, facing backwards, with his hands firmly zip-tied to the posts of the headrest. His trench coat was pushed aside and his boxers were around his ankles.

"Maybe you should, uh, quit lookin' and start touching, hmmm?" He wiggled his bare ass in Batman's direction.

"You're being punished, remember?"

Joker licked at his scars, glaring daggers at the zip ties around his wrists.

"Punishment's supposed to hurt."

"Nah. You'd like that too much."

Joker huffed, and asked, "You gonna at least tell me where we're going?"

"We're here," Batman said, parking in a deserted alley next to an apartment building.
"Here where? Where are you going?" Joker demanded.

Batman opened the door and started to get out, leaving Joker tied up where he was.

"I need to talk to Gordon."

"Right now?"

"Yes, right now… Don't go anywhere," he teased, smacking Joker's bare ass before climbing out of the Tumbler, ignoring his captive's protests and locking him inside.

Batman climbed up the apartment building's fire escape, stopping just outside of the window he knew was Gordon's. He peered inside the dark living room and saw Gordon sitting on the sofa holding a large bottle. Batman briefly activated the cowl's night-vision feature to make sure Gordon really was alone in the room. In a room down the hall, it looked like the kids had fallen asleep next to their mother in her bed. Satisfied, Batman switched his vision back to normal.

Then he took a deep breath, and knocked.

Gordon jumped, his head snapping towards the window.

For a second, Gordon and Batman looked at each other in silence. Then, with a snort, Gordon stood up and stumbled his way to the window, clutching the mostly-empty bottle of Jack Daniels.

Batman glanced at the bottle, concerned. If it had started out full, then the commissioner must've raced straight home and chugged the stuff. And if so, hello alcohol poisoning. Hopefully Gordon was smarter than that.

Gordon reluctantly set the bottle down on the window ledge, and used both hands to open the window. Gordon forced it up halfway before suddenly stopping, looking horrorstruck, and asking, "You're alone, right?"

Batman nodded, trying not to wince as Gordon's 90-proof breath stung his eyes.

Gordon relaxed and opened the window the rest of the way.

"Well move over so I can geddout there," he slurred, lifting one leg towards the window ledge and nearly falling over. "Whoops," he laughed.

"Maybe you should stay inside," Batman suggested. Heavy drinking and fire escapes don't really mix, and Batman wasn't in the mood to jump off any more buildings tonight. This morning, technically. Whatever.

Gordon pointed his index finger in Batman's face. "You," he said, "are smart."

"You're drunk."

"'Cause you were kissin the fuggin' Joker!" Gordon exclaimed, snatching the bottle back up for another drink.

"Say it a little louder, I don't think you woke your kids up yet."

"Don'you dare bring my kids inna this! An' you better keep your fuggin' boyfriend away from 'em!"

"He is not my boyfriend!" Batman didn't know what the term was for what they were, but he knew that wasn't it.
"Oh, well escuuuuuse me," Gordon slurred. "Y' only yelled for the whole street'ta hear that ya fucked him, and 'e had a damn bat symbol drawn on 'is unnerwear, an' you couldn't seem'ta get enougha kissin' him. But forgive me for being presooma—prozumpsis—pressumstitious—"

"Presumptuous?" Batman offered.

"Tha' one!"

Gordon took another drink.

"If you heard that, then you also heard that I thought I was doing it to save hostages. He tricked me, Gordon… I'm not 'going dark side' anytime soon."

Gordon studied him in silence. After a long moment, Gordon sighed and said, "I know…'m sorry, I just," he trailed off and shook his head.

Gordon stared at his bottle, swirling around the tiny amount left inside.

"You were still kissin' him. After."

"I know."

He didn't know how to make Gordon understand that in this case, Batman was just a kid who was forced to try a weird vegetable that somehow turned out to be his new favorite food. But much like fire escapes, metaphors were tricky for the inebriated, so Batman didn't bother.

Gordon lifted the bottle for the last time, draining the last drops of whiskey. He glanced at the bottle and frowned. "It issn' workin. I wanna forget." He looked up, pinning Batman with a very serious look. "Ri' now I believe that'cher still one'na the good guys—but when I sober up, I dunno… I don't wanna not trust you."

"I don't want that either," Batman said. After a moment of consideration, he continued, "If you're serious about wanting to forget, I have something that will work."

"What issit?" Gordon asked, perking up.

"A variation of rohypnol. It'll put you right to sleep and wipe out the past six hours or so."

"Rohyp—you mean roofies?" Gordon barked out a laugh. "Whadd'are ya, a rapist or somethin?"


Gordon snorted, half in disgust and half in amusement.

"Where is he, anyway?"

Batman saw no reason to lie.

"Tied up half-naked in the Batmobile," he said, using Joker's ridiculous name for it ironically.

Gordon blinked.

"…Gimme the damn roofies."

Batman handed the pills over.
Gordon tossed them back and swallowed them dry.

"You should probably sit—" Gordon swayed on his feet, and Batman caught him before he could collapse "—down."

Batman carried him across the room and set him down on the sofa, then got the hell out of there. Because, well, the Joker was tied up half-naked in the Batmobile.

A tiny smirk crept onto Batman's face as he hurried down the stairs of the fire escape, then leapt the short distance to the ground, landing next to the Tumbler.

A quick glance up at the blue-lit pre-dawn sky told him that he wouldn't have the cover of darkness much longer. And as much as part of him rebelled and shouted too much, too soon, are you legitimately fucking crazy, there was really only one place to go. Besides, Joker already knew his 'secret identity.'

Batman opened the driver's side door, peered inside, and nearly laughed at the sight that greeted him. Joker had managed, presumably by using his teeth and his knees, to drag one of the pockets of his trench coat up into his mouth—now, he was using his shoulder to tip the pocket open, trying to retrieve something inside.

Joker narrowed his eyes at Batman as he finally got his mouth on what he was after—a switchblade knife. Of course.

He leaned his face over the headrest and dropped the knife into one hand, popping the blade out and trying to cut off the zip ties that bound him.

Batman got into the Tumbler and snatched the knife away before Joker could succeed.

"No toys in time-out," he teased.

Joker glared at him.

"Fuck you, Bruce."

Batman's smile disappeared.

He slammed the Tumbler's door—thank god no one was around to hear his name just now—and growled, "Don't ever call me that."

Joker ignored it.

"So, how long 'til they get here, Bruce?"

Batman blinked and remained silent, trying to figure out what Joker was so pissed off about all of a sudden.

"I guess the delay's 'cause everybody's busy putting out our fire, hmm? Y'know, you actually had me fooled, and that's hard to do—I'd give ya a round of applause, but, ya know," he flapped his tied-up hands uselessly.

"Joker—"

"And the funny part is," he furiously talked over him, "I didn't actually do anything this time! I went out of my goddamn way not to hurt anybody, for your fuckin' sake—and Harley doesn't count, she blew herself up. Didn't see you trying to stop her, by the way," Joker ranted, licking at his
scars. "That one rule of yours must have some interesting fine print—you should have your lawyers fax me a copy sometime."

"What are you—?"

"Joke's over, Bruce. Stop pretending!" Joker shouted, throwing a murderous look at him.

"I'm not—"

"Bullshit—the second you get me tied up, you decide you have to talk to Gordon right that fuckin' minute, and leave me all trussed up out here." Joker licked his scars, then put on a nauseating, falsely cheery voice and asked, "So did you two have a nice little chat, hmmm, arranging my ticket back to Arkham? Did Harvey Dent leave an extra body or ten laying around for you two to pin on me, Bruce?"

Oh.

Duh.

"We weren't—"

"Don't lie to me!" Joker shouted, struggling against his bonds so hard that Batman worried he would break his wrists.

"I'm not!"

Batman leaned across the Tumbler and tried to hold Joker still before he hurt himself. He got a knee to the ribs for his effort, and barely dodged a vicious head-butt. But Batman kept at it, and ended up in the passenger seat, on top of Joker's legs to pin them, pressing him against the seat to hold him still. Joker threw his head back in another attempt to head-butt him, but Batman grabbed a fistful of his hair and held him still, pressing his body harder into the passenger seat.

Joker finally stopped struggling, but after a second's pause to catch his breath, he growled, "If you touch me right now, you're dead."

"I would never—! Will you just listen?" Batman hissed in Joker's ear, backing off a little but still restricting Joker's mobility so he couldn't hurt either of them. "I wasn't arranging to turn you in—I was just smoothing things over with Gordon. I drugged him so he won't remember seeing us tonight! If I was planning to throw you back in Arkham, I would've roofied you—and...call me crazy but I want this. Whatever this is with us, I want it. Okay?"

Batman released his grip on Joker's hair, turning it into a brief caress as he removed his hand.

Joker said nothing, and Batman wished he could see his face, so he could see how he was taking this.

"If I let you up, will you calm down?"

A pause.

"Try it and see."

After a second's consideration, Batman did. He carefully moved back to his own seat, and took it as a good sign that Joker stayed still, aside from turning his head to catch Batman's eyes with his own.
Batman met his stare, not trying to hide anything—he wanted Joker to see whatever he was looking for when he did his reading people magic, wanted him to know he was telling the truth.

Batman knew the second Joker found it—Joker's entire body relaxed in relief as he let go of all that murderous tension.

"You, uh," lick "really roofied the Commissioner?"

"He practically begged me to."

"Did he?" A tiny smirk tugged at Joker's lips. He stared at Batman for another long moment, then the smirk faded and he wiggled his bound hands. "Take these fuckin' things off me."

"No." At Joker's sharp glare, Batman elaborated, "Five more minutes."

Batman started up the Tumbler and sped off towards his penthouse.

"Make it three," Joker grumbled, "or I'll crash this thing."

Batman glanced at him; one of Joker's unbound legs could easily reach the steering wheel if he decided to kick it.

"Hold on then," Batman said, taking his driving up a notch, flooring the gas pedal and weaving between cars and buildings at a speed that turned the city's lights to blurs outside his window; it would've been reckless for anyone else (even without taking into account his current blood alcohol level, which had to be pushing legal). A smile crept onto his face—it was such a rush, driving like this, being in perfect control of this powerful machine, swerving through traffic and drifting expertly around corners. It wasn't quite on the same level as physical combat, not as satisfying as using only his fighting skills and his own body to take down opponents, but it was a rush nonetheless.

He felt eyes on him, and spared a second's glance to find Joker staring at him with a matching, secret smile on his lips. Apparently, Joker enjoyed seeing Batman in his element as much as Batman enjoyed being in his element. Batman tore his eyes away so he wouldn't crash into anything, but his smile grew a little wider.

As he approached the construction site near his penthouse, he slowed down and put the Tumbler in stealth mode.

Less than a minute later, the Tumbler was safely parked in the 'temporary Batcave', and Batman found himself under Joker's expectant gaze.

He hesitantly retrieved Joker's knife and cut one hand free, then handed the knife over so Joker could free the other.

Joker glanced over at him when his hands were both free, still holding the knife; after a moment of tense silence, Batman wondered whether he'd miscalculated how angry Joker was and whether he was about to get a few new holes in retribution, but Joker finally closed the switchblade and stuck it back in his jacket pocket.

"So, I guess that's a no to bondage," Batman said, just for the sake of saying something; Joker's nixing the idea wasn't going to cripple his libido or anything.

Joker tilted his head. "I never said that."
Batman wasn't quite sure how he let it happen, but one half-scuffle half-makeout session later, he was zip-tied to the driver's seat in the exact same position Joker had been in moments ago, and Joker was sitting on his legs to hold him still.

"I just, uh, don't like being the one tied up," Joker said, taking a few seconds to catch his breath before reaching around and detaching Batman's 'rape panel.'

"Joker—" Batman growled, struggling to throw him off, but Joker ignored him.

"See, I don't find it sexy being tied up," after a few seconds of tactile investigation, Joker found the hooks to detach the rest of the panels around Batman's hips, thighs, and backside, "being helpless," he ignored Batman's struggling and tugged the black boxers down, "being completely at the mercy of somebody else, who, uh, might not have any."

He scraped his fingernails down Batman's exposed ass, moving his hand lower and lower.

Batman tensed and stilled as one of Joker's fingers teasingly circled his entrance.

"You do it, and it'll be the last time," Batman growled.

Joker chuckled, and murmured, "Oh, sweetheart, it wouldn't be any fun if you couldn't…react." He leaned in close to Batman's ear and said, "Have I made myself clear, then?"

"Inescapably," Batman said, relaxing as Joker's hand retreated.

"Good."

The switchblade reappeared, and Joker cut Batman's hands free.

"Definite 'no' to bondage," Batman muttered.

Joker moved to the passenger seat for the two seconds it took for Batman to turn back around the right way, then he was right back in Batman's lap, reaching between them to start stroking Batman back to hardness.

"Now, where were we?"

Batman's eyes slipped closed at the touch, and Joker's lips captured his small exhalation of surprise —Batman was still half in defensive mode while Joker was already back in full-tilt sexy times mode. It looked like roller coaster mood-swings were just something Batman would have to get used to.

Batman welcomed the kiss, sliding his hands up Joker's bare thighs and around to his ass, grasping the flesh and spreading while pulling him closer.

Joker grinned into their kiss. "Impatient, are we?"

Batman replied by pulling off his gauntlets and shoving two fingers into Joker without warning.

Joker hissed and bit down on Batman's lower lip but rocked against the fingers, taking them deeper. He was still a little slick inside from earlier.

Batman smirked, and teased, "Who's impatient?"

Joker hummed against his lips, and slid a hand across Batman's armored chest. "Take this off. I want to feel you."
"Mmm." Batman withdrew his fingers and pulled off the rest of the Batsuit in record time until he was only wearing the mask (and, technically, his boxers, which were somewhere around his ankles).

But Joker didn't give him time to feel ridiculous; he reached down the side of the driver's seat and found the lever to recline the seat, shoving Batman backwards and straddling him.

"That's better," Joker said, taking in the muscled expanse of Batman's bare body.

Joker was naked except for the trench coat that curled around the two of them like a parody of Batman's cape.

Batman could almost feel Joker's eyes tracing lines across his skin while he perched on top of him. His hands followed, reverently, traversing muscles, mapping planes, lingering on scars. Joker's fingertips started at Batman's hips, skated over those tight, perfect abs (what is that, a twelve pack?), up to his pectorals, teasing whisper-soft touches over his nipples.

Joker's hands came to rest on Batman's shoulders, and he leaned forward for a moment while he shifted his hips, positioning himself above Batman's straining erection.

Joker started to sink down onto it, winced, reconsidered, and produced a small bottle from his coat pocket.

Batman stared. "That building was burning down around us, and you took the time to save the lube?"

"Obviously. Priorities, Bats," Joker said, uncapping the bottle and drizzling some over Batman's erection. It was warm from being in Joker's pocket.

Batman bit his lip while Joker moved back into position; Joker put his hands back on Batman's shoulders, and shifted most of his weight to his arms, effectively pinning Batman in place.

Batman wasn't sure he should let this continue—it felt too much like giving Joker control. Too much like surrender. But then Joker was sinking down onto Batman's cock, engulfing him, and then it just felt like amazing-dirty-perfect-twisted completion. Batman held his breath to keep from moaning.

Joker lowered himself until every inch was inside him. Then he exhaled and leaned forward, arms still braced against Batman's shoulders, letting his head hang down while he took a moment to adjust. The ends of his hair tickled Batman's chest.

Batman tried to sit up, to get some leverage so he could move—if Joker stayed still another millisecond, Batman was going to go insane—but Joker kept him pinned. Then he looked up. And he clenched. And Batman stopped breathing for a moment.

Joker chuckled at the noise that burst past Batman's lips—some hybrid between a moan and a gasp and a whimper. Batman's eyes slipped shut as Joker lifted himself up and slightly forward, treating Batman to a slow, hot, exquisite drag before sinking back down again and clenching around him.

Joker's hands curled around Joker's hips, urging him to move faster. They fell into a rhythm, and Batman found himself reaching for Joker's erection, stroking it and simulating what Joker was doing to him—a slow, tight stroke from base to tip when Joker was lifting up; a quicker tip-to-base stroke followed by a squeeze when Joker sank down and clenched.

It still felt odd to more or less lay there and let Joker ride him, but at this point it was more like ten
percent odd, ninety percent really fucking awesome.

Joker's hips sped up their rise and fall, outrunning the rhythm. "Bats, I'm gonna—"

"Go on."

Batman stroked Joker a little faster, a little harder. His other hand slid up from Joker's hip, and he raked his fingernails down the soft flesh of Joker's side. Joker sank down one more time before shuddering and releasing across Batman's abdomen.

Joker leaned forward, resting his forehead on Batman's sternum while he caught his breath. Batman's erection throbbed inside Joker, unimpressed with the sudden stillness.

Batman stroked one hand through Joker's hair while he waited, taking deep breaths and trying to be patient. But he was close to being close, and the lack of movement was killing him.

Joker sensed his frustration and clamped around him to compensate for the stillness. "Just, gimme a second?" Joker took a deep breath, then he seemed to pull himself together, and he straightened back up.

Batman started to sit up with him, but Joker pushed his shoulders back down.


Then Joker rose up and sank back down, and it was all Batman could do not to scream in ecstasy. But then Joker stopped again.

Batman growled.

"Stop stopping!"

Joker's lips quirked up at that, but he was studying Batman's face. No, he was studying the mask.

Joker's hand came up, slowly, and his fingertips brushed across the mask, over the part that concealed his cheek bones. Something in his expression replaced Batman's impatience with wariness.

"Take it off," Joker murmured.

Batman blinked.

"Why?"

Joker licked his scars. "I wanna watch your face this time. Wanna see the…" he trailed off.

"Little expressions?" Batman guessed. He'd seen the security tapes; he'd heard every twisted, manipulative word.

Joker nodded.

"Planning on killing me?"

Joker smirked. "Only a little."

Batman's lips quirked up a bit in response. "La petite mort?"
"Oui oui."

Batman rolled his eyes, and reached up to take off the mask, setting it aside in the passenger seat with the rest of the disassembled Batsuit.

"Get on with it, then," Bruce said.

Joker's eyes mapped every millimeter of newly exposed skin, then one hand rose up to do the same.

Bruce curled his hands around Joker's hips, and said, "If you don't move soon, I'm going to make you."

Joker grinned but said, "Just a sec," and smudged his thumb across the skin under Bruce's eye, trying to wipe away the kohl. "Between your makeup and mine," he said, wiping a little trace of his lipstick from the corner of Bruce's mouth, "it's like I'm fucking my reflection."

Bruce quirked an eyebrow. "Aren't you?"

Joker's breath caught. Another way of saying you complete me, and Batsy beat him to it. Believed it, even. "Yeah, guess I am. Same features, only backwards."

"Your reflection's getting impatient," Bruce said, rolling his hips up as best as he could in his pinned position.

They both hissed, and Joker's eyes were drowning in their pupils. "Well, we can't have that."

Joker glanced down at Bruce's come-splattered chest and smirked. He shifted forward as he lifted himself half-off of Bruce's cock, lowering his head to lick a long stripe of his own come off of Bruce's chest. Bruce's muscles twitched under Joker's tongue as Bruce inhaled a shuddery breath.

Joker's grin widened and he stretched up meet Bruce's lips and let the Bat taste him.

Bruce growled into the kiss, and took the opportunity to seize Joker's hips and slam him back down, impaling him. Joker made a muffled mmph noise, but he grinned.

"Control freak," he muttered affectionately.

"Tease," Bruce replied.

"Me? Never," Joker said, raising up and sinking back down while clenching around Bruce's cock.

A breathy "Fuck, Joker," escaped Bruce's lips without his permission.

Joker closed his eyes as if to savor the sound. "Batsy...Bruce," he whispers, raising up and slamming himself back down, rewarding Bruce with a faster, steady rhythm.

Bruce's grip on his hips helped him along—Joker's thigh muscles had to be on fire by now.

After a moment, Joker glanced towards the window for a second before meeting Batman's eyes and saying, "These windows are tinted, right?"

His voice was breathy but his rhythm didn't falter as he rode Batman's cock.

It took Batman a second to process the question; he was really close and not in the mood for Twenty Questions right now. Or ever, really, but especially not now.
"Yeah. Why?"

He tried to look out the driver's side window, but the way Joker was straddling him blocked his view. And the warm, sliding friction of *in and out* was altogether distracting.

"*How tinted?*" Joker asked.

"Opaque, from the outside. Why?"

Batman started to sit up, but Joker leaned forward, using his weight and his hands on Batsy's shoulders to keep him there.

"No reason," Joker said, too casually.

A sharp tap against the tinted window interrupted, and Bruce shoved Joker back enough that Bruce could get one arm behind himself for leverage and sit up; both looked over to find a very displeased Alfred standing outside the Tumbler.

"Shit," Bruce said, a flare of panic shooting through him.

Joker put all of his weight into shoving Bruce backwards, and succeeded in getting him flat on his back again. "We're, uh," *up and out, down and in*, "not finished here."

Even though there's no way Alfred could actually see them, the Tumbler had to have been rocking this whole time, and the windows were all steamed up, and Alfred was standing *right there*, and Bruce was more than a little freaked out by that.

"Get off!" Bruce demands, trying to sit up.

"Yeah, that's the idea," Joker said, misunderstanding him on purpose and riding him harder, clenching hard every time he took Bruce all the way in.

"Joker," Bruce growled, wanting to fight him on principle, but he was so goddamn close, and in the back of his mind there was a quiet kind of earth-shattering thrill at the inevitability of someone else knowing—a variation of how he felt when Harley walked in on them sucking face hours ago. And Joker looked positively primal riding him, covered in a sheen of sweat, his green hair a train wreck, make up smeared nearly off, fucking obsessive psychopathic hot mess but he was *his* fucking obsessive psychopathic hot mess, and *fuck*, those *eyes*.

Bruce closed his eyes, gripped Joker's hips harder and forced him to speed up.

"Look at me, Bats."

Bruce looked. His eyes locked with Joker's for the whole thirty seconds left before he came buried to the hilt inside Joker. Joker shifted forward and leaned down to kiss Bruce through it, one hand twisted possessively in Bruce's dark hair.

Joker carded his fingers through Bruce's hair, their eyes meeting as Bruce let the afterglow wash over him.

Joker opened his mouth to say something, but there was another, more insistent knock on the window, and Joker frowned. "Ya know, I have a history of killing people who interrupt me."

"No." He gave Joker a look that managed to be stern and entreat ing at the same time. "Alfred raised me after my parents died. He is permanently on the do-not-kill list."
"You're assuming there is a list."

Bruce thought back to the night when Joker was strung up upside down in front of him, when he told him he's too fun to kill, when he promised him forever.

"There's a list," Bruce said.

Joker's tongue swiped at his scars, but the minute quirk of his eyebrows seemed to convey grudging concession.

He sighed and sat up, shifting to let Bruce slip out of him and reaching for his boxers on the passenger seat. It struck Bruce that they hadn't used a condom—he was so caught up this time that he hadn't even thought about it until now. Too late now, although Joker's last round of tests six months ago before he busted out of Arkham declared him free of any kind of diseases, sexually transmitted or otherwise. Arkham was very thorough about their testing. And Bruce was very thorough in his investigations—he totally was not obsessed with Joker or anything. So, hopefully, the only thing he was going to catch from this was a stronger case of their particular brand of folie à deux.

"Well then. Where are your manners, Batsy? Introduce me," Joker said, reaching for the door handle.

A/N: Sooo, it looks like there's going to be more of this :) At least one more chapter, maybe more, I don't know. But if these bonus chapters decide to join forces and turn into a full-blown sequel, I'm still going to keep posting them here under the original story. That way, everybody who is following this one doesn't have to go hunt down a separate post, because that gets annoying.

Hope you all enjoyed this :)

A/N 6-15-15:

So, I have a favor to ask you, but it's also a fandom recomendation, so bear with me. One of my favorite shows, The Following, got cancelled after 3 amazing seasons. However, it's possible for another network to buy the rights to the show and continue it. There's a social media fan movement going on right now to #savethefollowing . Please use Twitter to ask Netflix to pick up The Following for a 4th season.

And if you haven't seen it, give it a shot- I think you would like it — the Ryan/Joe dynamic is a lot like Batman/Joker :) And the subtext starts getting a lot less "sub" in season three ;)

Thank you!

A/N 8-6-15: ANOTHER FAVOR/ FANDOM RECOMENDATION: Hannibal has also been cancelled by NBC and is looking for another network to pick up the show. The show is ART on its own, but shippers you'll fall in love with Hannibal/Will aka Hannigram (by the end of season 2, even the writers ship it XD ) The actors, producers, writers, and fans are all on board so please join us to help #SaveHannibal !

PLEASE JOIN IN ON TWITTER TO HELP #SAVEHANNIBAL. Follow the producers
"at"DeLaurentiisCo and "at"BryanFuller for updates! Also follow me "at"Kayliana19 if you want ;)

PS/Duh replace "at" with the at symbol because for some STUPID REASON ffnet won't show the at symbol.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Chapter End Notes

AN: 3-7-18: So, yes, perhaps you noticed that I just copy/pasted from my original post on ffnet, old AN's included. I'm lazy, sorry :P Also there is another bonus chapter in the works so yay XD

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!