



Koraz/Gotham

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Rated · 3857 words

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Koraz/Gotham

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The Destiny Freaks meet the Gotham Rogues (and Batman)

Homo Sapien Sapien -- Modern humans (more or less)
Chiroptera -- Bats!
I have absolutely no clue how bold or italics work on this site...

Chapter 1: Riddle Me This (AKA, Batman Regrets Everything)

"What are they doing?" Batman asked, staring at the huddled group that five minutes ago had been surprisingly fearsome allies and were currently excitedly whispering teenagers.

"Remember how I told you that Mages have a thing for math, physics, that sort of thing?" Paige asked, idly twirling Riddler through the air with her powers.

"Yes?"

"Well, Spiripa" she jerked her head towards the group "are known for heightened observation skills, perfect recall, and being easily bored. Puzzles are a preferable past-time for those people, Homo Sapien Chiroptera. The fact that the riddle you broke was a language based one? We might nev- actually, wait up."

Paige turned to Riddler, who currently couldn't decide whether to be happy at the attention his riddles were getting, excited at real life magic, or absolutely terrified at being held at the mercy of said magic. He settled for all of the above, leaning more towards the last as he felt that confounded 'truth spell' take hold of him again.

"Riddle me this, Ridley, if the Bat fails to stop this puzzling plot, will the body count raise?"

"No, no one will die if my plan succeeds or fails." Riddler answered, a little angry at being mocked.

"Okay then." Paige nodded, turning back to her friends. "Well, sorry Bats, but we aren't getting out of here until they solve it."

"The Greek god of death!" Eric shouted suddenly, jumping up. "That's why the chicken crossed the road!"

"Is he right?" Paige asked.

"No, but shockingly close." Riddler replied.

"Oh yeah, we're gonna be here for a while." Paige stretched. She snapped her fingers, conjuring a teaset. "Tea?"

"Ooh, yes please!" Riddler clapped his hands, sitting cross-legged midair as he graciously took a little green teacup. "Thank you. Quite a nice flavor, almost as good at Jervis's, but don't tell him I said that."

"My lips are sealed. So glad you like it, it's home grown." Paige laughed like tinkling bells. She held a black teacup out to Batman. "Tea, Chiro?"

Batman, in an uncharacteristic display born from having dealt with this nonsense for three days straight, groaned and held his head in his hands. "Fine."

He knew better by now than to argue with a Mage, even if that did mean that was drinking tea with the Riddler while a devious plot unfurled. It was easier this way, really.

"The Egyptian cat goddess?" Eric asked.

"Getting colder." Riddler replied, sipping at his tea. "Unlike this tea. Is there a warming charm on it or some such?"

"Possibly?" Paige shrugged. "My magic sort of does what it wants. Which isn't the safest thing in the world, but I've learned to live with it."

"Oh? Sounds fascinating." Riddler leaned closer. "Tell me, how does that work? Your magic, I mean."

"Well... How good a grasp of physics do you have?" Paige asked, going into a lecture on the logistics of magic.

Meanwhile, the huddled group has just gotten into a heated debate on whether avians being dinosauria made chickens dinosaurs or dinosaur relatives, and whether a Viking fertility god was related to a pagan war goddess (or merely adopted).

Batman, sitting on the floor with his little cup of admittedly delicious tea, was questioning all of his life choices. At least Joker wasn't here to see this.

"Hey, Eddie! I thought we agreed I was robbing this place toni- Batsy?!"

So much for that.

Chapter 2: From One Clown To Another

Eric hated The Joker

I wrote this when I realized my puzzle-loving, tophat-wearing, good natured prankster thief had similarities to several Batman villains.

As well, this is from back when Eric was in deep denial about being head over heels for Lyla.

Eric hated The Joker, hated him with a fury he usually reserved for someone who'd tortured him, though Joker barely knew he existed.

Eric hated Joker because of how similar they were. Hated him because Eric couldn't be himself in Gotham, not without giving people uncomfortable reminders.

He hated him because Joker's skin was only a few shades paler than his. Hated him for his playing cards, and squirty flowers, and joy buzzers. He hated him for how much he laughed, even when angry. He hated him for being what Eric had always been -- a clown, a mastermind, and a thief.

He hated him for how he treated Miss Harley, hated him because he'd never treat Lyla like that. Not that they were dating, not for a couple more years if ever, but he still cared deeply about his blonde partner-in-crime.

Most of all, he hated him for spoiling his fun. Eric had to be his clumsy, sweet, subdued, helpful self -- and while that was indeed a part of him, he wanted to be the Clown again, for a little while.

So, he joined The Joker's gang as a minor thug named Snapshot, calm and cool and oh-so-boring. Then, the fun began.

Other criminals, Batman, even -- ugh -- the cops were all suddenly getting one-over on Joker -- nothing went how the demented clown wanted it to. Loyal henchmen were snitching, long-term alliances were breaking, and fool-proof plans...

Well, they'd never accounted for a fool like Eric.

Eric spent a month in Gotham, a month is all it took to drive Joker's kingdom into the ground, with Harley as the only henchperson left. But she wouldn't stick around that jerk long, not with the new therapist assigned to her at Arkham, the best of the best -- Eric should know, he had a standing appointment with Dr Dreka La Dream.

A month, and suddenly, a new thief was in town. Jack-in-the-boxes, exploding pies, playing cards, tophats -- oh, how he missed this! He'd rob the city's richest blind -- well, except for Mr Wayne and Ms Kyle, and other such true philanthropists. He was more Robin Hood than Big Bad Wolf, after all.

And apart from that, at lunch Lyla made the best joke, and he could finally laugh. It was loud, long, and somewhat crazy -- and Lyla giggled with him, because she loved his laugh.

Laughter and clowns, pranks and gags, silliness and nonsense -- the villains of Gotham had taken these things from its people.

And Eric? Well, he was gonna take them back.

Hahahaha!

Chapter 3: Dangerous Games (Are My Favorite Kind)

Eric loves games, riddles, puzzles.

Last chapter was about Eric hating a villain he was similar to, this one's about him liking a villain he's similar to.

On a completely 'unrelated' note, Riddler's my favorite Batman villain! Can you tell?

Eric watched almost sadly as the Riddler was taken away.

No, actually, Eric wouldn't lie to himself -- he was sad, plain and simple. Sad because the game had been fun, sad because he'd run out of time and had to cheat when he didn't plan to, sad because...

Because he understood.

Eric was the boy who hid codes in his letters. He loved puzzles, and riddles, and mazes, and games. He loved a challenge, but few people were challenging enough.

And Riddler wasn't the most challenging person out there, but he was one of the only others interested in the game. Normally, when Eric cheated, it was all a part of the game. Winning through trickery, deceit, breaking the rules -- it was still winning.

Not this time. This time, Eric *wanted* to play fair, to solve every riddle and follow every clue. He had a feeling the Riddler had been as disappointed as him when he resorted to cheating. After all, Eric was the only opponent he'd had who considered the danger a fair part of the game.

So, Eric would make it up to him with a new game. He had a few more weeks in Gotham, he could leave puzzles and codes for the man to solve and find, proper challenges for his fast-moving brain. It would be both an apology and a thank-you, for one of the most interesting games he'd played yet.

It seemed almost a shame to go back to his puzzle boxes and cages. Even when his friends played, they didn't really see the game.

Lyla did, but they couldn't play properly with each other. He wouldn't lie to her, and neither of them could even *pretend* to risk harm to the other. Maybe that's why he liked the Riddler, there was an actual stake in his games.

It was all the fun of outrunning guards, except the guard had a bit more intelligence. It was playing in the Fasttech maze, except his opponent didn't treat it like training. It was, pure and simple, a game.

And Eric loved games.

Chapter 4: Memories Of Safety

No matter happens, Lyla knows where she's safe.
(Set right after a bout of magic-induced amnesia)

My favorite Koraz couple got together, so I wrote this. Eric connects Lyla to safety, something that he's still getting used to, but Lyla connects him to the same.

Lyla jumped into the air, cackling. Memories were returning to her in flashes almost too fast to comprehend. She twirled, only to come face-to-face with the barrel of a gun.

Oh, right. Combat situation. She needed to be careful and--

Nah. "Oh, 'Mistah J'," she mocked, pouting, "don't be like that -- I thought you liked to laugh!"

It was at this moment that she caught sight of pale skin and black hair, spinning around and completely ignoring the Joker. She launched herself into a running jump, landing in Eric's arms.

Eric, for his part, easily held her by her legs, looking up at her with a small grin. "Hey, Milady."

"Heeeey, My Clown." Lyla giggled, her arms thrown around his shoulders and neck, her nose moving forward to boop his.

"You feeling alright, Lyes?" He asked, with only a slight chuckle.

"Yep." Lyla nodded, popping the 'p' at the end. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, maybe because it seems like you're a little addle-brained, post memory surge?"

"Yeah." Lyla shrugged, self-aware enough to admit it. "But it'll wear off soon-ish."

"It always does." Eric agreed, looking at her with utter adoration (and slight amusement).

"Hey, hey, hey!" Lyla bounced a little. "Cloooooown!"

"Yes?" Eric asked, spinning to keep them both steady.

"Make me laugh?"

"That an order, Captain?" Eric asked, smirking.

"No, it's a request, Darling." And with that, Lyla leaned forward and kissed him.

It was at this point that the villains snapped out of their confused/interested daze and started shooting, but Mischief was too fast for them.

Reluctantly breaking the kiss, Eric moved one arm to press a finger to Lyla's lips. "Maybe that's not the best idea when you're like this, Dearest."

"Is it the first time?" Lyla asked, ignoring Mischief's chaos in favor of searching her currently-fractured memory.

"No, but still." Eric shrugged. He lowered them both to the floor by a wall, properly holding Lyla now. "How's about we just enjoy the show? I believe I heard a request for amusement?"

"Oh, alright." Lyla nodded, yawning. That sorta brain surge could take a lot out of a girl. She snuggled closer to Eric, watching her favorite Spirit's antics through a half-lidded gaze. She giggled as a pie hit Joker, causing him to sputter indignantly. Couldn't take what he dished out, huh?

Maybe it was dangerous to fall asleep in the middle of a bunch of psychotic villains battling, but she didn't care. Even if she wasn't addle-brained, she wouldn't care, because Eric was there.

And with Eric, she was always safe. She could never forget *that*.

Chapter 5: Tricks

Lyla knows Eric

Another example of me shipping my own characters, and another example of my favoritism towards Riddler.

Lyla giggled as the black-and-white jester battled Joker's gang. Batman stared at her, shocked the stoic, determined teenager was giggling like a schoolgirl.

Black smoke appeared and the jester was replaced by a pale skinned, black haired boy in a magician suit. His grin was that of a Cheshire Cat.

"Did you like my trick, Milady?" He asked hopefully, tilting his head.

"Always, My Clown!" Lyla replied, hugging him. She pulled back but her arms were still around his neck. "What are you doing here? I thought you were playing with Riddler?"

"He Who Leaves Riddles was lots of fun, but our game for today is done." The boy shrugged. "Neither lost, yet neither won. I really like his games, Bright One."

"I thought you would." Lyla smiled. "So, did he get away?"

"Um... Sorta?" The boy chuckled nervously.

"You let him go, didn't you?"

"...Maybe."

"Eric!"

"But he was fun!" Eric whined, pouting.

"Silly boy." Lyla sighed, shaking her head. She kissed him on the nose.

"Clever girl." He responded lovingly, chuckling as he pressed their foreheads together.

Chapter 6: Laughing (Free And Fun)

Eric loves to laugh

Slight explanation. That other set of emotions is from Mischief. She and Eric can feel whatever the other does, emotionally and physically.

Laughter, loud and long and slightly desperate, rang out from Eric. He could've stopped it, if he'd really wanted to, but for now he'd let it overwhelm him.

What was so funny, one may ask? Well, Eric had just gotten his memories back after a few days of amnesia. He had many terrible memories, yes, but so many more great ones!

Especially recently, since he had started dating Lyla. And the last three days of cowering and trying to figure out where that other set of emotions was coming from? Oh, that was simply hilarious.

The villains around him, even Joker, backed away as the previously timid boy seemed to have a mental break. But Eric couldn't care less, rolling around on the floor, hugging his Soul Bracelet. And laughing.

With a few wheezing chuckles, he started to calm down, standing up with only a few giggles. He grinned widely, partially because he felt like it, partially to freak everyone else out. He stretched, saying something about enjoying playing with the Bat, but now it was time to have fun by his own rules.

In all honesty, he wasn't really paying attention to himself, much more interested in summoning Mischief. He shouted in glee as her dark power engulfed him, the Shadow Energy revitalizing him and returning his regular outfit. His frilly white shirt, with dark black vest and trousers. His Shadow Cloak, clasped with the red bowtie his Dearest Lyla had given him. The black boots and white gloves weren't casual wear, but necessary for a proper battle.

He fixed his tophat and snapped on his red flame shades, twirling his magician's wand until it shifted to his trusty slingshot. Mischief grinned beside him, and he matched her.

"Who's ready to play?" His Spirit asked, spreading her arms in a showsprit's manner. The Rogues, who'd hurt his new friend and tormented him, were gasping and staring.

Once more, his laugh rang out, but it wasn't a good laugh this time. Deep and low, a dangerous chuckle. He lowered his head, peaking from under his hat as his hand began to spin the slingshot, red Shadowflame ready to seek his target

"This is gonna be fun."

Chapter 7: Blood

No matter what happened, she could always count on Oliver to stay calm

So, it ends a little suddenly, sorry. This is where I first came up with the idea of my little plant mutant mind scientist (Oliver, stoic outside, chaotic inside) having multicolored blood.

Lyla sat in her new 'This Is Gonna Be Fun' t-shirt, wincing as Oliver checked over her wounds. They were in the lab basement of Fasttech Enterprise's Gotham Branch, with practically the entire Rogues Gallery locked in the cells along the walls, and Batman listening to the twins' explanation of Koraz -- she almost felt bad for him, the poor guy looking downright panicked as the two bounced the explanation off each other at a mile a second.

Lyla had gotten cocky when helping the Bat, and had fallen off a building. Well, punched off a building. It wasn't that bad a fall, really, but the SOS she sent had resulted in every Destiny Freak in Gotham showing up.

So now she was wearing a thin t-shirt and shorts, showing off way more skin than she normally liked, while the villains sneered at her. She was glad -- not for the first time -- that Oliver wouldn't know how to be pervy even if he'd been the slightest bit interested in someone with breasts. Every prodding touch and searching look was directed at where she was hurt, bandaging and applying healing potion with a professional detachment.

"Would you stop staring?" She growled at the criminals. It wasn't like they could see anything inappropriate anyways, and their looks were probably aimed at the burns along her arms and legs, but still.

Eric responded by switching his wand to a staff and marching back and forth between her and cages, Mischief following along with a smoke trail to block their view. The two looked so serious, so determined, with the staff thrown over Eric's shoulder like a guard's gun...

She couldn't help it. She laughed.

Eric froze, staring at her and then at Mischief with the blank look that always meant he was surprised but not in a scared way. He turned back to her and grinned, adding in a chuckle of his own before continuing his march, this time with a goofy smile.

That smile was replaced with a growl when she winced from Oliver's prodding.

Oliver's straight-mouthed face turned towards him, eyebrow raised. "We don't have the best healing supplies here, and she's pretty 'roughed up'. I'm going to have to hurt her to heal her, as it were. If you can't handle that, you shouldn't be in the room."

Eric whined, eyes flicking to Lyla. She nodded at him, knowing how mad he'd be at himself if he attacked Oliver in a protective rage.

So, he left, dragging Batman behind him to get the cops for the Rogues. And now Lyla definitely felt bad for the Bat, knowing just how much trouble her Clown could cause when stressed out. Whether on the Bat's word or the Thief's trail, the cops would be there soon enough.

Lyla cursed, scratching Oliver across the face in response to a sharp pain in her side. Seeing the thin streaks of Oliver's bizarre purple, green, and yellow blood brought her back to her senses with a horrified gasp.

"Oliver, I'm so sorry!" She slipped her metal claws off, angry at herself for not doing so earlier. "Oh, zapping stars, I'm sorry."

"It's fine." Oliver dabbed some of healing potion on his cheek, his expression unchanged. He healed fast, so he paid it no mind.

"What's up with your blood?" One of the villains -- she didn't see who but it was probably Quinn -- asked.

Oliver touched his cheek and stared calmly at the multicolored blood. "Oh. That's new. How fascinating. Probably a result of my recent pushing of my powers. Or perhaps that new chemical compound I've been experimenting with leaked more than I thought. I don't like speculating, though, so I'll have to do some tests soon."

Lyla blinked. She shook her head, chuckling softly. No matter what happened, she could always count on Oliver to stay calm.

Chapter 8: Dreams Of Arkham

A little chapter one of a series I had planned but never wrote more of.

Dreka isn't a Destiny Freaks, but she is their favorite therapist.

Eric's Mindsets are blurry most of the time, more a way for him to deal with his own conflicting desires than something like split personality.

Dreka La Dream was a Dreamwalker witch, known for her sheer psychic and empathic powers. She turned this power towards the one thing she was most passionate about; therapy.

And she had come to Gotham.

"You sure this is a good idea, Dreks?" Eric Stargem asked, helping to carry one of her bags to her new office at Arkham Asylum. "I mean, some of these people are really broken, in a way our peoples just can't be."

Dreka smiled at the Spiritcaster, not commenting that he was considered broken by most people. And he had been, several times, but even Dreka was impressed by how quickly and completely the boy could heal. Not that he didn't have his scars.

"I'm only in Gotham for six moons, Eric." Dreka didn't carry any of her own bags, being much too much of a fall-asleep risk when unable to use her powers. "If I can do any good for these people in that time, I've got to try. As you said, our minds are strong, I'm in no danger."

"I just worry about you, Ms." Eric sighed, and Dreka took note of the Miss. Respectful titles like that meant that Eric was in his calm or 'assistant' mindset, or was manipulating someone. He paused for a moment, nose wrinkling. "I'm gonna have to visit Gotham for therapy, aren't I?"

"Well..." Dreka drew out the word as they reached her office. "I suppose we could put off our sessions for a couple moons."

Something like hope flickered in Eric's eye. She couldn't read *his* emotions, but she knew that no-one grew up with the Spirit Of Deception without being secretive. Eric hated therapy, he hated letting anyone poke around in his head, and there were things he near-desperately hid every session. A break from that might be-

"No. I'll come." Eric sighed, letting his emotions be read for a second as explanation. He was resigned to therapy, used to it, and... And he actually was getting a lot out of it.

Shutting his emotions up again, he smirked like the Spirit he lived with. "Besides, there's a couple banks in Gotham I've been meaning to make a deposit from."

"You've been meaning, or Mischief's been meaning?" Dreka asked as they unpacked her stuff, setting it about the office. Eric scowled at her.

"I have Chiefy's urges under control, Dreks." He muttered. "I'm a thief, with or without her being bored. We're not making a big thing outta it, just quick in and out jobs, no pranks."

Dreka raised an eyebrow.

"Well, alright; some pranks." He grinned, backflipping onto her chair to reach a high bookshelf. "Mischief and I haven't lost control in ages, we're doing this cause we both wanna. Not cause one of us hasta."

"You'll lose control again, Eric, it's nothing to be ashamed of." Dreka took his hand, and he shrugged. Mischief was a young Concept Spirit, and it would take her a few centuries to get a handle on her instincts. The fact that Eric had to share her every emotion or urge only made it harder on the both of them. "But I believe you when you say it's not happening this time."

The vast majority of the time, Eric and Mischief lied, stole, cheated, pranked, etc, just because it was who they were. None of her stuff had gone missing, none of the asylum guards they passed had mysteriously tripped, and Eric had kept his usual ratio of lies to truth. He wasn't losing control.

"Thanks, Miss." Eric hopped down, hugging her briefly before heading towards the door. "Mischief and I will have to remember to steal something nice for you."

"If you let yourself get arrested, get thrown in Arkham." She told him gently, pulling him back into the hug, knowing the touch-sensitive Spiritcaster had broken it off sooner than he'd liked.

"Fake insanity? Oooh, how fun!" Eric chuckled. "I'm not sure if I'm getting caught yet. It would give me a chance to help improve their security..."

"Don't let the Batman catch you." Dreka added.

"But it would be fun!" Eric backed away and pouted, but the grin was back with a little bounce. "Oh, alright. But I'm still playing with him."

"Goodbye, Eric."

"Goodbye, Dreks. And, um..." Eric paused at the door. "Maybe let someone else open that top drawer to the left there? Someone you wouldn't mind seeing get pied in the face?"

One last chuckle, and he was gone. Dreka shook her head with a smile, sitting at her desk chair to get in a quick nap before work, when an alarm started blaring.

"All hands! All hands! Scarecrow has escaped!"

— end of "Koraz/Gotham" —