



A Good Nest Means You're Home

Batman - All Media Types · Not Rated · 1275 words

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Edward sees Joker's nest for the first time and has some thoughts about the state of it.

The first time Edward entered Joker's lair, he was bleeding out and already half dead and couldn't really focus on anything. The second time, he was too busy frantically looking for a weapon so he could rejoin a rather nasty fight outside to really take in his surroundings.

The third time, however, he was coming over for a plotting session and wasn't in any particular hurry, and so he was free to look around.

There were a lot of bright colors everywhere, peeling posters that advertised various circuses and comedy clubs were layered thickly across the walls, stuffed animals took up far too much space... In other words, it was more-or-less exactly what he expected the Clown's place to look like.

Except for one thing.

"What in the world is *that*?" Edward asked, pointing to a lumpy pile of blankets. They were mostly dull purple and grey and looked almost sad as they sat by their lonesome in one bare corner of the room.

"What's what?" Joker turned his head to follow the direction of Edward's finger. He snorted and waved a hand dismissively. "Oh, *dat*. Ya never see a nest before, Eddie?"

"That's your *nest*?" Edward asked, reeling back a little in his shock. It was the most pathetic nest he'd ever seen in his life; there were no pillows, the blankets were lumpy because they were pushed too close together, and it wasn't even hidden in the slightest — it was just *there*, in the open, where anyone could see!

"Uh, yeah..?" Joker said slowly, as if Edward was the crazy(ier) one. The clown stared at him in confusion for a moment, then shook his head and turned to search through a drawer, giggling. "I can't wait 'till Batsy sees dis plan, Eddie-boy! I should partner wit' ya more often, yer brains an' my creativity know no bounds! Hehe, no-know. ♪No-know, no-know, no no no no-know know♪."

Ignoring the other's antics, a skill he'd nearly perfected over many years of semi-unwillingly being his friend, Edward focused his attention on the so-called nest.

Now, Edward was a beta. Betas didn't typically make their own nests, but for much of his life Edward had anyways. His mother had been an omega, but she hadn't cared enough to build him a nest after he got too old (by her standards) to share hers. His father had been an alpha, a particularly violent one at that, and Edward shuddered to think of what would've happened had he asked him to teach him how to nest.

At a certain point in his life, Edward wouldn't have looked twice at Joker's nest, as his own would've been little better (though at least it would've been *hidden* properly).

But then Edward had made friends with Jonathan Crane. And while Jonathan would quite literally be fine sleeping on a concrete slab, the omega's heats made him rather insistent on making proper nests for those few he cared about. And proper nests were not just a few blankets shoved into a corner, Edward had learned.

Edward remembered how embarrassed he had been about asking Jonathan to teach him to nest, admitting he hadn't even known it was a skill he was missing. But he didn't have a pack, which meant he didn't have an omega to do it for him, so he needed to learn.

The next thing Edward knew, he was in Jonathan's nest and Jervis was making a rather possessive sort of rumbling noise — it was the very first time Edward had actually been able to reconcile the short, ridiculous man with his designation as an alpha — and Edward had two new pack bonds flaring to life inside him.

Edward had learned how to nest, eventually, but out of curiosity rather than necessity. His pack had refused to let him go without a proper nest ever since he revealed to them that no-one, besides Jonathan when he was in heat, had ever made him one.

"Even Granny would make me a nest when ah was a pup!" Jonathan had growled viscerously, looking like he would very much have bitten Edward's parents had they still been alive.

To Edward, a proper nest was a sign of love, home, safety. A poor nest meant neglect, abuse, so many cold nights all on his own.

Which was why Joker's nest made no sense.

"I thought you nested with Harley?" Edward couldn't help but ask. Despite being a beta like him, Harley had even most omegas beat when it came to nest-making. Hers were just so soft...

"I used ta, but den she moved in wit' Ivy," Joker replied distractedly. He was still busy searching for and laying out everything they needed to plot out their plan. "I love Harls, but Ivy doesn' like me much. Don' know why, I'm *delightful*."

Edward barely held back a derisive snort. Then something occurred to him. "You just nest by yourself?" Alphas and betas nested by themselves regularly, even when part of a pack, but an omega doing so was... concerning.

"Eh, I sleep over for most my heats." Joker shrugged. "But yeah, I guess. Ivy doesn' really like me in her den."

Edward nodded. Even an omega like Joker, who was known for shoving boundaries straight out the window with glee, wouldn't want to nest with an alpha that didn't want them there. It was bad enough being a beta around a hostile alpha, omegas could be sent straight into a panic from it.

And Joker was apparently a bit more in tune with his omega side than he tended to let on.

Which still meant that his nest didn't make sense.

Edward had never been good at keeping his curiosity reigned in. Foregoing any tact whatsoever, he asked, "Didn't any of the other omegas in your pack ever teach you to build a proper nest?"

Joker froze. For the first time in the entire course of their friendship, he looked completely caught off guard and thrown for a loop. "...I don't remember."

That was Joker's dangerous voice. The one that reminded you that he wasn't all there upstairs and not all of his psychotic breaks were faked. The one that warned you that you'd just touched a nerve and pain was in your future if you touched it again, no matter how much he cared for you.

Edward's blood went cold, and that tone only had very little to do with it. Joker's memories from before he was *Joker* were sparse at best, but it hadn't occurred to Edward what exactly that meant for his knowledge of basic life skills.

Most alphas didn't know how to make good nests. It wasn't that odd for betas to know, but it still wasn't all that common.

For an *omega* to not know, though? Edward hadn't ever heard of a full grown omega who couldn't nest by themselves. Though he supposed he wouldn't be likely to hear of such a thing — what omega would admit to it? It would be like an alpha admitting they still didn't have the hang of territory howls.

It was embarrassing for Edward to ask to be taught to nest. He was a beta and an adult.

But for a grown omega to ask? That wouldn't just be embarrassing, that would be completely *mortifying*.

A good nest meant love, home, safety. A poor nest meant loneliness, fear, cold.

Edward decided that Joker wouldn't have to ask.

— end of "A Good Nest Means You're Home" —