



□ Gotham Calls You Back, Every Time□

Batman - All Media Types · Not Rated · 530 words

by Arukir

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Fandom: Batman - All Media Types Rating: Not Rated Category: Gen

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Characters: Temple Fugate, Joker (DCU), Clock King

Tags: Symbolism, Weird Gotham City, Sentient Gotham City, Or At Least Joker Thinks So

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Clock King plans to leave Gotham, but the city isn't quite done with him yet.

"You're ten seconds late, *again*." Temple Fugate growled at the guard bringing his food, not turning to look at him. "Is punctuality not something Arkham values?"

"Well, Tick Tock, I do so apologize." A voice, one that did not belong to any guard Fugate knew of, chuckled. "Next time, I promise I'll make my escape precisely on schedule."

Fugate looked over his shoulder. "Joker. What happened to my guard?"

"Sleeping off some gas like the rest of 'em." Joker tilted his head, grin frozen in place. "You wanna escape with me?"

"My escape will occur in three months, four days, and thirteen hours from the next chime of the clock." Fugate turned completely now, adjusting his glasses. "I thank you for the offer -- why give it? You are not known for generosity."

Joker shrugged. "Ya looked bored. Or boring, maybe. Ah, well. Ciao, Mr. Tock."

Three months, four days, and fifteen hours later:

Clock King, back in his true clothing, approached the docks. There the boat was, about to depart for the other side of the world, right on time. He sighed.

He couldn't succeed here, not with the Bat, but still... It made his heart hurt to leave this city he'd always called home.

Oh well. He raised his foot to board the boat, when FOOOM! The explosion rocked the docks, smoke billowing into the air, hunks of burning metal sinking into the water. Clock King stared, horrified.

"Don' worry, Your Majesty," a voice chuckled from the darkness behind him, "tha crew are all safe an' sound, wakin' up in an abandoned warehouse across town."

"Joker." Clock King turned, looking at the Clown Prince Of Crime. "Why?"

"I figured out why ya wanted ta escape *today*." Joker shook his head, frowning. "Ya can't leave Gotham 'til she stops singin' ta ya. An' she ain't done singin' yar song, Tick Tock."

"What nonsense are you going on about?" Clock King growled. His schedule was completely ruined!

"I'll leave tha nonsense ta Jervis." Joker grinned. "Come on, I know ya hear her! We all do, dat's why we do what we do. Why **He** does it. Why everyone in tha city stays here! No one leaves Gotham 'til she's done with 'em, otherwise they jus' get pulled back."

"Gotham is not some living organism, holding the citizens captive." Clock King rolled his eyes. "You messed up my plans for utter gibberish."

"I had ta!" Joker sighed, as if he was the one dealing with an unreasonable loon. "Look, ya don' wanna leave, so don' leave. Simple."

"What makes you think I don't wish to leave?" Clock King asked. "Perhaps my months of carefully setting up transport to the other side of the planet?"

"Exactly!" Joker nodded happily, pointing at Clock King. He pulled out a piece of paper, holding it out to the other villain. "There's a rare clock bein' shown in the downtown museum in three days. Some people say it has mystical properties. Ya want in?"

Clock King thought for precisely 37 seconds, then grabbed the paper.

— end of "|| Gotham Calls You Back, Every Time ||" —