



The Riddler (Doc 4)

ITEM INVENTORY

ABRAM	SOLOMON	I3	JAQUELINE	LYRE
VISION PENDANT	FERRET MASK	VISION PENDANT	SUNSHINE POUCH	WEIGHTED COLLAR

THE RIDDLER

ABRAM | SOLOMON | I3 | JAQUELINE | LYRE



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CHAPTER 1 : LIFE 9

Start Date: 14th June, 2021 - End Date: 9th August, 2021

RULES

- Each post must be at least 300 words in length
- Ensure that your post includes: Character name, Pronouns, Post Number, and Word Count
- You cannot use tables to format, and text must be readable
- Images if used, can be no larger than 100x100 pixels
- **Every line of dialogue within a post must rhyme**
- Checkpoints are a week apart
- Actions must be bolded, and you must include a summary at the end of each post
- All injuries from the first half of Chapter 1 carry over into the second half
- If you find the doc is lagging, let us know in your Discord chat and we will create a new doc

[DOC 1 HERE] [DOC 2 HERE] [DOC 3 HERE]



Lyre ⇌ 20 / 5

None ⇌ {He/Him}

Contact. *Contact.* **Contact.**

Lyre desired to soak in the contact for as long as it lasted, even if it was for less than a *thup-thup*. Pressed against the side of The Jaqueline, eyes peering into the little bag that had been chosen as a gift, it was easier to bear the weight of the new collar and focus on the trembling beating of the Rhythmsel within.

The contact from this 13 was too much to ache for, and yet it came anyway. Barely, but there.

A little *gasp* noise escaped the throat, jerking at the paws and filling the chest with the urge to puff and preen and pounce for more. But that hadn't gone well last time. So the urge was pressed down and *down* and **down**, held under the weight of the new treasure, reminded again that there was danger nearby and *thinking* needed to take place, first.

Besides, this 13 had refused the contact twice already. There was nothing to say that one little brush of fur meant it wouldn't be refused again.

So *thinking* Lyre focused on.

There was the suggestion from this 13, of the tossing of rocks and fleeing the other direction, a diversion - a plan of **escape**.

Teeth and jaws bent close to the cold to grasp a small stone and pluck it free, wrinkling the nose at the taste and dropping it into a waiting paw with a *blech*. How would throwing be accomplished? The Scarf had not fluttered far when the Lyre attempted the rescue, even though all of the little bit of might was used. Which direction would be safest to scurry away to?

Nothing but darkness and snow lay in wait beyond the columns. But any direction *away* from where the rocks lure the danger was probably best.

“How far and clear a rock be thrown;
Is this a thing which can be known?
Lyre has but little strength
Not a far or dreadful length,
But perhaps a second stone,
If the first not far has flown -
An opposite direction cast
As long as fleeing might need last,
There are here Three to carry if the path be long.”

If each of the Three Once-Together carried a rock while sneaking away, then maybe three times more there could be chances to escape, just in case the first diversion did not keep the danger busy for enough of the *timing* for all to escape.

Stat Rolls:

- **Perception Roll for looking around:**
 - Base 12+ Roll 11
- **Speed Roll:** N/A
 - Base 11
- **Running Speed Total:** 66
 - Item: Tapestry Tassel ~~Blue Scarf~~ Weighted Collar

~ Lyre soaks in the small amount of contact and redoubles his efforts to pay attention, trying not to get distracted by the longing for touch. He asks how far everyone thinks they could throw a rock, trying to gage the distance between ‘distraction’ and ‘escape’ and the ‘lurking fast’ - not seeing a direct path out, he suggests running in exactly the opposite direction of wherever they throw the rock. He asks if they should keep hold of a rock each in case the beast still has time to come after being distracted once. ~

Jaqueline (she/her) – Post #: 17 – Word Count: 833

Jaqueline followed Lyre’s eye and just barely caught the edge of *something*. No, wait. It was gone? Or had she never seen it in the first place at all? Regardless, she couldn’t shake the sound of crunching feet just barely reaching over the snow. Something about this place, unlike the hallways where they originally came from, seemed so much quieter. It was as if the snow beneath their paws was eating the sound before it could reach their ears. Could it perhaps work the other way around?

Copper eyes fell to the floor as 13 pointed out the stones. The black cat listened intently to her plan, making sure to keep at least one ear on the lookout for the sound of approaching feet.

Maybe... maybe that could work... but it felt like there was something else they were missing. She prepared herself to take in a breath and speak her concerns, but Lyre cut her off before she wasted the breath, *thank Rot*.

His words brought up another consideration: what would happen if their first plan failed? What would be their backup plan? Where was the most efficient use of their resources?

She turned inwardly again, taking stock of what they all had: Lyre had a heavy necklace and possessed the smallest stature of the three of them, 13 was gifted a small vial of objects and was the least injured of the lot of them, and she possessed a bright, golden bag that warmed things up and she was the heaviest of them. They also had the stones before them and the snowdrifts all around them.

All in all, it was a paltry amount of stuff that they had to work with, but they had to figure out something. She thought that 13’s idea was fairly good, but Lyre made a good point that their own physical limits could cause their plan to backfire.

What’s the goal, she stopped herself before her heart could accelerate again, only realizing that her mind was beginning to race again. *The goal, yeah, it’s simple, we just need to figure out the goal and go from there. The goal is to get past the creature unscathed. So what if we got-* no, that wouldn’t work, they didn’t have the strength to incapacitate the creature.

While she was thinking, her head had started to sink towards her chest where she noticed a familiar smell: her old friend. He had always stayed with her, even after falling into the water. There was something else, too, though: the stale smell of 13 and the fresher smell of Lyre intermingled with her fur from when she had been in close contact with them.

Her head jerked up as her eyes widened. An idea had come to mind, but she daren’t say something without having a fully formed thought. She couldn’t say for certain that it would work, but it was worth the shot, and it potentially offered a stopper to plug up some of the holes in their plan.

Visibly, she tried to rush out a sentence before catching herself. Jaqueline took a breath in, careful not to black out this time while holding onto her thoughts. *Easy, easy...*

“Back in the tunnel

The sound acted like a funnel.

If we throw the stones
Back there, the walls could funnel the tones
Towards the beast.

And then our friends,
The one that suspends
Above us—”

She caught herself, thinking about the confusion she had seen earlier from the others whenever she had mentioned her friend.

“The ones we site as smell
Is what I’m talking about, if you can tell?

They still linger on each other and ourselves.
They’ll hang off of the air like shelves
And lead the creature into the darkness.

Sounds will catch its attention
And our lingering friends will cause its further ascension
Into the cave
Where we did badly behave
And linger.

The smell covers the walls
Just as it did all throughout the halls
We traversed to find our way.

If there is luck about us
One stone will sound like three
And it will lead the creature into the water
Where it will become like a potter.”

Jaqueline stopped, confused at the words that came out of her mouth before trying again.

“It will lead the creature into the water
Where it will drown in squalor.

But if it does not fall,
Our work will not be for null.

We will be able to flee and scatter,
Making a clatter
With our new stones after our first one has lied
So that we are able to hide
In the noise-consuming snow.”

The black she-cat gasped for breath, trying to remain upright.

“One of you make the first pitch
I worry that I’ll fall into a ditch

If I try to toss a stone far right now.”

She sidled over to the side, trying to hide herself partially behind a column before picking up her own stone to use for a worst-case scenario.

Rolls:

Creativity: 12

Total Speed: 30

Item:

Golden Bag of Warmth and Tranquility

Summary:

Jaqueline thinks that 13’s plan is a good one, but notes Lyre’s misgivings about the flaws in the plan. She feels like there is something missing to it as well and tries to evaluate what all is at their disposal. She suddenly has a brain blast, remembering how their scents were probably all over the place in the tunnel because of how much time they spent there. She also recalled how echoey the tunnel was, realizing that it would allow the sounds of the stones being thrown there to become amplified. She suggests to her teammates that they throw the stones down towards the tunnel, their scents causing the creature to be lured further in before falling into the water and potentially drowning. She sites that, even if it doesn’t drown, they’d still have enough time to use their remaining stones to make more of a racket somewhere else before hiding in the snow to conceal their own sounds. Jaquelines takes a big breath in, worn from speaking and breathing so much, and suggests one of the others chucks the first rock as she goes to rest behind a column to obscure her height, grabbing her own stone just in case.

THIS 13

she/her | post 18

Not-Here Jaqueline and Here Lyre shared their thoughts, were being careful and well behaved. 13 turned to cast her eyes upon them both as they spoke, inclining her muzzle to show that she had heard and accepted their plans.

A small smile hitched at the corner of her mouth, before she summoned a frown of concentration. She set the stone down briefly, so that she might speak. In a whisper, she voiced her compliance:

**“These points are good and true;
This 13 shall follow through.”**

The she-cat rose up higher onto her tiptoes, eyes wide and ears swivelling. Around her the silence was thick, disturbed only by her own breaths and the almost-imperceptible breeze. Scenting the air brought her no new information, and as before, she could see nothing else exceptional. So, here it was - she would rely on her teammate’s supposedly more attuned senses.

Bending to scoop the small stone back into her mouth, 13 turned in a tight pirouette, cocked her muzzle back, rose a scant half-foot off of the ground on both forepaws, and with her downward momentum, *threw* the stone back towards the hallway.

And then her left forepaw landed, a short step forwards--

CRACK

Agony jolted up her leg, setting her nerves alight, cutting through her limbs it a burst.

13's leg gave out beneath her, and she crumpled to the ground. A gasp of pain was torn out of her, as every nerve lit up, and her pulse rocketted, and her lip curled around shaky, uneven gasps.

She barely had long enough to blink white spots from her vision, and scramble to try to get her paws beneath her, and then the world was rushing in towards the three of them.

From all around, from every side, they rushed - huge, hulking shapes that twisted through the shadows - and before 13 could do anything more than cry out,

**"H-Here's, my Here's, run,
They've heard This 13's folly, she is sorry--
To us they now come!!"**

The monsters attacked.

WORD COUNT:

333

ROLLS:

3 STRENGTH (-12 health base)

SUMMARY:

13 listens to and accepts her team mates concerns and their ideas, and shares her appreciation for their input. She raises up onto her hind paws, pulls her head back, and uses her downward momentum to toss the stone back towards the hallway. However, upon landing, her injured left paw gives out beneath her, breaking. She falls with an audible crack and a gasp, bringing the monsters' attention to their position. Just before they descend upon their little group, 13 rallies herself to give her teammates a warning to run.



ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: SOLOMON | POST 17

Try as he might to keep his pace even, Abram's plan to let Solomon take the lead was failing. His legs were too long, his strides too urgent, and it wasn't long before he found himself edging past the smaller cat in the tunnel. The mist was gaining on them, and gaining fast, and Abram gritted his teeth. He couldn't slow down, he wouldn't let himself be caught up just for Solomon's sake, but that didn't mean he would abandon his companion. As he passed, he offered a small plea to the red furred cat whose presence he had come to enjoy.

**"Please Solomon, of you I beg,
move faster, though you're short of leg.
I hate to admit it, but I find
I'd loathe to see you left behind."**

He didn't dare look sideways to judge the other cat's reaction, but instead pushed himself faster down the tunnel. *Solomon will make it, of course he'll make it. Look how successful we've been so far, the Riddler wouldn't dare take him now.*

And yet he could still smell the acrid stench of the mist, could hear it sizzling as it made contact with something behind him. The jungle cat growled nervously, but before he could turn back, something ahead caught his eye.

Light.

**“Solomon please, we’re almost there!
I feel a breeze upon the air!
We can escape the horrid mist,
all you need is to persist!”**

The air that rushed to greet him from the tunnel’s exit was fresh and cool, a relief to his aching lungs. Flurries of white rushed past him as he climbed. One landed on his nose, a spot of frigid cold that soon melted away under his body heat. Encouraged by a visible end to their journey, Abram clawed forward with fervor until finally, *finally*, he was free from the tunnel’s confines.

➤ Abram does his best to encourage Solomon as they run through the tunnel, urging him to run faster and admitting that he does indeed enjoy the red cat’s presence. He then spots a light up ahead and calls back to Solomon once more, before bursting into the cavern at the tunnel’s end.

308 words

CHECKPOINT #6

10TH August 2021

Solomon and Abram scramble, and climb, and push to get out of the tight tunnel. The end is in sight - driven, biting snow and a gust of clean air. Solomon, still stuck a short way behind Abram, feels the fur on his heels and his tail tip burn away, and a blistering pain sets in.

But they burst free, and into the faint light of the cavern beyond, they *run*.

As they move, they will note the sharp, bitter smell of pine in the air - though they will not know what it is - and below that, something thicker and muskier. Like the scent in the tunnels and the silver room... only here, it is stronger.

Around them the cavern is dark, and piled high with snow. Huge pillars are silhouetted against the white, stretching up into shadows so thick, the ceiling cannot be seen.

They run, aimless and tight-chested, only knowing that they *must* avoid the mist... until ahead of them, there is a horrible sort of cracking sound that makes them instinctively slow. It is followed by a loud, gasping breath, and caught in the moment, they drive forwards through the thick shadows, a rush of adrenaline blocking out any sense of self-preservation.

Because... yes, *yes*, there, ahead of them, are Jaqueline, 13, and Lyre.

The darkness stirrs and shift just as the two tom cats burst into the space, and there is a moment of quiet just long enough for 13 to impart her words of warning from where she lies in a heap on the ground--

Before five huge beasts lunge at the all.

They are made up of smooth, tight black skin that seems to absorb what little light is in the cavern, and limbs wreathed in writhing shadow. Each of them has three eyes - two solid white, and a third in the centre of their forehead, huge and slit-pupiled. They barrel towards each cat, jaws wide open and black teeth bared.

First knocked down is Abram, who barely manages to kick at the beast's face and shoulder, as fangs sink into his left foreleg and *crunch* down, piercing the skin in large, evenly spaced teeth marks and fracturing one of his bones. (-19 health base) He is pinned to the ground, with the monster looming over him.

Next is 13, who has no time to get her paws beneath her as a second beast sinks its teeth into her shoulders and ribs, biting hard enough to draw a great deal of blood. If she is not careful, these wounds could easily tear wide open. (-13 health base)

Third, Solomon, who is able to turn and rise up, challenging the beast and driving it back for a beat with lashing, outstretched paws - but soon it overpowers him, and drives him into the snow, teeth catching in his scruff and giving a mighty, skin-ripping shake. His skull knocks hard enough against the ground that he left disoriented. (-11 health base.)

Finally, Jaqueline and Lyre approached from either side, cornered back-to-back by two of the skulking monsters. Nostrils flaring as they scent blood, and teeth bared in ghoulish grins, they press in close. Both take turns pawing and nipping at Jaqueline and Lyre's tails and flanks, opening small cuts and bruising flesh. (-6 health base for Lyre; -5 health base for Jaqueline.) They are *playing* with them, both cats will realise... but fear will grip them solidly, freezing them to the spot.

As each cat fights for control of their own positions upon the floor, peering into huge, intelligent eyes, they will hear the monsters speak inside their minds. The words are a chorus, sharp and rasping, edges painful where they scrape against each cat's thoughts.

*"Speak now, lovely Abram,
Tell us what you found.
Tell us something good now,
or we'll put you in the ground.*

*"Solomon, sweet Solomon
Share now, Little Bite
What present in here did you find
So that we don't have to smite?*

*"Jaqueline, do be a dear,
And say aloud for all
What in our cavern you have claimed,
Or we'll drown you in the pool.*

*"Lyre, child, why is it,
You chose to wear that weight?
Tell us, yes, and do be quick,
Or your neck will snap and break.*

*"13, darling, let us know,
Why did you choose this gift?
Take your time, by all means;*

We've no need to make death swift.

*Impress us and we'll let you out,
Back into the white halls.
We'll even let the Riddler know,
So They might gift you all."*

As their song finishes, amidst a round of snarling laughter, quiet falls again, filled only with panting breaths and the occasional warning growl.

All five cats will understand the challenge posed:

There is no escaping these beasts, and there is no fighting them. Each cat is too weak, and too badly injured to pose any threat to the group; they must instead impress or outwit the beasts with their words. They must be careful, and quick-witted, just as the Riddler has warned them from the beginning...

[THE REUNION]



ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: MONSTER, JAQUELINE | POST 18

The cavern he emerged into was dim, but already much better than the tight space of the tunnel. Solomon was hot on his heels, and the mist just beyond him, and so without another word, he continued to run. The air around them was bitter, though not entirely unpleasant. It reminded Abram vaguely of both the plants in the maze, and, oddly, a bit of the burned rubber. There was also the scent of something else, a musky scent that he had briefly encountered in the tunnel, and in the silver room. It was stronger here, and the fur on his spine began to rise.

Snow lay in piles all around him, and Abram could just barely see the outlines of massive pillars that rose up, up, up, until they disappeared into shadow high above him. He longed to stop and look, but the mist was still racing behind them, and he refused to give up now.

Only when he heard a loud *crack!* from somewhere up ahead did his pace falter. The gasp that followed sounded familiar; he did not recognize the voice, but rather, recognized it *as* a voice. It had to be a cat, it just had to be. Ignoring his own instincts of caution, Abram continued to run forward until he could just barely make out a trio of shapes in the darkness.

He slowed upon approach, taking them all in. They looked horrible, 13 most of all, with her body bent and crumpled on the ground. He opened his mouth to speak, to ask what had happened, when out of the corner of his eye, the shadows began to shift. Abram barely had the time to turn before the nearest shadow was upon him.

A massive weight collided with the tom from one side, throwing him to the ground with an ease that sent every alarm bell ringing in his head. He lashed out instinctively and felt his claws rake against smooth flesh. It wasn't enough though, and in the next instant he felt the beast's massive jaws clamp shut over his foreleg, and *squeeze*. He

let out a howl of furious agony as something crunched, pain shooting like lightning through his body. He was pinned and had nowhere to go, nothing to do but to stare into the beast's trio of eyes. Two white, one large and bulging, all three of them horrible.

And then it *spoke*. A painful, rasping chorus that scratched at the insides of his mind. He twisted and strained, desperate to escape the noise that had invaded his thoughts, but there was nowhere to go. These were the Riddler's doing, and they were the next part of the challenge.

*“Impress us and we’ll let you out,
Back into the white halls.
We’ll even let the Riddler know,
So They might gift you all.”*

As their dreadful rhyme came to a close, Abram looked around wildly. The others were pinned as he was, and there was no way out but to play the creatures' game. It reminded him of the pool, *the only way out is through*. He was furious and in a tremendous amount of pain, but Abram refused to lose the game when he had made it so far. With a ragged cough, he glared at the abomination that pinned him down, and began to speak.

**“The Riddler sent us to this maze
and a gift I did soon find.
Aided by many a gaze
to this necklace I did bind.”**

He twisted, glancing at where the vial lay on the ground beside him. His mind was filled with images once more of a night he both could and couldn't remember.

**“Among the jars
and shattered shards
I found a glimpse of my past.”**

He turned his gaze back to the massive beast that held him, and raised his chin.

**“So I ask of you,
with your three eyes, not two,
what more could you have asked?”**

It was a bold statement, but he felt nothing but confidence in his choice. Abram had been meant to find that necklace, he was certain of it, and his words swelled with self assuredness. But when the beast cackled, and the teeth around his leg sank in further, Abram thought that perhaps he had made a mistake. He felt himself being pulled, yanked from the ground as though he weighed nothing at all. He snarled in both resentment and fear before the creature flung him into the darkness. Abram's eyes screwed shut as he anticipated his landing, jarring and harsh against the cold, hard ground-

THUD!

He lay there for a moment, dazed, as he took in his surroundings. The floor was warm, not cold, and he felt the heat seep into his fur. Abram blinked his eyes open, lids heavy, and he looked around.

**“S-Solomon, we made it out,
I told you there was no need to doubt-”**

The tom grimaced as he pushed himself into a sitting position. It was a simple movement, but it caused him immense pain, and he very quickly learned that his front left foreleg refused to support his weight without a jolt of agony. Instead, he leaned to his right as he looked for the red cat who was... Nowhere to be found.

There was only Jaqueline, looking bloody and haggard as well. He looked around once more, frowning deeply as he took in the hallway they found themselves in. They had passed, apparently, but what of the others?

He turned his gaze to Jaqueline.

**“The others, where are they?
Still trapped in the fray?”**

➤ Abram meets up with the other three cats, but is quickly pinned by the beasts that had attacked from the shadows. His leg is fractured, but he manages to convince the creature pinning him to the floor that he chose a suitable item for his task. He is flung into the darkness, and lands, somehow, back in a hallway on warm ice. Jaqueline is there, but he is more concerned that Solomon *isn't*.

906 words

SOLOMON

man of peace, Here Unseen

Reply 20 | He/Him | [Stat Sheet](#) | [Biography](#)

Narration | Thoughts | **Solomon Speech** | **Other Speech** | Action

Even with Solomon's best efforts at staying ahead, clambering up the tunnel and yelling back what he found, Abram managed to keep up and even overtake him. His long legs surpassed Solomon despite their initial agreement. In truth it was because his smaller body struggled to clamber over the roots and pull himself along, but he preferred to believe that he was blazing a trail that Abram was lapping up in the meantime. His success was because of Solomon's success. And yet, instead of leaving him behind in the haze, Abram turned back to him and shouted words of encouragement.

“Please, Solomon, of you I beg, move faster, though you're short of leg. I hate to admit it, but I find I'd loathe to see you left behind,” Abram called to him. Solomon didn't have the breath to call back to him. Instead he panted hard, and hoped the Orange Other would hear. **“Solomon please, we're almost there! I feel a breeze upon the air! We can escape the horrid mist, all you need is to persist!”**

Almost there, we're almost there out into the New which we will find we will not drown we will not, his thoughts mumbled. Solomon's ears perked up as the fluttering in his chest warmed, a reckless feeling that welled up inside him as he pushed himself forward as much as he could. Abram's belief in him was well-received, and it gave him the boost that he needed in order to propel himself forward. They would find the New together. *We will find the New together.*

A low howl worked its way into his throat as his tail tip **BURNED** from the mist, marking another ache that littered his body. His nose clogged and pulsed with pain and every step his misshapen toe smarted that it made his ears almost permanently adhere to his skull. Solomon only kept himself quiet, the noise catching in his mouth as up ahead the ground rose up-

And out from the tunnel they both burst through.

Solomon's legs kicked as his paws met flat rootless ground, eyes tilting up and up and up to see the large pillars and falling, falling... the falling *snow*. Despite his intrigue his paws kept running, forward and after Abram as they scrambled from the mist. His concern lies there, with his compatriot, determined to keep up with him and not to fall into the waiting clutches of the mist.

But ahead, there is a distinct *crack*, and it feels as if a stone settled into Solomon's stomach. Instinctively, fearfully, his paws slow. No, no, no more cracking, no more danger. He was *tired* of being in danger, and the weariness breathed a new and warm rumble as a low growl and raised hackles shone a new frustration through his frame. He kept moving as Abram did, and ahead he caught flickers of silhouettes - no, of blackened fur and the pale orange that was their other three teammates. The paler black - a *gray*, more like - of 13's pelt was on the ground, as she raised her head to call out to anyone who would hear.

"H-here's, my Here's, *run*, they've heard This 13's folly, she is sorry - to us they now come!!"

Solomon had no time to react, before 5 great creatures were upon them. He watched ahead as Abram was knocked to the ground, the three-eyed, shadowy beast, his foreleg in its jaws as he heard another sickening *snap*. In the split moment he had he could whirl around on the beast, the fear surging heat into his body as it rose against him. His teeth gritted and he screeched, baring his fury as he lashed his claws and swiped at the creature. No, NO, it would not take him, it would not take Abram!

Until he feels the Other barrel into him, wrestling him into the ground and biting around his scruff, lifting his small body and *shaking* him. The burning sensation traveled to his neck, where his neck fur split from the force. Solomon let out a pained cry, twisting in the creature's grasp, before he was thrown back onto the ground. His cry silenced as sheer disorientation blurred his vision, and he wrestled with his remaining senses to give him the information he needed.

His ears told him there was fighting. Screeching and howls of pain, desperate fights for the existence of being Here, his paws were cool yet burned, feeling the biting snow beneath his pads as he struggled to move and stand upwards. Pain wracked him everywhere he moved, aches that he *knew now* and finally realized with an understanding why the Others had been so slow before. His taste, muted by what has been done to his nose, was filled with sharp and tangy iron as *red* spilled onto the white flakes below. And then his thoughts, which were muddled and filled with a scraping, sharp and rasping, voice. One not like the Riddler, but one that he knew were these creatures.

"Solomon, sweet Solomon, share now, Little Bite. What present in here did you find, so that we don't have to smite?" they laughed and howled in his mind. **"Impress us and we'll let you out, Back into the white halls. We'll even let Riddler know, so They might gift you all."**

It's voice was horrid, but as he forced his vision to focus, what he looked up into was even more horrifying. The stone in his stomach soured as it dropped further, staring into the large, bulging eye squared neatly upon its forehead. Its sight crawled all over him, it was in his *mind*, and all he could think about was how much it could *see* him. Fear gripped his legs in a way that made it hard to move, and a lump formed in his throat that made it nearly impossible to speak.

Solomon glanced around, desperately looking for an exit. But what he saw was that of their count of five, their numbers were dwindling. Most importantly, Abram was gone. Solomon stumbled to the side and looked and looked, desperate for the companion that had been with him this entire game, but all his eyes found in their blurry vision were those creatures. There was no exit. There was that which the beasts offered, mercy at the hands of convincing, and beyond that only blood and teeth and *death*.

He felt a surge of bitter warmth again that interwove with the fear, and Solomon glared at the creature before him demanding an answer. And he said *nothing*, afraid that any word he spat now would result in his own death.

Word Count: 1070 words

Interactions: No one directly, though everyone mentioned

Rolls: (Perception Roll: 7)

Summary: Solomon runs out of the tunnel with Abram, and rejoins his other teammates in... less than fortunate circumstances. He is terrified as the creatures attack and in horrible pain, but when he tries to look around he sees no other alternative. Solomon remains silent for now.

The black she-cat gave a 13 a nod at her plan, watching with bated breath as she stood up onto her hind legs. Stone raised high, body full of tension. She daren't take a breath.

Then it flew, disappearing into the darkness, but before the shadow of a sense of relief could go through her, a loud *crack* resounded through the dark cavern.

Jaqueline watched in horror as 13's paws suddenly went... wrong? Wrong. Never in her time observing the musculature of other cats had she seen such a horrid deformation become apparent so suddenly. Before Jaqueline could rush over to the crumpled form, they were joined by two familiar silhouettes before being surrounded by creatures on all sides.

Horrid eyes decorated what she would've described as their visages, sharp teeth pulled up into wide smiles. Three of them cornered or tackled her other three companions to the ground as Jaqueline huddled close to Lyre, her back against his as she felt teeth and claws nip at her long tail and the raw portions of her shoulders.

Her breath was ragged, rushing in time with her heartbeat that was now wildly out of her control. It was all she could do to not black out, but that didn't stop the horrid barking that had replaced her outward breaths.

But she wasn't going to take this sitting down. Not now, not after all of this Rip forsaken hellscape this place put her through. Jaqueline snarled, her nose wrinkling up despite the *huff huff* that interrupted her, as she took a couple swipes with her claws. Even if she missed repeatedly, it felt nice to know that if she was going to die, she was going to do it standing up this time.

Then the horrid thing spoke, its words twisting through the air and sending a shiver through her bones. Her body shook as she grit her teeth.

*"Jaqueline, do be a dear,
And say aloud for all
What in our cavern you have claimed,
Or we'll drown you in the pool.*

FOCUS FOCUS FOCUS, IT WANTS IT, she yelled at herself as a part of her realized what it wanted. *Speak the truth, tell it everything, do not lie.*

She took a breath in before leveling her gaze, her mind focusing on the image of the pouch around her neck. Lyre against her side, touch, the glowing eyes before her, vision, the smell of her own blood in the air, scent.

**"In a world of maze and endless time
We were confined to speak in rhyme.**

**I was tasked to find warmth and charm
However, my friends were brought to harm.**

**However through conflict and communication I found the thing
That which I now bring.**

**It is gold and sunshine
That which I now bring.**

**It brings me warmth to myself and friend alike
And helps mend the emotions of an unwillful strike**

Into the lake.

Despite my origin in bringing harm
There is a certain charm
And to the memory of friends
It will forever lend.”

The thing laughed its horrid laugh. Jaqueline’s body shook and cringed, collapsing into itself and she flinched away from the light from its oculus.

And then she was gone.

Well... not gone. Just... not there. She opened her eyes, feeling slightly warmer with familiar ice beneath her. Her pouch still hung around her neck and her racing heart seemed to be much more under her control. Warmth steadily returned to her, giving her a chance to stumble back onto her feet and look around.

Jaqueline was alone.

Then there was Abram. He was on the ground in front of her. A rising emotion originated in her chest, rising to her throat and to her lips. One of passion and anger and concern and fear and, above all, relief.

But then, as she watched his body seem to deflate as he looked around and saw them alone, the emotion died. There was no time for such things.

The black cat stepped forward, copper eyes gazing at him with no where near the energy of when they first encountered each other in the white space, and instinctively pressed her cheek to his in an attempt to comfort him. Her bruised tail reached up around her and laid itself on Abram’s shoulder.

“We will wait here as long as we need,
They have come too far to be turned to feed.”

She said, after a moment of silence, her voice slower and more drawn out than when they last spoke together.

Rolls:

Intelligence: 18

Summary:

Jaqueline watches in horror as 13 breaks her paw and they’re suddenly ambushed by a bunch of strange creatures. After a moment of resistance, she tells them about what she learned and what the golden pouch means to her. After getting flashed back to the hallways, she comforts Abram, telling him that they will wait as long as they need to for their companions to arrive.



Lyre ⇌ 21 / 5
None ⇌ {He/Him}

Planning. There had been a plan. Lyre had offered thoughts on the plan and the plan had begun and then-

Then this 13 was on the ground and the monsters were all around and heaving and hauling with the roiled, spoiled breath of jaws desired to snap and crunch and crush.

Teeth that nipped and eyes that bit, boring into the Lyre while toiling out a question asked askance.

*“Lyre, child, why is it,
You chose to wear that weight?”*

*Tell us, yes, and do be quick,
Or your neck will snap and break."*

No more breaking. *No more breaking.* **NO MORE BREAKING.**

Enough had been broken already; slashed apart, ripped through, snapped into odd angles and twisted until there was no saying which way was straight to begin with. Dripping red and searing pain and shivering chill had already overtaken the body, shaking terrified and one by one by one becoming Five and then Four and then Three - what would happen if the Lyre became once again a One Together? *Lyre would be alone.* Where was everyone going?

No time, no thought.

Only questions and an answer spat trembling for relief:

"Riddler said find strength, be strong
Lyre searched so hard, so long,
A tassel,
A hassle,
A scarf to which the Lyre strength belong.

But neither filled the empty space,
Neither caused the chest to race,
Or slow
And show,
The Lyre how with Time be chaste.

The collar drags and lags and sags the limbs
A caution forced not on a whim;
The Lyre chose,
In time so froze,
And now time so be granted-"

This word was not right.

"granted-"

It was not right.

"Granted-"

NOT RIGHT.

"granted - HIM."

The word was *wrong* why was it used for Lyre when it was **wrong**, *everything was-*

Laughter, cruel and loud and bellowing was the beast with jaws opened wide and **Wide** and **WIDE** and swallowing the ears, the eyes, the chest, the *everything until it was all-*

A gasp of warmth and wet and comfort.
Close, close, press close and closer.
And eased, the Lyre-

Stat Rolls:

- **Roll for Explaining the Gift:**
 - Charisma Base 19 + Roll **13**
- **Speed Roll: N/A**
 - Base 11
- **Running Speed Total: 66**
 - Item: Tapestry Tassel ~~Blue Scarf~~ Weighted Collar

WC: 348

☞ **Lyre gives his answer while terrified, until the rhyme forces him to use a word that is not himself and he rebels - ultimately succumbing to both the word and the beast and**

finding himself in the new cave. The shift between terror and comfort is so overwhelming that he promptly passes out with his face pressed into the ground. ~

THIS 13

she/her | post 19

There was no time, *no time*, to see the approach of their lost teammates. There was a flash, bright red fur, and ginger-brown, and then the *teeth descended upon her*.

As they sank into her shoulder and *crushed the air from her lungs* 13 **SHRIEKED**.

After that, for long moments everything was blurred. There was the kind of blistering, gut-wrenching pain that hit so hard she could no longer feel anything else. One moment she was halfway to her paws; the next she was on her back in the snow, and the world was spinning, and in her eyes all there was... was the beast's face. Slick shadows and burning irises. Huge, wickedly curved fangs piercing her flesh until she thought they might be scraping across bone.

Voices rasped and laughed and dragged their serrated edges across her disoriented mind. Her chest struggled to rise and to fall, her vision again clouded over. It was... a rush. *Stimulating*. For after the fog cleared, her mind returned to her with a wickedly sharp edge. She felt elucidated - as if this were the pinnacle of their journey, the moment where 13 was meant to *be*.

Everything before this moment paled in comparison, with the exception of her drowning. Was this what it felt like, to be brushed by death and found too precious? To be desired by whatever came *after*... and to slip free at the last moment? This... this was power. To experience this and *survive it*--

For there was no doubt in her mind that she *would* survive this. Nothing could take her away before *she* was ready. Not again. Not *ever*.

Tearing her gaze from the beast's, she focused on the rictus of pain cramping her broken leg and her mangled shoulder. The constriction of those jaws around her chest and the lightheadedness did not aid her here, but she squinted to narrow her focus...

And watched as, one by one, her teammates were magicked away from her. *Again*. Their words had been lost to her in the rush of her pulse in her ears.

Some residual stirring of dissatisfaction that they had left without her say so - that they had not been *concerned* for her wellbeing, or for looking after her as she had been watching over them - flickered through her. It was brief, however, eclipsed by the swell of rich, warm pain tingling along every nerve ending.

Alone. So, she was alone. *Good*. Perhaps, then, she could *enjoy* this last game. Her lip curled back into a vicious snarl, words biting at the tip of her tongue--

A struggle and a huffing of breath to her right stilled her. Quite unconcerned with her current captor, she tipped her head towards the movement and realised that, *oh*, she was *not* quite as alone as she had thought. The beasts *still* had claim over one of her Heres after all. *The peppery one*, her mind supplied, conjuring a flash of his awkward, barked words and his back as he stormed away without waiting to hear her farewell.

Perhaps, before, that might have incensed her. *Perhaps*. But Here Little Lyre and Not-Here Jaqueline had shown her that what she wanted must sometimes be *fought* for - through pain, and punishment, and a force of will.

And she would not allow the monsters to take one of her own.

13 jerked into action from total stillness, curling in on the beast's muzzle on a forced exhale, and catching her hind legs against its lower jaw. Before it could react, she used the remnants of her waning energy to *tear herself free*.

Flesh and fur gave. Muscles tore. Blood *poured*.

With a curdling scream 13 wrenched herself loose and rolled away, unable to think or breathe. She staggered to stand before remembering her left leg - now a twisted *mess* - was indeed broken. The limb gave beneath her, but by some miracle she righted herself.

Copper thick in the air and slick on her tongue, the once grey - *now red, all red, her beautiful pelt, ruined, how would her Allmines ever look her way again?* - she-cat staggered blindly towards her remaining team mate. She swallowed convulsively as she fought the urge to speak;

Instead she arched her back and raised her tail in challenge to the beast pinning him down in challenge. Let it try to take one of hers, let it try to kill them both; it could not. It would not *dare*. There Eyeful Lump had not permitted it; 13 had not permitted it.

Chest heaving, 13 curled her lip at the beast in a bloody snarl, and spit upon the snow beside it's muzzle. Let the creature take *that* as it would.

WORD COUNT:

776

ROLLS:

10 PERCEPTION (and -16 health base)

SUMMARY:

13 is knocked over and grievously injured - it is an elighting experience. When she notices all of her team mates bar Solomon have left already, she says 'fuck this', literally tears herself out of the beast's jaws, and staggers towards her remaining team mate. She will not leave him behind. Bleeding copiously and feeling incredibly spiteful, she makes a rude gesture and spits blood at the monster pinning Solomon down.

Narration | Thoughts | **Solomon Speech** | **Other Speech** | Action

Being gripped by this horrid creature filled Solomon with an emotion indescribable. He was *trapped*, held down and unable to *move*. His paws itched for freedom, to run and escape. Another wordless screech escaped him, loosing the feeling held in his chest and directing it towards the creature holding onto him. It was echoed by another howl, a shriek from a voice who had not yet made such a sound to his memory.

Solomon looked beyond the mask he wore, up to see the Soft Other looking not so soft anymore. Her gray pelt was marred by the teeth marks of these beasts, soaked in water and blood, staining the white patch against her pelt. She looked about in the same mood that he did, hackles raised and lips curled into a threatening snarl. 13's gaze rested not on him, but on the creature that had been holding him down. The notion of protection once again flashed through his mind as he stared up at the Other, warmth flooding through his chest.

When the Others seemed to leave them behind, *she* had stayed. Solomon felt a small modicum of regret that he and Abram didn't take her with him.

So, with as much strength as he could muster, Solomon set out to make things as they should and kicked his legs out, digging his forepaws into the snow suddenly to rip himself away from the beast. He felt its sharp teeth rip away from his scruff as he stumbled forward, closer to 13. He didn't think beyond the idea of shielding himself, drawing close to 13's side, *red* against *red* as Solomon whirled on the creature that had just been holding him.

All around they seemed to loom, eyes everywhere, watching, waiting. There was no escape. Solomon's maw curled in frustration, in anger, in *rage*. The idea of ripping them apart was more favorable in his eyes, but there was far too many for their two to take. But his tail flicked and curled in a threat that meant, on the Riddler's watchful eyes, he would be *sure to try*.

**"Oh man of peace I'm not,
My heart now set to tame,
But I tell you this, you wretched lot,
I will not play this *game*."**

**I think and act upon Mine's own,
And spilling red is favorable, I think.
Yet here you stand, untouched, alone,
Mine's paws in the snow, beginning their sink."**

Solomon's ears flipped back as he took a threatening step forwards, slightly in front of 13.

**"The false head abhors the wand'ring gaze,
And obscure the many eyes in a haze.
Seeing not, they turn away,
And Mine stands, the paws unsplayed."**

With that final note, Solomon raised his head confidently. Though he knew not to act on impulse, he had considered this long enough to not think it as such. Instead, he calculated, thought and processed. Should it make a move, he would not hesitate to strike it down.

And that thought gave him *comfort*.

**"So great *beast*, do you think Mine's words are true?
For I tell you this: You *will* let me through."**

There was a silence that pervaded in the next moment as his words rang out in the clearing. The creature cocked its head to one side as its ears flattened. Its upper lip slowly curls into a snarl, and yet hesitates, as if unnerved. *That's right Great*

Beast Other, be afraid of me, he thought viciously. And yet the creature lunged forward, taking one of its mighty paws and swiping down at Solomon. It aimed directly for his eyes, and in the moment he could help but flinch back instinctively. His world descended into darkness for just a brief moment-

And he stumbled forward, paws once freezing on cold snow now pressing onto warm ice. His blurred vision coalesced until he looked up, seeing black and pale rounded markings and bright orange coloring. Jaqueline, Lyre, and Abram. 13, however, was not anywhere in their group. The final one left behind with those beasts. Solomon let out a sharp growl at the loss, rearing back on his hind paws and scoring at the ground, releasing the energy that had been building ever since his toe had cracked from the container falling on it.

**“Unfairness breathes through the Mine,
At forceful leavings of one behind!”**

Solomon’s cry echoed from, well, *wherever* they were, directed at no one in particular. He gave the ground one more hard smack with his good paw, before lashing his tail and drawing closer to Abram. Blood dripped from Solomon’s wounds, trailing down his back the more he walked and persisted. Despite the warm and safe ice, the comfort had been broken, and Solomon doubted anything beyond a *you’ve passed my game* would suffice.

Despite all this, a sense of relief washed over him as he finally drew close to the Orange Other. Abram’s left foreleg was held in the air, misshapen and not rightly positioned, but he was sitting and he was aware, and that was enough for Solomon. He stepped forward and butted his head against Abram’s side in a brief note of affection before drawing back.

**“To think they’d taken our meager few,
Yet we stand clear in view.”**

His greeting was terse, but he figured it would do. Instead he rested his gaze over to Entirely - no, Jaqueline, the First Other, and more specifically her black legs, and the flank of the Scented Other, Lyre - though Solomon supposed he wasn’t going to be scenting anything anytime soon. He noted the items they had with the also; Lyre a heavy-looking stone wrapped around his neck with fabric, while Jaqueline held a pouch of some sort with her. Solomon regarded them with a squint, lips curled in the remains of his fury.

**“She will join us, I so believe,
I only wish they’d let her free.”**

With that, Solomon swayed, feeling the rush of weariness that dragged him further and further downward, until he laid upon the floor next to Abram. A brief respite as he waited for the last of their number to finally join them.

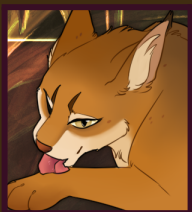


Word Count: 1021 words

Interactions: 13, Abram, Jaqueline, Lyre

Rolls: (Passive damage from moving away from the enemy: -3 health base) (Intimidation roll: 19)

Summary: Solomon is angered by the creature, but touched that 13 was trying to defend him from it. He rips himself away from the creature and huddles next to 13, threatening the creature and demanding to be let through. The creature is intimidated and hesitates a moment before lunging at him and transporting him to the rest of the others. Solomon throws a tantrum that 13 didn’t come with him and hits the ground a couple times, before going over to headbutt Abram disgruntledly and greeting him. He coldly regards the other two, and says that 13 will come soon.



ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: JAQUELINE, SOLOMON | POST 19

Abram nodded, blinking unevenly as he committed himself to waiting. The ice here was warm, as it had been before the eyes had appeared. They were safe, and he felt a slight twinge of relief. Lyre’s appearance caused a similar feeling, despite the pale cat not being the one he was so eagerly waiting for. He cleared his throat and offered his thoughts to Jaqueline in the meantime.

**“The ground below
is warm and safe,**

**my past does tell me so.
Though that others might be unsafe...
The thought troubles me so.”**

He turned his gaze downward, examining his leg. It was bloodied and bent awkwardly, and the nature of the position made his gut churn. A leg should not bend that way, especially not there. Abram leaned down and tended to it carefully, ignoring the most painful areas as he cleared away a majority of the blood. Before long his mouth tasted heavily of iron, and the cream fur of his chin was stained red.

He continued that way for a while, fastidiously grooming away the ichor that ran down his leg. It was calming to have something to focus on, a concrete problem to solve. Only when he felt a shift, and heard a growl in the space beside him, did he look up, his gaze falling upon a familiar mask.

**“Solomon, you made it free!
And you found your way back to me.”**

The tom made to stand, a purr devolving into a hiss of pain as he accidentally stepped onto his broken leg. With a pang of frustrated disappointment, he gingerly set himself back down. Solomon, in the meantime, had closed the distance between them, and Abram felt a gentle pressure against his side. The cool material of Solomon’s mask was pressed against his fur in an affectionate gesture, and Abram’s purr returned. Solomon looked content to rest upon the warm ground, and Abram longed to join him, but he had a feeling that if he laid down now, he might not have the will to stand again. His leg throbbed in agreement, and Abram was forced to satisfy his desire for contact by placing his tail gently against Solomon’s flank.

**“We will wait for Thirteen,
for the five to convene,
and then set out from there.”**

He turned to Jaqueline and Lyre, his head tilted to one side. It was doubtful that they would protest, but he asked anyway.

“Does that sound fair?”

➤ Abram informs Jaqueline that the ground being warm means that they are safe. He then begins to clean the blood from his fur. He is pleased when Solomon appears in the hallway, and rests his tail against the other cat’s flank. He then tells Jaqueline and Lyre that they will wait until Thirteen arrives before continuing onward.

408 words

TH1S 13

she/her | post 20

With flat ears and lashing tail she stood guard as her teammate tore himself free of the beast. She was pleased, yes, when this time he moved back towards her instead of away - *more* pleased, even, when red-to-red they pressed. 13 trembled as the nerves along her side sparked rejection at that contact, brief though it was. Oh, how lovely, how good it was, that acknowledgement, that standing *together*.

Her eyes slipped to his back as the short tom stepped just slightly before her face hidden behind his mask and legs wide. She studied quietly the way his red fur rose on end and his tail filled out as if with static. When he spoke, it was all hard edges and deep growls.

13's soaked it in, this lovely sense of rightness, that he too might know that must not take this trite, belittling treatment. This 13 and her Heres were too good to bow to the whims of monsters. They ought to make them cower.

But then, her lovely, bloody thoughts were abandoned as the monster ripped her final Here away. 13 stood, swaying, alone in the cavern. Finally, she had assured that all were through before her.

She had herded them up and now they were safe, together. It would stay that way. She would not allow deviation. Not anymore. Until they finished this horrid game, it was together, or nothing.

Not at all concerned for herself - for she had seen the way the creature had cowered when Here Peppery Red had threatened it - 13 collapsed back onto her haunches with a hitching, stuttering breath. She fully ignored the creatures, and turned instead to checking over the gashes encircling her shoulder, chest and ribs. They were wide, and the flesh that peeked through those gaping holes was raw. She inhaled, and oddly enough, the smell of her own blood and meat was not at all appealing.

She was hungry, below the network of pain. So hungry that it ached through her, it pressed down until she was growling again, not from her throat but from her stomach. 13 sighed, for this was inconvenient, and bent to lick some of the blood from her shoulder. It was just as unappealing in taste as it was in scent. Perhaps because she was already coughing it up?

Bemused, shivering, and lightheaded from her continuously weeping wounds, 13 decided she was finally sick enough of this place to enjoy makign the beasts squirm. She remained where she was, but straightened her back, bearing her gift to the creatures with a cruel curl of her mouth.

Her words were high and singsong, pretty and a little breathless.

**“Oh, poor wretched, ugly things you are,
all twisted up and bare,
you go about throwing your weight,
as if This 13 cares.
You are not Here Eyeful Lump,
you are not to say
whether I stay or whether I go;
you're here to light the way.
So go on, you filthy, stinking brute,
do as This 13 tells,
you took Alloneself's Heres,
so don't hesitate--just ask yourselves:
Is this what There Riddler wished for?**

To pull **This 13** free?
No, it is not, you useless husks,
it's with her *team AllOne* should be."

By they end the tune had faded, and **13** was again left snarling. The rhyme had worn her out, until she was panting.

Nevermind, though, for the beast that had caught her circled, making a pained sort of sound; **13** had only long enough to give a blood-spattering *hiss* of disrespect, before the beast's eyes flashed bright white--

And **13** felt the warm floor and clean air rush in at her from every side.

Shaking and disoriented, the she-cat fought against and roll of gut cramping nausea, before she attempted to right herself. It was not an easy thing; the pain now was muddying her thoughts and affecting her sight. Grey clouds and black dots distorted her vision, no matter how she blinked to clear them. Her left forepaw was twisted at such an odd angle, and her entire left side was torn flesh and small flaps of ripped skin. She would not have done differently if given the choice again - Heres would always engender such a reaction, for they were *hers* - but she *did* find some small, raw place inside of her mind that whispered,

*'no matter how **This 13** grooms **Alloneself** will never be clean again... **This 13** is no longer desirable.'*

After a moment of dizziness and revelation, **13** shoved her thoughts aside and focused on studying her teammates, who were indeed gathered around her. Still-Here-Not-Here Jaqueline and Here Little Lyre were nipped and sore along their flanks and limbs, but otherwise were no more harmed than they had been before the incident.

Here Tall Abram was skewiff, stood with one leg at the oddest of angles - just as hers was. They mirrored on another with their wonky left forelegs perfectly. The idea that he had experienced the same pain as she had was delectable.

Pupils blown wide, she glanced at Here Peppery Red, stood strong and still, and closest to the spot that she had appeared. She made a low sort of crooning sound, wordless, and struggled to her paws. With a deep, blood dripping limp, she closed the scant space between them and, eyes slipping shut, brushed her clean cheek against the hard, smooth ridges of his mask.

She stayed there, close, just long enough to whisper,

**"You are brave, you are strong,
All said was right, it was not wrong.
This 13 sees in you **AllOneself**,
And is pleased to see your continued health."**

With her little piece said, she pulled back her his space and turned to each of them, sparing what was by now a very tired, red-stained smile. Louder, she spoke to the group.

"This is done well, it was all good."

Your words improved **This 13's** mood.
And now, *together*, we all may leave.
As *five in one*, not twos and threes.
Together we're strong, when in each we trust.
Now, let's finish this journey, if we really must."

Oh, how little she was looking forward to the long walk. For she was already so, so tired...

WORD COUNT:

1025

ROLLS:

20 CHARISMA

SUMMARY:

13 feels kinship with Solomon as he stands protectively in front of her. When he is gone, she sits down for a little think, before verbally flaying the poor monsters for daring to question her. Once she's done, and back in the hallway, she studies each teammate, says a private word to Solomon, and addresses them all. She makes it clear that she will not accepted them splitting up again (as they did in the beginning), though she is proud of their words in the cavern.

Jaqueline (she/her) - Post #: 19 - Word Count: 702

Copper optics trailed down to see Abram's paw knocked askew in a similar fashion to 13's. She could already tell that he wouldn't be able to apply weight to it, the pneumatic systems in his leg wouldn't be able to operate properly. Jaqueline didn't respond, instead taking stock of her own injuries.

Her outside was raw, slices and scrapes scouring her flesh, while her shoulder remained just as bad as ever. The slice from the ice to the side was ragged and looked more like it had torn through her body rather than cut through it. *Superficial wounds*, she determined. Things that she could evaluate and keep an eye on. Things she could easily communicate.

It was her chest and belly that concerned her. Something was wrong. Something within her container had been compromised. There must've been something similar, yet different, to the pneumatic system in Abram's leg that was ruptured or broken. Perhaps something more complex than a simple movement? Jaqueline lifted her foreleg to her side, the origin of her pain, and tentatively felt along at it. It was noticeably swollen and tender where she touched it. Not good at all, but something to be evaluated later.

Jaqueline's head jerked up to see Solomon tumble into view, Abram rushing forward and almost instantly stepping on his injured paw in his haste. She would've gotten up as well, maybe would've said something because her heart soared with relief that he had made it out, but that kind of excitement was dangerous. The dark cat stifled her feelings and let them hang at her side where she could look at them another time.

Another time she would've been surprised that Abram and Solomon had decided to stay behind to wait for 13 and Lyre. Maybe she would've even been happy. But those kinds of emotions could get you seriously injured or, worse, killed.

13 bamfed in sometime later, appearing between eye blinks and glances. One moment open space, the next moment 13.

Some moments beforehand she might've jumped up, risking her shoulder and chest, to go over to greet the smaller cat. But there were others that could do that, no need to add another body onto the pile. Jaqueline instead turned her gaze to evaluating the bodily status of each of the cats before her. Mobility was going to be a problem, their speed greatly hampered by 13 and Abram's broken legs. Solomon seemed mobile enough, but her own ability to move was limited even if she pushed herself due to her shoulder. Lyre, should he arrive unharmed, would be one of the most mobile of the bunch, but he wouldn't have the strength to carry any of them.

Abram was the largest of them, so he would've been her first pick to carry the weakest of them, but it would be a wonder if he could carry himself for any length of time without taking breaks. Her own debilitating injury may flex enough to be able to carry someone on her back, but it would be a very limited motion that would prohibit her from being able to assist others.

So the answer to her question of if they could move forward was simple: yes. But with innumerable caveats. They counted 0x5 in total, not an easily balanced number. One would have to carry a disproportionate amount of the weight to compensate for the rest of them. They would have to move slowly and in a group, any split offs would lead to easy pickings for if the Sleepers decided to trail after them.

Copper eyes would be attentive as the group would walk, watching for the weaknesses of the others and the arrival of those who would desire to do them harm. If the others chose to break ahead of her or out onto their own, she would reevaluate and learn. Panic led to devastation, both visible and invisible.

Jaqueline gave 13 a nod as she finished speaking, not so much as opening her mouth or walking over to her. She was going to need as much strength as she could grasp to remove the weaknesses in her mind and body. It was a necessity to preserve her companions.

The dark she-cat cast her eyes along the walls, taking in what all had remained the same and taking note of the discrepancies.

Rolls:
Perception (eyes): 14
Summary:

Jaqueline evaluates her companions, taking note of the weakness plaguing them and how, should they end up separated, it was a guaranteed death should the Sleepers return. She decides to dedicate the rest of the journey to tracking to see when/how her companions would falter while remaining vigilant to external threats arising. Talking is now a precious commodity with her injuries. No point wasting it.



ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: 13, ALL | POST 20

His gaze flicked to 13 the moment she stepped aside to speak to Solomon. She approached him without hesitation and whispered words that Abram could not hear, though he could tell immediately that it must be something pleasant. The way she pressed close to him, how she moved across the floor to greet him, despite looking the most critically wounded.

Abram shifted his weight, feeling a twinge in his own broken leg as he watched 13 step gingerly around hers. With their challenge nearly complete, and a momentary pause in their constant travel, Abram allowed himself a moment to truly consider her.

Her fur was bloodied and torn. Her expressions were strained, and he knew beyond a doubt that she was in agony, as he was. And yet, she offered them praise, offered them affection. She urged them onward toward their

goal, towards what the Riddler bade them to do. Solomon had insisted they wait for her, and now, Abram was fairly certain he knew why.

“Of course, Thirteen,
your will is seen.
We shall depart with haste.”

A glint of glass caught his eye, and Abram’s eyes zeroed in on 13’s chest. Where Jaqueline carried a bag, and Lyre had his weighted collar, 13 had a necklace just like his own. He cocked his head; the she-cat was getting more and more interesting by the second. But still, they had other matters to attend to.

He spoke louder to address the group as a whole.

“Let’s hope that as we all
move through *this* hall,
we shall no longer be chased.”

While he spoke, he kept his eyes locked on 13’s gift. If she were as bright as he hoped she was, he assumed she would take the hint. If not, then perhaps she wasn’t as interesting as he was starting to believe.

➤ Abram notices 13’s interaction with Solomon, and studies her more closely. He notes their similar injuries, their similar drive to finish the game, and that their gifts are nearly identical. He agrees with 13, and makes a point of studying the vial around her neck as he speaks to the rest of the group.

304 words

SOLOMON

man of peace, Here Unseen
Reply 22 | He/Him | Stat Sheet | Biography

Narration | Thoughts | Solomon Speech | Other Speech | Action

The warm ground was a welcomed relief from the bitter cold that Solomon had found so suddenly mere moments before. Upon his flank and legs he was content to rest for as long as it would take for 13 to get back. Though his back ached, his nose stung, and flares of pain rippled with his slowing pulse, the warm ice was comfortable and *safe*. Solomon enjoyed that feeling for as long as he could.

Next to him, Abram rumbled with a deep... rumbling type of sound. Solomon had only caught bits and pieces of it before with the Others, but paired with his high tone of voice and the way Abram’s tail rested against his flank, he assumed that it was a good sort of reaction.

“We will wait for Thirteen, for the five to convene, and then set out from there,” he had said.

Solomon nodded in agreement. He didn’t feel the need to add onto what he had already set his mind to.

And, just as he had figured, 13 came tumbling to the ground not too far from where the pair had sat. She didn’t look any *more* injured, but that wasn’t entirely saying much. Her foreleg too, like he’d surmised back in the cavern and now looked at with renewed curiosity, was skewed the wrong way just like Abram’s. Just like his smaller toe. The thought of his legs bending in such a way made a restless but deep pit settle in his stomach, paired with a roll of nausea. No, he did not like that thought.

13 approached him, limping, blood dripping from all manners of her soaked pelt. Her face approached his and in momentary instinct he moved to pull back - until her cheek brushed against the top of his mask. Touching the barrier against his face. Solomon's tenseness slowly but surely melted away as wide eyes looked up to 13's reddish pelt as she whispered words to him.

"You are brave, you are strong, all said was right, it was not wrong. This 13 sees in you AllOneself, and it pleased to see your continued wealth."

Well, at least someone liked that jumble of words he said. Though he wasn't sure what AllOneself meant, he wanted to think it was perhaps... herself that she was speaking about? Whatever the matter, a brief flash of comfort warmed over his body, muting the pained feeling in his neck a bit.

When 13 made the motion to move ahead, Solomon agreed. Their time for rest was done now, and while they were all together they should move as one. After all, they all needed to get out in order for this test, trial, *whatever* that eye said to be completed. So he pushed himself up to his paws again with a bit of added difficulty. He shook his fur to get it mostly lying in the right spots, unintentionally spraying small droplets of his own blood everywhere.

For a moment he flexed his bad paw, feeling its stiffness. An angled eye downwards told him that it was nearly twice the size of his other one - swollen like the dead kits' bellies. Solomon's ears fell back in a modicum of fluttering in his chest. Was he turning into the kittens when he was hurt? Flexing the toe despite the pain made it difficult for the claw to unsheathe as well... he would have to keep an eye on it.

His ears pricked as Abram rose his voice to address their five. **"Let's hope that as we all Move through *this* hall, we shall no longer be chased,"** he said.

**"Yes, let's move with haste like Abram said,
'Lest we find the five among the dead.
For we must *all* make it through,
To find beyond, to find the New."**

Solomon hopped away a few pawsteps, stopping to turn to his other compatriots who had yet to speak a word. The First Other, Jaqueline, was aware and yet casting her gaze ahead. The Scented Other Lyre's eyes were closed, face against the floor. Dead? With a tilt to his head Solomon noted the way his chest rose and fell, *breathing*, his thoughts supplied. No, no, not dead, a state of... of... *not eyes open, unawares, aching rest tumble floating feeling nothing nothing nothing?* Nothing. That wouldn't do.

Before his journey could properly be started, he stepped forward to the Nothing-Lyre. Uncaring of the wounds along him, Solomon used his two forepaws to push against the Scented Other, moving his body in what little strength that he had.

**"Wake, you of many scents!
To find the New, present the gifts we go hence!"**

Word Count: 775 words

Interactions: Everyone, Lyre specifically

Rolls: (Somehow none)

Summary: Solomon is comforted by 13's words and appreciates them inwardly. He agrees with 13 and Abram that they should get moving together, and goes to leave, before realizing a couple of their number haven't spoken or moved. Upon seeing Lyre passed out, he walks over and begins to shake him awake.



Lyre ⇌ 22 / 5
None ⇌ {He/Him}

The dark was calm and peaceful, warm against the face and smooth against the chest where it was pressed into the ground. It would be lovely to stay like that until all of the sharp and aching and leaking of the red that drip-drip-dripped could stop. Everything

was stopped, on pause. Blissful.

Until harsh paws ravaged the aching shoulder and sent the *painpainpain* stabbing deep and hot and yowling into the dark. Or maybe that had been The Lyre yowling.

Bleary sight opened to find the impatient ass from the warm ice caves putting weight and jostling movement into the Lyre and causing the *painpainpainPAINPAIN*. A whimper built in the back of the throat. Why was the ass-cat so determined to be mean to Lyre? Was Lyre close to someone that the ass-cat wanted for only the self of the ass cat, the way Lyre had fussed over keeping The Jaqueline away from this 13? The face scrunched and pressed further into the warmth it had fallen next to.

Oh. The Jaqueline was there. Did the ass-cat want the Jaqueline, then?

Too late. The Jaqueline belonged with Lyre now - the ass-cat had left both behind in the tunnel and so the ass-cat had no claim to either.

Lyre would stay and enjoy the warmth and let the eyes close again and- And, what would happen next? The sleep that had taken over in the Vast White Noise? That would separate Lyre again, though, wouldn't it? Every time the sleep or the dark or the fading of the mind came, the waking was in someplace different. So there could be no sleeping, or pausing, or stilling to make the *thup-thup* slow or cede or lead to an elsewhere that was away from those who stayed waking.

The warmth was missed as the face was hauled once again back into the air to look around with the eyes that no longer wanted to focus or remain any more open than a half-closed slit.

Hauling weight around, whether collared or not.

It was exhausting.

But there was more to Lyre than exhaustion, and there would be a making out of the tunnels, if only to make mad the Riddling Eyes that trapped all here to writhe in anguish.

Stat Rolls:

- **Perception Roll for Peering through the Ice:**
 - Roll 17
- **Speed Roll: N/A**
 - Base 11
- **Running Speed Total: 66**
 - **Item:** ~~Tapestry Tassel~~ ~~Blue Searf~~ Weighted Collar

WC: 375

~ Lyre is rudely awakened and wordlessly screeches into Solomon's face in retaliation (though mostly pain). He wants to remain pressed into Jaqueline's side in blissful unawareness, before remembering that staying too still was bad and falling asleep might mean he would wake up separate from his team again. He struggles to sit up and remain awake, clinging to the surge of adrenaline and goading himself to keep moving out of spite for everything that's happened. ~

TH1S 13

she/her | post 21

Pleased with how Here Peppery Solomon, though tense, did not entirely flinch away from her, but slowly settled, she allowed the rumble to start up again in her throat. This time, it was deeper and lower a sound, and it vibrated through her aching bones and torn up flesh at a frequency which... soothed? How curious. (How *tired*.)

The she-cat turned to peer at Here Abram as he spoke, closeby still. His words were directed at her, and as with the very first time that he had acknowledged her, back in that very first hallway, she *felt* Seen. It was good, to be listened to and appreciated without fuss. Especially when the weight of exhaustion, pain and hunger was pressing down on her. Flattery was most pleasing.

Still, 13 paused when she noticed how his eyes dropped to study her gift. Her chin ducked to do the same (and she saw that, yes, for all her blood and gore, the tiny little vial remained undamaged), before she returned the glance to his. She caught the flash of warm, transparent ice on a chord about his throat. Inside were slivers of plant she knew instinctively. He, like her, was from the island? He came from *before* the Great Whiteness too? Was she *not* the only creator of the Heres?

She was not at first sure whether to snub him for the offense of being her equal (for, *look*, even their paws were twisted similarly!), or to mark him as such now. Through the descending fog of sleepiness, she shook herself. Silly thoughts! Snug him? Why should she? This made them the *same*, this made her stand with him. This was yet more proof of 13's purpose. She was *meant* to meet Here's Abram and Solomon, and she was *meant* to stand beside Here's Jaqueline and Lyre. Not matter the cost, or the hardship, this was her *team*. Here Solomon, her equal protector, Here Jaqueline, her equal thinker, Here Lyre, her equal kit, Here Abram, her equal from the Before.

Something hot and squirming wriggled through her aching chest. It boiled her blood and branded in its tracks *mineminemine*.

Understanding now the sense of possessiveness, she curled her mouth knowingly at Abram's quiet acknowledgement, and inclined her head just so. If he was her equal in creation, then so be it. She would not deny a truth that he knew. She would not drive away her teammate.

While she was busy thinking these important things, Here Peppery Red had pulled aside with a mention of haste, and had pushed down at Here Little Lyre's slumped, sleeping form with two paws. Here Little Lyre had woken with screeches and complaints, and as before, 13 felt herself growing weary with the lack of discipline in her ranks. Subordination would *not* be tolerated. Here Solomon was acting (perhaps crassly) upon her will; Here Little Lyre was behaving as a churlish kit would. Unlike before, when she might have had enough strength in her to drag him along by his scruff, she was now by far too broken to endure such treatment. She did not wish for any more of her flesh to rip away in a struggle. She did not wish to hurt, or bleed the floor red. An odd sort of ache had settled deep inside of her, and it called for her Allmines. Her Allmine Here's, Lethe and Almost.

And seeing she might use the ache to her advantage, she stumbled weakly forward, presenting her savaged side to booths smaller cats, and saying in low, wounded sort of tones,

“Please, Mine Heres, **This 13** begs
we get along, behaving good,
for **Allone** is tired, she is not able
to step between more rushing blood.

This 13 wishes we'd get along,
She's begged, been nice,
she's scolded and chided,

she just now wishes to get off the ice.

**This long trip takes a lot from us,
but moving on is for the best.
So do not fight, dears, be kind and well,
let's move on so *all of us* may rest."**

Her bit spoken, she moved instead in slow steps to Here Abram, who seemed the one least likely to continue the roughhousing and noise. Tilting her head back to look up at him (and oh, how the movement reminded her of Allmine Here Lethe), she said in low tones,

**"You are a mirror from before the White,
This 13 knows that she is right.
She is pleased to see these mirrored paws,
Though the pain they give is more a flaw."**

That last, of course, was not entirely true. Pain *bonded*. Pain made wrongs *right*. It tied two beings together inextricably. Touch, solidness, pain, death. These were the markers for relationships; a standard that *13* had slowly been devising. She had shared in pain with all of the Heres on her team (some shared pain, she thought with a flash of memory at how she'd almost left Here's Jaqueline and Lyre to drown, more unnecessary than others), which meant they each were bonded irrevocably with each other, no matter what they took from this moment. It would not be reversed. The bond could not be thrown.

She had torn herself up for Here Peppery Red, and he had stepped in front of her, injured too. They had spit in the beasts' faces (she literally, he figuratively), and he had accepted her touch afterwards. Here Abram was twisted as she was - only he, perhaps, would understand what the agony of cracking the leg in two felt like. They had not fought for each other, had not spilled blood (at least, had not spilled *more* blood), but they understood one another. Knowing the awful throb that would be radiating out through him from his broken limb was pleasing.

Turning again to her team, she swallowed and blinked hard to stop the tilting of the hallway in her eyes, and said to all of them,

**"Which way, then, do you all wish to go,
This 13 would be pleased to know."**

WORD COUNT:

1005

ROLLS:

17 CHARISMA

SUMMARY:

13 reevaluates her idea of 'equality' as well as the worth of her teammates. After getting possessive and missing her Allmines, she uses huge puppy eyes and a sad voice to get Solomon & Lyre to behave, before confirming quietly that she recognises Abram's worth, and asking everyone which way they'd like to go.



So she *was* clever. Despite his pain, Abram felt his lip curl with satisfaction as she glanced down at her gift. He did not have to waste words to have her see his meaning. Of course 13 was clever, was something *more*. With their similarities, how could she not be?

Lyre's awakening shriek barely registered, beyond the fact that it was wholly unpleasant on the ears. They were safe, and with Solomon as the cause for the sound, Abram saw no need to concern himself. Solomon had gotten him this far; should Lyre feel stepped on for a moment in order to move, so be it. 13, however, seemed to feel otherwise.

He watched as she turned to them, her bloodied side on full display, and began to *plead*. Not in a desperate way, but in a way that showed reason. It reminded him vaguely of Jaqueline, and how she used her many questions and reasons to explore the world around them. It had seemed tiring when he had seen it in the White, but as he watched 13 speak, he blinked with the realization that perhaps truths could be used to his advantage. But doing all of that questioning seemed so exhausting, and he was already so tired...

When she drew closer to him, Abram felt a bubble of excitement in his chest. To be approached and acknowledged was immensely satisfying. So too was hearing that she considered him a mirror, a reflection of her own self. He dipped his head and matched her low tone.

**"This 13 speaks true,
and convincingly, too.
Your words I quite admire.
They move, convince, inspire."**

As Lyre and Solomon presumably gathered themselves under her direction, Abram glanced down at 13's flank. If 13 truly were similar to himself, perhaps he had something to offer her in this brief moment.

**"The pain is bothersome, yes,
a distraction, a mess.
Though while the others obey,
if This Abram may..."**

He mimicked her way of speaking once more, not minding in the slightest how the title of This sounded, before leaning down to carefully groom her flank. He was mindful not to let his tongue rasp too close to any openings in the flesh; he knew all too well how badly *that* would hurt. Instead he focused on taming the soaked and matted fur, giving it a gentle but quick once over. There was no time to fix all of it, not here in the hall, but it was a start.

➤ While he waits for Solomon and Lyre to follow 13's request, Abram mentions to 13 that he likes how she handled the situation. He then attempts to try and fix the most disheveled parts of 13's fur, in case being tidy brings her as much satisfaction as it brings him.

Narration | Thoughts | **Solomon Speech** | **Other Speech** | Action

The waking screaming was not what he expected. Solomon's eyes widened and he drew sharply back as the Scented Other screeched and howled and made noise. Immediate suddenness turned sour, turned to a heated fluttering he had so commonly before the paws and claws as he'd put it before. Yes, paws and claws should shut the screaming up, wouldn't it? The threats worked quite well in his favor when he asked Abram to not look at him. And so Solomon's bad foreleg rose, poised to strike at Lyre's face in retaliation for making his ears ring with unpleasantness-

"Please, Mine Heres, This 13 begs we get along, behaving good." 13's voice rang out amidst the screaming. *Pleading* with them to stop and explaining her wish to leave. **"This long trip takes a lot from us, but moving on is for the best. So do ot fight, dears, be kind and well, let's move on so *all of us* may rest."**

He paused. Face narrowed into a serious glare, Solomon thought over the choice of striking Lyre. That *would* be quite impulsive, and it wouldn't do to fail the Riddler's begrudging lessons so close to the end. So with a quick hop away, holding his bad paw in the air, Solomon let the Scented Other have his space at 13's behest. It didn't make him pleased in any way, and the warm, assured feeling he had in his stomach soured. *This is your fault the screaming screeching happened*, he thought at Lyre, mutely tasting a bitterness in the back of his throat. Then he turned and stalked away, further down the hall. He paused after a couple steps, raising his voice for the Others to hear.

**"The plea, it sings truly and right.
The end now rests within the sight.
To the Riddler, now, the five must go,
Lest eyeless sockets weep in woe."**

The lesson was learned. Reserve the touch for things who respond not with screeching but with gentle touches, like Abram and 13. But the encounter and the plea had already soured his mood... he wasn't sure if he wanted to stand by them right now.

However, his paws itched. They whispered to *move run along, not much time now no we must leave and move to lay the gifts to find the new*. He agreed. So all together Solomon gathered himself and skipped forward a bit. His eyes turned back to maintain his connection with the team - to those which he needed to get out of this place - before looking ahead to the path before them.

There were two directions of the hallway, but that wasn't what made him pause. No, instead he saw the engravings of gold upon the hallway, placed eerily similar to when he and Abram were walking down this way. The only difference in this case was that before they bulged and moved and looked. Now they were a cold, sightless gold. In all their travels, Solomon barely recalled going *right* once... instead going left at a crossroads. Meeting that crossroads again would mean they go right to retrace their steps! Furthermore, Solomon knew that there was no moss here like there was by the silver room... so they must be close to the entrance. Yes, surely, the right turn was the safe way to go. Then they could travel on, to the Riddler, and to the end of this challenge They had set before them.

Solomon flipped around and raised his voice with a smile.

**"The news! It shouts with unbridled glee!
For the Mine knows where we should be!
To the right, Their beckoning call,
To reach the end in Their great hall!"**

His *good...* news? delivered, Solomon stood and waited. Surely with the anticipation of knowing where they must go will drive their paws to move as he had? After all, now that they knew the way, it would only be a short time now until they all could rest their aches and ache no more.

Interactions: Lyre, Everyone

Rolls: (Exploration: 20)

Summary: Startled by Lyre's screech, Solomon very nearly thinks to hit him before 13's plea rings out. He thinks again about his impulse reaction, and instead leaves Lyre alone, thinking moody thoughts as he explores further down the path to look for an exit. Solomon attains a slight memory transcendence considering he was so focused on the eyes, and realizes exactly where he is in contrast to their placement, deducing that the party must go to the right in order to return to the Riddler. He shouts this at everyone else and hopes that it will give them motivation.



ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: 13 | POST 22

The sound of pattering pawsteps drew Abram's attention away, and he looked up just in time to see Solomon padding off down the hallway. As eager as when their journey began, it seemed. He sighed, glancing down at his broken leg. As much as he might have desired it, there was no way he would be keeping up with Solomon this time around.

"It is time to depart,
to move, to start.
We shall make our way,
without delay,
and without a doubt,
we'll make it out."

Abram began to hobble after Solomon at a steady pace. There was no use trying to rush; after all, he did not know how close to the end they truly were. Solomon seemed to know the way though, and that was good enough for him.

But what would happen when they reached the end? Would the Riddler be pleased to see them? It was odd to think of how the blobby behemoth might look when happy, but it would be interesting to see. The creatures that had assaulted them had mentioned gifts to be gained, and that had piqued Abram's interest as well. He focused on Solomon's retreating form as he pondered the idea. Were the gifts other things to be worn? Like Lyre's collar, or Solomon's mask? Or would it be something else, something more desirable?

As if on cue, Abram felt a twist in his stomach, and a scratch in his throat. Perhaps there would be something at the end to soothe his aches and pains. Most of them were the Riddler's doing, brought on by the trials in their domain. There was a feeling of correctness, of thanks for the task they had completed, that surrounded that idea. That having their needs seen to would be...*Fair*. He wasn't entirely sure of the concept, but it sure sounded satisfying.

➤ Abram begins to walk down the hallway after Solomon, his pace slower than before due to his broken leg. He wonders what the Riddler's gifts might be at the end of the maze, and considers the concept of fairness.

309 words



Lyre ⇌ 23 / 5
None ⇌ {He/Him}

Again the Lyre received words of- of- of *chiding* when Lyre had done nothing wrong. The sight of This 13 all battered and dripping with red and pain made the inside of the

rumbling empty under the ribs scrunch. Both were in the *painpainpain*.

Then 13 should understand! If the ass-cat had stepped on the injured shoulder of this 13, then there would be no doubt a screeching would follow.

Trembling to the up and right, Lyre in turn showcased his plight, eyes wide, strained beside, and pleading more, though without spite.

“The Lyre did not mean to blurt!
The ass-cat made this Lyre *hurt*!
Why always
This 13 says,
That Lyre must be acting curt?

With injured limb it hurts to step,
But a stepping *on* the limb intent?
The pain intense
The urge immense,
Any would have yowled contempt.”

The ears lowered, the tail curled around a back limb, and the shivering of effort only increased with the addition of the prize that had given entry past the beasts before. Heavy though it was, there could be no leaving it behind.

A task which would now be more difficult as the shoulder dripped with even more red and the twisted paw pulsed with more heat and *hurthurthurt*.

The ass-cat could have bent that paw completely wrong. If The Lyre had a matching paw to this 13 and the other large cat, would the Lyre not have been scolded for crying out? Maybe the limb would give out in walking, and it would be the fault of the ass-cat, and maybe *then*, finally, the ire would not be directed at Lyre for merely reacting in a way that made sense.

But this 13 had already said that if Lyre and the Jaqueline did not heed the spouted words then there would be another leaving behind. Maybe the Lyre did not want to follow one who would only cuddle if there was a use for it. Maybe instead of this 13, Lyre should focus on staying with the Jaqueline.

Decision made, the nose lifted to brush gently, *gently* against the soft dark pelt that had provided warmth untarnished and unfettered,

“It’s time to go, The Jaqueline,
No time to stay just where we’ve been,
In the warm,
There could be harm,
Now must escape this place unseen.

Do not worry, do not fret
If again these others let
Us fall behind,
Then nevermind,
The Lyre by this side is kept.”

Yes. The Four Together would be amended - and when the end of this, this, this *terrifying* place was finally reached, it would be with Th’Eclipse, The Nimh, and The Jaqueline that Lyre would cuddle. Maybe also Th’Orli? A proper Five Together chosen for warmth.

Stat Rolls:

- **Charisma Roll for turning 13’s chiding toward Solomon:**
 - **Roll 19**
- **Speed Roll: N/A**
 - **Base 11**

- Running Speed Total: 66
 - Item: ~~Tapestry Tassel~~ ~~Blue Scarf~~ Weighted Collar

WC: 454

Lyre feels bad for 13 being injured and tired, but is once again rubbed the wrong way when it seems like he's being chided for something that wasn't his fault. He returns her pleading while displaying his own injuries and wide, tormented eyes; shoving the blame towards Solomon and acting thoroughly hurt by both action and word. He makes a show of how much effort it takes to get up on his paws now and gently nudges Jaqueline with his nose to let her know that they need to get up and start moving, and that he would walk with her so if they were left behind again at least they would be left behind together. He determines that Jaqueline would be in his chosen cuddle pile with Eclipse, Nimh, and maybe Orli, when they finally escape the maze. ~

THIS 13

she/her | post 22

To say that 13 was tired of their situation would be a kind understatement. So it was that she listened to Here Solomon's and Here Abram's responses to her plea, and watched the ways they moved. Here Solomon distanced himself first, and then Here Abram followed; she was not yet *quite* tired enough to miss the way that Solomon's past eagerness seemed to wane, and she found herself disapproving of the distance set between them. It had pleased her when they stood, shoulder to shoulder - now, the thought of being left behind again soured the lingering blood in her mouth and made the weight of the There Eyeless Lump press more heavily on her mind.

Then Here Lyre spoke, and drew her displeasure at her perceived abandonment away. His plaintive words bit at her weary mind, and she paused to really digest them. Ought she scold Here Solomon for his part? She did not appreciate that he had stirred Here Little Lyre up so much when a gentle touch might have urged him on more gently... but then...

13's ear twitched as she considered the fact that all of her kindnesses and gentlenesses had been turned away and rejected by Here Lyre in the cold cave, regardless of how much care she put into her words and actions. Only the sharp voice and the distance had moved him in any notable way. The sweetness had made him rash and mean spirited, overzealous and fussy. 13 had gained nothing from babying Here Lyre before. And if there was no gain in it, then why should she waste her time on him at all? She would leave him, then, to Not-Here Jaqueline.

Bleeding sluggishly from her badly torn shoulder, and lightheaded with the pain, 13 turned away from Here Lyre's imploring tone, aimed now at Not-Here Jaqueline, and set off after Heres Solomon and Abram without another word. She had no more energy to waste on Here Lyre and his plight of whining.

Tottering along, swaying to-and-fro across the hallway, did her 13 best to look about for further clues that she might share to make herself valuable to her teammates, but she was now so dizzy that even just keeping up with Heres Solomon and Abram was made an almost impossible feat. Their backs blurred and her vision dipped, but she shook it off by forcing her mangled paw down against the warm ice. The burst of pain elicited a breathless whimper, but it woke her a little.

With that jolt of clarity, she pressed forwards.

ROLLS:

Nat 1 perception (lol)

SUMMARY:

13 considers Lyre's words but ultimately dismisses them bc she decides alienating Solomon just to please Lyre would be dumb, especially when Lyre has proven himself temperamental & so far Solomon has been reliable. She will study her surroundings & begin moving down the corridor after Solomon and Abram. Bc she is a big bloody mess it is awkward & honestly kinda pathetic to watch. Slow going.

Jaqueline (she/her) - Post #: 20 - Word Count: 690

The black she-cat did her best to ignore the pain along her side and the numbness in her right shoulder originating where she had been flung against the ceiling by Rip. Previously, she had been too distracted to notice that the numb feeling had started to spill out around it, but now that they weren't in immediate danger it was something that was determined to be noticed.

She cleared her throat and tried to distract herself by glancing over her companions. There was a somewhat familiar light in Abram's eyes as Jaqueline witnessed his and 13's conversation. Something inside of her felt... irritation? Yes, it was something akin to the word that jumped to her mind. Not quite that, but close.

A small weight fell against her side, her tail reflexively curling around the warmth before realizing that it was the arrival of Lyre. Then the First came over, causing copper optics to settle on him as they got into their brief scuffle. Lyre pressed close against her as her eyes narrowed on the First, one who she would've been happy to see in other circumstances but now felt a weariness.

Whenever 13 got between the two of them, figuratively, she considered making a followup comment or her own chastisement, but it seemed like a waste to repeat words that had already been said. Wasted air and wasted breath were killers.

But so is negligence by not using the air, she reflected, recalling how she had so hastily dove in after Lyre. What relief she had initially felt to be reunited with her companions was steadily giving way to frustration, not least of it being because of her limited ability to communicate her thoughts, wants, and needs.

Jaqueline shot Lyre an irritated look in response to his pleas to 13 to ostracize her First, but relaxed at his further words. She gave him a lick on the top of his head before struggling to her feet and pushing herself to catch up with the others. Ultimately, it was much easier to do so now than at the beginning of their misadventure due to Abram and 13's broken leg.

The dark she-cat came up to abreast of Abram, looking him over for any additional injuries besides his leg. Upon initial inspection, it appeared to be purely scrapes and other superficial injuries, but she couldn't discount the fact that something inside of him might be damaged. Especially considering the pain that persisted in her chest.

She headbutted his shoulder, being careful not to jostle him too much to knock him off balance, to get his attention.

"My shoulder is clean
Lean on it if you please.

I'll keep my eyes out for if we are seen."

Her voice was hoarse (had she been yelling when the Flicks had come out of the shadows?) as she spoke. The pain was steadily becoming something she was used to, but there was still a rattling to it. Not great, but manageable. Jaqueline cracked a joking smile.

“Unless you decide to be a tease
And flee from us again.”

Eyes flicked from 13 to Lyre to Solomon before settling back on Abram, her face falling back into a more serious expression.

“When we became two separate entities
It did not remove the ease
Of which we travelled.

Swiftly, things became unravelled
And we found ourselves in a place of cold.

There were engravings and inscriptions
Marking many pathways of old.

You seem to know this way
So I assume that your travels were okay,
Save for the splitting of your hind?”

She inquired. Perhaps they had found some additional clues as to the nature of this strange meandering place.

Making due of her promise, she searched the hallway of which they travelled. Perhaps there was a Flick hiding in a stray shadow, preparing to launch itself at them. If she could help it, she'd try to let out a cry to her companions before being struck down by the creature. Still, though, she tried to ensure that he felt like she was being attentive. Listening, as well as speaking, was imperative to survive she was finding.

Rolls:

Observation: 11

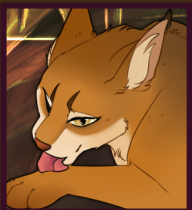
Item:

Bag of Sunlight

Summary:

Jaqueline feels a bit of jealousy that she isn't finding this reunion as cheery as the others are finding it. Lyre and Solomon's spat proceeds to sour her mood further before taking a moment to calm herself down. She gets up after a bit, offering Lyre a lick, and walks up to Abram. She offers him her shoulder and gives him a quick recounting of their journey to this moment before asking what things they encountered on their journey. Quickly, though, she flicks her eyes across the hallway looking for the predators that had attacked them previously while trying to indicate to her companion that she was listening to his tale.

ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: JAQUELINE | POST 23



His progress through the halls was steady, even with his broken limb. For while he had no idea what lay ahead, he was fairly certain he recognized the path they were on. Abram's confidence was bolstered by the fact that Solomon seemed to be of a similar mind; indeed, they were making their way through a pattern of halls that seemed slightly familiar, backwards though they were.

As they turned a corner, he felt another brush against his fur, and a gentle bump to one shoulder. It was

Jaqueline, the one he had met in the fog, and left to 13 and Lyre's care within the labyrinth. She offered a respite from the aching of walking, and he took it gratefully. Thankfully they were of similar size, and he had no issue matching his strides to hers.

**“Your offer I shall take,
though a promise I cannot make.”**

He returned her grin, a playful note ringing through the exhaustion in his voice.

**“We survived this lot,
did we not?”**

But instead of continuing to joke, Abram noticed that Jaqueline's face grew more urgent. It seemed that the eyes had been correct; the trio's trek had certainly not pleased the Riddler, and had been more difficult than the path he and Solomon had taken. *From good, to bad, to mad*, the eye had giggled. He nodded knowingly, showing no surprise at the description of the trio's plights.

**“So I heard,
through giggled word;
the Riddler was not pleased.”**

His whiskers twitched with amusement, and he nodded towards Solomon as he continued.

**“During our walk
we had time to talk,
and it was, for the most part, pleasant.
It was much the same,
quite dull, quite tame,
as it seems to be at present.”**

Though he couldn't quite make sense of it, he felt an odd sense of pride in hearing of the others' misfortune. It helped him feel more secure in his own choices, and he felt himself clinging to the validation of the creature that had disgusted him upon his awakening in the Riddler's lair. Distracted from the pain in his leg, he let his grin widen.

**“And I now have a *secret*!
I could share, but could you keep it?
Mm... Perhaps I should keep to myself.”**

He pretended to mull the thought over, but the tom's ruse only lasted a matter of moments. Soon he was grinning widely again, his eyes bright and full of mischief.

**“Oh, I'll give you a clue:
before we found you,
I found *this* stowed away on a shelf.”**

Abram puffed his chest slightly, letting the cream colored fur on his chest frame the necklace he had found. The flashy gesture was somewhat hindered by his heavy limp, but his excitement endured. The tom leaned in close to

whisper in her ear.

**“My expectations were surpassed,
and the gift it unmasked
was hidden where I would have checked last.”**

It wasn't all that clever of a riddle, not really. But oh, what *fun* it was to tell! To make a puzzle and leave it neatly at Jaqueline's paws- no wonder the Riddler spent its time this way. And Jaqueline was a clever one, one that liked to know things. It gave him hope that she might try to work out his cryptic message. If not, well, then the information would simply stay with him.

➤ Abram accepts Jaqueline's offer of aid, and leans on her shoulder as he listens to her tale. He then recounts his own experience in the labyrinth, although he is fairly vague with the details, making the trip out to be much more boring than it actually was. He then takes great pleasure in offering a riddle to Jaqueline, finding the little game to be incredibly entertaining.

551 words

Jaqueline (she/her) - Post #: 21 - Word Count: 641

She braced herself as the heavier tom laid himself against her, ensuring that he would have a solid support. A part of her felt a bit of relief at hearing the familiar playful tom from Abram, but she wasn't able to completely give in to it due to the tension still present in her shoulders. The black cat couldn't determine what exactly was causing it, but she was sure it had something to do with the eyes that she felt staring at her.

Jaqueline wasn't sure how to feel about the fact that the Riddler had watched their plight and done nothing to assist. Then, again, it had said that by denying the willingness to think before acting that it would not attempt to help the trio. Something else, though, was born in her heart upon hearing the lack of... events(?) that plagued Solomon and Abram. Her whiskers twitched with irritation, but she resolved herself to feel better that they weren't in worse straights.

Solomon could still walk at a decent rate, Lyre was in relatively good health, and herself, while limited, still had a good range of movement. All things considered, it could've been much much worse. Whatever Solomon and Abram had done to get in the Riddler's good graces she could worry about later; for now, they needed to get to the antechamber and show the Riddler what they had found. And potentially lose their eyes...

Her thoughts turned back outwards, not liking the line of thinking that would lean down. Dark ears perked at the mention of a secret, her eyes forgetting their diligent roving to fall to the necklace around Abram's neck. Inside of its crystalline structure was a combination of sticks and other foliage. Copper eyes squinted as she considered the abilities that it may possess. Maybe something akin to warmth like her own bag? But the Riddler didn't seem to be the kind to repeat things so frequently.

She was about to speak up, her ear flicking with annoyance at the teasing, before he seemed to resolve to a distraction. For a moment, she considered just demanding the information from him or just walking away, but it was then she caught the tail end of one of her thoughts. There was a pattern to it, either in its color or internal texture, that reminded her of the cold water. Something in the irritation...

So she smiled, her face turning back to the direction in which they were working. Copper eyes played across the body of the red cat leading the way. Jaqueline needed to have a chat with him, too, but all in time.

**“My expectations were surpassed,
And the gift it unmasked**

Was hidden where I would have checked last...

Hmmmm... your expectations were exceeded,
Indicating that you happy with what proceeded
After discovering its capabilities.

Unmasking indicates that there was something hidden
That may have been quite sudden.
You found its presence,
And, based on your tone, made what you found not so tense.

Now the last place you checked...
That one is a bit more difficult to make sense
Of, so it probably wasn't terribly immense.

We're in a maze, afterall, so you would've checked everywhere
Until on your body would come to wear--"

Jaqueline came to a sudden mental stop, her mind jumping to something that seemed so improbable that, had she not had her own experiences, she would've discounted it entirely. She fought to maintain her pace until she was able to match Abram's again, her mind reeling.

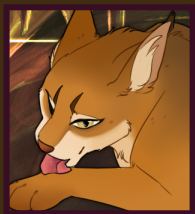
"Was it that you found something within yourself?" she asked, her eyes looking up to him with surprise and recognition.

"Because I found something within myself
While struggling in frigid water
And freezing squalor."

Copper eyes searched amber before falling back to the necklace and travelling over the rest of his body.

Summary:

Jaqueline is initially irritated that the duo got off easy and wonders what it was they said/did to remain in good graces before letting it slide off of her. She listens attentively, curious about Abram's new secret, before considering yelling at him for being coy. But riddles are fun, especially when her life isn't on the line, so she plays along and asks him if he had found something inside of himself, telling him that she had discovered something inside of her as well.



ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: JAQUELINE | POST 24

Jaqueline's willingness to play sent a thrill of triumph through his pelt, and Abram watched with great interest as the she-cat worked through his puzzle. Abram listened as she worked it out aloud, nodding every so often. He didn't really care if she had the capacity of actually solving it. For now, it was more than enough that his game was being entertained.

Abram stumbled slightly when her pace faltered, but Jaqueline was so close to the solution that he forgave her missteps. The light in her eyes intrigued him; recognition, though he knew there was no way she could understand fully what she was looking for. It could have, he assumed, come from the pendant on her neck. But that was an option Jaqueline did not have, and so the recognition in her eyes was something he wanted to explore.

"You're very close-

but what does engross
your clever little mind?
You do entice-
what did you find,
within yourself, beneath the ice?”

His gaze drifted to the bag she carried. It was a wonderful color, and he longed to see what the bag contained. Unlike his own pendant, the contents were well hidden- but it didn't seem to be what she was talking about. The pouch was a puzzle of his own for later then, something he would discover in time. Returning to the matter at hand, Abram tilted his ears forward, encouraging Jaqueline to elaborate.

Perhaps there had been benefits to disobeying the Riddler's wishes? It was a possibility he had briefly considered, but after his time in the cave... Abram pushed the horrid memory away. The trio looked worse for wear, and so he assumed there hadn't been many boons for disobedience, but he wouldn't *know* until one of the trio told him. His original plan had been to discuss the matter with 13, but if Jaqueline could provide more insight? Well, he wouldn't turn it down.

➤ Abram comments that Jaqueline is on the right track, and then asks what it was that she found while in the icy water.

320 words

THIS 13

she/her | post 23

The only thing keeping 13 truly present was the soft chatter shared between Here Abram and Not-Here Jaqueline. She allowed the two of them ahead of her without complaint, and watched with heavy, drooping eyes and one leaned upon the other. The sight invoked in her an odd, hollow sort of ache for a time in the Great Whiteness where she had leaned into Allmine Here Lethe, and they had been as one, walking easily, talking and touching in a way that kept them equal.

Who knew if it was 13's injuries or her odd separation from the others in her party, but she felt as if she were walking the length of the corridor and traversing the caves of There Eyeless Lump's maze entirely alone, with no one at her side. The odd sensation did not subside as her Heres spoke, and she watched them progress, comfortable among themselves, taking easy, purposeful steps, not sparing her the consideration that she surely deserved, as the one who had slowed for them time and time again. Though... the discourtesy of their actions was an offence that she was, at present, too tired to truly engage with or chastise. She had given her all with those ugly creatures in the cave, and the last of her spark had been wasted on Here Lyre's insolent bluster.

So it was that she walked along, conjuring up thoughts of her Allmines, of curling with them in the white, of grooming their fur as she had groomed Here Little Lyre before the fallouts, of soaking up their warmth, of being to them what they were to her.

(That odd ache grew.)

Sighing out a shaky breath, 13 again raised her chin to look about, narrowing her eyes as she tried to soak up anything she might be able to take from their surroundings. Again, the golden symbols on the walls blurred, and she shook herself to clear it. Her legs were all heavy, and her head felt as if it were floating far above her. The foreleg that was all twisted and torn, especially, weighed so much that it kept tripping her, sending her forwards a step to far so that she stumbled, and leaving a bright trail of red in her wake. The whole limb throbbed in time to her heartbeat, and the toes tingled in shocks, as if remembering every now and then that they were there.

That, at least, reminded her to keep moving. The aching, the hollowness, the suffering... all was good, in that it reminded her of what she had done, and what she was willing to give to her team - even those too ungrateful to appreciate her sacrifices. The pendant, too, patted gently against her chest with every stumbling step, reminding her there that it was her duty to follow after those around her, to pursue them and be always looking out. And the suffering, the cold, the sense of being alone was not all bad - after all, on her pebble beach in the Before, she had found comfort in herself. There was no need for her wishing after what was not.

She shook herself bodily, ears twitching as the movement sprayed red droplets of her blood across the nearest wall.

No, she regretted nothing she had done. It simply was not in her nature.

WORD COUNT:

555

ROLLS:

5 perception

SUMMARY:

13 follows on behind the group, and while watching Jaq and Abram, thinks longingly of Lethe & the White Space. She has a moment of psychopathic moping & then shakes herself off, deciding that to suffer for her teammates is important, in order to succeed. She looks around and, again, finds absolutely nothing useful to share. Oh, and she bleeds a lot.

SOLOMON

man of peace, Here Unseen

Reply 24 | He/Him | [Stat Sheet](#) | [Biography](#)

Narration | Thoughts | **Solomon Speech** | **Other Speech** | Action

Solomon's ears flattened against his head when Lyre continued to complain and whine about his intrusion. He wondered if the Other truly was this dumb, or perhaps the weariness was slogging his thoughts up. Can't he see it was better for them to go, not sleep? Doesn't he feel the moving, tapping, the sense in the paws to find the New? The quite *limited* time that they had here? Perhaps not. Perhaps The Lyre, as it was put, was frankly not seeing it. Solomon's lips curled, slightly, as instead of properly moving, Lyre continued to whine that he, the 'ass-cat', had caused the incident. Which was completely *wrong*, of course. He was trying to keep them moving! To keep them *alive*! Had The Lyre no sense to keep breathing and to keep the pulse beating?

Thankfully, 13 was one who had *some* sense. Instead of allowing Lyre the chance to waste more time complaining she moved further down the hallway. Soon, they were all walking down the hallway, further directed by Abram as he, too, was able to navigate this labyrinth. Solomon felt a sense of warmth flood his chest that let his head stand straight despite the

pain in his back. Yes, it was quite comforting that Abram could also navigate this place. Between the two of them, finding their way back to the Eyeful Other would be a non-issue.

As Solomon watched them go, he began to take steps to keep pace with them. The pace was slow, yes, but one he was now willing to tolerate. The Riddler's - or rather that *eye's* - words played clearly in his head. They needed the five to complete the labyrinth, *together*. Though if given the chance Solomon would be more inclined to leave with the *two*, the Orange and the Soft. But such wishful thinking wouldn't be useful - they had to get out of the maze with the five, not two, regardless of what Solomon wanted. So instead he focused his efforts forward. While Abram and Entirely-Jacqueline continued their conversation, he scanned the walls. Underneath the mask Solomon frowned.

His entire plan for returning had involved scent, tracking down the ways past and working backwards. But now with his nose stuffy and still sniffing that vaguely-metallic taste, there was no hope that such a plan would work. Nevermind the fact that he couldn't remember which turn they had taken in order to travel this way, *or* the various times they'd been set in a New Place altogether. Beyond the first turn where he'd recognized their path, Solomon was... lost.

The thought to ask another was also... unfavorable. How could he trust one to tell him where to go? Solomon wasn't sure if one would lead him astray... but the more he pondered such a thought the more he wondered if it was in *any* of their best interests to lead them in the wrong direction. Solomon knew *he* wanted his eyes, his life. Surely these simple Others would, as well?

A simple process of elimination later - *Jaqueline and Abram speaking nonsense words and not paying attention eyes lift look around but not seeing, Lyre an ass that cannot see beyond the reason of moving finding New instead wish to sleep in the death place until dead himself* - and Solomon found his paws limping over to 13.

Her eyes were drooping and not *entirely* paying attention, but from what little he'd seen Solomon knew her resolve was at least somewhat strong. So as he found himself at her side, slowing his pace considerably, he spoke.

**"This 13, the labyrinth's confusing.
Perhaps that nose you could be using?
For whence the Mine and one traveled,
A consequence found Mine plans unraveled."**

He sniffed to show his point, pointing his bad paw up to his nose still dripped with that metallic taste.

**"So now Mine asks of you,
To scent for us, the path that's true."**

**We all walked down these halls,
The blood, the soft, the rich, the grit,
And finally the sharp, comprising all.
We started *together*, before we split.
Together scents mix, Heres withal."**

The Riddler's confusing mix of words were, well... confusing. Solomon hoped that somewhere in that mess of languid words 13 would surmise an understanding of what he was asking her.

Word Count: 713 words

Interactions: 13

Rolls: (Exploration: 9)

Summary: Though Solomon is angered by Lyre's complaining, he doesn't give it any time. He absentmindedly listens to Jaqueline and Abram drabble on as he looks ahead himself, before realizing that he can't scent his way back like he'd hoped. Solomon thinks logically about who to ask and ultimately goes up to 13, asking her to lend her nose so that they can find their way out of here by tracking themselves, instead of trying to use the confusing halls for reference.

A flash of disappointment came across her face upon hearing it wasn't quite what she was hoping for. Her eyes narrowed, considering what else it could be. Perhaps... It had something to do with the bottle around the jungle cat's neck.

His inquiry distracted her before those thoughts could engross her too much. Whatever it was she had come close to discovering whatever it was purely from conjecture. Jaqueline took a moment to collect her thoughts, brow furrowing as she mulled over the revelations she had come upon while thrust under the surface.

**“It is within the confines of the shell
Where proper sight cannot tell.**

**When the ice cracked underneath
There was a second snapping beneath
My fur.**

**Then there seemed to form a wreath
Of pain around my center that ground my teeth.”**

She reoriented herself, ensuring that Abram had a solid place to lean on.

**“On your side there is an extrusion
Along my side which indicates the contusion.**

**There is something more complex,
Something that instills in me a vex,
Than a leg in the casing.**

**An... imperfection
In the rib section.”**

That last set of words caused a bout of confusion to go through her. She had been searching for a word, grasping at Gaze's manipulation, to find something that would fit her plight exactly. But, instead, it was a strange combination of words that hinted at something beneath her fur. Her mind drifted back to the bone she had found in the White Place, a treasure stolen from the shell (yes, a shell) of some object.

Before she could get much further, though, she noticed a rising sense of urgency. She broke her speech, her eyes focusing forward. *One is the warmth beside me, two is my friend hovering around me*, her nose flared. *Three is the color of the marble before me.*

Focus.

Something else is here.

The dark cat's tail lashed with irritation as she realized it was Gaze meddling with her emotions again. *Suppression, rioting, and physical manipulation are what it's capable of.*

**“The one of eyes is holding sway
Over our emotions and trying to direct how we go our way.”**

She spoke loud enough to catch the attention of the rest of her companions, her fur bristling at the violation of her mindspace.

“It's a wordless thing

That is trying to push
Like their earlier sting
That forced us into the beasts of shush.

I think we should maintain our current pace
Throughout the remainder of this place.
Keep eyes up.”

She punctuated those last three words, wanting to ensure everyone was being aware of their surroundings.

“Our feelings are forfeit, but our thoughts are our own.
Do not give into the zone
Where you abandon the collective body of our own.
Stay together.”

Rolls:

Perception: 11

Summary:

Jaqueline describes to Abram how she got hurt and the location where he could look for the evidence of the injury. Noticing that there Gaze is manipulating her emotions again, she gives the rest of the party a heads up and warns them to keep watch and stay together.



Lyre ⇌ 24 / 5

None ⇌ {He/Him}

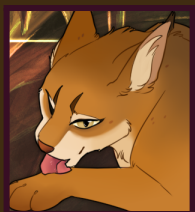
Words to be added after migraine medicine kicks in, hopefully

Stat Rolls:

- Perception Roll:
 - Roll [7](#)
- Speed Roll: N/A
 - Base 11
- Running Speed Total: 66
 - Item: [Tapestry Tassel](#) ~~Blue Scarf~~ Weighted Collar

WC: 300+

~ Lyre is lonely and tired and sees that everyone has paired off without him. He briefly looks around before deciding to just focus on walking and following the group to get out and get back to Eclipse and Nimh and maybe Orli. He silently takes Jaqueline off his list again and wonders if it's better to simply stick with his Three Together instead of continuing to try and find more cuddle buddies since they don't seem to last. He really hopes that he can find Eclipse and Nimh again. ~



ABRAM | HE/HIM | INT WITH: JAQUELINE | POST 25

So Jaqueline's discovery wasn't as closely related as he had thought. It was interesting, though, that she had felt a similar breaking. A snap, a sound connected with immense pain, that forced upon

them an unseen burden to bear. It was an intriguing idea, that they were all made of the same things beneath their differently colored fur. Made of something that could tolerate quite a few hits; more than the fur and flesh they were made of.

Solomon seemed less content with their musings, and Abram frowned. If the Riddler had wanted them to progress so quickly, surely They could have just brought them back to the original chamber. Abram glanced up at the sigils on the walls as the party turned a corner. They had been able to show him, however faintly, a path directly to the trio that had departed early on. A shortcut was certainly possible.

He reached out with his mind- or at least, he told himself that was what he did. In reality there was no way for the tom to know if he could reach the Riddler with his mind, but he was going off of the assumption that if they were being watched, perhaps they were being listened to as well.

*Oh One with many a gaze,
who orders that we walk the maze,
I hope you do not mind
the slowness of our kind.*

*Our bodies ache,
with the steps we take,
but our gifts to you we carry.*

*However, it might
be a more welcome sight
if to you, the sigils did ferry.*

He felt no presence in his mind, but Abram was relatively unbothered. If the Riddler wanted them so badly, then there were certainly ways of speeding them up. Until such a hint arrived, Abram was content with the comfortable pace they traveled at.

➤ Abram continues to think about the Riddler as the group takes a right turn within the maze. He then tries to reach out mentally to the Riddler, despite having no real evidence that such a link is possible. In the end he continues on unhurried, figuring that if the Riddler wanted them back so badly, They would use their powers to make a direct path.

306 words
