

**Word Count:** 1418 Words

*Wicked Lester Bar & Grill*

*Baime, Solyat, Kiast System*

**Autumn, 35 ABY; 1643 Hours, Local Time**

A lock of bright blue hair fell across pink skin into a crystalline eye as Aurora Ta'var tilted her head to the side and glanced down at the note she had received.

*Aurora Ta'var,*

*In the interests of becoming friendly with the other members as High Councilor Sorenn ordered, I was supposed to start a correspondence with you. However, I'm not much for writing - indeed, it took several drafts to figure out how to start this note - and would prefer a conversation in person... Yes, I've just realized that I'm saying I'm not much of a writer whilst I write you a note, rather than leave a holo-message.*

*Turel told me that you prefer to be called 'Aura', but I don't want to presume anything or offend you if it's something you prefer friends call you. After all, we only ever said 'hello' or 'goodbye' on the random occasions we've run into each other... Or you were in a hurry after your lesson with Yuki Suoh.*

*There's a relaxing locale in the City of Baime called the **Wicked Lester Bar & Grill**. They have live music and decent food. If you're interested in a discussion, I'll be at that location tomorrow at 1700 Hours.*

*This is not a date, but an offer of a friendly dinner - I figured that was a point that should be clarified beforehand so as to not give you the wrong impression. Feel free to wear your weapons, as it never hurts to be prepared.*

*Celevon Edraven Erinos*

The Rollmistress took in the building, down to the faded paint of the sign and the sound of music from within. "At least I know I'm not overdressed," she muttered to herself, glancing down at the form fitting bodysuit — in this case, it had been chosen to keep her warm and able to maneuver. With the leather coat, she looked like she would fit in at a variety of places.

It was also long enough that Aura wouldn't have to wonder if people were staring at her rear.

Letting out a breath and hoping the Aedile had been right about wearing her weapons, the Rollmistress walked into the establishment. It took a moment for the Zeltron's eyes to adjust to the shift in lighting.

The interior was much nicer than she had been expecting. From the run-down appearance of the outside of the building, Aura had been preparing herself for a dive bar. Instead, the floor was clean, there were a number of tables and comfortable looking chairs in a large open area. The bar itself ran along one wall, with a kitchen visible through a cut-out of the wall where meals could be passed through.

The Zeltron knew she had arrived early and took a seat, passing a glance at the chronometer. As she turned to glance at the live performance, her crystalline blue eyes widened, as the person she had come here to meet was one of the three on the stage behind a guitar.

The song itself sounded familiar, but there was no one singing. The fact that it was an acoustic set meant that it took longer to place. When it clicked, a small smile curved Aura's lips as she started humming along.

It had been released decades earlier by the original band, the lyrics themselves having been a love letter to the lead singer's girlfriend. Even despite that, it remained a fairly popular song.

When it ended, Aura clapped along with the other few patrons. Celevon caught sight of her and said something to the guitarist seated next to him, who nodded. The Onderonian stood up and walked over to the edge of the slightly raised stage, putting the polished black guitar with some kind of silver design into a leather case.

"This next one is an original song," the female holding a bass said into the microphone. They counted down and started playing.

The Aedile walked up to the table, placing the oblong case on the ground next to the table. "You're certainly here early."

"It beats being late," the Zeltron smiled, holding out a hand in a silent invitation for him to take a seat. "You're very skilled with that. How long have you been playing?"

“Thank you. I first picked up a guitar fifteen years ago. It’s very soothing and it’s easy to lose yourself in the flow of the music,” the half-Echani replied as he took a seat. He seemed to be struggling to find something to talk about. This was one of the reasons he hated small talk.

“So, I’m guessing you’re not in that band?” Aura asked, gesturing toward the group that were still playing.

“Not at all. They play here two days a week. Whenever they do their acoustic sets, they’ll invite people to come play with them. It seems quiet now, but the place will be packed tomorrow night.” Celevon could guess what the next question would be, since it was something he was asked often when people learned that he could play. “It’s been a little over a year since I was in a band. And, even then, we only played clubs every so often for a bit of extra pocket money. You hungry? Want something to drink?”

If the Zeltron were thrown off by the abrupt change in the conversation, she gave no indication of it. “Not particularly. I wouldn’t mind something to snack on. And water would be nice.”

“I’ll be right back in that case,” the Onderonian went off toward the bar. Within a minute, he was back with two waters, each glass bearing a slice of lemon. “We’ll have some nachos in a few minutes.”

“If neither of us are having alcohol, why did you pick a bar to meet up at?” The Rollmistress asked curiously.

“It’s a public place and the food isn’t too bad. It isn’t a tourist trap, but we still have some privacy,” he shrugged, squeezing the lemon into his water before dropping the rest into the glass. “Besides, I didn’t want to give you the wrong impression by inviting you to my home and cooking a meal... plus the fact that my daughter seems to think it’s hilarious to see the reaction people have to blunt questions or comments.” The Aedile gave a wry smile. “One example would be ‘she’s nice. Are you going to marry her?’”

“That sounds adorable. How old is she?”

Celevon snorted. “It was adorable when she wasn’t doing it on purpose. Artemis just turned twelve. All the fun of hormones, independence and about a million questions.”

“My daughter Zoe is three. She’s already a handful, though thankfully ‘no’ is no longer her favorite word,” Aura grimaced, thankful the ‘terrible twos’ were over. “She loves exploring the woods.”

“Oh, just wait. If she hasn’t already started, that means she’ll be even more inquisitive soon,” the Onderonian grinned, thanking the server who placed the nachos on their table.

“How so? These are good.” The Zeltron had eaten a nacho and swallowed before she asked.

“They’re probably the healthiest nachos I’ve ever eaten outside of my home. Everything is made from scratch, down to the tortilla chips, which are baked instead of fried,” Celevon agreed, popping one into his mouth. “As to the child inquisition... imagine being asked roughly a hundred or more questions in the span of an hour. And it starts with ‘What are you doing?’”

The Rollmistress just stared. There was no little smirk or appearance of it being a joke. She also wasn’t going to ask about Artemis’ mother, since he had not mentioned her. The fact that Celevon also wore no ring was rather telling. “Please tell me you’re joking... or exaggerating.”

The Aedile shook his head, swallowing the chip that had been dipped in the mix of grilled chicken, vegetables, and sour cream. “No, I’m not. At that stage, Artemis started asking what I was doing and why when I was doing the prep work for a roast. Around three hours into the cooking process, she finally got bored and went to play with her toys... I stopped counting at the two hundredth question.”

Aura stared for another minute, then put her head down on the table, resisting the urge to bang her head against the wood. “Is it too late to get a drink with alcohol in it?”

Celevon resisted the urge to pat her head.

~(END)~