

Word Count: 1185 Words

*Edraven Home, Kona’li Island, Pearls of the Chosen
Solyiat, Kiast System, Outer Rim Territories
Winter, 35 ABY; 0732 Hours, Local Time*

Celevon cradled a mug of potent coffee, as he knew it would be needed soon. And there was a full pot brewed, so no one would try to snatch his mug. There was also a full platter of breakfast, which he had spent the last half hour throwing together to draw the attention of his ‘long-term guests’.

There was no other way to describe them, since the others insisted that this was *his* home, not theirs, despite the half-Echani explaining otherwise. Bellatrix had her own room, a decision that was made after the first time she tried to share his bed in their temporary living quarters. Jade also had her own bedroom, which was shared with Celevon’s twin sister, Rowena, as the two had been a couple for nearly a year.

The Onderonian had barely managed to convince his daughter to go back to sleep earlier. Due to it being Life Day, the Assassin knew from previous experience that Artemis would be up well before the sun, ready to jump start the festivities. And, every year, Celevon coaxed her under the covers to ‘keep warm’ until he was ready to get out of bed, which led to her falling back to sleep.

Then, several hours later, she would shake her father awake. With the demand of blueberry pancakes, pan-seared bananas and bacon.

Now, however, the half-Sephi sat across from her father, forking down a plate of blueberry pancakes, liberally drizzled with a sweet syrup. Her two slices of bacon had been demolished, as was Artemis’ practice, folded with the banana in a pancake in a mimicry of a sandwich. With a little peanut butter spread along half of the pancake used in place of bread.

The Onderonian took another bracing sip of his coffee, having eaten his own breakfast — a fruit salad — whilst he cooked. The moment his daughter finished eating, Artemis would be ready to open presents.

As his daughter continued her miniature breakfast feast, the others that lived within the house began to stumble in, headed directly for the coffee. The Mandalorian looked as though she were

still asleep, eyes barely open. Rowena was in a similar state, mere steps behind Jade, though her black hair was sleep mussed, pressed up on one side.

Bellatrix looked like a wild woman, dark auburn hair sticking up everywhere in a manner reminiscent of someone who had been shocked by a live wire. With the fuzzy slippers and warm pajama bottoms, she looked nowhere near as dangerous as she really was. If anything, she looked cute in a sleep-rumpled way.

Artemis actually paused, fork halfway to her mouth, staring at the Zeltron in confusion. She glanced toward her father, who shook his head. With a shrug, the half-Sephi went back to her food. The pancakes were only good when warm, in her opinion. *That explains why Bella takes so long to get ready in the mornings.*

The Onderonian got up and refilled his coffee, emptying the first pot of the morning. With deft movements, he started another, since there was no doubt more would be required. Jade and his sister were normally not awake for another two to three hours; more than likely, the Mandalorian had awoken Rowena with a warning of how excitable the youngest female was.

You see, Artemis' birthday was just three days prior to Life Day. Instead of having one celebration, then another just days later, their tradition was to combine the two.

Celevon wandered into the living room, staring at the decorated tree that his daughter insisted on setting up every year. Feeling a need to be productive, he started glancing at the labels and sorting the gifts into piles by recipient. He had barely finished when he heard the water running in the kitchen, indicating that his daughter was washing her plate.

Meanwhile, the half-Echani stared blankly at the large box with his name on it; it was not wrapped, but appeared as though the box itself were decorated. The only other thing on it was a folded note, which the Assassin retrieved, opening the missive as Artemis ran into the room.

Happy Life Day!

*You are a difficult person to shop for, Celevon, so I decided your wardrobe needed some additional color to balance it out. Honestly, do you own anything that isn't black, gray or green? The single navy blue shirt does **not** count. You're definitely a winter, so I decided to keep to the darker end of the color spectrum. I certainly hope you enjoy and use this gift.*

*Sincerely,
Your Anonymous, Admiring, Secret Santa*

P.S. Never fear. I avoided garish shades that would clash with your coloring. Something in yellow would only make you look more pale.

P.P.S. You should get some sun when all of the snow recedes.

He blinked slowly, closing the note as he cautiously pulled the box toward him. The handwriting was not one he had seen before, so it wasn't someone that lived within their home. Three quick slices of his knife removed the adhesive.

“Thank you, dad!” Celevon looked up, spotting his daughter beaming as she kept glancing from him to the gift he had purchased for her. It was a computer terminal with interactive holographic features; with Artemis' designs, she could make changes with her hands in the air, manipulating the holographic image, and the computer would reflect those alterations.

“You're welcome, imp,” he smiled, glad she liked the gift. He had placed the order months ago, the moment he spotted the advertisement for this particular item.

“What did you get?” His daughter asked curiously, pale laurel eyes taking in the box.

The half-Echani looked down warily as he opened the box. The first thing he spotted was something... purple. Dark, rich purple. “Clothes,” he replied, pulling out the bundle, only to realize that it was a dress shirt, tie and pocket handkerchief. The designer mark was concerning, since he recognized it as belonging to a tailor. He pulled a small piece of paper from the pocket of the shirt, frowning slightly as it revealed the same handwriting as the other note.

Contained within are two complete suits, since I know you favor this style on the occasion you choose to dress up. One is completely black and the other is completely purple. I would highly suggest, if you wish to impress, the full black suit with the royal purple tie and matching pocket handkerchief. These items have been tailored to your specific measurements, so there should be no need to bring them in beyond dry cleaning after you have used them. The scent is the fabric softener, which is made with lavender oil; one of the few aromatics you are known to enjoy. The matching trenchcoats to be worn over the suits will be ready in three days in Baime.

As he read, his silver eyes widened. Was he being stalked or spied upon? How could someone know this much about him?!

~(END)~