

A Life Days Carol

A submission for the fiction competition: **[NBSR] Sithmas Tales**

Written and submitted by Knight Appius Wight of Clan Vizsla.

He could hear it all outside. Laughter, playing. The sounds of harmony both in and out of pitch as they bellowed both both sober and intoxicated echoed throughout the Yuanming halls. Yet here he was, sat at his desk on the one day of the year where most of the Brotherhood took it easy. Life Day... by the Living Force how he hated it.

He sighed deeply and reclined back in his rancor leather chair, counting up all the administration he had to do. His helmet sat at the very corner of the wooden piece of furniture and his jetpack sat idly against one of the walls. No, he didn't hate Life Day. What he hated was working on Life Day. Plus, for whatever reason, he just couldn't get into the mood for it this year. Perhaps it was his missing wife. He used to spend Life Day with her when they were together and it was the first time since they were married that they were apart for it. How he missed her dearly. It just wasn't the same without her, so when the opportunity arose for him when the House Wren leadership, Rulvak Qurroc and Amira Lux asked him to maintain house security over the holidays he jumped at the chance with open arms. If only to distract himself.

At least it was relatively quiet... most of Clan Vizsla were more than likely drinking themselves stupid at the Saga drinking hall singing songs about credits or some kark like that. But one thing bothered him. A note on his desk.

He picked up the piece of parchment in question and read through it once again.

You will be visited by three spirits on this night. This Life Day, join it, you might.

Seriously... what kind of schoolboy prank was this supposed to be? Appius almost found it comical. Three spirits? Were the dead about to come visit him?

He allowed himself a slight chuckle at the humorous thought until realized that it had suddenly gone dark all around him. A faint white mist began to blow in and he felt the hairs on his body began to stand on end. Even with his personalized Mandalorian armor the cold began to get to him. Creeping up through his spine.

"How long have I been here?" He muttered to himself. He sighed and placed both hands on his desk. Clearly, he's been working too hard. Yes, that was it. But as he was about to leave his eyes were greeted with the site of an apparition appearing before him.

It was like looking into a mirror. Though the man was older, bald and a lot more physically bulky than he was. The blue hue surrounding him gave him an ethereal feel as Appius felt the breath he took escape his body.

"Father..." He said quietly. This had to be some kind of trick. It was impossible! His father, Sterion Wight, was here. The man was killed back on Mandalore in 25ABY by a Collective splinter group. How in the name of the Living Force was this possible?

"Hello, Appius. I trust you are well?" Sterion replied to his son with a warm smile.

"I see Brennius gave you my lightsaber. Good. I hoped it would reach your hands eventually." He said, noticing his old weapon attached to the young Sorcerer's waist.

"What is this? If this is some kind of trick? Because if it is it isn't funny!" Appius yelled in an attempt to see if anyone would respond to him. If this was some kind of Force illusion then it was a damn good one.

"I assure you, Appius. I am very real. I am the Force ghost of Life Day past." The apparition then clicked his fingers and immediately it felt like he was teleported through hyperspace. He had a feeling of weightlessness until he was dropped back into reality in a place he recognised very well. Mandalore.

More specifically. 24ABY, the year before his father's death. Life Day. Where he, his Mandalorian clan, his half brother and father spent their time together in the festive season. He watched as a fourteen year old version of himself toiled away in the corner of the room trying to build what he remembered to be his first lightsaber. He struggled, but he had help from everyone, his family. He remembered Brennius giving him spare pieces. His cousins relentlessly barraging him with questions. His father watched his every move. Even despite being the only Force sensitive in the family outside of his own father they accepted him for who he was and despite their differences. Mandalore and the Jedi Order had a tumultuous history at the best of times and was downright hostile at the worst. But it didn't matter here. Mandalorian, Jedi... it didn't matter. Everyone helped him until...

A brilliant emerald coloured blade sprung into existence before his very eyes. The look on his younger self was priceless. The countless hours trying to get it to work had finally paid off and he got to share it with those closest to him. His heart aches for those days. Oh how they seemed so far away now.

"Why did you bring me back here, father?" He asked quietly. But after a moment of silence he turned to see that he was back in his office in Yuanming and the Force ghost of his father was nowhere to be seen. He rubbed his hands down his face. Was it just a dream? Was he just losing the plot? Yes it must have been. He sat down at his desk and rubbed his hands down his face.

"I'm losing the plot." He muttered to himself. Seeing an apparition of his dead father on Life Day? That was his only conclusion.

"Appius." Spoke a voice he recognised very well. He immediately rose from his chair and turned to the image of his older half brother behind him. Clad in sleek Mandalorian armor, short blonde hair and blue eyes gazed back at his, the only telltale signs of their familial relations.

"Brennius?" Appius responded, clearly the night wasn't over just yet. His older brother smiled at him warmly.

"Your not even Force sensitive!" Appius called out.

"We are ghosts, Appius. Whatever form we need to take to suit our goals and get our point across is fine. So long as it helps you. I am the Force ghost of Life Day present." Brennius clicked his fingers, just as Appius' father had done only minutes prior. They were transported again to Mandalore, only this time Appius could see his older brother working on something obscure and hidden away from sight. As Appius glanced over his shoulder to see what he was working on, he was greeted by the presence of the Armor he was currently wearing being packaged and sealed tight into a sturdy durasteel container.

"Take this to my brother on Zsoldos. Make sure he gets it. He's going to need it."

Of course. Brennius was the one who commissioned for his Armor to be made personally for him he still remembered what the note said that came in the box.

If you are going to lead, Appius. You need to look like a leader.

Ever since he got this Armor from his brother he was rarely seen without it. His brother had made it just for him...

"Brennius, why did you..." Appius began his question but as turned to face the apparition of his brother he suddenly realised he was back in his office, all alone once again. He wanted to ask why his brother had bothered to make him such an intricate and specifically designed set of Armor. It wasn't like he asked him too. It was a complete, albeit welcome surprise. Appius scrunched and tensed his face and placed two fingers at the bridge of his nose. He closed his eyes tightly and breathed in deep through his nostrils. But his eyes burst open at the sudden realisation of one detail he had forgotten for the briefest of moments.

There's still one left.

Once again, exactly on cue, darkness obliterated the light and a chilled mist rolled in completely unannounced. But that wasn't what concerned the Battleteam Leader the most. The last apparition. The Force Ghost of Life Day's future was in the image of a young woman standing at five feet six inches tall with short brown hair and beautiful brown eyes that sparkled in whatever light remained in the room. She smiled softly at the young Sorcerer and he trembled and felt his heart drop at the sight of her.

"Tessera." He muttered her name quietly and pain winded him in his chest like an invisible punch. It was a well of emotions as both joy and sorrow, happiness and anger built up within him. Clashing with each other like the violent storms of Kamino.

"This isn't fair..." he could barely speak as he choked on his own words. He tried to will his legs to move but no matter what his body remained in place. His breathing paced quickly and his jaw remained slack, trembling as he refused to take his eyes off her.

"Appius, it's ok." She whispered to him as she took his right hand in her own. The split second her skin touched him he couldn't control the wall he had built up around himself. His emotions poured through the cracks and his eyes watered and flowed down his face like a flooding river. He dug his face into her brown hair and instantly her familiar scent reassured him. It was exactly as he remembered it. Tessera dug her head into his chest and started to shush his weeping comfortingly.

"Are you... a part of my future? Is that why you are here?" Appius asked after managing to control himself once again. She pulled her head away from his chest and smiled happily at him.

"Appius, I'm always a part of your future. When the time is right, we will be together again. Until then, don't be sad. Lift your head up high and smile. Because that's the man I fell in love with."

As quickly as she was here she was gone. There was nothing but Appius left in the room. That was it. It was all over. He didn't understand how or why it happened, all he knew was that he wanted to act on the feelings he was now experiencing and the lesson they had left behind him. He stood up and left the office, making sure to lock the door behind him on the way out.

A smile curved onto his face as he made his way to the Saga drinking hall. For once, he was going to enjoy himself. Come hell or high water for the first time in just over a year he was going to enjoy himself.

Happy Life Day, everyone.

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