

Personal log: 49:08:13, Hjal

I have become a parent.

This is a daunting turn of events. In my life I have been responsible for the lives of thousands of men and women under my command but never has being in that position given me so much cause for trepidation or fear as it does in this moment. I have a son and the prospect of being a father of being responsible for this tiny little life awes me.

True to form, his arrival into this galaxy was not easy. When has anything his mother has done been easy? I love this woman more than I could ever find the words to express but she does not believe in doing anything by the book or without some sort of life threatening hardship. Why should giving birth to our child be any different?

What began as a normal labour according to Thomas, ended up in an emergency surgery which lasted just over an hour. Unforeseen complications arose making a natural birth impossible. Thomas explained it to me in excruciating detail but his words were just noise against the wash of sudden fear that not only might the child die but that I might also lose Merlyn as well. As I have said, she does nothing easily, by the book or without great drama.

According to the two very capable Dantassi physicians it was Thomas who prevented my worst nightmare from becoming a reality. I am grateful for my friend's abilities and feel vindicated given the fight I had to get the Dantassi to allow him on the planet and leave to stay in the enclave with us.

I did not even know that Merlyn had gone into labour. In the last few weeks she often got up during the night to pace about, too uncomfortable to sleep properly. She often described herself as a fat bantha, big and slow but to me she has never been more beautiful however I can only imagine that carrying a child, especially late in one's term is not the most comfortable thing in the galaxy. I became used to her restlessness and unless there was cause I didn't wake when she left the bed to go downstairs. I was not prepared for her hand on my shoulder waking me up telling me it was time.

We had planned for a homebirth as is Dantassi tradition but that soon changed when the bleeding began suddenly. Before I could say anything Thomas rushed her to the medical wing and all hell had broken loose. From that moment on I knew a cold, dark fear which not even the presence of our friends and family could alleviate.

I wondered, as I sat in the waiting chamber, if all expectant fathers go through this sort of terror. After all our part in the process of creating a child is rather enjoyable and without much risk. We are casual observers after the fact, watching the slow growth of the being we helped to create from the outside. The swell of the woman's belly the only real sign of the life to be. It is not our heartbeat the unborn baby hears for the first months of its life.

As I waited for news I suddenly knew an anger that I had never experienced before. This was so horribly unfair after all we have gone through; after all she has gone through to end up, once again, with the possibility of losing it all. If I believed in any sort of deity I would have at that moment become a non believer. It is hard to be pragmatic when one's entire life revolves around another being. The loss of that being would leave such a gaping hole in my life I do not know if I could ever recover from it and then I wonder when did I become so attached? When was that moment where I stepped over the point of no return and allowed myself to belong to another?

In that moment, with a clarity I have never known before, I understood her bitter fury at what I had done to her when I faked my own death. It is a miracle that she has forgiven me at all, although I suspect a tiny part of her never will and I understand why.

From the moment we told A'njast'a and Navaari (Merlyn has insisted I call him by this name and stop being so damned formal) as was predicted, this child became something the entire enclave took to heart. Merlyn may be an outsider but she is beloved here. As the enclave is small and news travels faster than lightspeed, everyone knew of the failed pregnancies. The fact that this time she did not lose the baby early on filled everyone with cautious hope. The longer she carried the more that hope grew. I have never seen such a fuss made over the prospect of a child before.

The Chiss do not react this way. The birth of a child is treated like most every other event in Chiss life, it is a necessity for the continuation of the species. We are glad to welcome a new life into the world but there is no need to make a huge fuss about it. The Dantassi, much like humans, do not feel the same way and the birth of a child is cause enough to stop the world for a day. A normal birth would have been cause for a great celebration but as it so often is the case with Merly, this birth was anything but normal.

Waiting is usually something I excel at. I am a patient, careful man. I did not get to where I am by being hasty or impatient but from the moment she was taken into surgery until the second that Thomas came out to give me the news I knew a hell that was too slow for words. Seconds passed like years and it was all I could do to keep from bursting into the surgical room to demand an update every five minutes. I did nothing of the sort. Then in the seconds between Thomas coming into the waiting room and actually speaking to me, telling me that both mother and baby were fine there was a moment of such exquisite anguish then it was drowned so equally quickly by relief that I did not know how to react. It was Navaari who broke the spell by clapping me so hard on the back it hurt and breaking the terrible void that had formed around me.

I have a son.

He is healthy and normal.

Merlyn is recovering and will be just fine.

Then because I simply stood and stared at him he directed me to come and meet my son and be with my bondmate.

I have seen her look far worse but looking at her lying in a medical bed with IV lines and monitors always chills my heart. It was her smile that thawed the chill. Thomas told me to sit so I did and before I could do or say anything else he placed my son in my arms.

"He looks like you." Merlyn said to me. "Your hair, your eyes, your skin colour. I guess Chiss genes are dominant no big surprise there."

"Then I am sure he will have your personality to make up for it." I replied.

As I looked at the tiny being in my arms I knew we had chosen his name well. Thrass'eth'pavjaska will be his Dantassi name and his basic name will be Seth Kit Gabriel. We have named him after my brother and Merlyn's father but as he also needed his own name too he will be called S'eth or Seth. In Dantassi Cheunh S'eth means great gift. I had no idea how true that was until the moment Thomas placed the boy in my arms.

I have a son. We have a son. Now my life has changed in ways that I could never for a single moment have imagined and as much as I find the prospect of fatherhood daunting I also find I am looking forward to it.