

## **Birthday Traditions**

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# Birthday Traditions

by [Gaffsie](#)

## Summary

Ronon celebrates his birthday, with a little help from his friends.

## Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Ronon had been on Atlantis for a year before he willingly started talking about Sateda, and even then it was in short, halted sentences, like it hurt even mentioning his old life.

John could understand that. Sometimes the wreckage of the past was best left untouched.

But as time went by and Ronon got more comfortable with life on Atlantis, he opened up more about his past. Hell, he was even able to make shit up about it just for fun, something which John learned the hard way: Ronon doesn't believe him, but he swears he had bruises for *weeks* after that time Ronon coaxed him into taking him on in a so-called traditional Satedan bare-knuckle birthday fight.

"In what way is this supposed to celebrate your birthday?" John panted, lying in an exhausted, broken heap on the floor, Ronon looming over him.

"Is it supposed to remind us of the pain of childbirth?"

Ronon just grinned hugely at him, all his teeth showing. He sported the beginnings of a spectacular shiner where John had gotten in a lucky shot. Christ, Carson was going to *kill* them when he found out.

"Nah," he said. "I just needed to blow off some steam."

Scratch that, *John* was going to kill Ronon before Carson had a chance to.

"You fucker."

He climbed up painfully from the floor. Even his *hair* was hurting.

"This is the last time I'll believe in any of your so-called Satedan traditions."

"That's what you said the last time," Ronon said. He was still grinning.

"Yeah, yeah." John lazily gave him the finger. "Just for that, you're not getting your present."

"Yeah, I will."

Then Ronon ambushed him with one of his enthusiastic full-body tackle-hugs, knocking what little air John had left in his lungs right out of him, before just as suddenly releasing him again.

John was still grumpy and in pain, but it lured a smile out of him. He'd defy anyone to resist one of Ronon's hugs.

"*Fine*, you will. But only 'cuz I'm easy."

Ronon him nudged him affectionately, and John mock-scowled and waved his hand away before making his way to the bench where he'd left his stuff. He collected his towel and

training bag and made a show out of stretching his abused muscles before he loped off in the direction of the changing room.

"And you're welcome," he threw out over his shoulder as he left the gym. He caught a glimpse of Ronon's surprised face just before the doors closed behind him.

That night, after a pleasant team dinner in the mess hall, Teyla presented Ronon with a beautiful knife with a hand-carved handle made out of the antlers of the Pegasus equivalent of a reindeer.

Ronon tested its weight and balance and grunted approvingly.

"Belarienusian?"

"Yes." Teyla smiled. "I had Halling pick it up for me on one of his journeys there. It is perhaps a little more ornate than you're used to."

"It's great." Ronon smiled at her. "My grandfather had one of these."

Teyla inclined her head graciously, a pleased smile on her lips.

Rodney gave him a *Lord of the Rings* box set and then made Ronon swear that he wouldn't make Rodney have to sit through them again.

"Seriously, it's bad enough that Jeannie made me read *The Hobbit* incessantly to her when we were kids. I'd had enough of hobbits to last me a lifetime after that, and that was without dragging another four of them into it."

"Thank you, McKay," Ronon said. He sounded pleased.

"Well. That. It was nothing, really. I know you like them, because when they showed the first one on movie night you wouldn't shut up about the smelly-looking one, Argon, I think, and I had an Amazon gift card that was about to expire anyway-"

It was at that point John took advantage of the fact that he was seated opposite to Rodney, and kicked him on his shin.

Rodney glared at him, but he got the hint.

"You're welcome," he said to Ronon, and then, to John, "And what did you get him?"

"Yeah," Ronon said happily. "You owe me a present."

"It's in my quarters," he said.

"Oh, really," McKay said, looking equal parts disgusted and superior. Even Teyla was smirking behind her coffee cup.

"What?" Sometimes John just didn't get Rodney. Ronon's gift really was in John's room, because his meeting with Lorne about the new security team rotations had taken longer than

expected and John hadn't had a chance to pick it up before Teyla came to collect him for dinner.

"Let me guess, it's a home-made coupon for one orgasm, courtesy of the Kirk of Atlantis."

John stared at him.

"What is *wrong* with you, McKay?"

Rodney rolled his eyes. "Oh, come on, you didn't seriously believe that you two were fooling anyone, did you?"

"McKay," John hissed, scandalized. He looked around the mess hall in panic, half-expecting General Landry to be lurking just behind him.

"Relax, we're the only ones here. And I thought your country had changed those rules anyway." He gave an irritating smirk and reached for his coffee.

"So not the point."

Ronon made a considering face. "Part of the point."

John pointed at him. "And you, stay out of this, or you're not getting your present."

He knew he'd made a mistake when Ronon smirked at him. "I'll get it. I know you're easy."

Later, John would reflect that Ronon suddenly becoming adept at innuendo - and at his expense! - was worth it for the hilarious spit-take Rodney did, but that was later. Right now, he was too busy feeling *murderous*. Even Teyla was giggling, and she was supposed to be the nice one.

"Very childish," John said.

Teyla patted his hand. "I am sorry. We meant no harm."

John grunted noncommittally.

"Rodney and I are both very happy for you."

"You really knew?" He sounded plaintive even to his own ears.

"We suspected." Seeing his concern, she quickly added. "I do not believe anyone else does. But, we're friends. We know you."

Rodney nodded. "The snuggling was a pretty good clue."

John stared at him. "I had a concussion!"

Rodney snorted. "I was with you the last time you had a concussion, and I don't remember you giving *me* the octopus treatment."

Teyla successfully managed to steer the conversation to safer topics after that, and they lingered over coffee for another 20 minutes before Teyla expressed a wish to go check on Torren, and Rodney suddenly remembered that he had an important experiment running in the lab.

"Come along then, birthday boy," John said when they were alone.

They made their way to John's quarters in companionable silence. It was one of the things John really loved about Ronon, that unvoiced understanding. It was rare to find someone you could share a silence with.

Ronon was kissing him the second the door closed behind them. John gave him a brief peck in return before ducking away.

"I really did get you a present." He explained, feeling a little breathless.

"Okay," Ronon said. He sat down on John's bed while John rummaged around for it in his closet.

"Here." He presented Ronon with a rectangular box wrapped in elegant moss green paper and then sat down next to him.

It had surprised him how daintily Ronon unwrapped gifts the first time he'd saw him do it. Honestly, it reminded him a lot of how grandma Sheppard used to do it, and she had a habit of saving the wrapping paper for later use. Ronon even folded the discarded paper before putting it away, just like she did. Unlike her though, Ronon simply enjoyed making a production of it.

Finally, Ronon pulled the bottle of *very* nicely aged whiskey out of its wooden box.

"I noticed that you liked that brand when Dave offered it to you."

"We had something similar on Sateda. For special occasions." Ronon sounded a little wistful, and John nudged his shoulder companionably.

"Like birthdays?"

"Yeah."

Ronon leaned into John's shoulder. "Want to share a drink with me?" He said seriously.

"I'd be honored to."

John quickly collected two scotch tumblers from his book case, and watched as Ronon poured them each a glass. He let Ronon put away the bottle, and handed him his drink.

For such an informal setting, the situation felt strangely solemn.

"May we still be here next year," Ronon intoned, and raised his glass.

"May we still be here," John repeated, and raised his. "Happy birthday, big guy."

The End

## End Notes

Written for  **ruric** in the 2012 SGA Santa exchange.

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