

Remembrance

Summary:

EJ has moved into the Dimera mansion upon Stefano's departure back to Italy. Although he and Samantha are husband and wife, she has decided to maintain her residence in the apartment with the children. EJ has been afforded the opportunity to be a real father to Gianni and Alice.

While he should be excited about his first Christmas as a husband and a father, he is consumed with guilt and sadness, convinced that nothing short of a Christmas miracle will make Samantha love him as much as he loves her.

Dimera Mansion - Christmas 2007

The bells from the church down the street echoed in his head, as he sat at the window watching the snow cover everything in sight. He imagined the streets of Salem full of holiday revelers, busy wishing one another tidings of comfort and joy. The thought nearly made him sick. The sweetness of it all, blah!

Not one light adorned the mantle of the Dimera mansion, no evergreen stood in the window. Without his wife and son at his side, it was barely an occasion to celebrate. He had tried to block the holiday from his mind, but found himself thinking back to Christmases past. His father always made sure of it that EJ had whatever it was that his heart desired. Now as an adult, the one thing he wanted more than anything, was the one thing that he could never have.

He was pulled momentarily from his thoughts by the shrill ring of the telephone. Without making a move to answer it, he stared it down as if doing so would make it stop. He had no desire to speak to anyone. *"This is EJ Wells, leave me a message and I'll call you back."* He waited and listened as the answering machine played his outgoing message, knowing that the next voice he would hear would be Sami's.

"EJ, it's Samantha. I wish you would answer the phone. I need to know that you are okay. You shouldn't be alone, especially not this time of year. Call me."

The message was similar to the ones that she had been leaving for the past couple weeks. It had killed him not to answer her calls, but in his heart he felt that it was for the best. It was for the best that Gianni be raised under the same roof with his sister.

The phone rang again. He stood to answer it, stopping short of reaching out for the receiver. It was her again. "EJ, I know that you're there. I guess this would mean that you don't want to speak to me. Well, that's tough. I will be bringing our son to see you this evening and I expect you to actually open the door for us. You can't sit there in that big house and shut everyone out of your life. I will not allow it."

With that said, she hung up again. A smile crept across his face as he played the message over again in his mind. Her feistiness was something that he had always loved about her.

The snow kept falling, with no sign of letting up. He thought to call Sami and ask her to stay home. He didn't want her to trek out with the baby with road conditions being what they were. The knock on the door told him he was too late.

His heart jumped, even as he attempted to maintain his cool, calm composure. He hastened his step, slowing just before reaching the door. Swinging the door open, he found her standing there looking absolutely angelic.

"Are you just going to stand there or are you going to invite me in?"

He took the baby from her and backed away from the door, allowing her to step through the door. What she saw shocked her. "EJ, it's Christmas. These children are going to expect Christmas trees and presents. They are going to be expecting Santa Claus and Christmas lights. Don't make me have to do this all myself."

"Well, darling. I wasn't expecting you. Why aren't you spending Christmas Eve with Lucas?"

"I'm just not, okay? I don't want to talk about it."

"Well peace on earth and fa la la la la to you too."

She smirked at him, as she threw the diaper bag to the floor, and took Gianni from him. "You can go

get the packages from the car.”

“Packages. Samantha, really Gianni is not even 6 months old, he won’t remember any of this.”

“I will remember. Besides, who said that all the gifts are for him?”

“Careful sweetheart, you wouldn’t want to give me the wrong impression.”

“Just go!”

Placing his hand to his head, he saluted her and walked out the door. “Johnny, this is what you have to look forward to.” She looked around and shook her head, realizing that this co-parenting thing was going to be more difficult than she had originally thought.

EJ came back through the door with a stack of colorfully wrapped boxes. He could barely see around them.

“Samantha, really? Is all of this necessary?”

He had barely finished speaking when he felt something wrap around his leg. The boxes went flying across the room, as he clumsily fought to stay on his feet. He gathered his composure, and looked down at the obstacle, the diaper bag which she had carelessly thrown to the floor. “Bloody hell, Samantha. Now I’m convinced that you’re trying to kill me.”

“If I wanted to kill you, you would know it! And watch your tongue. Little ears are listening.”

Flustered, he began to pick up the boxes. “I’m not used to this father thing. Give me some time, won’t you darling?”

“You had 9 months to prepare. Suck it up.”

“Suck it up? Is that an American phrase?”

“As American as apple pie.”

He held out his arms to her. “Samantha, please may I hold our son?”

She softly kissed Johnny and handed him to EJ. “Don’t worry, Johnny. I’ll make sure he doesn’t drop you on your head.”

“Please, Samantha. This part I can handle, barring any diaper bag incidents.”

He walked across the room, taking a seat in the nearest chair. He spoke softly, but loud enough for Sami to hear. “Your mummy thinks she’s funny, doesn’t she? Yes, she does. Daddy isn’t laughing though, is he? No, he’s not.” He glanced up and winked at Sami, who just stood there shaking her head. “Daddy is just going to have to tell Mummy who’s the boss, now isn’t he?”

“Ha!” Sami laughed at him, as she took a seat on the arm of the chair. “Daddy is so funny, little man. But no one bosses Mommy around, do they? Mommy is not amused. No she’s not. Daddy has met his match, hasn’t he cutie pie?”

He looked up at her, seeing once again the woman that he had fallen in love with. “I stand corrected. I’ll teach you all about women when you grow up, Gianni. But for now, the most important thing is that they are always right.”

“That’s right, little man. Now your Daddy is speaking the truth.”

She climbed down from the chair, taking a seat on the floor in front of the pile of gifts. She pulled out a large box, with a bright red bow wrapped around it. "So, let's see. This one is for Johnny from Santa. What could it be?"

Sami handed the box to EJ to open. "Really, Samantha. I don't have enough hands for this."

"Just open it."

EJ braced Johnny on his lap, as he carefully tore the wrapping paper from the box. "Good grief. Just tear it open."

"As you wish, darling." He tore the rest of the paper from the box, sending it flying all over. He balled up the last little piece and playfully tossed it at Sami's head.

Focusing his attention back to his son, he grabs Johnny's hands and helps his son open the box. "What could it be Gianni? There's one thing for certain, Santa must know you've been a very good boy."

Sami smiled, as EJ bonded with his son. She watched as he opened the box, finding a large body pillow in the shape of a race car. EJ looked it over, a smile upon his face.

"Samantha?"

She balled up the wrapping paper and threw it back at him. "Don't make too much of it, EJ. It's just a pillow."

They lost track of time, as they spent the rest of the evening making small talk and opening gifts. Johnny had fallen asleep long before the last box was opened. EJ watched as Sami, surrounded by a sea of wrapping paper, cradled their son.

Sami situated Johnny on his race car pillow, then picked a red bow from one of the presents and pressed it to his forehead.

He smiled, realizing the true gift he had been given. "I'm sure there must be one more present around here somewhere. Let me go check. I'll be right back."

He stood and walked over to his writing desk, pulling a small velvet box from the top drawer. He glanced out the window on his way back to the living room, noticing the snow beginning to pile up. "If it doesn't stop snowing soon, you may just have to stay the night, darling." He fully expected her to protest it, and was surprised when she didn't. Holding the box in front of her, he took a seat on the floor beside her. "It's nothing fancy really. Just something I just picked up."

"EJ, you didn't have to do this."

"Yes, I did Samantha. Now, open it."

Without hesitation, she opened the delicate box, finding two opal hearts entwined surrounded by diamonds, hanging from a dainty gold chain. "EJ..." Her breath caught in her throat and she felt her eyes begin to well with tears.

"Opals. You know that it's their..."

"Yes, Samantha. I know."

"Thank you." Without another word, she jumped into his arms. "This means so much to me. Thank you."

Their eyes met briefly as she pulled away from him. She felt that same feeling building in the pit of her

stomach. It was if all the hurt and pain from the past year had melted away. It was just EJ and Sami, the way it used to be.

Sitting there, lost in his eyes, she wanted desperately to kiss him, but jumped up from the floor instead, remembering the special gift she had tucked away in Johnny's diaper bag.

"Oh, I'll be right back." He sat there, waiting for her to return, watching their son sleeping nearby. After what had seemed like hours, she finally returned carrying a simple cardboard box. "I'm sorry. I didn't have a chance to wrap it." She sat back down in front of him and handed him the box.

Lifting the lid, a smile crept across his face as he pulled out a fresh sprig of mistletoe. "Why Samantha, whatever is this for?"

Her eyes danced with happiness as she shrugged her shoulders and grinned. "Hmmm, what is it that they do with mistletoe?" She snatched the sprig from his hand. "Ah yes, now I remember."

She playfully held it over his head. EJ's face lit up with delight. It was the one thing that he had hoped for, and dreamed about. Samantha coming to him with an open heart.

He wrapped his arms around her waist, pulling her closer. "I do love these silly traditions, darling." He leaned over, gently placing his lips upon hers. They lost each other in that kiss, holding each other for what seemed like an eternity. The chiming on the grandfather clock broke their concentration. Sami smiled and cupped his face in her hands.

"Merry Christmas, Eddie." She exclaimed with a wink.

"Right back at you, Trouble."

They snuggled up in front of the fire, watching as the snow continued to mount up outside. "Thank you, Samantha. You've given me everything that I could've ever wanted, and then some." He nuzzled her hair, softly kissing her as she allowed herself to drift off to sleep, wrapped in the arms of her love.