

# Statistics

By C. Jade Wyton

*The avio people are best known for their big hearts and giving natures. Their drive to do good in the world and to help others is immense. They can do no wrong— Or, at least. They can't do what they PERCEIVE as wrong.... But that doesn't make them perfect. What happens to an avio when logic gets messy and horrible, hateful acts begin to seem justified?*

***Contains discussion of death, racism, violence, and hate crimes.***

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An avio hurting someone was rare.

An avio killing someone was practically unheard of.

And an avio murdering ten people was *impossible*.

When Janna'han heard the report, he was sure it was fabricated.

It had to be a lie.

It had to be a mistake.

A misunderstanding.

A joke.

It *had* to be!

Avio didn't hurt people! Not on purpose!

The few times that avio had caused someone harm had *always* been either an accident or self-defence. Never *murder!*

Never.

It had never happened before, and Janna'han refused to believe it had happened now!

The harpy man threw open the dungeon doors, ignoring the concerned chatter from his fellow guardsmen as he marched down the long spiral staircase.

He had to check it out for himself. Confirm the story. Prove this avio was innocent— There was no way they *weren't!*

But as he reached the bottom of the stairs and made his way to the cell, he felt his feathers standing on end.

She was calm. Far too calm for someone accused of a crime they hadn't committed, as she sat at the table in the centre of her cell and scribbled quick and precise onto the loose papers she had been provided.

*Deep breath*, Janna'han thought. *She must be calm because she knows she'll be found innocent. Clearly....*

Janna'han cleared his throat as he removed his keys from his pocket and moved to unlock her cell.

'Oh! Hello, cousin harpy,' she greeted, a wide smile on her face. 'I am Kee'Sisi. It means smiles pretty. What is your name, Q?'

'I am Janna'han, second son of Tro'da and Elt'kir; husband of Yera'jin, father of Lez'liyna,' Janna'han introduced as he entered the cell and closed the gate behind him.

‘By title a husband and father, Q?’ Kee’Sisi cocked her head; though she didn’t stop writing as her eyes darted back and forth between her papers and the harpy. ‘Not by title a warrior, Q?’

‘Yes. For it is a greater honour to have a henha, than to be a kiita,’ Janna’han clarified. ‘Every harpy is a kiita by necessity. But to be loved so deeply is a much more difficult achievement.’

‘In my homeland it is the opposite,’ Kee’Sisi gave a giggle. ‘Being loved is easy. Being a fighter is much harder.’

‘Yes, I know,’ Janna’han returned the laugh with a warm chuckle. ‘That is why I can’t believe that the captain thinks you killed those people.’

‘Oh, but my friend. I did.’

Janna’han felt his blood run cold, and the smile vanished from his face.

‘What?’

‘I killed them,’ Kee’Sisi replied, simply. ‘Your captain is correct.’

‘Wh— Why?!’

‘Wolvens are a very dangerous race,’ Kee’Sisi said, scribbling on her paper. ‘The statistics show that wolvern countries have a higher rate of xenophobia than any other country; with Rendi citizens being the biggest targets of their violence.’

‘These were innocent people!’

‘We do not know that. Not for sure,’ said Kee’Sisi. ‘Statistically, according to data gathered by Bonark researchers, there are seven point four hate crimes committed for every wolvern citizen registered on the yearly census. Though I understand that this data is skewed by the likelihood of individuals to commit more than one violent act, it is still safer to assume that all wolvern people are dangerous. And thusly safer to treat them all as if they were dangerous.’

‘And treating them as dangerous means *killing* them?’ Janna’han’s brow furrowed into a frown, and he crossed his arms.

‘When there is danger threatening your family, there is no evil in removing it. It would be wrong not to. You are Heck’nerian by birth. I can tell by your scars.... Do you not agree that it is an act of evil to not take action to protect your community, Q?’

‘Not by *killing an innocent family!*’ Janna’han snapped.

‘It is unconfirmed if they were innocent,’ Kee’Sisi responded. ‘I thought you would see the logic. Statistically, harpy people suffer more than any other people under wolvern racism. Surveys run by Canis La’Can officials show that as much as sixty percent of the wolvern population remains uneducated about the harpy people and think of you as naturally prone to savage behaviour. Sixty percent. Six out of ten. And there were ten members of that family. Meaning that six of them were a danger to your people.’

‘And four of them *weren’t!*’ Janna’han growled, leaning over the table to growl furiously at the avio. He could feel himself sweating as he grit his teeth; biting back the horror of this woman’s justifications.

‘I did take that into account, yes,’ Kee’Sisi nodded. ‘But I considered the fact that, if six of those wolvens committed one act of harm each against a innocent person, there would be six acts of harm against innocent people. But by killing them, that harm was reduced to four innocent people. Meaning that harm was reduced by two out of six. Or thirty-three point three-three percent.’

Janna'han felt sick as he watched the avio scribble down a visual of her example. And he felt a white hot rage build inside him as she held it up to show him the diagram.

'The statistics show—'

'—To *Underfor* with your damn statistics!' Janna'han cried, throwing the table aside and scattering Kee'Sisi's writing across the room. '*Nothing* can justify what you did!'

'Statistics can,' said Kee'Sisi. 'I have reduced the statistic of harm done against the Rendi people.'

'No,' he said, simply. 'All you've done is increased the statistics of crimes committed against wolvens.'

For a moment, Kee'Sisi stared at Janna'han. Then her eyes widened as if she had realised something important, and her gaze darted to the papers scattered across the floor.

She jerked her head, then; snapping back to look at the harpy across from her.

'I have increased the statistics of harm against wolvern people,' she stated, her voice flat.

Janna'han's brow furrowed as Kee'Sisi's head jerked back to her papers. And he winced as her hands slammed down to grip the sides of her chair.

'I have increased the statistics of harm!' she repeated, loudly. 'I have increased the statistics of harm!'

Her chest was heaving now with laboured breaths, and Janna'han stepped back as she suddenly let out a high-pitched cry and jerked her entire body as if she was in pain.

'I have increased the harm! I have harmed! I have harmed! I have harmed!'

Janna'han couldn't bring himself to move; all he could do was watch as the avio's head jerked from her papers to him and back.

'I have harmed! I have harmed! I have harmed!'

The sounds of footsteps echoed down the dungeon steps and Janna'han heard his captain shouting behind him as the cell door clunked and was hurriedly unlocked.

'What did you *do*?!'

'I-I-I was just talking to her!' Janna'han exclaimed. 'I was just trying to—'

A loud scream, sounding like fingers against a chalkboard, escaped from Kee'Sisi's throat, and she took in one last breath before she froze; her mouth open and her eyes wide as she stared into Janna'han's own.

Time seemed to slow as the avio's eyes rolled back, her body lurching sideways off her chair.

She seized, another horrid and unearthly sound escaping her, as guards surrounded her and tried to hold her down.

Then she went limp.

Her eyes stayed wide and her body was still; not even the rise and fall of breathing moved her.

Janna'han stared in horror as his captain knelt by Kee'Sisi and placed a hand on her neck.

A long silence yawned throughout the dungeon; even the other prisoners had stopped their usual jeering and were craning through their cell bars to try and see

what had happened...

A sigh escaped the captain, and the man slowly rose to his feet.

'Captain?'

'She's gone.'

—END—

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