

A Day to Remember

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1186) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1186>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Expanded Universes (General)
Character:	Keytal
Additional Tags:	Weekly Challenge: History and Memorials , Suicide , Ficlet
Language:	English
Collections:	Weekly Writing Challenges
Stats:	Published: 2023-11-27 Words: 697 Chapters: 1/1

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by [spacedogfromspace](#)

Summary

Keytal takes the day off to reflect on the anniversary of their sister's death.

Keytal had the day off. They always took this day off, year after year. They remembered a few years where they tried to go to work, or go out in public, or do *anything* on this date, but no matter how many years passed, their feelings of grief were always as strong on this day as it was fifteen years prior, on the day of their sister's death.

Sitting in their dimly lit quarters with a cup of hot tea and a PADD full of pictures of decade-and-a-half old messages, Keytal allowed themselves to remember with abandon. They could remember, like it had only happened yesterday, when Taeran told them that she was one of the gendered people— that she was female. Keytal wasn't for a moment skeptical, didn't for a second feel disgraced or embarrassed. They loved Taeran, and that wouldn't change whether she was their sibling or their sister. In fact, Keytal was proud of their sister for admitting this, and for choosing happiness over social expectation by expressing herself in what little ways she could.

If only the rest of J'naii society felt the same way about gendered people as Keytal. Taeran had to keep her identity secret— the J'naii considered having gender to be a sign of a retrograded evolution. An embarrassment to the species, which had apparently evolved past such 'primitive distractions.' They thought being gendered was something that needed fixing, that a gendered person was very, very sick, and needed treatment to be 'normal.'

Many of the gendered people *were* sick. But not because they were gendered. It was impossible to live happily and be confident in one's own skin when you had to hide your true self from those around you, constantly being referred to as something you are not. And if anyone found out, well— that was the end. You would be 'cured,' and that was that. No more gender, and happier than ever.

At least, that's what J'naii authority would have everyone believe.

When Taeran was found out, she was taken away to be cured with the doctors' therapies to erase the 'de-evolved gendered feelings.' When Taeran returned, she was all smiles and assurances that their society was right, having gender *was* wrong and she *was* much happier now that she was cured. But behind closed doors, Taeran sobbed into Keytal's shoulder night after night, unable to sleep after what they'd done to her.

The therapies— if they could be called that —didn't stop the gendered feelings. No, they just attached different feelings to the gendered ones. They attached fear. Those 'therapies'— they were torture.

Keytal never learned what exactly they had done to their sister. Taeran was never able to speak of it in much detail. But she was deeply traumatized, and all that trauma was interwoven with her gendered identity. Now she wasn't just a person who had to keep her identity secret. She was someone who was disgusted by and fearful of her own identity because of what was done to her. She was too afraid now to express herself as female, even in private. She had panic attacks over being perceived as female by Keytal. She was trapped in her own body once again, only in a different way.

In public, she was all smiles. In private, she cried.

She didn't last long.

Keytal always wondered if their sister would still be alive if only... if only what? If only Keytal took her sister off-planet and begged asylum elsewhere, and got her treatment to reverse the damage done in the therapies? If only Keytal had stayed home that day? If only Keytal hadn't stopped for five minutes at a shop on their way home— maybe they would have been home in time to save her.

Keytal remembered that day like it was yesterday, too. Taeran was still warm when they cut her down from the ceiling fan and administered CPR. She was too late by minutes.

PADD in hand, Keytal looked down at her favourite picture of her sister. Her smiling, happy sister, before the therapies. She was so beautiful, so amazing and strong.

Droplets of water blurred the surface of the PADD.

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