

An Extension of Myself

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Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/M
Fandom:	Star Trek: The Next Generation
Relationship:	Jean-Luc Picard/Beverly Crusher , William Riker/Deanna Troi
Character:	Jean-Luc Picard , Beverly Crusher , Deanna Troi , William Riker
Additional Tags:	Soul Bond
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2013-04-04 Words: 1,998 Chapters: 1/1

An Extension of Myself

by [VelvetMouse](#)

Summary

Take one psychoprojective race, stir in two Starfleet officers and add pinch of bad luck. This is your recipe for a minor catastrophe.

Notes

written for trope_bingo

thanks, as always, to seren for the beta :)

There was no reason for either of them to be on the bridge, let alone both of them. They were in stationary orbit around a friendly planet. They weren't expected to depart for another twelve hours. There were well-armored ships of known allies in orbit with them. They were as safe - perhaps safer - as if they were orbiting Earth itself.

So there was absolutely no reason for either the captain or ship's counselor to be on the bridge. And yet, there they both were.

Picard sat rigid in his chair, only years of training and self-discipline keeping him from fidgeting.

Troi had no such constraint, and would periodically rise from her seat and pace, or wander aimlessly around the bridge.

In one of her laps around the perimeter of the room, the ensign seated at the science station caught her eye. He raised his eyebrows and gave her a pointed look. Troi sighed. He was one of her patients, and she had given him that same look on many occasions, when he was avoiding the issue at hand. She knew it was his way of saying her behavior wasn't helping anyone, least of all her. She gave him a slight smile and nod of acknowledgement.

"Captain, would you care to join me for a cup of tea?" Troi said, motioning towards his ready room. It was phrased as a request, but there was a trace of steel in her voice that said clearly she wasn't actually giving him an option.

Picard jumped slightly, as if her voice had brought him back from elsewhere. He cleared his throat before responding. "That would be acceptable, Counselor. Lieutenant, you have the bridge," he said to the officer at navigation, who nodded in acknowledgement.

Troi led the way into the ready room and paused by the replicator to acquire their preferred drinks. She placed Picard's mug on the edge of his desk and curled up on the couch with her own. They sipped in silence for a few moments.

"You know something more about this conference than you've said," Troi said suddenly. "There's something else going on here, that's why you're nervous."

Picard stared at her for a moment. "Yes, there are factors beyond what is commonly known about this conference, and they are making me a trifle uneasy," he conceded. "However, both Dr. Crusher and Commander Riker are fully aware of the circumstances. So why are you so nervous?" he asked after a moment.

"Will," Troi replied succinctly. "He's been twitchy ever since you briefed him on this conference and it spiked a little while ago."

"Are they in danger? Do we need to call them back to the ship?"

Troi closed her eyes briefly and concentrated on the thin thread that forever connected her to the ship's First Officer. It was tenuous at this

distance and she had to focus to block out the stronger feelings of those on the ship. One by one, she identified the familiar presences and excluded them from her awareness. The captain was strongest, of course, his solid presence tinged with worry. The bridge crew were tranquil, and she met few pockets of strong emotion on the ship. Worry, love, lust and fear. She slipped further into a light trance and followed the thread of Will's existence down to the plant.

"No," she said a few moments later, opening her eyes. "No, they are not in danger. Will is frustrated and a little angry about something, and he's blocking me in an odd way, but I do not believe they are in any danger."

Picard nodded and opened his mouth to reply, but whatever he was going to say was cut off by the chirp of the comm opening.

"Transporter Room 1 to Captain Picard."

"Picard. Go ahead."

"Captain, Commander Riker and Dr. Crusher are ready to return to the ship. The Commander requests that you and Counselor Troi be present when they return."

"We're on our way. Picard out."

As one, Picard and Troi rose and quickly made their way to the turbolift on the bridge. They made their way to the transporter room in a tense silence, and Picard gave a curt nod to the engineer on duty.

Troi felt herself relax when both Crusher and Riker appeared on the platform looking whole and unharmed. Automatically, she reached out to give Will a mental caress, as she always did after they had been parted. Instead of his usual open mind, she found his thoughts strangely guarded. She frowned in confusion, and Will gave a slight shake of his head.

Meanwhile, Picard was staring intently at Crusher. "I know that look," he said to her after a moment.

"Indeed you do," Crusher replied, and Troi caught the faintest echo of a thought. It was just the fleeting impression of words and emotion, a barely-overheard mental snort at the captain's statement. She shot another quick glance at Riker, who again shook his head slightly.

"But this is certainly not the place to discuss this," Crusher continued, seemingly unaware of the by-play around her.

"Very well," Picard agreed. "Shall we adjourn to -"

"Sickbay," Crusher said decisively. "There are some scans I want to run anyway." She and Riker shared a long look before they both nodded and stepped off the transporter pad in odd synchronization.

Troi felt her stomach drop as the realization of what had likely happened hit her. The only way she knew of for people to act in such concert was through an incredibly tight bond of some kind. She had to lean up against the wall for support, and she frantically reached out to test their emotional state, looking for any sign that her position in Riker's affections had been supplanted.

Then she felt a large, warm hand on the small of her back and Riker's familiar voice hissed in her ear, "Think, Deanna! Don't just react, think."

She took a long slow deep breath and followed the captain and doctor out the door, with Riker still hovering protectively behind her.

He was right, she realized. She needed to think about the situation logically, and not just react before she knew the full story.

By the time they reached Dr. Crusher's office in Sickbay, Troi had mostly regained her equilibrium. She wasn't overly surprised when Crusher picked up a tricorder, scanned Riker and then handed him the device to perform the same service on her.

"Readings are as expected," she announced and then got a thoughtful look on her face. Riker's face flitted through several emotions before he nodded.

"Come on in, De," he said, and picked up Troi's hand and place it on his cheek. Physical contact made the psychic connection stronger, and Troi easily slipped into his head.

Hello, love. Will's mental voice was tinged with laughter.

It's getting crowded in here, isn't it? Beverly's voice was also full of laughter.

But... How? If was possible to sputter mentally, Deanna was doing it.

Let us show you, came the oddly dual response, and then Deanna was awash in thought and images.

What seemed like hours later - although it was probably only a few seconds - Troi found herself alone in her own head, trying to sort out the information she had just received.

"Well?" Picard asked. He was obviously trying to be patient in finding out what happened to two of his senior officers, but the edge in his voice belied that attempt.

"They've been bound together," Troi said slowly, looking at her friends for confirmation. They nodded encouragingly. "The Halanans have changed. That was the big secret about this conference that everyone was keeping. Some of them have evolved so that their psychoprojective telepathy along with their instinct to choose a life companion now lets them bond at the deepest level to that companion. A soul bond, some might describe it."

As she spoke, Troi reached out again, testing the emotional waters, trying to assess Riker's and Crusher's true feelings towards each other. To her relief, she found nothing but respect and friendship. In a flash of insight, she realized that love would come in time, but it would be an internal sort of love, as one might love a part of themselves.

"But then - "

Troi shook her head, cutting off Picard. "And that's where everything went wrong. They thought this ability would only exist between two Halanans. They were demonstrating it to a group of conference attendees, when. . ." She trailed off, trying to wrap her mind around the knowledge that Will and Beverly had unceremoniously dumped in it.

Riker wrapped his arm around her shoulders. "As Deanna said, that's where it all went wrong. The two Halanans began the ceremony they had developed for this soul bond. I don't know whether their control slipped, or if it was an unforeseen consequence of having non-Halanans in attendance. All I know is that suddenly my mind was under assault. I tried to put up some sort of mental shield, like Deanna had taught me, but it was instantly torn away under the onslaught of emotions."

"I didn't even have that option," Crusher continued. "The next thing I knew, one of the Halanan doctors was waking me up. As soon as Will woke up, I realized what had happened. I've had the feeling of someone else being in my mind before, but this time there was no convenient piece of technology to remove."

"We spent the next few hours working with the Halanans, trying to determine what exactly had happened, and if it was reversible," Riker finished. "As far as anyone can tell, we're in no danger, but the bond seems to be permanent."

Picard shifted in his seat and looked back and forth between the two people he relied upon the most. "So what does this mean?"

"In practical terms? Not very much, except that in emergency situations you have another person who is a trained medic - or, I suppose, could fly a shuttle," Riker said.

"You got each other's skills?" Troi said in surprise.

"More like we can access the necessary knowledge," Crusher explained. "We're going to need to explore the limits of that particular ability. For example, I don't know if it will work if one of us is unconscious. And we're going to need to practice. Right now, I can tell you where all the controls in a shuttle are, and Will could tell you exactly how to remove an appendix, but we're both going to have to spend some serious time on the holodeck before we can do those things in reality."

"And you're telepathically connected, yes?" Troi asked.

"Yeah. Again, we're going to have to explore the limits of it. We haven't been out of sight of each other yet. Will it reach across the ship? A planet? Solar systems? We just don't know yet. Right now, Will is always in my head, and I'm in his. We have to consciously keep thoughts from each other."

Picard snorted. "Good thing you both have the same security clearance, isn't it?" Troi looked at the captain in shock. "What?" he said. "This obviously isn't their fault. It doesn't seem to have any sort of emotional impact on them, except perhaps making them closer friends. I hardly think I have to worry about Number One running off with my woman."

"Your woman?" Crusher said icily.

"My doctor' sounds wrong. And you know very well that I am just as much yours."

"Nice save, sir," Riker muttered quietly.

"I thought so."

This was too much for Troi, who gave into helpless laughter, which set everyone else off.

"You know," she said when they had calmed down again, "if this had to happen, I'm glad it happened to Will and Beverly. We're all already good friends, and I think we're going to be stuck with each other for a while."

"I can think of worse fates," Crusher said with a smile.

"As can I, my dear. As can I," Picard agreed.

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