

(G)hosts

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(G)hosts

by [VelvetMouse](#)

Summary

The Trill Symbiosis Commission gives new hosts a great deal of support. But, as Jadzia learns, there are a few things they fail to mention.

They don't see it.

Even Benjamin, who ought to, doesn't. He, of all the people here, knows what I am. And I'm sure if he stopped to think about it, he would realize the implications. But as it stands now? He doesn't see.

When you apply to the Symbiosis Commission, they send you mounds of reading material. Physiological, psychological, spiritual. All the things you might possibly need to know about suddenly no longer being alone in your head.

When you go through the actual Joining, they are with you every step of the way, easing the transition from "I" to "we".

And then they cut you loose. Every child must grow up, they say, and shove you out the door to make your way in the world.

At first, it wasn't too bad. I was so busy learning my way around the Station, learning my job, learning how to apply all those things I learned in the Academy into reality, that I barely had time to sort out my own thoughts, let alone those of the previous hosts.

Oh sure, meeting Commander Sisko was a bit of a shock. But they warn you about this, too, meeting dear friends of the previous host. You will find your own relationship with these people, they say, and life will continue on.

The Symbiosis Commission tends to take the long view on things.

But then, as life on the Station settled down into some approximation of "normal" (well, barring the weekly crisis that comes with being on a Federation Deep Space Station), I began seeing things.

Ghosts, I have taken to calling them, in the privacy of my head. People I'm sure I know, somehow, but who just as surely don't know me. Situations I have seen before, in a time and place far removed from this one. Feelings that are engendered in me, not because of anything I have done or thought, but based on situations that existed long before I was born. It is hard not to react to those things.

Kira doesn't see my hands clench behind my back, as we walk the concourse together. That man over there? The stooped, older man browsing the wares on that cart? The last time I saw him, he was an infant, slung on his mother's back at a gymnastics competition. I tickled his feet and he giggled so delightfully. I wonder if he is still ticklish there.

Julian does not catch the quick intake of breath I make as we sit in his office browsing PADDs of medical journals. I don't explain that the article I've just read blithely talks about improvements to a cure for the incurable disease that took Lela's sister. I don't explain that it hurts, knowing how easy the treatment would have been, even back then. And to make it even more complicated, the article itself was written by someone that I - Jadzia - had as a TA at the Academy. Worlds and lifetimes colliding in one deceptively simple article.

Quark notices when I tense up, but he thinks it is one of my tells at the gaming table. He tries to take advantage of it, and hasn't yet figured out why it generally doesn't succeed. I don't have the heart to tell him that I'm not actually reacting to my current cards at all. Tobin, for all his other issues, did love the tables at Risa, and had remarkably good luck at them. Besides, anything that gives me an advantage and drives Quark crazy has to be used to its fullest extent, right?

Even Benjamin, dear sweet Benjamin, doesn't understand - or always notice - when I hesitate slightly when he asks for my opinion on some matter. It's not that I don't have one. It's that I have too many. Many of the Dax hosts have been strong-willed people, and sometimes I fear I will drown in the conflicting opinions. So I hesitate, just slightly, trying to sort out what is *me* and what is *them* and what is best for the current

situation. Sometimes I am more successful than others.

Once, at the Academy, a friend showed me some ancient Earth comic books from the late 20th century. We had a good laugh about the "aliens" in those stories and speculated about which ones might have been clandestine visitors from other races. But one character in particular stood out for me. She was a young human girl with a "superpower" - the ability to do things that others could not. Her particular ability was to absorb the knowledge, memories and abilities of anyone she touched. Despite the fact that she started off as one of the bad guys in the comic book, I always felt a particular sense of kinship and sympathy for her.

The others don't see it, but I often feel like this character. I am constantly bombarded by memories. Some, I have learned to tune out, others I've learned to embrace. But they are always there, lurking just below the surface waiting to pounce.

They don't warn you that it is the little things that will trip you up. That your instincts will tell you go left and right at the same time. That knowledge and experience don't always match up. These are things a host must learn for herself.

Food is a particular challenge. I have always had a sweet tooth, even as a child. Unfortunately, Curzon did not. So my meals are often a strange contrast, a mix of the sweet and the savory. If anyone has noticed this, they have chosen not to comment.

And so I continue to smile cheerfully and pretend I know of what I'm doing, that I'm confident in who and what I am. Those around me don't see my hesitation, my confusion, my daily struggle to define who and what I am in this particular time and place.

They never see. But I do.

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