

Ezri Dax and the Big Bad Worf

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Ezri Dax and the Big Bad Worf

by [Pixie](#)

Summary

Counselor Troi helps Counselor Dax work up the courage to approach Worf

Ezri stood, as she often did, at a viewport on the upper ring, where she could look out and see only stars. The stars calmed her. Everything else may have changed but the stars were as welcoming as ever. She knew these were different stars from the ones she grew up with, but they felt the same. Calming.

"There you are, Old Man." Ezri turned to find Benjamin accompanied by quite possibly the most beautiful woman she'd ever seen. "This is Counselor Deanna Troi of—"

"*Enterprise!*" A wide grin spread across Ezri's face as she turned her full attention to the woman. "We invited you to the wedding!" She pursed her lips slightly. "Jadzia did," she clarified, though neither Troi nor Benjamin was confused. "She really wanted to meet you."

Troi looked thoughtful. "Oh?"

"Well, all of Worf's friends." Ezri frowned. "Other friends." Still wasn't right... "Off-station, um, friends. I mean." She pulled her lips in over her teeth, nervous.

Deanna smiled. She seemed as unfazed as Ezri was frazzled. The (mostly) younger woman straightened her shoulders. "...I'm Ezri and... pleased to meet you."

Affection played across Benjamin's eyes as he watched the women shake hands. Ezri was new, different, *young*, but Dax, too, and he was fond of all her sides. And he wanted her to succeed, which is why, when Starfleet requested a command level counselor sign off on Ezri's promotion, he'd contacted Troi. She was the person most likely to help both Ezri and Worf work through their, admittedly complicated, situation.

"I'm having dinner with Worf, and I want to find that Mr. Odo I've heard so much about, but I'm hoping we can talk? Tomorrow afternoon, maybe?" Ezri nodded. "Good. How's 14:30— and let's meet in sickbay. I also want to see the facilities."

Ezri glanced at Sisko but she didn't say anything, simply nodded again. "Good." Troi gave Ezri's arm a small squeeze, smiled at Sisko and took her leave.

Ezri rounded on her Captain. "Why's she here, Benjamin?"

"To confirm your appointment to the Station." Ezri's expression grew dark, a look he'd seen on Curzon more times than he could count. "Just a formality, Old Man." As she nodded the darkness fell away to reveal an insecurity that was all Ezri. No one was looking so Sisko pulled her into the swift hug she'd never admit to needing.

"I thought he'd never stop talking!" Already flagging from the anxiety of the interview, and the stress of the whole situation, Julian's exhaustive presentation of the DS9 medical bay had drained what energy she had left despite his effusive support of Ezri as an addition to the staff. Or perhaps because of it. Before the doors to her quarters had finished closing Ezri dropped, relieved, into the cushions of her sofa.

And then, at Lela's nudging, jumped right back up to offer her guest a drink. "Tea?" she asked Troi as she crossed to the replicator, waving the other woman into a chair, distracted but polite. "Or something stronger?" Ezri blinked. Who'd offered that?! Curzon, probably. But it could be Jadzia, or. . . she shook her head and turned her attention back to Deanna.

"Tea is fine."

Ezri nodded, ordered two Sarcosian Moon Teas (Audrid's favorite), and told everyone in her head to *shut up and let her be in charge for once*. Someone giggled, but they quieted. She handed Troi a cup, placed the second on the table, and dropped back onto the sofa.

"He wants to protect you." Troi blew over the cup to cool the liquid. "And impress you, I think."

Ezri raised her head. "What?" She straightened. "Oh, Julian." She took a breath— but didn't know how to respond and chose to pick up her tea instead. She blew over it as Troi had. "I guess that's. . ."

Cute, supplied Jadzia.

Sweet, agreed Audrid.

Childish, argued Tobin.

He's a good doctor, said Emony, a playful lilt in her mental voice.

Ezri closed her eyes, tight, but it didn't help.

She asked us to leave her alone, reminded Curzon.

Ezri sighed and opened her eyes to Troi's thoughtful gaze. "Fine," she finished. She placed her tea back on the table. "Sorry."

Troi took a sip of her tea. "It must be hard to—"

"Have eight other people in my head all the time?" interrupted Ezri. Troi nodded. "Yes. It is. But. . ." She gave a self-conscious shrug. "Trill have been doing it for years so I..."

Again, she didn't know how to complete the thought. And she didn't want any symbiont interference! *They'd* all handled it fine. She felt the stirrings of a protest and pushed it away as hard as she could.

"I could teach you some exercises."

Ezri blinked. "What?"

Deanna smiled. "When I decided to pursue a career off Betazed, I had to learn how to filter outsiders' emotions and thoughts. It can be overwhelming, especially in times of stress, or when I'm entering new communities. And I need to be able to control the process if I'm to help the Captain and crew. The same principles may be applicable to your situation."

"Maybe." Ezri was doubtful but tried to look interested, grateful, hopeful, polite and not as tired as she really was. Which was exhausting.

"You weren't expecting to be joined, right?"

Ezri deflated. "Did Benjamin tell you? He's worried about me." Ezri spoke in a rush, not giving Troi a moment to respond until she stopped. "Or maybe he's not but he thinks he *should* be? He wanted you to talk to me, right?"

"He did." Troi gently placed the teacup on the table. "But Worf told me."

"Oh." Ezri frowned. "Why? I mean, don't answer that. I shouldn't." She bit her lip. "I shouldn't have asked."

Troi leaned back in her chair, casual. "Why not?"

"Umm," Ezri said through her pursed lips. "I don't know." Deanna was quiet, waiting. Ezri sighed. "He shouldn't be worrying about me."

"Why?"

"Because... I don't want him to!"

A slight head tilt was Troi's only response. Some part of Ezri— or Dax, or both— wanted to shake her perfect, pretty, calm, counselor face off. But she simply fell back into her pillows.

"It's a strange situation. I'm *not* his wife. I'm *nothing like her*." Ezri balled her fists, pushed them into her seat, trying to focus on the physical sensation instead of her emotions, and thoughts, and the sensation of the others. "But I remember. And sometimes...it's just strange." She closed her eyes. How could she explain to Deanna or Benjamin or anyone else when she didn't understand it herself?

So far Troi had been impressed with Ezri Dax. She was almost disturbingly young but she seemed constantly ready to attack her own self-doubt. She was still finding her footing but she was doing it with purpose. And Captain Sisko, Dr. Bashir, Mr. Garek, Odo, and Quark all praised her. Even Worf, in a way. Now, as she felt the wave of emotions Ezri was trying to work through all on her own, Deanna was amazed at how well she was doing.

She took a deep breath. "A few years back the *Enterprise* discovered a man who'd been accidentally left on a planet for eight years. He was a duplicate of our first officer, Will Riker."

Ezri raised her eyes to Troi's. "Tom."

She nodded. "Yes."

"Nerys..." She pursed her lips. "I know some of his story."

Troi nodded again, specifics weren't important to the point. She continued, "Tom was in love with me in a way Will hadn't been for years. It was—" She opened a hand toward Ezri as she borrowed her word: "'Strange'. But also intoxicating." Ezri felt herself blushing, which only made her blush more. "We fell into a relationship."

"It didn't last," Ezri extrapolated.

"No," Troi confirmed. "But that's not why I'm telling you this. Will, he encouraged me to pursue something with Tom. But he wasn't 'okay' with it."

Ezri frowned. "You think the part of me that's Jadzia..." Her frown deepened.

Deanna moved to sit beside the younger woman. "I think you remember being in love with Worf and it's comfortable and frightening at the same time."

Ezri bit her lip. "Sometimes it feels like I'm being steered away from Worf and toward . . . someone else." Her eyes were wide with too many feelings. "Maybe that *is* Jadzia's doing."

"Maybe," Troi echoed. She touched a hand to Ezri's shoulder. "I'm afraid I don't know enough about Trill."

"No one does. They don't want to talk about it with anyone off planet and only the chosen few on—" She broke off and shook off anger. This wasn't the time or place for that conversation. "I thought I could..." She shook her head. Nor regrets. They'd already gotten in her way at the Institute. Benjamin, and Starfleet, and now Deanna Troi, were willing to take a chance on her. That she wasn't prepared didn't matter to them. Maybe it was even a strength. She met Troi's eyes to ask with a quiet voice, "Why do you think Worf told you about me?"

Troi paused to take a deep breath and consider. "Worf is a very private person. But he's hurting. He reached out to me as a friend, and someone who might understand how he feels, without being told."

Ezri was quiet a long while. "I would like to be that."

Deanna smiled and drew the young woman into a hug. "You are. Just give it time."

Worf wasn't expecting anyone when the door to his quarters chimed and he briefly considered ignoring it. But of the people he wasn't expecting: Bashir would override on the basis of a possible medical emergency, O'Brien would call Bashir to override on the basis of a possible medical emergency, Sisko would only be at the door with good reason, and Quark would loudly never let him hear the end of it if he was so 'impolite' as to ignore him. "Come."

Worf wasn't expecting anyone and certainly not her. It hurt to look at her so he chose not to. She *wasn't* Jadzia and he didn't want to know Ezri. Or he didn't want Ezri to know him, Deanna had said. Worf chose not to see the difference.

"Hi."

Worf didn't answer. She was nothing like his wife had been, but the way she stood, hands clasped and shoulders back in an attempt to look taller, and older, and more in command, reminded him of someone. Wesley Crusher, maybe or— Sito Jaxa. Another loss. He growled in his throat at the memory. To her credit, Ezri didn't flinch.

"May I come in?"

Worf stepped aside with a curt nod. Ezri walked past him into the quarters he'd shared with Jadzia. Her eyes moved over the Klingon artifacts — weapons— on his wall. But didn't linger. She turned, hands still clasped, and waited for his attention.

"What do you want?" he asked, not unkindly, but gruff.

Ezri took a breath. "Will you tell me about Sto'Vo'Kor?"

Worf's eyes flashed but with effort he kept his temper in check. "The station computer..." he started, but like Ezri often did, seemed to lose the thought.

"Reading about it is not the same."

Worf glared. She should have the memories of two people who could explain Sto'Vo'Kor as well as he, but he didn't want to suggest it because that would be admitting some part of Jadzia lived on in this slip of a girl before him.

"Yes."

"What?" Worf's glare deepened. He hadn't said anything, but she must have read it on him. He didn't want to admit she could do that, either.

"Yes, I have Jadzia's understanding of it and Curzon's as well," she confirmed. "But that is not the same either."

Worf growled again. Ezri took another breath.

"You said. . . 'Jadzia is in Sto'vo'kor'." He had, the first time they'd spoken, though it was hardly a conversation. "What did you mean?"

He wanted to shout it was not her concern! She is not Klingon and not Jadzia! She has nothing to do with it and can't understand and should not try! He wanted to throw her out. He wanted to scare her so badly she would never come back, would run away into space and the quicker the better!

But he also wanted to memorialize Jadzia the way she would want. The way she deserved. His wife was in Sto'Vo'Kor, a warrior, an angel avenged. She had a Klingon soul. But she was also a Trill. A mentor to the girl in front of him. His eyes filled with anguish.

Ezri tried to take another breath but she felt as if she'd been punched in the gut. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry," she started toward walk to the door, as quickly as she could without running. "I— I'm very sorry."

"Ezri." She froze. "Jadzia had a Klingon soul." Ezri was still, and calm, listening. "She was a warrior."

Ezri turned to meet his eyes, but he averted them. "I'm not."

Worf gave no response.

"...Does that..." She bit her lip.

"Ask."

Silently, Ezri forced her heart to stop its panic. "Does that comfort you? Or bother you?"

Worf finally met her eyes directly. "Yes."

Ezri gasped. And then started to giggle. She slapped both hands over her mouth but it didn't help. She couldn't stop. All the tension of the moment— and all the months before it— exploded out of her in laughter. Worf stared, dumbfounded, as she tried to catch her breath to explain she was absolutely not laughing at him—

But then he was laughing with her. Because it was a moment Jadzia would love.

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