

Hope of Thee (The Zombie Remix)

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/60) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/60>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Star Trek: The Next Generation
Character:	Lwaxana Troi , Kestra Troi (I)
Additional Tags:	Remix , Grief , Mother-Daughter Relationship , TNG S07E07: Dark Page
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2011-04-23 Words: 1,877 Chapters: 1/1

Hope of Thee (The Zombie Remix)

by [Beatrice_Otter](#)

Summary

Don't worry, Mother. You'll never be alone. I'll make sure of that.

Notes

Written for cosmic_llin in Remix Redux 9

This fic is AU for the season 7 episode "[Dark Page](#)," in which Counselor Troi finds out she had an older sister named Kestra who died when Deanna was a baby. The script is [here](#) if you want to read it.

Betaed by [Jedi Buttercup](#).

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

- Inspired by [Watching Stars](#) by cosmic_llin

Daddy's coming home tomorrow, Kestra said.

I know. Lwaxana watched her younger daughter sleep. Deanna snuffled, pulling her stuffed horse closer. It was a gift from Ian, of course, to go with the stories he recorded for her every time he went away. *Deanna needs her sleep*.

She can nap later. Daddy's coming home.

Lwaxana never could deny her daughter anything, not even a trip to the park on a day when both Ian and Lwaxana needed to work. After all, they could take PADDs and work outdoors as easily as anywhere, and their daughter was a big girl who could take care of herself and the dog, as long as she stayed close. And she had, until—

“Wake up, little one,” Lwaxana said, shaking Deanna gently. It took a few minutes before Deanna blinked sleepily up at her.

“Mother?”

“We're going to watch Daddy come home,” Lwaxana said. “Would you like that?”

“Yes,” Deanna said. “How? Isn't his ship still really far away?”

It's easy, I promise.

Lwaxana helped Deanna out of bed, grabbing the blanket as well. Hand in hand, they walked past an empty room and down the hall away from the private quarters of the House, to Lwaxana's study. “Lights, half,” Lwaxana said. *Let's move the couch in front of the screen*. She took one end of the couch, and Deanna took the other (though she was only five and still small, she liked to help) and dragged it over. In the light from the screen, her daughter's hair was yellow. Once that was done, she turned to the screen. “Computer, what is the current location of the USS Carthage?”

“Security clearance required.”

“Authorization Troi Alpha Alpha Zero.” The screen lit up, showing the Betazoid sky with a little Starfleet symbol moving across it. “There he is! Look, Deanna, do you see how near he is?”

He'll be in the system by tomorrow. He might be home for dinner tomorrow evening.

“Let’s watch him coming,” Deanna said.

They sat on the couch and curled up with the blanket, just the two of them. *Three of us.*

Lwaxana flipped her way through the catalogue of fabrics and patterns in her favorite store, looking for something *spectacular*—the end of her formal mourning for Ian was almost here, and more importantly she was feeling the need for something new. She wanted her first outfit to be spectacular, and that meant time with the catalogues and then with the designer. She was more than happy to spend the time to make it perfect.

Also, it allowed her to watch the man seated in the café across the street. He was handsome, and Betazoid, and so very different from everything Ian had been. Yes. It was time for something new. She tossed out a thought to him, getting a glimpse of the outer shape of his mind. Nothing intimate, just the telepathic equivalent of a long glance up and down—perhaps with a hint of what Ian had called a “wolf whistle,” if Lwaxana had ever been so crass as to do such a thing. Her target blinked, and paused in his conversation, glancing around to spot her.

Lwaxana smiled at him through the window, and he smiled back. After she was done here, perhaps she would go over and introduce herself.

The handsome young man sent his own telepathic appraisal, and Lwaxana tried hard not to stiffen.

You know if you sleep with him, he'll want in past your shields, Kestra said conversationally, her attention never straying from the PADD with the catalogue. *You haven't allowed anyone in since me.*

Lwaxana turned her attention back to the display. She was here for a new dress, after all. That was enough change right now.

“You’ve been alone too long, Lwaxana,” her friend Nizanla said. “It’s not healthy. It’s been *years* since Andrew died. He wouldn’t have wanted you to be lonely.”

Lwaxana smiled her best diplomat’s smile. They hadn’t spoken face-to-face in quite some time, as Lwaxana had been busy with offworld assignments with the diplomatic corps now that Deanna was out of the house. Besides, Nizanla was a daughter of the Second House, and thus her social superior. *You’re not alone. You have—* “I’m not alone,” she said. “I have—” *me* “—Mr. Homn.”

Nizanla shot her a look. “Servants don’t count, no matter how devoted,” she said dryly. “I mean a *man*, Lwaxana. I know you travel so much, but I know many suitable men who would be happy to be introduced to you.” She sent images of a great many handsome young Betazoid men, each tinged with an impression of their personality and mental tone.

“I’m sure you do,” Lwaxana said, accepting the images but not commenting on them. She leaned back on the exquisitely embroidered divan that Nizanla kept for guests, trying to find a comfortable spot.

Trust a daughter of the Second House to choose ostentation over comfort, Kestra said, quietly so that Nizanla wouldn’t hear.

Lwaxana shrugged. “I meet a great many men through my work—you know how most species favor men for such tasks. And you know how much I prefer aliens. Betazoid men are so ...” she wrinkled her nose, “... so *domestic*.”

“I’m sure I could find you someone who wouldn’t mind your dalliances offworld. You need someone you can be truly intimate with.”

“I do, believe me.” Lwaxana smirked at Nizanla. “Perhaps *I* should introduce *you* to some of them.”

“I’m sure they’re very good in bed, but I wasn’t talking about sex.” Nizanla made a moue at her friend’s flippancy.

“Neither was I,” Lwaxana said dryly. “Don’t be so provincial, Nizanla. Even non-telepaths can be intimate with one another in ways that have nothing to do with sex.”

“I know, but *you’re* a telepath. Being isolated isn’t healthy. I know a woman your age would normally have her primary bond with her daughters, but ... Deanna can’t be strong enough to be much help to you over these distances now that she’s left Betazed for Starfleet. And I don’t know how much you ever really connected with her anyway, not after what happened to poor Kestra, whom you were so close with—oh, don’t look at me like that, Lwaxana, I know you don’t like to talk about her, but she’s been dead over twenty years! Not that I blame you for going a little strange after she died, alone with a baby in that house, no sisters or aunts, and your husband gone away—not that a human could have been much help, but your daughter was dead! He had a duty to support you, and a Betazoid man would have known that, much as you may love your wild aliens. Everyone knows *I* did my best to help, but there’s just nothing like *feeling* your family around you when you’re in pain. You’ve never really recovered, have you? I want to see you *happy*, Lwaxana! With a new, young man you could have more daughters to support you as you age—and he could stay at home and raise them, and you could go offworld with your work and your dalliances, and you’d have someone to come home to. Doesn’t that sound nice? I just don’t want you to be alone.”

Don't worry, Mother. You'll never be alone. I'll make sure of that.

“I’m fine, Nizanla,” Lwaxana said. She smiled. “Don’t worry about me so much.”

Deanna’s eye’s snapped open, and she lurched up, off the biobed.

“Deanna, are you all right?” Doctor Crusher asked.

Deanna nodded, taking a few deep breaths to get her heart rate under control. None of the things she had experienced in her mother's mind were real—no matter what her mind thought. She was safe, in sickbay. Beverly was here, and Captain Picard, and Maques. This was reality.

"I don't like the readings I got," Beverly said. "Your own psilosynine levels dropped dramatically, almost as if they were being ... *drained* by something. And the rest of your neurotransmitters were all being affected, as well. I'm sorry, I can't allow another attempt."

"I couldn't do anything, anyways," Deanna said dully, closing her eyes.

"Do you know what the problem is, now?" Captain Picard asked. "Was your mother's friend correct?"

"Yes," Deanna said. They'd contacted all of her mother's friends, hoping that one of them might know of whatever trauma Lwaxana was hiding. "Nizanla was right. It did start with the death of ... my sister Kestra." She closed her eyes. A sister she had never known of. But at the same time, it explained so much. So many little things she'd wondered about, over the years.

"But ... there is more," Maques said. "Not just ... death."

"I know," Deanna said, wondering how much he'd seen, if the Cairn ever had to deal with something similar. He looked sympathetic, if she was judging his expression right. Her empathic and telepathic abilities weren't reliable at the moment. "My mother has been hosting a psychic imprint of Kestra since she died."

"I've never heard of a psychic imprint," Captain Picard said. "Is it like a Vulcan katra?"

Deanna shook her head. "No. Not at all. Katras are self-sustaining, and a complete imprint of the person they were in life. You can put one in a holder, or transfer it to another person, and it will survive. When two Betazoids are telepathically connected at the deepest level when one of them dies, the other is sometimes left with an imprint, an afterimage of one who died. Normally, it dissipates on its own. But sometimes the bereaved one will try to cling to that imprint, keep it. It's one of the reasons Betazoid funeral and grief rituals are so communal, so that someone will sense what's happening and help them to release the imprint."

"But your father was not a telepath," Captain Picard said. "And your mother isolated herself from her friends after Kestra's death. So she was able to ... keep it?"

"Is it starting to dissipate now?" Beverly said. "It's been thirty-four years. Is that the trauma?"

Deanna swallowed, trying to blink back tears. "I wish it were," she said. "An imprint isn't alive. The only way she could have kept it all these years, could have made it such a distinct force within her own personality, almost completely separate, is by feeding it bits of herself to sustain it."

"It is ... forceful." Maques said. "Strong."

"Yes," Deanna said. "And she will do anything to keep it. She's convinced herself that it *is* Kestra. That's why she was so strange around Hedril—Hedril looks like Kestra, and Mother couldn't always tell the difference between what the imprint was saying to her and what Hedril was saying."

"Is there anything we can do for her?" Beverly asked.

"There are telepathic healers on Betazed who may be able to help," Deanna said. "They're trained to deal with such things. If anyone can reach Mother, and separate the psychic imprint and release it, they can."

"But if she's been feeding it bits of herself for over three decades, how much of her will be left without it?" Captain Picard asked.

Deanna looked down at her mother's body, lying still as a corpse on the biobed next to her. "I don't know."

End Notes

On My First Son
Ben Jonson

Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy;
My sin was too much hope of thee, loved boy.
Seven years thou wert lent to me, and I thee pay,
Exacted by thy fate, on the just day.

Oh, could I lose all father now! For why
Will man lament the state he should envy?
To have so soon 'scaped world's and flesh's rage,
And if no other misery, yet age!

Rest in soft peace, and asked, say, Here doth lie
Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry.
For whose sake henceforth all his vows be such
As what he loves may never like too much.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!