

Vanilla

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by [nostalgia](#)

Summary

The next time they fail to excite each other she asks, “Did Garak ever hurt you?”

Notes

One of the tags for this on AO3 was "Dubcon Trill Threeway" which I feel I need to mention/warn for at the start. So here goes: there's a bit in this where it's kiiiinda Ezri/Julian/Joran for a bit, without everyone involved having consented to that (or even being aware of it), so it briefly goes somewhat Dubious Consent, just so you know.

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

Their friends have left them in a universe of two, orbiting each other in binary loneliness. The station is as busy as ever and as empty as a void, an explosive silence in the aftermath of the war. They loiter on the promenade hand-in-hand to stay anchored together, but love can only do so much and they're already drifting apart.

Ezri misses Benjamin and Worf, Julian misses Miles and Garak. Deserted, they at least have each other, although the relationship becomes ever more uninspiring to both of them. They meet for lunch and discuss the routine days that fill their lives, over dinner they talk about nothing. They could never miss the war, but after years of running on adrenaline facing a less eventful reality sober again is difficult.

After another painfully empty day they fuck against a wall in her quarters, something which is far easier in theory than in practice. The wall is cold and unyielding at her back and the balancing act is awkward. It's incredibly uncomfortable. It's incredibly good. It keeps them together for another week.

It gives Ezri an idea.

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The next time they fail to excite each other she asks: “Did Garak ever hurt you?”

“Physically or emotionally?”

“Sexually,” she clarifies, with a counsellor’s candour.

He doesn’t even blush. “Yes.”

“Did you like it?”

“Are you going to psychoanalyse me if I did?”

“That’s not why I’m asking. I want...” she stops, suddenly afraid of his response.

A smile twitches the corners of his mouth. “You want to liven things up.”

The possibilities send heat racing through her. “Yes.”

They’ve already moved towards each other while talking about this, and now his hand is on her hip.

“I never had you down as a sadist, Ezri.” But he stitched up Jadzia and Worf enough to know the kinds of things that Dax must enjoy. (And now, years later, it strikes her as somewhat cruel that Jadzia flaunted it in front of him.)

“It’s just a game,” she says.

The smiles becomes seductive: “Do your worst.”

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It begins as slightly rougher sex than usual. She builds her bites and scratches slowly, until Julian says “I thought you wanted to hurt me,” and she stops holding back so much.

She breaks him easily, and then it almost shocks her that they haven’t tried this before. It’s refreshing and addictive and exactly what they needed.

She hasn’t felt this good in months.

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Afterwards he slips from the bed and returns with the supplies he borrowed (stole) from the infirmary. Julian has planned ahead, like he always does. He treats the injuries he can reach himself and then shows her how to hold the equipment to deal with the marks she left elsewhere.

“You’re stronger than you look” he says, as she works on a deep scratch across his back.

“Lucky for you,” she replies, only half joking. She runs her fingertips over new-made skin, kisses his shoulder. “All fixed.”

He leans back against her. “For now.”

“For now,” she agrees, and she starts planning for next time.

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Some nights the war still hasn’t ended and it carries on in dreams. Battles, bereavements, and mistakes come back to her when she sleeps and replay themselves in sharpened detail. Ezri wakes from Jadzia’s death and spends two hours trying to get back to sleep before she summons Julian.

He brings medical concern and a bag of possible solutions. “I can give you a sedative,” he offers.

She declines. “Distract me,” she says, pulling him closer.

For the first time he hesitates. “Fuck the pain away? I’m not sure that’s the recommended treatment.”

“But you know it works,” she says, and he acquiesces because it’s true. She kisses him and only a moment passes before he kisses her back.

In bed she is frenetic – if she can exhaust herself there’s a good chance she won’t dream again tonight. She pushes him further than he’s used to and the rewards are spectacular for both.

“You should talk to someone,” he says later, drowsy at her side.

“So should you.”

“I’d feel like I was wasting their time.”

But she remembers what he was like before the war – arrogant and idealistic, wide-eyed and naive. There were parts of him that never emerged from that Dominion internment camp, or that went missing in the heat of battle. Maybe he didn’t survive the war after all.

Maybe neither of them did.

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Julian returns from a medical conference looking guilty. For two days she suspects him of adultery until she realises that she hasn’t seen him smile since he got back, and then she reassesses the situation. He looks ashamed and he sounds cynical. He holds himself like has done something he is certain to regret. It’s a combination she associates with Section 31.

“Were you really at a medical conference?” she asks.

“I can’t talk about it.” It’s all he really needs to tell her.

“They got you,” she says.

He looks as battered as she’s ever seen him. “They got me,” he agrees.

When she takes him in her mouth she uses her teeth.

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Perhaps she should blame Joran, name him as the point where Dax went wrong. Joran Dax was a murderer, which makes Ezri Dax a murderer too because she remembers committing the crimes and memory is everything to a Trill.

She isn't going to kill Julian, but she lets Joran out a little when they play their game. Joran hits Julian harder than Ezri would have alone, and she thinks she might have gone too far when she tastes blood in Julian's mouth, but he just pushes further into her and never utters a word of complaint. He likes it, she likes it, Joran likes it.

She should probably have mentioned Joran's current prominence to Julian before they fucked him, but she isn't sure a non-Trill could ever really understand what it means. The previous hosts are always there in any case, and Julian doesn't need to know the details.

Or maybe he does know, because he calls her Dax when he comes.

Human blood is made of iron and salt. Ezri likes the way it tastes on her tongue.

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The next 'medical conference' lasts a week and Julian returns with shadows in his eyes. When she goes to him in the evening she finds him alone with a half-empty bottle of whiskey, the lights at half-brightness.

"How much have you had?"

"Not enough."

She takes the glass from his hand and straddles his lap. He leans his head against her shoulder and she allows him a few brief moments of quiet rest before she moves away and collects the items she keeps here for difficult nights like these.

In the bedroom there are thin lengths of rope, and the candles are in plain view on the dining table. She replicates the tray of ice cubes and the box of matches.

She ties him down and what she does with hot and cold comes precipitously close to torture. But it works, the way it always does, and for a while nothing else hurts. For a while the war really is over.

They've both lived through a lot and they've both survived too much. Sometimes the guilt is almost unbearable.

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In a quiet corner of the bar he pushes a small box across the table towards her. "Open it."

Inside there is a ring, nested in velvet. "It's pretty," she says, with a questioning raise of her eyebrows.

"It's a human custom," he explains, "I'm asking you to marry me."

She stares at him, wonders if he's joking. Staying together at all is a terrible idea, making it legally-binding is insane. Everything about this is a mistake, but neither of them has anywhere else to go or anyone else to turn to. She considers her options. "What do I do?"

"Well, ideally you say 'yes'."

She has been married several times over several lives, he has never married and is only going to live once. Eventually he will be the memory of a memory and she'll be someone else. Either way it's going to last longer than it should.

She says, "Quark once told me never to pay full price for damaged goods."

"He's right," Julian agrees. "So you're saying no?"

"I'm saying yes even though I shouldn't." At least this way they won't hurt anyone else.

He takes the ring and slides it onto her finger. "I suppose this means we're stuck with each other." His smile is weak but convincing.

The ring is already too tight around her finger. Ezri lifts her hand to look it - it sparkles in the light and distracts her, the way it was supposed to. She wonders how much it's going to cost them.

End Notes

She was married to a Klingon and he used to date Garak, so there's no way the two of them together are going to be entirely vanilla. So I started writing this and then it went a bit darker than I expected. By which I mean quite a lot darker. Oops.

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