

Lemonade

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by [nostalgia](#)

Summary

There's an awkward pause while Julian looks at him with a weird, pensive expression. "Quark, would you... I mean, do you..." He waits for Julian to form a full sentence – he'll get there eventually, he usually does. "Have you ever had a threesome?"

Quark blinks, surprised. "That's kind of a personal question, don't you think?"

Notes

I promised myself I wouldn't write this pairing/throuple and then I did it anyway.

He's been waiting two years for them to split up and it still hasn't happened. Which is kind of ridiculous, because surely by now Ezri must have spent enough time around Julian to be sick of him? Quark certainly is, and he doesn't even have to sleep with the guy.

At first he'd assumed it was pity-sex – maybe Ezri felt bad for Julian, wanted to offer some kind of consolation prize for turning him down all those times when she was Jadzia. Then they were pity-dating, which was taking things a little far but, okay, it kind of made sense – Ezri's soft-hearted and it makes her far too generous. She'd probably date somebody for a few weeks if their plight moved her enough. And then that had turned into pity-moving-in-together, at which point Quark had had to admit to himself that maybe – *maybe* – there was a little more to it than that. These days he's pretty much accepted that Ezri probably actually loves Julian, as weird and off-putting as that idea is.

They approach the bar together – it's a rare thing to catch Ezri without her shadow these days – and sit in their usual seats, just next to Morn, which is always a risky location if you don't want to be monologued to death. Quark nods to acknowledge their presence. "What'll it be?"

"Lemonade," says Ezri.

"I'll have the same," says Julian, and Quark moves to the back of the bar to look for the bottle – it's not something that gets ordered often round here other than as a mixer. He can hear them talking behind him. He's not eavesdropping, it's just that it's difficult *not* to hear everything when you've got ears like his.

"You can have something stronger if you want," says Ezri.

"I'm not drinking alcohol if you can't," says Julian.

Quark returns with the bottle, and there's a horrible feeling creeping its way up his spine. "Why can't she drink alcohol?" He might not have guessed the answer. He hopes he hasn't.

Ezri looks at Julian, who shakes his head; "He'd tell everyone."

She bites her lip and turns back to Quark. "Can you keep a secret?"

Of course he can. "Sure."

She leans across the bar towards him, and he moves closer to her as well, and soon enough they're in a conspiratorial huddle, almost touching. For a split-second he thinks she might be about to kiss him. But she doesn't, of course. Instead she announces, "I'm pregnant."

Quark automatically glances towards Julian. “Is it his?”

Julian’s indignant. “Obviously!”

“But you can’t tell anyone,” Ezri continues. “We haven’t even told our parents yet.”

“Nobody’s going to hear about this from me,” he promises. He actually means it, too – if Dax has a secret then Dax has a secret, and she’s the last person he’d ever break a promise to.

She really does kiss him then. It’s only on the cheek, but it counts. He lifts a hand to his face automatically. She can trust him not to spread the word before she’s ready. She can trust him with anything she wants if she’s going to keep kissing him as a reward.

But it’s still bad news. It means she’s stuck with Julian now, one way or another. It’s Jadzia and Worf all over again, only worse because this time he’s lost to *Julian*, who’s always been a little... well, pathetic is a strong word but it’s the one that springs immediately to mind. He’s a good customer, sure, but that doesn’t mean Quark has to be okay with losing out on a woman like Ezri to him.

He puts a smile on his face, because he’s a professional. “Congratulations.” He fills two glasses with lemonade and slides them across the bar towards them. “On the house.” Why not, it’s not like the stuff is expensive. Besides, it’s worth it for the way Ezri smiles at him.

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A few weeks later Julian drops into place at the bar with a tired sigh. He looks dead on his feet and it’s still only lunch time. Quark’s pretty sure he knows why that is: he’s learned a lot over the years from the crude jokes of his customers, and rumour has it that pregnant Trills get horny as all hell. Julian probably isn’t getting much sleep these days. He might even feel bad for the guy if he wasn’t burning up inside with envy.

Quark picks up an empty glass from under the counter. “Lemonade?” Julian hesitates, and Quark adds smoothly, “I won’t tell her if you don’t.”

Julian narrows his eyes at him. “Lemonade,” he says, firmly.

“You’re really going all-in on this, huh?” He’s kind of impressed, despite everything.

Julian shrugs. “I love her.”

He can’t possibly love her as much as Quark does, no one could. “I’m sure you do.” He pours the glass of lemonade, hands it over.

There’s an awkward pause while Julian looks at him with a weird, pensive expression. “Quark, would you... I mean, do you...” He waits for Julian to form a full sentence – he’ll get there eventually, he usually does. “Have you ever had a threesome?”

Quark blinks, surprised. “That’s kind of a personal question, don’t you think?”

“I suppose it is. Do you feel uncomfortable discussing it with me? Would it help if I talked about my own experiences in that area?”

“Don’t bother.” Quark already knows way too much about Julian’s sex-life – he’s the one who has to clean the holosuites, after all. “Why are you asking? Is it for a research paper? Because I’d prefer it if you didn’t start hassling the other customers about their sexual proclivities.”

Julian shakes his head. “No, nothing like that. It’s... Look, I’ll just come right out and say it.” He takes a breath. “Would you like to have sex with me and Ezri?”

Quark blinks again. That was unexpected. He thinks about it, though, because now the idea’s been put in his head. Ezri? Sure, absolutely. In a heartbeat. But Julian? Well, maybe. He’s a handsome man, probably, and those illegal genetic enhancements must have done *something* for his performance in the bedroom, right?

Julian’s talking. Julian’s always talking, but Quark figures he should probably actually listen to what he’s saying this time. “We’re not asking you to get into a committed relationship with us, nothing like that. It’s just a one-off. Something to liven things up a bit. You know how boring things can get around here.”

Quark just stares at him. The offer’s tempting, but it might complicate things – sleeping with your customers is a very good way to lose them, and the idea of losing Dax’s custom is enough to make him cautious.

Julian continues, “I’ll give you a preview, if you like. A free sample.” He reaches towards Quark, grabs him by the ear, gently but firmly.

“You’re not going to just –” Quark begins, but the rest of the sentence becomes a garbled noise halfway between a gasp and a moan as Julian goes to work on his ear. He’s good at it, too, he’s applying that perfect level of pressure that so few even know to aim for.

Julian speaks softly as he massages Quark’s ear. “I’m an incurable xenophile, you know. I love aliens. Can’t get enough of them. And I’ve never slept with a Ferengi. Quite the gap in my collection, don’t you think?” He pulls his hand away, and by this point Quark is half-breathless.

Well, that was... an experience. Maybe he’s misjudged Julian. He’s friendly enough, and he never starts fights in the bar. He’s the type of customer that keeps an establishment like this running – always hanging around, making small but regular purchases, advertising the place to

acquaintances via positive word-of-mouth. So he's a little weird sometimes, who isn't?

Julian prompts him for an answer to his proposal. "Well? Are you interested?"

Quark makes his decision – why the hell not? "Pick a time and a place. I'll be there."

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It helps him understand it better, being with them like that even if it's only for one night. They love each other, he's seen it up close and he gets it now, kind of. It's a little easier after that to accept that they're together, but he'll probably always be pining after one of them and jealous of the other.

Ezri sits at the bar, alone for once, and Quark hovers nearby, offering whatever she's willing to accept from him. She's just transitioning to the maternity variant of her uniform, and she asks him how it looks because she's the only person who can't see that it doesn't matter either way and that makes her a little insecure about herself.

He tells her, "You're glowing." And she is. But unfortunately he's not the one who put that glow in her.

They could still split up. Couples split up all the time, it's a natural part of the ebb and flow of life. And then Quark will be waiting right here to console her, in any way she needs. He wouldn't have a problem with raising another man's child, and maybe he'd even be good at it – he helped Rom bring up Nog, didn't he? And Nog turned out pretty good in the end, even he can see that.

Julian appears, inevitably, and greets Ezri with a kiss to her forehead and a gentle pat on the bump that seems to be getting bigger every day. He perches on the chair next to hers, and Quark looks from one to the other, almost at peace with the whole crazy situation as he automatically reaches for a bottle of lemonade.

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