

all the horses in the streets

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by [hoodwinked](#)

Summary

In which Julian proposes to Garak—on their very first meeting.

Notes

All hail Amnesty Week :D

“Marry me?” Julian Bashir squeaks about two seconds after Garak—suspicious Cardassian extraordinaire—has settled into the seat opposite him.

It’s their very first meeting, Julian thinks. Why is he *like this*?

“Yes,” Garak says.

Julian starts nearly right off his chair, boggling. “You—” he doesn’t manage to make the sentence go anywhere, mind blank, and he just ends up flopping his lips a little as his mouth opens and closes.

Garak leans forth over the table, lowering his voice. “My dear, you look flummoxed.” He sounds positively dangerous, and it does something to Julian; sadly, the effect is instantly ruined by the panic threatening to choke him. Why did he say *that*?

“You can’t just—” Julian tries, and again doesn’t manage to get anywhere.

Garak hums. He orders something to eat while Julian tries to think. He’s not certain if he’s trying to think his way out of this, or further into it, but regardless he accomplishes absolutely nothing. Mind blank, no thoughts, head empty. *Say something nice at my funeral*, he thinks, *remember me as I was and not for what I did*.

The sharp smell of the food jolts him out of his thoughts, and he focuses his gaze on the meal. It does look palatable, and the smell is far too tempting. After a second and a glance up at Garak, he grabs his cutlery and digs in. Then he blanks again on the next four minutes, finding himself utterly starving.

Smacking his lips, he leans back on the chair. The food sits heavy in his belly and weights him down, dragging his attention into something slow and lazy, and some of the frantic energy at his own actions dissipate. “Surely,” he says, finally remembering that Garak is rumored to be—well, lots of things. And maybe he shouldn’t be simply sitting and eating a meal with him. This might all be some kind of ruse. “Surely,” he repeats, “You don’t—”

But Garak smiles. Julian’s throat dries up, his hands clammy. Something curls through him, an emotion he’s not much used to, and he blinks at Garak. The Cardassian—and possibly spy—says, “A most sudden proposal, I shall think. But nevertheless, I do admit I find myself rather charmed. So. Why not?”

“Why not marry a stranger?”

“But ah, will we be strangers tomorrow? The day after?”

Julian bites his lip. (Is it his imagination or does Garak track the motion?) Regardless, he says, “I suppose not.”

“Then I won’t be a marrying a stranger, will I?”

Julian closes his mouth. He tongues the inside of his teeth. He thinks, and he looks around—the people are merry where they so newly were in pain, and even Garak has ventured out of his shop. Rumors abound; about many things, of course. And—well. It’s possible, just slightly possibly, that Julian might be lonely. And a little out of place. For no particular reason, of course.

And well. They won’t be strangers if they get to know each other, will they?

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