



Mourning

Star Trek: The Next Generation · Not Rated · 815 words

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Relationships: Jean-Luc Picard & Q

Characters: Jean-Luc Picard, Q (Star Trek)

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In the aftermath of Quinn's actions in Death Wish, Q finds himself dealing with frighteningly mortal emotions. As always, he makes this Picard's problem.

"Q, what in heaven's name are you doing on my couch?" Picard snapped as he entered his quarters.

Q was indeed sitting on his couch. But rather than lounging on it like one would expect, he was sitting with his legs drawn up, his arms wrapped around them and his forehead resting on his knees. Small objects from around the room were floating in a loose circle above and around him.

"Q?" Picard said warily after several minutes had passed without the other acknowledging him. This was... new. "I'm not in the mood for your games; either tell me why you're here or get out of my quarters. Preferably both."

"...did you know that the Continuum doesn't mourn?" Q asked, his voice small and muffled. He didn't look up as he continued, "No, we're supposed to be above such things. We're supposed to be detached, impartial judges and guides of existence. Stewards, maybe. We aren't supposed to feel such pathetic mortal emotions like grief or love."

"As fascinating as this is," Picard told him, "it still doesn't explain what you're doing here."

"Some days, I think we're more against emotion than your beloved Vulcans are," Q continued as if the other hadn't spoken, "because how else do you explain being expected to stop talking about someone you've known your entire existence just because they died?"

"What are you talking about?" Picard asked, growing more concerned the longer this went on. He was used to Q acting strangely, but this was something else.

"Nothing. I'm just being stupid," Q muttered. He looked up with a sigh, speaking softer than Picard would've thought possible for him, "I didn't mean to come here, you know. I just needed... I couldn't stay in the Continuum any longer. It was what you humans might call a subconscious decision. Which is quite funny, really, considering the 'subconscious' makes up most of the conscious."

He smirked, but it seemed more performative than truly amused.

"I..." Picard trailed off. He wasn't good with messy emotions at the best of times, he certainly didn't know how to deal with them coming from Q of all people. Clearing his throat, he latched on to one particular thing Q had said, "You say that you couldn't stay in the Continuum; why? They didn't banish you here again, did they?" he asked, feeling very displeased by the idea. It was bad enough that it happened once.

"Does this look like I'm human again?" Q asked, gesturing to the objects still floating around his head. "I meant that I didn't want to stay in the Continuum. Believe it or not — and I'm really not supposed to tell you this, but what the Hell — we aren't as harmonious as we like to pretend to be. I'm not... Do you know what it looks like when a Q cries?"

"What?" Picard blinked at the non-sequitar.

"It looks like small slip-ups in our powers," he gestured again to the ring of objects. "Which is, of course, entirely unacceptable in the Continuum. To not be fully in control of ourselves implies that we aren't perfection incarnate, and that simply wouldn't do."

Here, Q glared at the ceiling, and promptly yelled, "Well, we *aren't* perfect! I'm certainly not! I'm an obsessive, stubborn ass, and I'm done pretending otherwise!"

"Are... Are you alright, Q?" Picard asked slowly, warily. Q was dangerous and admittedly terrifying at the best of times, Picard really did not want to see how much worse he could get during an apparent mental break.

"No, Jean-Luc, I'm not," Q answered quietly, sighing. Then, he smiled, the expression small but surprisingly real. "It's kind of nice, actually, in a twisted way. Not being okay, not trying to believe I'm perfect — it's terrible, don't get me wrong, but at least it isn't boring. If only he'd just tried to experience something like this, instead. It didn't have to be so extreme!"

Before Picard could question what he meant, Q looked at him and said, "I know I'm really the last person you'd have a reason to want to indulge in any way, but is it alright if I stay here for a bit? I'll be quiet, I won't interfere in your work, I'll even turn into a plant or something if one of your little crew comes in. No-one will know."

"I still don't understand why you even want to be here."

"The Continuum is depressing and I don't want to be alone," Q stated plainly, far too simply for the normally grandiose and enigmatic being, with a one-shouldered shrug.

Picard studied Q. His balled-up form, his subdued tone, the ring of objects that was apparently his version of tears. And completely against his better judgement, Picard nodded and told him, "...fine."

— end of "Mourning" —