

Losing Count

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Losing Count

by [Alixiii](#)

Summary

Darla has died so many times she has lost count.

Notes

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

She has died and been resurrected so many times that not only has she lost count of how many, but she can't even remember whether she is currently alive, dead, or undead. The sun which hovers overhead isn't burning her (well, maybe it's burning her skin, but a tan can't hurt), but she knows that it isn't Earth's sun, so that's not a definitive sign. She experimentally holds her breath and when she is forced to take a breath because her lungs feel ready to explode, she knows that she is alive. Which means she probably has a soul, and that's always inconvenient.

Now if she could only remember what she was doing naked in the middle of a desert on a strange planet.

"Darla," a voice calls out, and after a moment she realizes the name is her own. The only name she can remember, at least. She turns and there is a woman in a red silk dress staring at her intently.

"What do you want?" Darla asks.

"Would you believe we're married?" the woman asks, then shrugs and says, "I suppose not." She takes a metal device from the pouch at her side and brings it to her mouth. "Mal," she says into it, "we're ready for our ride now."

Suddenly a ship appears in the sky and settles gently to the ground next to where Darla and the woman are standing. A door opens and a crowd of unfamiliar people are standing on the exit ramp.

"Cap'n," says a young girl in a green jumpsuit, "she has a naked woman."

"I can see that, Kaylee," says the man that Darla supposes must have been the captain. "Now, Saffron, why don't you tell me what you're doing with a naked woman?"

"Oh, your precious little Reader already verified I was on the up and up," Saffron answers. "This is just part of the process."

An even younger girl, dressed in a sundress, steps out of the ship. When she looks at Darla, she suddenly stiffens. "On and off the carousel so many times that one gets dizzy. What dreams may come." She takes a step backwards, never taking her gaze off Darla. "So many dead. Oh, so many."

Oh, great. Another insane psychic. *Deja Dru* all over again.

"Why don't you get some clothes on our new passenger?" the captain suggests to Saffron, forcefully.

"I can think of some reasons not to," chimes in a lean, bearded man on the side, but Saffron is already leading Darla into the ship. The insane girl steps out of their way, muttering all the time some nonsense. They travel through the ship--*Firefly*-class, Darla recognizes, and wonders in which of her lives she picked up that bit of knowledge—and finally end up in

somebody's quarters. Saffron closes the door behind her, but instead of giving Darla some clothes to wear, begins stripping off her own clothes.

The two of them are now each naked as the day they were born (really born, the first time) and Saffron presses a button on her communication device and it begins to play music, some suite by Beethoven or Bach that Darla once knew the name of but had forgotten in the course of one of her lives or another.

Saffron, whoever she is, is trying to play her. That much is obvious. But Darla can't even remember which of her lives she is living, and one thing is clear to her: that by being played, she can begin to play the game.

She goes in for the kiss.

End Notes

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