

The Chemistry Between Us

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The Chemistry Between Us

by [nostalgia](#)

Summary

The first time they experiment with illegal pharmaceuticals together it's in the form of a small pink pill that promises an hour or two of euphoria and the effects of a mild aphrodisiac.

Notes

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

The first time they experiment with illegal pharmaceuticals together it's in the form of a small pink pill that promises an hour or two of euphoria and the effects of a mild aphrodisiac. Julian checks thoroughly – twice – that the substance is safe for both humans and Trills before they lock themselves in his quarters and let the pills transport them to a more agreeable version of reality. It's just for the novelty of it, this first time, it's nothing serious and the drug that they've chosen isn't known to be habit-forming.

Julian tried a few illicit stimulants in medical school, mostly for the thrill of the forbidden; Ezri has the memories of more than one sampler of chemical delights, and of course she remembers the way Curzon could over-indulge in almost anything if he was given half a chance. It's not the first time for either of them, separately, but sharing the experience with each other is new and correspondingly exciting.

The chemically-induced but otherwise very much real elation arrives as promised and they revel in it – they're happy to be happy for once. It's a wonderfully intoxicating change from the grey depression that's been encroaching on their lives since the war ended, and they enjoy being joyful together for as long as it lasts.

The drug also makes them needy and hot, and the mix of emotional states is potent. There's laughter in the room when Ezri reaches for Julian, and he's smiling when he looks at her and sees that her eyes are wide and her pupils are dilated black discs surrounded by a thin ring of bluest iris. It's a universal effect of the drug but it's also a sign of arousal, as is the hitching of her breath and the flush that spreads across her pale skin.

They move the feelings of festivity to the bedroom, giggling stupidly as they fall onto the bed already half-undressed. It's a side-effect of the drug that makes them clumsy while they remove the rest of their clothes, but they're ready for each other by then and eager to show off what tricks they've picked up from other lovers, as well as to invent new ones themselves.

All in all it's a very memorable evening for both of them.

In the morning Julian treats himself with a cocktail of far less illicit substances to counteract any lingering effects of the previous night's experiment before he leaves for his shift in the infirmary. He does have responsibilities, after all. He does the same for Ezri, pressing a quick kiss to the spot where the hypospray injected it's contents into her neck. "How do you feel?" he asks her, affecting an air of clinical detachment.

"Physically or emotionally?"

"Either. Both."

"Good." She looks relaxed and content for the first time in weeks. "If you want to try something like that again, count me in."

He does, and he will.

There's quite the thriving drug trade on DS9 now that Odo's gone. It makes it a trivially simple task to procure their next hit, despite their recent inexperience with the business of obtaining such shady merchandise. If the dealer who lurks at the door of the Klingon restaurant is surprised to be selling contraband to the station's CMO she doesn't show it, and the exchange of latinum for narcotics is easily done.

They've decided to embrace variety, to try out as many possibilities as they can. This time the drug alters sensory processing, and they spend an hour or so lying on the floor touching objects and each other, staring at unexpectedly new sights and trying to think of names for all the colours now that there seem to be so many more of them.

Julian is entranced by his own drug-exaggerated reaction to her touches – even the feather-light brush of a fingertip feels like it might leave a longed-for bruise.

They fuck eventually, inevitably, but they're both feeling everything far too intensely for it to last very long. Overwhelmed, they lie together, staring up at the now fascinatingly-complex ceiling as they wait for normality to return.

They both know that they're attempting to self-medicate an almost unbearable loneliness and that it's unlikely to be effective long-term, but for now it seems to work and they might as well enjoy the release while it lasts.

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The drugs don't always affect them both the same way, and that's important to consider when choosing what to try out next. Sometimes it's a matter of them being different species, and sometimes – harder to predict – Julian's reactions differ from the usual human experience of a drug because of what his parents' genetic meddling did to his biochemistry.

This one, for instance, is supposed to induce a mild euphoria, but instead it has made everything slow. His thoughts are sluggish and sticky, his mind no longer races with ideas and possibilities. In a way the drug has temporarily undone his enhancements, and the result fascinates him.

Is this how Jules saw the world? He can't remember much from that far back in childhood – before his memory was made artificially perfect – but there's something teasingly, achingly familiar about thinking like this. Is this what being normal felt like?

There's concern in Ezri's expression as she watches him explore the room as though he had never been in it before. She asks him if he's okay and words are much too difficult right now so he just nods in response. It doesn't seem to alleviate her worries, and he feels a little stabbing shot of guilt that he's upset her like this.

Maybe this isn't what normal is like after all. It's good, though, it's quite relaxing. He doesn't have time to worry about very many things when he's thinking this slowly.

He lets himself luxuriate in the state while it lasts – he might never feel this ordinary again.

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Perhaps it's just inevitable that something will eventually go wrong on this risky adventure of theirs.

After only a few weeks of experimentation it happens – Ezri reacts badly to what she ingested and Julian is driven almost to panic by how little he can do to help. Taking her to the infirmary is out of the question, and there's only so much he can do with the equipment that has accumulated in his quarters over his time on the station. His own intoxication provides a further complication to his efforts to take care of her, even as he speeds up his own metabolism to clear the drug from his bloodstream more rapidly.

He kneels beside her on the floor of the bathroom, rubbing her back as she vomits up the contents of her stomach, and he silently curses both his most recent supplier and himself.

He hadn't quite realised just how utterly terrified he is of losing her. She's the only close connection he has left here, and he has few enough of those anywhere that the loss of one would likely break him. He stays at her side with a twisting feeling in his stomach and an itch in his brain that insists she might disappear forever if he leaves her even for a moment.

"I thought you said this stuff was safe," she groans, holding a hand to her head.

"It was. It should have been. It may have been contaminated, cut with something less agreeable to Trill physiology." He shakes his head. "If I had any left I'd sneak a sample into the lab for analysis, but as it is..."

She touches his arm. "Don't worry about it."

"This is my fault," he insists, angered by his own stupidity.

She closes her eyes and leans against the toilet. "I'm too sick to listen to you beating yourself up right now, can it wait?"

He smiles at that, despite his worries and his guilt. "I'll reschedule the self-berating session to this evening."

She opens her eyes and looks at him. "I guess we should be more careful from now on."

"I think we should forget these little experiments entirely," he counters. "If anything were to happen to you, I'd... actually I don't know what I'd do, but I know I'd be very upset. You mean a lot to me, you know."

"That's sweet."

"It's true." He tugs her collar downwards to kiss the back of her neck. "We don't need all these hazardous chemicals. We've got each other, isn't that enough?"

He waits for her to point out that it wasn't nearly enough before, but then she's retching into the toilet bowl again and he rests his hand on her back as the only real comfort he can offer.

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The week that follows is one of adjustment back to a world that they can no longer escape from even for a short time. They lose the exciting anticipation of trying out new substances and even the mundane thrill of breaking the rules. If nothing else this renewed sobriety is cripplingly dull, for both of them.

Ezri appears at his quarters at the end of the week looking distracted and tense. There's no question of him not inviting her in so she steps over the threshold without waiting for him to speak.

The door hasn't fully closed before she launches herself at him, pulling his mouth down to hers with aggressive tugs on his hair. "Fuck me," she mutters against his lips. "Hard." She presses against him and invades his mouth with a searing, angry kiss.

He responds to her kiss and her words with an immediate surge of need. "I'd love to." His hands roam across her back while she bites at his mouth, and he starts backing them towards the bedroom without making a conscious decision to do so. Finally he has something to do that isn't just part of a slow spiral into despair.

Her mouth is hot and wet and endlessly fun to explore. Reaching blindly, he cups a hand against her cheek and his fingertips touch something wet. He pulls back from her, confused. "Are you..? You're crying."

"It'll have stopped by the time we're in bed," she says, like it's nothing, and she kisses him again.

He pushes her back, gently but firmly. "Ezri -" She makes a sound that's almost a growl, tugging down the zipper on his uniform jacket and he catches her wrists to hold her still. "Hey, hey, no. Not while you're like this."

She tries to break away from his grip without success – Trills are strong but augmented humans are stronger still. He waits for her to stop struggling and calm down before he releases her, and by then her tears have already dried.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"I'm fine," she says, so quietly that it's almost a whisper.

"You really aren't. Neither of us is." He suggests a possible course of action, one that's more socially-acceptable than taking whichever illicit drug is currently offering the most tempting form of oblivion. "I think you should see a doctor."

She looks at him pointedly. "I *am* seeing a doctor."

His answering smile is weak. "Ideally you'd talk to one who isn't also showing signs of PTSD."

"It won't work," she states, flatly.

"Losing faith in your own field?" he quips, keeping his words lighter than his thoughts.

"Mental health work is a lot more complicated than just holding a dermal regenerator over a flesh wound, you know. You can't just stitch up a patient's mind and send them away with a prescription for a few days worth of painkillers."

"You think I don't know that?" he snaps back. He feels the need to defend his own work and to insist that she's over-simplifying, but he knows that isn't the point that she's trying to make. He takes a slow, calming breath – an argument isn't going to help either of them right now. He pulls her closer and wraps his arms around her. "I could really go for a bit of chemical distraction right now," he says, morosely.

She smiles without amusement and rests her head against his chest. "Me too."

"Shame we gave all that up."

"Don't tempt me."

But it *is* tempting. Maybe they got scared off too easily. Maybe they should just have become more cautious rather than abandoning such an appealing source of temporary solutions to their problems.

Julian starts making tentative enquiries about finding a new supplier the next day.

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Quark picks up a cloth and begins cleaning the surface of the bar, and as the busywork brings him to Julian's spot at the bar he speaks at a discreet volume, eyes fixed on the task in front of him to help conceal the overture from unwanted observers. "I'm getting a delivery tomorrow afternoon, if you're interested."

Julian stares at him blankly. "Delivery?"

Quark nods but he doesn't look up. "Just a few choice products to help the days pass by more easily. Something to help you relax. Maybe something to spice things up a little in the bedroom. There's a range of options, all at very affordable prices. If you'd -" Quark stops talking when Julian grabs his wrist and holds onto it much more tightly than he needs to, and they finally make eye-contact with each other.

"What have you heard?" asks Julian, voice quiet and steady and cold.

Quark tries and fails to pull away. "Relax, Doctor, I'm not going to tell anyone. I'm the soul of discretion, you should know that." When Julian looks sceptical, he adds, "I never said a word to Keiko O'Brien about what I had to clean up in the holosuites, did I?"

Julian raises his eyebrows, surprised but not shocked by that little revelation, and lets go of him. "I suppose you can be trusted not to rat out a good customer."

"A *very* good customer," says Quark smoothly, rubbing his reclaimed wrist carefully. "One of the best. So, should I make a house-call tomorrow evening, drop off a few samples?"

Julian considers. "Alright. Is 2100 convenient for you?"

"I'll be there." He nods and starts to walk away, but then he hesitates. "You won't let Dax do anything stupid, will you?" Now he sounds worried, which isn't quite the professional detachment and faith in his own products that inspires confidence in what he's offering for sale.

"You have my word." The Ferengi doesn't seem quite convinced, so he adds more; "She's all I've got, Quark, I'm not going to let anything happen to her."

"Okay." He seems satisfied by that, at least for now, and moves towards the other end of the bar.

Julian looks around the room, wondering how many other customers Quark is going to offer these new wares to. The bar is quiet this evening, there isn't even a crowd at the dabo wheel. His gaze comes to rest on the empty space on the wall where the dartboard used to hang, back when there was anyone else on the station who was willing to play that game.

The absence coaxes painfully pleasant memories to the forefront of his mind and he looks away.

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He hasn't felt this relaxed since... actually, he can't remember the last time he felt like this, and he usually remembers almost everything.

Ezri is straddling him on the couch, rocking her hips inordinately slowly, barely even moving. Her mouth is on the exposed skin of his neck, gently sucking and occasionally biting. She's going to leave a mark. She's going to leave a lot of marks. It doesn't really matter, the wounds can be healed easily enough before anyone gets the chance to notice them and gossip.

The close contact and the friction have made him hard, of course they have, but there's no urgency behind the arousal and he lets the sensation simmer without trying to intensify it. For her part Ezri seems equally unhurried, content to allow events to progress glacially for once.

The entire experience is very, very nice. He'd be quite happy to stay here forever, sandwiched between soft furniture and a woman he loves.

There's a quiet sigh that could have come from either of them, and identifying the source seems like needless effort. It's just another thing that doesn't matter.

He moves his hands to her hips without any intention of encouraging her to speed up. This can last the rest of the night if it needs to.

There's no rush.

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"...and that new one that the news services won't shut up about, vraxoin, see if you can get any of that."

They're standing in a shadowy corner on the upper level of the bar, talking in hushed tones to avoid being overheard. Quark reads over the list and shakes his head. "Some of this stuff is going to be difficult to get hold of."

“I’ll make it worth your while.”

Quark is unimpressed by the offer. “How? You’re human and I’ve already got most of your money.”

“What would you like, Quark? I’m open to suggestions.”

“I’d *like* you to think carefully about your consumption of illicit substances. I’m worried about you.”

“You’re not worried about *me*, you’re worried about Ezri. Still carrying a torch for her, aren’t you?”

“I’m concerned about *both* of you,” says Quark, unperturbed. “These things are illegal for a reason, you know.”

“You’ve left it a bit late to grow a conscience. If you don’t want my custom then fine, I’ll go elsewhere.”

He starts to turn away but Quark stops him with a hand on his arm. “I didn’t say that. I’m happy to continue with these transactions for as long as you’re able to pay for them.”

“Good.”

“Just... Could you...” Quark sighs and shakes his head. “Never mind. I’m sure you know what you’re doing.” He says that last part as though he’s trying to convince himself.

Julian smiles and pats his arm. “Don’t worry, Quark, I’m a doctor.”

The look he gets in return suggests that even this is in doubt.

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He tongues the latest pill past Ezri’s lips, feels it fizzing away in her mouth as he kisses her. A stimulant tonight, recently designed in a lab on the other side of the Quadrant, not too far from Adigeon Prime as it happens. This drug was carefully put together by chemists with an eye to what sells best, and if Quark was telling the truth about its properties and effects they should be able to fuck each other all night. That’s a very promising alternative to sleeping through nightmares or lying trapped in wakefulness thinking far too many thoughts – in some ways the nights have always been more difficult than the days.

With any luck they won’t have to face up to their problems before morning, and when that arrives there will be the brief distraction of work, and then when evening comes again there will be new mind-altering substances to play with. There are a lot of options available, they have a wide selection to choose from.

The taste the pill leaves on his tongue is bitter, but its effects will distract him from that soon enough. He closes his eyes and waits for the shift in perspective that will stop him caring.

End Notes

Title nicked from [a Suede song](#).

And don't do drugs, kids! Drugs are bad!

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