

## he can't be here

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## he can't be here

by [ussjellyfish](#)

### Summary

She has memories of being safe, and that's been enough for the last twenty years. It had to be. Now that she's been shot, Beverly sees things a little differently.

### Notes

For RighteousNerd.

a little stream of consciousness piece because I wanted to see if I could write Beverly in pain better after ten years or so.

Thanks for enabling me, RighteousNerd.

Written after episode one of season 3, before any others. No idea what happens, but I wanted Jean-Luc to look after her.

"There's something about their weapons, thalargon decay-tertaiso—" her son stumbles over the words. She's explained it to him a few times, but it's dense medical jargon, and he's afraid. It's so hard to think when fear is sharp like that.

Beverly can't think. Her thoughts are slow, coagulating like the blood on her hands. Her blood. She was shot.

Injured.

Fell down a hole, hit her head.

Woke up too early.

"Doctor?"

He's not here. He can't be here, she just sent the message. That's not Jean-Luc's voice. She's hallucinating. It's the blood loss.

"You can't use the vascular regenerator, you have to cut around the tissue and replace everything the disruptor touched. Mom's done it, I've watched her, it's hard. You can't—"

"it's all right, she'll be all right. Just give the *Titan* a few minutes to get to us."

He shouldn't see her like this.

"Come on, help me move the ship out of the way so we're out of the crossfire."

Beverly hasn't seen Will Riker in more than twenty years, but there's something calm and familiar about his voice.

"Show me the helm, it's all right. He'll look after her."

Moving her arm makes the pain in her shoulder lance through her clouded nerves. Stay awake.

"Doctor Crusher?"

He'll look after her.

He's not here. It's just an old log entry.

Lips touch her forehead, gentle warmth in contrast to the screaming agony in her abdomen. How many times was she hit? How fast is the bleeding? Their disruptors prevent clotting, keep destroying tissue—

"Beverly, I need you to stay with me."

It is him.

"You came."

"Of course I did." He opens her jacket, inhaling sharply. It's bad. Even he can see that. "You sent me such a lovely invitation."

She has to explain the disruptors. He can't help. There's nothing he can do without a more advanced sickbay than *Eleos* has. The med pod couldn't.

"I'm going to put pressure on these. Might hurt a bit."

Understatement.

Jean-Luc presses cloth into her wounds, hands on her hip and her shoulder. His voice is rougher, deeper. So much time has passed.

None of it matters.

At first she's drifting too much to feel. She knows there's pain. It's excruciating, burning her nerves, coating her skin in sweat. Her mouth tastes of blood. Internal bleeding. Organ damage. Shock. This is shock.

Or was shock awhile back?

Shock was Worf covering her face with venom.

"My son."

"He's with Will, he's all right."

"You have to—"

"We'll get you out of here. We came with a ship." Jean-Luc shifts his hands, moves so his elbow's on the bleed by her hip. He's thinner. Lighter. The last time he touched her there they—

Jean-Luc strokes her cheek. "It's going to be all right. Hang on a few more minutes."

Hours while they rebuild her tissue and repair the damage.

"You came."

"I did, so you have to stay." He leans closer, lips against her ear. "Seems there's a lot to talk about."

She tried.

They tried. Failed.

Beverly pictures his face more than she sees it. Her vision's so hazy, grey and soft. No depth at all, but her mind knows what he looks like. She knows.

More pressure on her belly brings her back, whites out the vision she has. Giving birth to Jack didn't hurt this much. Wesley barely hurt at all.

They should get to meet. They should—

Pain sizzles through her, tingling, burning, scorching—

"Hey." His voice carries, even through her own gasping for breath. "Beverly, stay with us."

Such a simple request.

Lying his coat over her legs, he settles over her, hands on the worst of it. Smart. Keep her warm. Maybe he did listen to her.

"He's a good boy."

"I know. He's your son."

She should—

Jean-Luc touches her cheek, then kisses her, continuing where they left. Starting over. Giving her something. For a moment, her lips are the only part of her that doesn't vibrate with agony.

She was.

She did.

She tried so many times and it just—

She couldn't. He knows she couldn't he has to understand that. He'll understand. He has to understand. He always has.

Jean-Luc's eyes remain above hers, warm, almost in color. She knows his eyes. "I have the feeling there might be something you've been meaning to tell me."

That conversation is too long. The words aren't even in her head. Her trembling is shaking now, and her lips are numb.

"It's going to be all right," he promises again. So sure - foolish - cocky - hopeful—

Jean-Luc was in her thoughts once. He knows that dark place she's worked so hard to find her way to live with.

That pain.

She has to stay here. Fight.

It's been such a long time since she wasn't fighting alone. Since she took a breath. Let someone else keep her safe.

More than twenty years.

"I've missed you."

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