

## The Best Medicine

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## The Best Medicine

by [Kari Izumi](#)

### Summary

"Of all the possible ways Boimler thought he'd receive anything resembling a love confession from Beckett Mariner, being completely high on painkillers was not it."

### Notes

Special shout-out to @effervescible, whose Bleach fic [Setting Sun, Rising Moon](#)" (specifically chapter 7) was the inspiration for this story. I tried this with two other fandoms in the 15+ years since this fic was released but the idea clicked here at last.

What else can I say, this is just a cute, fluffy piece to get Mariner to open up in the most ridiculous way possible lol

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

Doctor T'Ana waves a medical wand over Boimler's arms.

"There ya go, kid," she says in her usual gruff demeanor. "That rash should be gone now. How the hell do you get a rash from sand?"

"Beats me," Boimler says. It's a fact he's been keenly aware of since the first time Mariner brought it up, but what can he do about it? At least it was a short trip to Sickbay from the Holodeck after the program added a freak sandstorm and Mariner is on an away mission, so she can't tease him about it.

T'Ana injects a hypospray into his neck. "That's for dehydration. Geez, how do you always dry out on the holodeck? You should be dead by now!"

"I must have nine lives," he says flatly.

Rather than get angry, T'Ana snorts through her nose and guffaws. "Wow, that's a good one. You're really grown a brass pair since you two started dating, huh?"

"Oh. That."

It was overdue for that stupid rumor about him and Mariner to start up yet again. It's been a while since the *Cerritos* had had shore leave and the crew is becoming restless. Usually it starts around the time some rumor about him and someone else goes around and that one disappears overnight when it does. He felt a bit awkward about it at first but Mariner didn't seem to mind, so he stopped caring too. They're close, no doubt about it, so it's a natural assumption.

Still, he's not crazy about senior staff hearing things...especially senior staff who have the Captain's ear. "It's just dumb gossip, happens so often you could set a watch to it. We're not together, really!"

"Like I care about the soap operas you lower deckers make up about each other," she grumbles. "But you two are so joined at the hip, it seemed like a safe bet."

He goes to protest, but he really can't. The truth was, Boimler really did miss Mariner a lot during his months on the *Titan* and especially after her transfer/resignation from Starfleet when he thought he might never see her again after the way the crew all treated her—including him, he recalls with no small amount of shame. But she did return and he didn't complain when, during the celebrating after the defeat of the Texas-

class ships, she got drunk enough to commandeer his bunk rather than climb into hers.

Boimler did find a spot on the other side of his bunk. Watching her sprawl out in her sleep as her legs occasionally kicked into his ribs, he'd never felt so content to be in close contact with another person. It wasn't her snoring that kept him up that night, as the realization dawned on him what this meant, his entire being feeling warm at the thought of being this close.

Okay, so the rumor isn't entirely baseless, sure, but he was fully aware of Mariner's stance on dating in Starfleet and that she would shut it down hard if he ever brought it up. Or even worse, she'd laugh it off. Boimler is more assertive than he once was—ironically, much of it due to her—but he's not completely stupid to torpedo the best thing to ever happen in his life.

T'Ana waves a tricorder over his face. "Just checking for fever. You were looking red and spacing out for a moment."

Boimler has no fever and they both know it.

"Want my advice?" He doesn't, but T'Ana continues without waiting for an answer. "Stop thinking so damn much and just go for it. You might be surprised by the answer. I mean, I certainly had to be really obvious to get Shax's attention. Wasn't until I used my tail—"

"Away team to Sickbay," a sharp voice came through T'Ana's comm badge, thankfully ending whatever cursed wisdom she was about to bestow. Boimler uses this as an excuse to make an exit. "We have one for emergency transport."

"Who is it?"

"It's Ensign Mariner," the other voice replies.

Boimler freezes in place. His stomach drops, looking over at T'Ana, who replies, "You got her condition, or what?!"

"She's conscious, but it's a compound fracture in her right leg. No internal injuries."

*Thank goodness*, he says to himself, letting his stomach unclench.

"Standby. *Fuck!*" T'Ana lets out a hiss. "Hey you!" He feels a strong, clawed grip on his shoulder. "Keep Mariner distracted for a few moments."

"But why—"

"She's got a weird body chemistry where the sedatives that would knockout a targ make her stoned out of her goddamn mind instead," she explains, preparing another hypospray. "What a fun surprise to find *that* out the last time she needed to fix her bones."

Boimler can't recall any major injuries that she needed to be sedated for. Then it hit him—it must have happened while he was gone on the *Titan*.

"She'll fall asleep eventually but it'll be easier to unfuck her leg if she can spill her guts to someone else in the meantime." T'Ana locks in on Mariner's coordinates from a medical panel. "Make sure to keep her still, too."

He's happy to help, but he does ask: "Wouldn't the medical team be more suited to—"

T'Ana lets out a hiss, her gaze sharp. "Who's running this sickbay, me or you?!"

"Got it." Boimler doesn't argue—he's dealt with Mariner drunk on too many types of illegal alien alcohols before, and she'll maybe rant about work or her mom or something. Nothing he can't handle.

T'Ana energizes the transporter and injects the hypospray the moment Mariner materializes on the biobed, hands clenched and eyes screwed shut, fighting not to scream. Almost instantly, her entire body relaxes as the sedative takes hold. It takes her a moment to open her eyes, glassy and unfocused, but when she locks eyes on him, her entire face brightens in an unnatural way Boimler has never seen before. Not *bad* exactly, but...unusual.

"BRADWARD HIIIIIII!"

Mariner stretches her arms towards him as she tries to sit up. "Wow, you're actually here! Did you hear?! I saved the team! I went to look at a spot to confirm it was a bad hiding spot, and it was! I fell! Aren't you proud?!"

Mariner's probably leaving out some details, but seeing her so thrilled to be a part of Starfleet and back doing what she loves really brings a smile to his face, even if it's the drugs talking. "You did great out there," Boimler tells her as he leans her back gently into the pillow. "But you're hurt pretty bad so Doc needs to fix you—"

He makes the mistake of glancing over at T'Ana—her body is angled in a way to block the worst of the damage but the unnatural bend of her foot still makes him wince. He quickly turns his gaze away before Mariner's attention could be drawn to her injuries. However she doesn't seem to notice as she's too busy pulling at her hair, trying unsuccessfully to remove the hair tie off.

"Here, let me."

He takes time to wiggle it off—her hair is really soft, more so than he ever realized or dreamed it would be. (Not that he *has* dreamed about that...often.) The curls do catch in one spot, but Boimler manages to untangle it without snapping any ends.

Once free, Boimler runs a hand through her hair to smooth it out. It definitely isn't because of how soft Mariner's dream-like gaze has become when he does so or that he wants to commit her exact texture to memory because he will never get that opportunity again.

Then he stops.

"Doc," Boimler asks quietly, "Will she remember any of this?!"

"Probably not," she says. "Didn't seem to the last time. But the mind ain't my field of expertise."

He'll take that as a no, but he pulls his hands to his sides anyway.

Mariner, however, has other ideas—she grasps his wrists and pulls hard as she positions his hands in a spot right between her shoulder blade and her chest. The momentum is enough to knock him off-balance, causing him to faceplant into the left side of the pillow and get a face full of hair. Oh shit, he forgot Mariner's ridiculous strength gets even worse when medicated.

Blood rushes into his face at the awkward position he's in and he can barely hear the sound of the Sickbay doors opening behind him over his own quickening heartbeat.

"Bradward, I was thinking," Mariner giggles into his ear as one hand trails along his side.

"Oh?!" he asks, head still buried into her hair as her free arm keeps him locked in place in a vice grip.

Her next words come out a bit slowly, but they're clear enough: "About your butt."

He snaps his head up instantly, letting out a nervous laugh and not meeting her eyes. Damn, T'Ana was not kidding at *all* about this. "You don't mean that. You would think about anyone else's butt but mine."

As if to make her point, Mariner tries to tug at his waistband, and the look in her eyes is less than innocent. "But I wanna squeeze it in bed."

Boimler should move away, except she might try to jump after him and her healing takes priority over his mortification at having this conversation in front of senior staff.

*She won't remember this*, he says to himself, *You never have to talk about this*.

There's a part of him that wishes Mariner did mean any of it--that there's some deep-seeded part of her that that has mad, passionate lust for him because physically, he's on the way opposite end of the guys Mariner has dated. He brushes it aside.

"BRADWARD COME GET IN BED WITH MEEEEEE!"

"Mariner, T'Ana is *right here!*"

It's for the first time Mariner acknowledges there's anyone else in the room with them as she looks over at her. Thankfully, T'Ana's already taken care of the worst of the damage and her leg mostly looks like what a leg should look like. "Oh, boo."

Keeping one hand on her shoulder, Boimler covers his face with his free hand.

"You think this is embarrassing, you should've been here the last fucking time," T'Ana says. "Mariner wanted to beam her ass over to the *Titan* and f--"

"-Fight me for leaving the *Cerritos*?" he says. "Oh, I'm sure she did."

There's a long pause. "Sure. Let's go with that."

"Bradward, let's go in that supply closet," Mariner says brightly, pointing behind her. "T'Ana won't see us in there."

Boimler laughs in an unnaturally high tone. "You really shouldn't joke like that."

"She's not," T'Ana interjects over her shoulder. "Drugs don't make you lie, they lower inhibitions and she barely had any to begin with."

"Yeah Bradward, I was totally serious! You can squeeze my butt too! *And* my boobs!" Mariner offers generously.

Any hope of a good night's rest went flying out the airlock with that image in his head. Boimler takes a deep breath to shoo that thought away. *Don't enjoy this now*.

"But how is this possible when—Mariner, *no*, you can't touch there!--" He grips her roaming hands and holds them in place in front of him—"when she gets drunk and doesn't say stuff like this?"

"Probably for the same reason you're allergic to sand," she quips. "Different drugs affect everyone differently. Just gotta set the small fractures and then you can visit," she adds to whoever came in earlier. Probably their other friends, he thinks.

Of all the possible ways Boimler thought he'd receive anything resembling a love confession from Beckett Mariner, being completely high on painkillers was not it.

A loud sniff draws his attention back to her.

"Bradward, why aren't you saying anything?"

Mariner's eyes are unusually large. She's pouting now, bottom lip quivering as tears begin to form at the corners of her eyes. "Don't you want to do sex?"

"Yes! I mean...uh, no....I mean--"

Shit, what the hell *does* he mean? Mariner is hot, there's no denying that, and he's flattered beyond description but even if she means it now, he can't hold her to any of this in good conscience. But he does need to say something to her. Boimler goes with the most honest thing he can tell her as he draws her hands near his own chest, giving them a squeeze: "What I mean is that we have a unique bond that, uh...*transcends* the physical and that it means more to me than anything else and I--"

"Oh nooooo..."

"Wait, no!"

But it's too late as Mariner starts bawling loudly. "You just want to be friends!"

He can only count two times he's ever seen Mariner cry, and one of those was when Captain Freeman was on trial. Back then, she had been so helpless and besides herself about the fact that she could do nothing to save her mom, choosing to break most of the objects in her father's office in frustration. Boimler's seen her yell and kick in anger; he can handle that, but tears...he doesn't know how to soothe those.

"Is it because I'm mean to you?" she sobs.

"No, it's nothing like that! I just want to wait--"

"I only do it because I don't want you to know how much I really, really, *really* like you!"

His mouth drops and that...*that* stuns him even more than anything else. "What?!"

"I do...ever since you didn't rat on me to my mom that one time, but I didn't know what to do with that, so I tried being mean and you still wanted to be friends anyway. Then you left and--" she begins wailing again. "And then I left too. Petra was hot but I didn't even do her because I missed you too much."

Mariner wants so much to appear like she doesn't need anyone. Boimler knew that much, but didn't know it ran so deep--that she felt so deeply about him and buried it this far. That it was possible she *could* feel this way about him. After all, he's the opposite of her in every way.

Taking her face in his hands, he gently wipes the tears away with his thumbs. "I missed you too."

"You did?"

"Who wouldn't?" he says. "I missed your stories. I missed hearing your laugh and seeing in the morning and having bridge duty..."

Boimler could tell her that the reason he didn't tell her he was leaving for the *Titan* was because deep down he knew he'd have never left if he saw her once last time--that as much as he liked the private sonic shower, he missed being able to talk to her from two stalls down...but he doesn't want to bring that subject up and hurt her even more than he already has.

This would probably be the safest time he could ever say exactly the way he feels without messing up what they have now. Gulping, Boimler takes a deep breath. "You mean a lot to me. Really, you do. And if we did uh...that stuff, I would want it to be after a date--on the holodeck or on the next shore leave or wherever. Someplace special where I can really show you that and that you're able to enjoy it."

The drug-induced fog is lifting from Mariner's eyes. They really sparkle, even under the dim Sickbay lights, making something catch in his throat.

"So, you really like me, Bradward?" Her voice is so small and quiet, need assurance to believe this is real.

"I really do."

Yes, he really does like her--all the sides of her; the brash, hard side she shows to people as well as this gentler, sweet side that also exists. Even if Mariner never cuddles him again like this, propping her head into his chest, and holding his neck, he's glad he could say it once. And he'll hold her in his arms for however long she needs him to make sure she feels safe.

"I'm sorry," Mariner says after being quiet for so long, Boimler thought she'd fallen asleep.

"For what?"

"I made up the rumors that we're dating."

This doesn't surprise him in the least.

"Why would you--"

"Because so many people think you're sooo hot! Jennifer's friends, and Towel Guy and Jet and that new Vulcan Tendi's working with."

Boimler is pretty sure Mariner's got it wrong about T'Lyn at a minimum, but he doesn't correct her. "I didn't know you were jealous."

"I'm nooooooot! I don't want you being someone else's dork. You're my dork."

"Yeah, I am," he says, grinning.

"Can I squeeze your butt after the date?" she asks.

God, she's really cute like this, and he's overcome with the urge to place one quick kiss on her forehead before lowering her back on the bed. "You can squeeze anything you want once you're better. Get some rest now, okay?"

"I'm not sleepy," Mariner protests even as she yawns. "Don't wanna sleep now that you...you like..."

She's snoring before she's even adjusted on the pillow.

"There, I'm done," T'Ana announced. "She's gotta rest but should be fit for duty by tomorrow morning. Thanks for helping, Ensign."

"Don't mention it," he says.

"And thank you for not hovering, Captain."

Every hair on Boimler's neck stands up as Captain Freeman appears on the other side of him. How long had she been there?! *How much had she heard?!*

"Well, it looks like Mr. Boimler here was able to handle things," she proclaims, patting him on the back. If she knew anything, she's doing a great job of not letting it show.

He nods. "Just helping a fellow officer."

"Welp, time for me to take a cat nap," T'Ana says, letting out a yawn as she disappears into her private office.

Realizing he still had Mariner's hair tie, Boimler slips it onto her wrist so it wouldn't be misplaced, not daring to hold onto her hand longer than absolutely necessary.

"Beckett doesn't open up to a lot of people anymore," Captain Freeman says quietly as she readjusts Mariner's head into a more comfortable angle on the pillow. "You may not know it, but she's changed a lot since you two became friends. It's been a great thing to see."

"Honestly, I think Mariner's changed me a lot more. I'm the lucky one to have her in my life."

"Glad to hear it," Freeman nods, pulling up a chair. Tapping her chin, she adds, "I just realized it's been a while since we had shore leave. How long has it been?"

"Four months, sir," he replies, not sure where this was going.

"Hmm. We're pretty close to the Tarkalius system. Those waterfalls on Tarkalius Prime in the southern continent are absolutely stunning, supposedly the deepest in this sector. The night sky is something to behold there with their three moons. Seems like a nice, *special* place for you and Mariner to visit?"

Freeman winks at him.

*Oh.*

"I, uh...yes, now that you mention it, that sounds delightful. I'll look into that, thank you," he says nodding, absolutely stunned that he's gotten Captain Freeman's blessing without asking. Boimler looks between the two of them. "I guess I should be going now."

He turns to leave.

"Marshmallows."

"Captain?"

"Beckett loves marshmallows. Especially chocolate covered strawberry ones. She loves making them for herself, but she won't turn away ones from a replicator. Especially from you."

He blinks as her words sink in. "I uh, will keep that in mind."

He nearly walks into the arch as he makes an exit.

—

He's back at Sickbay the next morning, just as Doc is giving Mariner a final look before discharging her.

"No more jumping before you look!"

"Got it, doc," she replies.

"Oh look, you've even got an escort," T'Ana announces.

Mariner hops off the bed, looking more like herself this morning, and zeros in on the package in his hand. "Whoa, Boims! Your admirers are giving you gifts now? Wow, what a stud!"

It's an act, he knows that, but Boimler's not any less apprehensive as he holds out the star-shaped marshmallow pop, hoping she doesn't notice his hand trembling.

"It's for you. There's more on your bunk, but I thought you might like one now. Just saw it in the replicator, seems interesting. No big deal."

"Bullshit," T'Ana snorts under her breath.

She's not wrong. There was a pattern in the replicator as Freeman said, but after studying the ingredients, he figured he could make improvements easily. Thankfully, Boimler could replicate the separate ingredients. Between crashing in Rutherford's holodeck time to use a kitchen simulation and setting them in a refrigerator in Tendi's lab, he was able to finish by this morning.

And he was thankful that both conveniently had "briefings" they forgot about until just that moment when he went to Sickbay, not even waiting till he was out of their line of vision before high-fiving one another.

Mariner takes a bite, and then another in quick succession. "Holy shit, this isn't the replicator recipe," she notes as she wolfs down the entire thing in six more bites. "Wow, this is sooo good. It's my favorite, but...how did you know?"

"Lucky guess," he says.

She doesn't press the issue as she grips his hand. "Thanks, it's...it's really sweet of you."

There's that gentle expression again. He never thought he'd get to see that look on her face while sober. A man could get lost in those eyes.

"Hey!"

The mood is broken by T'Ana glaring at them. "Go flirt somewhere else!"

They make a hasty exit.

They walk along the corridor in silence. Boimler did have every intention of confessing this morning, but now, he's at a loss for words as he mouth goes dry every time he tries to speak.

Mariner stops suddenly and scans in either direction.

"What's wrong—"

He's cut off by Mariner pushing him into the bulkhead, taking a firm grip on his top and bringing her lips against his before he has time to close his eyes or protest or outthink himself like he usually does. Her lips are as soft as he'd imagined they would be, but far more gentle and tender than expected. His hands settle on her waist once his brain realizes *Oh shit, this is actually happening* and it's like time stopped. He's beyond exhilarated and for once he doesn't care about proper protocol.

All too soon, Mariner breaks out their kiss, moving only far enough away to catch her breath, hands settling around his neck.

"You remember last night."

"I remember enough," she says, a faint blush coming across her face. "Sorry I tried grabbing your ass, by the way."

He chuckles. "Don't worry about it." Then softly, he adds, "I was debating if I should say anything since you weren't...you know...yourself."

"Brad, you think *way* too hard sometimes. That's like, free intel right there. But I like that about you." She kisses his cheek. "I probably would've done the same thing."

"Wish we'd done this sooner."

Mariner nods. "We've both been chickenshits. I know what I've said before, but I'm pretty sure you're not a body snatcher or a changeling so...I'm game to try this if you are."

Boimler is beaming from ear to ear, and there's no hesitation in his response. "Yes."

"Now, we just gotta pick a program for tonight. I got a lot of new ones. Some of them are pretty sexy." She plays with his collar suggestively.

"Just as long as it not a Klingon battle simulator or a Cardassian interrogation," Boimler tells her, knowing their taste in holodeck entertainment couldn't be more different.

Mariner gives him a lopsided grin as she rolls her eyes. "Pfft, come on. That's, like, fourth date material."

He does laugh at that. And he knows she means it, but he wants to know all the different sides to her and to cherish each and every one of them.

"I'll bring those other marshmallows with me so we can enjoy them together with champagne."

Mariner doesn't drink champagne, but whatever contraband she brings, he'll happily enjoy it, because it'll be with her and what could be better than that?

"Speaking of doing things together," Boimler remembers as he finally feels bold enough to run a hand in her hair. "If you going to spread rumors about us, at least let me in on it next time."

"I dunno what you're talking about," she says, closing the gap between them.

**THE END**

## End Notes

You can find me at Tumblr, Pillowfort, the Lower Decks Discord, AO3 and what's left of Twitter under the same username.

Comments and feedback welcomed!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!