The One to Fix
by d8rkmessnqr

Summary

Not all scars heal. As Bones takes care of Jim, he knows there's something else that needed healing...

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

"Are you eating that the traditional way or trying to digest it through telepathy?" Bones groused—well, that was Bones for you. One minute actually using a reasonably pleasant voice like he had more than a passing grade in Bedside Manner 101. The next, griping and sometimes shouting about a guy's lack of diplomacy, or the failure of his ship's transporter locator technology, or how people shouldn't try to be big, damn heroes, and on and on. Then again, Bones might possibly this time, maybe have already been aggravated by Jim not having enough blood left in him to induce some hemoglobin replication thing and being forced to do a blood transfusion the old-fashioned way and then might have stayed up for a couple of days to make certain he didn't have an allergic reaction to the antibiotics they also had to pump him full of.

"Trying to decide how offended I am with this," Jim muttered, deciding to let sleeping tigers lie, and wasn't that just a hoot, as he settled under the lap tray, trying to find a comfortable position along his couch. The bruises from their latest "Hi, can the Federation be your new BFF" mission had pretty much left him on bedrest until his legs remembered they were supposed to keep one Captain James T Kirk upright, not dump him on the floor in an undignified heap like an antique marionette with its strings cut.

Bones looked up from reading some apparently fascinating medical stuff Starfleet had beamed over yesterday—beamed, rather than transmitted. Uhura had taken offense to that. Planetary entertainment dispatches, the academy newsletter, family vid-coms, the latest solar surfing reports Sulu might have requested out of the Lunar/Honolulu match up all fell victim to what she deemed non-essential high priority transmission allowance. There had been a long lecture on it at the last
staff briefing that Jim had maybe drawn Enterprise shaped doodles through. No doubt Bones' journal articles fell right into the "Banned from my Band Width" list she'd sent out afterwards.

Bones eyed the tray balanced on Jim's lap and frowned at its untouched state. "It's a salad, Jim and unlike some green things, it won't kill you." Bones didn't bother to unwind from his casual guard post on the floor using the bulkhead as a backrest. Bones said he wasn't there to trip Jim if he made a try for the Bridge again, but Bones also swore last week that the brandy he'd brought up to Jim's quarters wasn't strong. Uh huh. He was still apologizing for drunk comming Admiral Pike and serenading him with Andorian dirty limericks.

Pike commented dryly in a follow up call how he'd liked Jim's creative use of rhyming Vulcan ears on the third one with buccaneers. Then the admiral had given an oddly smug smirk; he warned Jim the fourth one wasn't physically possible. Making Jim wish he could actually remember what that one had been about.

"Jim, I know I said you need to increase your protein intake to rebuild the muscles that demon possessed, wannabe alien circus reject for a tiger damaged, but you still need—"

"A seg-men'ta," Jim supplied, adding the correct stress on the end of 'seg' because it pissed Bones off, because he couldn't wrap around the pronunciation like Jim or Uhura. "And it wasn't demonic."

"Its eyes glowed red." Bones seemed to take offense at whatever he read on his PADD and yanked out the data chip with an unhappy frown but not before Jim caught a glimpse of what looked to be an archivial holo-image of a child in an overgrown blue tunic, gnawing on an apple core with bleeding gums.

Jim looked away. He talked over Bones' fumbling for the next data chip. "Didn't Spock say it was due to some photosynthesis process where the planet's vegetation emits red chlorophyll?"

"Jim, it tried to eat you."

"No, it tried to eat the patch of ferns Sulu and I fell into. They're born blind," Jim reminded him.

"And it couldn't smell one stinky human inches away as it chewed?"

Jim scowled. He raised his arms, took a tentative sniff at his pits before he flipped a cucumber slice towards Bones. It bounced off the back of his head.

"Who you calling stinky?"

"That's because you haven't taken off your boots ye—Damn it, Jim. Those are for eating, not for target practice." Bones' narrowed eyed glare landed on said footwear resting elevated on the end of the couch.

"You shouldn't have them on anyway. You need to maintain circulation in your legs."

"Can't take off my boots," Jim whined. He crunched loudly on a carrot slice to at least show he wasn't totally disobeying doctor's orders.

"You had no problems putting them on to try to go to Engineering a few hours ago," Bones fired back. His eyes whipped back to the PADD and at the sepia tone image of from upside down what looked like a pile of skinned rats, he yanked that data chip out as well. He jammed the next one in and then had to reverse it to its correct position.
Jim absently rubbed a hand at a spot just below his diaphragm even though he knew the recessed scar would have long healed and filled out.

"Gaila and Scotty were going to convert the heat emissions within the manifold using the Carflott method." Jim glowered when Bones just scoffed. Didn't he hear him? Carflott. "You expect me to miss that?"

"I expect you to stay put and heal." Bones looked ready to throw the data PADD at Jim. Another data chip popped up and was tossed somewhere in the vicinity of the rest of them. "You have two more days until the calcium fully bonds before I can even think of using the osteo-regenerator which means your bones are still friable." He set down the PADD and jabbed a finger at him. "You're staying put even if I have to sit on you."

Jim waggled his eyebrows at him. "Promise?"

Bones returned Jim's cucumber with annoying accuracy.

"Besides," Jim said as he peeled the round off his forehead, "I stayed in the wheelchair and Spock knew where I was going." He scowled. "Wait, I also made him pinky swear not to tell."

Bones stared over the top of his PADD. "How the hell do you pinky swear with a Vulcan?"

"Very, very carefully." Jim grinned cheekily at Bones, who went back to panning for gold, long tapered fingers sorting through the piles of data chips which had been split up into some sort of categories. But now were like silicon confetti, tossed during turbulence.

"All right, who told?" Jim demanded. Loudly because he discovered there was no more cucumber ammunition on his plate and he wasn't about to throw his chicken fried steak either.

"From the moment you left your quarters, entered the turbolift, oh, just about everyone who saw you." Bones arched an eyebrow at Jim, his lips crooked into a smirk. "My spies are everywhere."

"Your spies. What happened to them being my spies?" Jim grumbled under his breath. He sat back, idly poking his steak, picturing it as a number of traitorous faces. Probably Chekov. The guy did know his way around the Enterprise security system. You'd think after he'd saved his boyfriend from the seg-men'ta he'd get a little more thanks than that. He was going have to find some way to de-gel those curls in response; it was the only mature thing to do. Course without Sulu finding out and running him through with his kitana. Maybe add something in the sonic shower system.

"Are you sticking food in your mouth?"

"Rather something else in my mouth," Jim muttered and was rewarded with a strangled sound from Bones. "Seriously, Bones. The walking, I can understand, but no sex? Last I checked, we don't have sex standing—oh, wait, never mind."

Jim grinned rakishly when Bones' eyes betrayingly snapped to his bathroom's doorway. Bones ran his tongue over his lower lip, and oh yeah, that had only been last week. Caught on the memory himself, Jim fidgeted as well. Leave it to Spock to inquire the next day if Jim's command chair was uncomfortable, raising an eyebrow when Bones began sputtering like he was trying to cough up a hairball.

"That won't work on me." Bones interrupted and pointedly looked away from the bath with its tiled walls, shoving a new data chip into his PADD. This time, it bleated in protest.

Jim frowned. "Hey, I know its Starfleet equipment but I think the adage still applies: you break it,
"you bought it."

"Break it?" muttered Bones. "Don't tempt me." He shot Jim a look. "Eat your dinner."

"My boots," Jim wheedled. He waggled a foot—ouch, bad idea. "I can't eat with these things on."

"Yet you kept them on last week while we—"

"That was just a more efficient use of our limited time," Jim interrupted. They'd had only twenty minutes between shift change, but it had been a very good twenty minutes. Very hard against the wall, very fast, with a toe curling pace that left them panting. Jim shifted at the memory, feeling a sudden need to adjust himself. There were some things the tiger had definitely not touched. He'd meant to tease Bones out of his snit, but it was working a little too well.

"You are such a pain in the ass," Jim griped to accommodate the uncomfortable pressure and spread his legs further apart while balancing the dinner tray.

"I thought you like it when I'm your pain in the ass, darling," Bones drawled.

Screw the steak. A piece of it looked better stuck on a scruffy cheek anyway. He looked meaningfully at his boots again.

Bones cast his eyes towards the ceiling. "Fine," he grumbled. "Don't move." He squeezed onto the end of the couch and gingerly lifted Jim's feet transferring them onto his lap. With the concentration of a surgeon and the care of a lover, Bones flipped the locking tabs and gently eased the boots off. Done, he didn't move Jim's legs off, his hands cupped carefully over Jim's feet, pale despite his time outdoors, striped because if you didn't get to a dermal regenerator in time, some things just stuck around all your life.

"Thought you said my feet are stinky?" Jim joked weakly, feeling odd at how careful Bones was being. Gruff he could handle, but Bones gently rubbing a knuckle down the ligament that connected his big toe to his ankle and then bridging the whitened scars with a calloused thumb, rubbing them back and forth made Jim want to squirm.

Bones shrugged one shoulder. Now, his thumb traced Jim's unblemished skin, around where an old skin graft covered up the zig zag etchings the scars. He bent and kissed it.

Jim's eyes drifted to the PADD on the floor.

"Let me see the PADD," Jim asked, his order whisper soft. Bones stilled. He hesitated, then wordlessly reached down for it and he passed it over.

The screen still held the old scans of the first responding starship. A finger flick and it slid to the image of blank faced children with swollen stomachs, balanced on skeletal legs.

The smile that crept over Jim's face was tight.

"I wondered if Starfleet was going to unseal the records for the anniversary." Jim couldn't understand, even now, why tragedy and death was marked with the same reverence as birth. "And with Kodos stepping forward to stand trial, I figured it would only be a matter of time." Nothing like upping the ante from mass murder to genocide of an entire fucking planet to finally push everyone into standing up and noticing that something wasn't quite right in quadrant four.

"Christ, Jim. _Tarsus?_" Warm hands curled over his ankles like a shield.
"As my physician, I know you need to have access to my full medical file," Jim said, ignoring the words. Refusing to think about leaving Earth. His mother exiling him to a distant aunt and uncle he knew nothing about. Him shouting back at her that it was going to be hell on Earth as he stomped up the departing shuttles ramp. Or later when it was. And he gratefully did not remember being carried off that shuttle six months later. Or how badly he wanted it to keep her planetside but that she could only bear to watch a young version of George Kirk's wasted face for five weeks before yet another urgent mission took her off planet again.

"How about not as your doctor, but just as Bones though…" Calloused fingers rubbed his ankles and across the scars.

Jim sucked in a shuddering breath. He could feel the trails of warmth from healer's hands, gliding up to his calves.

"I didn't want you to see," Jim got out, his chest tight. It shouldn't still hurt this much. "It was a long time again, Bones. I've dealt with it."

Bones lifted the tray to the floor, his gaze steady on Jim. "There's hardly any scars," Bones agreed sadly. "All healed up before I met you, huh?"

Jim watched the fingers trace scars that were no longer on his knees. Trying to see things that were no doubt written in the medical reports, but not finding them. Jim shifted, bending his knee carefully higher, turning it.

"Jim, careful, you shouldn't—"

"Here," Jim murmured took his hand and placed it on the spot. "I shattered the left cap trying to climb out of one of the pits. I'd jumped in." He laughed but it was strained. "I thought I saw one of them moving. I thought it was someone's mother or father, a grownup who could take over, take care of us. Some of the children wouldn't stop crying. We were all so hungry. Thought if someone down there was still alive…" Jim shrugged. "So I jumped. Bad plan."

Bones stroked the place his hand rested. He lowered his head and kissed it, his mouth lingering breathing life through the material and into a knee Jim had simply bound up with rags and rods at the time.

His fingers trembled; he'd started this and now couldn't seem to stop as he rolled up his tunic and brushed at a spot under his ribs.

"Here, they inserted a feeding tube because most of us forgot how to swallow. They took it out later. I found out it was up in Earth's orbit instead of ground side so the media would have less of a show."

Bones followed Jim's hand to the spot and settled a warm, open mouthed kiss on it. His eyes never left Jim's as he stroked Jim's stomach then crawling higher up Jim's length to carefully wrap his arms around him. Not a hug, but holding him, arms wrapping around him, like he was important. His eyes burned making the room blurry. The arms tightened, Jim felt lips grazing over his temple.

"And what's that one for?" Jim chuckled wearily.

"Because I want to." Bones eased his way between Jim and the couch, lining their bodies up so that Jim was resting against him. "Because that's one nobody bothered to take care of."

Bones stubble was rough yet familiar against his jaw. Jim settled against his chest. As Bones maneuvered his legs under Jim's, keeping them elevated, something eased inside Jim. Even his legs
didn't hurt as much as before.

"Guess you'll have to be the one to do it," Jim murmured.

Lips touched his ear.

"Damn straight."

End Notes

A fic for the Nu Trek Exchange on LJ, 2011 and recently unearthed (why hello there...) 
---------------------------------
For odd fic bits too short to post here, thoughts and rantings, I am no longer on my LJ, but here:

Tumblr

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!