

Behind Closed Doors
by Carol Sandford

'There wasn't long to go now', Deanna mused as she stood in the wings waiting for everything and everyone to settle down. Guests were still arriving by the handful, and going by the joviality, the excited voices, everyone was in high spirits.

A lot of people were overjoyed at the impending wedding of Chandra Xerx. It had been too long ago since there had been a function as big as this. A wedding as big as this. Deanna watched her friend wistfully, a tender smile couldn't help but flit across her stunning features.

::It'll your turn one day, little one.::

As Deanna's eyebrows rose, so did her lips in the slightly cynical smirk. She turned to face her mother who positively glowed in her over-frilly, over-the-top, and totally over-powering dress in every hue of pink imaginable. Deanna's mind boggled as to the importance of the dress, as within a few more minutes, it would be hung, discarded along with everyone else's attire in the changing room.

Deanna couldn't help but reveal her sarcasm, ::I don't think so, Mother, I don't see Wyatt getting on bended knee and proposing do you? In fact, where is Wyatt period?!::

Lwaxana looked around her briefly before hurriedly mentally whispering to her daughter, ::Hush darling, do you want to whole planet to know our plans::

Deanna scoffed out aloud at her preposterous remark, ::Mother, you have been 'bragging' to anyone who ever had the misfortune of getting within earshot, how your 'precious daughter was betrothed - since birth I might add - to that ~very~ nice boy, Wyatt Miller. That ~very~ nice, RICH boy, Wyatt Miller!::

Even Lwaxana had the grace to blush a little as she glanced around at the guests, throwing those who were pretending not to be listening, an embarrassed smile. ::Wyatt is a very busy man, little one. He'll be here...soon::

Tossing her raven curls derisively over her shoulder, revealing exquisite satiny shoulders, now totally devoid of any garments as barely a moment ago, the signal had been given that the wedding was imminent. ::Yes, well, Mother, maybe when he finally ~does~ show up, maybe ~I~ won't be sitting here waiting, like a good little girl. Maybe, I've got plans of my own::

Deanna hadn't, but she was damned if she was going to allow her mother, and Wyatt to think that she was waiting for them to make up their mind as to when it was convenient to begin preparations for their future. Deanna ~did~ have plans, and they didn't include Wyatt Miller - Not for a few years yet anyway.

Deanna listened to the hubbub of the crowds through the closed doorway, knowing that they

were all making their way to their seats. Turning to her mother, she silently told her that it was time to leave them and take her place with the other guests. But as usual, Lwaxana bustled around her, pulling at errant curls upon her head, muttering almost to herself about standing tall, shoulders firmly back, head held high.

Deanna silently sighed as she grasped for the door handle, ::Yes, Mother, I will. Now please go, your holding everything up:: She didn't need to add the 'as usual', it was always a foregone conclusion. That was Lwaxana Troi's way, it had always been Lwaxana Troi's way. Deanna secretly knew that it was her mother's way of reaping the most attention. Most of her fellow peers and friends knew that too.

Deanna's eyes followed her mother out into the congregation. As far as the eye could see, you could only see an expanse of flesh, with an assortment of hair colours atop of it all. That was until Deanna's eyes settled on something - or someone, that stuck out like the proverbial 'sore thumb'.

A man. A very handsome man she acknowledged, sat amongst the throng of guests still clad in what Deanna knew, was Standard Star Fleet uniform. The rich, burgundy of his tunic she noticed highlighted his rugged features. He was young, maybe just a couple of years older than her. His hair was dark, fashioned into a typical military style cut, but it suited him, she liked the way one rebellious lock sprung free of the rest, giving him that added roguish look.

Deanna didn't need to use her empathic powers to know just how uncomfortable the stranger was, it was written all over him by the way he glanced around at the other guests. She was mildly surprised when he got to his feet and left the room. Could he have been that humiliated by Betazed's custom of holding nude wedding services? Deanna hadn't really ever considered it before, and was bothered as to whether anyone had told him that it was unimportant if he was undressed or not, the choice was his.

But Deanna's breath caught in her chest when he strolled back in, his cheeks high with colour, but he stood tall, very tall, clearly unashamed at what he was revealing. Deanna's eyes strolled down his long body and saw for herself just why he wasn't bothered. He was magnificent.

Unconsciously, Deanna's tongue licked her overly dry lips, but it didn't help quench the thirst that surged throughout her body like it was on fire. She felt her own body go warm with a barely veiled desire. A desire that she had never known before. A desire that she suddenly and ferociously wanted to experience and explore.

She watched, unable to tear her eyes away from the man, now reseated and engaged in a somewhat benign conversation with Wendy Roper. She watched as Wendy played the vixen to the hilt, but Deanna could feel the man's inner turmoil as he struggled to not let his body betray her obvious teasing. She watched as he failed when Wendy reached out and touched his body. His legs crossed as an automatic response. Deanna couldn't help but giggle, but the heat to her own intimate zone made her heart thump painfully and her body invisibly squirm.

The man before her was dangerous. Even before he had spoken to her, touched her...made love to her, Deanna knew that he was going to play a major part in her life. All rational thoughts of Wyatt slipped away, overtaken by vision's of the mysterious Starfleet Officer. The

man of her innermost sacred dreams. The one she had been waiting for. Her future.