

Beyond Loving
by Carol Sandford

When I woke in the mornings, she was always gone. Back then, a huge part part of me was always disappointed, but an even bigger part of me was relieved. It was like living in a fantasy; making love to her with quiet whispers and unfulfilled desires, and then waking up and believing it was all a dream.

It is a dream, a dream come true? I'm just not sure if it's for me, or for her, but I'm not going to waste my time ripping the question to threads. The fantasy is too good, too revered. Too ~real~

If it weren't for the ache in my loins, and the scent of her on my sheets, I could easily mistake it for a dream. It was that good. ~She~ was that good.

Today, before she left, I sensed her watching me. I didn't want to open my eyes, I was too afraid to. This morning, something different happened. When we had reached the stars with our bodies, and our hearts, I had whispered, 'I love you' to her.

I had broken the cardinal sin. I had moved beyond what we had. I had taken it further by revealing my true feelings towards her.

What we had was unique. Each of us needed loving, but neither of us needed ~love~. It had been an unspoken agreement between us and we had sealed it with our unspoken words and our bodily actions.

Until now.

I just hoped to God that I hadn't blown it, or us.

I need her as much as a fish needs water. I am as dependant on her as she is me. That's what I like to think anyway. But this morning, I really think I have blown it.

We always thought that a relationship between us was out of the question. We thought that too many people would get hurt. Deanna being the first, the captain being the second. Neither of us want to hurt them, but neither of us could deny each other.

~We~ were too important, even if it was not because of love. Or so I thought, until this morning.

She had become a drug. I am totally reliant on what she has to offer me. I am aware how shallow that sounds, and I know I could ruin what we have in a heartbeat.

And I think I just have, something I am rapidly becoming famous for; That unlucky Riker streak that insists on screwing not only my own life up, but any poor woman who has gotten close enough to me to give a damn.

I felt her shift and leave the bed, and I wanted so much to reach out and stop her leaving, but the coward in me held me back. I pretended to roll over and I almost lost it when my head settled onto her pillow and her perfume sent an erotic image of her straight to my traitorous groin.

Damn it, I want her again.

As I lay there, with my eyes closed and my heartbeat pounding ten to the dozen, I listen to her moving around, getting dressed, getting ready to leave, getting ready to skulk back to her own quarters, and I find myself holding my breath, waiting. Is this it. Is this goodbye for us? After six wonderful, mind-blowing, fantastic months did it end

here, like this; Me in love for the first time in eons, only to find that she really only ever did want my body and not my soul after all.

God, I am such a fool. Why am I risking what we have - had, for the chance of something more? I want the fantasy to become real. I want to be able to walk through the corridors of the Enterprise with my head held high and my heart upon my sleeve for everyone to see.

I'm ready to face the world, and Deanna, but is Beverly?

I felt her kneel on the bed behind me, and then the tickle of her hair as she reached down towards my cheek, her breath kissing my mouth even before her lips touch, and I hear her whisper, "I love you too. See you tonight."

So it had got to her too. Love had wriggled its way through, filled our lonely souls and shown us what could be. It was hard to believe that what we had could be bettered, but I guess it could. Love had gone beyond us and taken over.

I snuggled deeper into the covers, freely inhaled her intoxicating scent and smiled to myself as I heard the unmistakable hiss of the doors as she left to start her day.

Maybe I haven't blown it after all.