

The Compromise
by Carol Sandford

"No."

""Wh...what?"

"You heard me, Will, I said no."

"But why not, Deanna? You knew I always wanted to go back there, especially when we had others to think about and consider."

"Will. When I agreed to become your wife, I imagined that we would spent our remaining working lives on board a starship and then maybe turn in our communicators and settle down somewhere warm and sunny, Warm and sunny does ~not~ apply to Alaska."

"It's not that bad, Dee, not in the summer anyhow's."

"Oh yes it is, Will. Can you imagine sending our children off to school wrapped up in a huge thick coats, their heads obscured by a rainbow coloured woollen hat, their hands all frostbitten and blue. Scarves so long they'd have to be wrapped around their tiny necks ten times?"

"Well, yes actually, I can. I remember it well. I also remember having amazing snowball fights in the playground. I remember spending hours on my sled going up and down the small hills. I remember just sitting on top of those small hills and looking out at pure white clean and magical world, listening to the roar of a distant waterfall, the only thing seemingly alive in the dead of winter."

"I also remember spring arriving along with all the new born's following their mama's. Tiny snowdrops peeking through snow and streams gurgling back to life and the sun warming everything up...I remember it all, Deanna and I want our children to see it too. I want our children to be raised in Alaska."

"And I want them to be raised on Betazed - in the warm, where they can go to school all year round in T shirt and shorts. where they can go swimming any time they like. Where they are surrounded with all the beautiful flowers that don't shrivel and die and disappear for months on end. I want the warmth Will. I need the warmth."

"Aw, Deanna, you'll be warm, you'll have me to do that. That and our huge log fire, and a rug in front of it where I can keep you hotter than toast. You'll be amazed how hot you can get in Alaska."

"Yeah, and then have to freeze our butts off when we have to go and get another log in the dead of night so that we don't curl up and die right there on the floor."

"That's not very romantic of you, Deanna. And besides, the idea of your mother just 'popping in' is enough to freeze me out, I can't believe you want to inflict her onto me, my love. She only has to look at me and I get a chill. She sure was mad when you married me."

"That's because she knew you'd try and pull a stunt like this. I don't want to move to Alaska, Will."

"But why??! Give me one good reason."

"Haven't you been listening to a word I've said, Will?"

"Yes, and they are just excuses, not a reason. If you loved me, you would go wherever I wanted, and I want to go to Alaska."

"And if you loved me, Will Riker, you would go wherever ~I~ wanted, and I want to go to Betazed."

"Okay...what else has Betazed got other than warmth?"

"Me, naked."

"Excuse me??!"

"Me, naked, nearly all year round..."

"You...you mean...you don't intend wearing clothes...at all??!"

"Nope, well, most of the time. It is unnatural for Beazoids to wear clothes, Will, its no big deal to us. Betazed is really just a planet sized nudist colony, clothes are just something we wear, just to look different occasionally, or if we've got stuffy offworlders visiting."

"All year round...?"

"All year round."

"Can we compromise a little...just a little, please?"

"Sure, what do you have in mind, Will?"

"We live on Betazed for 11 months of the year, and Alaska for one month... just one month."

"Okay, sounds fair enough, I can agree to that. Its a deal."

"I love you Mrs. Riker."

"I love you too, Mr. Riker."

"All year round huh?"

"All year round."

"Wow..."