

Count down
by Carol Sandford

I'd forgotten how quiet silence could be, especially when one is waiting on one's own. I could have put some music on - lost myself in the magical strains of some haunting trombone melody, but in the end, thoughts would wind themselves around to you. Thoughts that I was already having, but somehow the silence leant hope to those thoughts. Music somehow, somehow took away that hope and made them memories.

Once more I wondered if you would come to me tonight. It was getting close to ten o'clock - my deadline. After ten o'clock things changed. I changed. I became me again; William Riker, Commander of the Enterprise, and no longer the spurned lover. No longer someone sitting here anxiously waiting for a second chance - a chance to forgive, forget and become the other part of you again.

I'm scared. With each day that passes I become more scared. With each day that goes by, it pushes you further away from me. The only difference is that only I seem to know it. You appear to be oblivious to me - or that is how I interpret your absence from my life.

I want you back, but you have to come to me. You have to see past my face and see into my heart. Somehow. I've been hiding me from you simply because if I didn't, I wouldn't be able to stop myself from becoming a fool to not only your eyes, but others too.

But in here, in the solitude of my quarters, the fool comes out and waits. There is no one to see me. There is no one who cares. Not even you. But I can't bring myself yet to think that that is true. I have to hang onto something, just until my heart gives up its hope, and my soul closes its doors for eternity.

But not yet, I'm not ready to give up. Today you actually looked at me and saw something other than your commanding officer. It was an accident on my part; a lapse of remembering who and where I was. Before I could bring my shield up again, you managed to see into my heart. I saw the tiny frown upon your beautiful face, and I saw the question in your eyes. I also saw the tiny shake of your head as you turned away from me and continued on your way.

I now wonder which part of my heart you saw, but I wonder more if it made you curious enough to seek me out and ask. I hope so. God, I hope so. I want you in my arms again. I want to sway to the music with your body moulded against me, and I want your tongue teasing my lips apart so that it could have its own private dance with mine. But God, most of all, I need your love, the love that you gave me before. The love that you left me with.

But, do you really want me. Do you want what we had back then, or do you want something more? I hope you have the courage to ask me, because whatever it is that you want, I want it too. I know that you may not want me at all, and in time, I will forget you. I will never forget the memories, but I will forget you - the you that I see everyday. I am strong enough to do that, but I've got to know. I've just got to know if you don't want me.

Do you, Deanna?

Nine fifty seven...

Nine fifty eight...

Nine fifty nine...

Ten.