

## Desert Heat

by Carol Sandford

The sun beat down relentlessly, its fiery laser beam like intensity pounding upon their bodies, deliberately revealing every ounce of moisture they possessed, making it bubble and blister as it fried the droplets upon their raw skin.

Deanna groaned, her eyes falling shut as she continued to put one foot in front of the other, she couldn't stop the wine slipping from her cracked lips, "I...I can't take much more of this, Will, how much further?"

Deanna now barely lifted her feet from the soft, powdery sand, dragging her toes through the hot dust, searching for just a seconds relief but finding nothing but even more heat. Weak with fatigue, Deanna gasped alarmingly as her tired legs gave way and she hit the soft ground with a bone-shattering thud, her cry drawing back the big man that walked before her in his best attempt of shielding her, even if it was just a little, from the sun.

She felt firm hands drag her weary bones from its temporary resting place and hauled against a hard body that sizzled as hot as hers, but right then at that moment, she didn't care. All she knew was that she wanted to sleep. To slip to the ground within Will's arms and slide into a slumber hoping and praying that when she woke, the nightmare would be over. That they would be back on The Enterprise, wallowing in a ice cold bath and only the moonlight upon their faces.

But the sun's burning rays continued their onslaught, Deanna only managing to block them out as Will continued to hold her steadily against him, his rasping voice losing itself into the tangled, sweat soaked mass of curls upon her head,

"Come on, Deanna, we've got to keep moving, we've got to find the rendezvous point, you know that. Another hour and the sun will start setting, it'll be cooler then, I promise. Deanna...Deanna! Wake up!, you can't go to sleep now."

Will went still as the woman in his arms suddenly went heavy and unresponsive. His heartbeat went wild within his chest as he slid to the ground his own energy spent holding the now unconscious Deanna up.

Collapsing with a desperate effort to not only soften his own fall, but Deanna's too, Will landed heavily on his knees, still cradling Deanna's unconscious form to him. Falling sideways, Will pulled the woman flush against his large frame, half covering her heated body with his own, trying his utmost to shelter her from the sun's insistent torment, until blissfully minutes later, he too fell into a light slumber, knowing that when he woke, the sun would have turned a beautiful rubicund warmth, the breeze would have picked up enough to cool their frazzled skin and the blessed heat would have died down enough for them to recover a little, and move on to their ultimate destination.

## **\*\*Chapter two\*\***

The distant chirp of something living stirred Deanna's frazzled brain enough to rouse from her deep sleep. She tried to move, but found herself pinned down, her back and buttocks half buried within the sand beneath her. Initially Deanna panicked thinking Will had collapsed, but as she tentatively moved, will disgruntled snore released a sigh of relief.

She hated to move Will knowing that he was exhausted, mainly from doing his damndest to keep her alive. She freed a stiff arm enough to raise it to his face, tracing its outline tenderly, "Will...Will, wake up, its time to move on. Will..."

Deanna gasped aloud when she felt herself pulled against his body, his arms enfolding her, intent on not allowing her to move away, "Stay here."

Pushing firmly against his powerful chest, Deanna spoke louder, using her authoritative tone to waken the seemingly drugged man. "Commander Riker! I need you to wake up, we have to go, we have to reach the rendezvous point by tomorrow. Commander!"

Deanna watched as Will struggled to break through heavy fog of sleep as well as the sticky mass that had built up across his eyes, his body's own defence mechanism to protecting the delicate orbs beneath. Deanna tenderly brushed the spiky clump of dusty hair away from his forehead, silently urging him to push through and emerge. She'd never wanted to see his sky blue eyes more than she did right now.

"C'mon Will."

Will heard the tenderness in her voice, wanting desperately to see the smile that he knew was upon her face. Lifting a heavy arm, Will grasped a piece of his shirt and dragged it across his eyes, wincing at the scratchiness beneath and above his eyelids. But eventually, little by little, Will managed to open his eyes wide enough to focus on the woman before him, wondering if he would ever welcome a more beautiful sight than Deanna Troi bathed in the moonlight and within his arms with a smile so tender and sweet it brought an incredible dry and painful lump to his throat.

"Are we still alive or have I died and gone to heaven?"

Deanna chuckled hoarsely as she pushed herself into a wobbly sitting position, "If this your vision of heaven, then may the Gods help us."

Will grimaced as he too moved his stiff body to sit beside her, linking his hands around his knees as he viewed the expanse of desert before them, "After today, I'm not even sure if I believe in a God. I don't believe for one minute that God would have tormented us in that way just because we accidentally missed the transport. I thought he was a little more forgiving than that."

Deanna moved to sit beside Will, seeing what he saw as he continued to look into the distance. She gasped in awe at the vista before her. The sand that not so long ago was burning holes into he soles of her feet, now shimmered with the rosy glow of the setting sun, still

slowly disappearing on the horizon, creating a weaving dance of lights as they bounced off the dune tips.

The watched the sun's final descent in revered silence before realising that they were now sitting in muted darkness. With a huge sigh, Will pushed himself to a stand, stretching his large hand out for Deanna to clasp. With an equally reluctant sigh, Deanna allowed herself to be hauled upright, by mutual consent, their hands remained linked as they began the long haul towards the settled sun.

**\*\*Chapter three\*\***

The nights silence floated around the twosome as they trudged wearily on. The euphoric relief of escaping the sun's torment along with the comfortable coolness of evening soothed the couple's frazzled minds somewhat, even to the point of somehow enjoying the tranquil time.

Their relief at knowing that they were within hours of reaching their destination, allayed their fears knowing that the worst was over. The short time they'd spent in the searing desert seemed to disappear into oblivion as they looked ahead to their destination, and eventually home.

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The decision for some of the crew to spend some time on the recently discovered planet had been too much of a pull. Captain Picard had allotted several groups of his crew to spend 3 days on the planet, arranging specific times and destinations for returning to the ship.

Only Will and Deanna, enjoying the planets resources; the spa's of Taralee and the subsequent after care services that the spa's personnel supplied, had lost all sense of time and had missed their transport.

The next transport was due the following day, but in the next designated dropping point, Pralaar, some ten miles away. Will had assured Deanna that the trip would be a breeze and that they would be there in no time and probably have enough time for yet another spa session.

That was until barely two miles outside of town they had hit the desert. From there it had gone down hill...rapidly. Unprepared, and unwilling to return, Will and Deanna had begun the perilous journey, Will, her trusted friend and Commanding Officer assured that they'd be across the other side of it before breakfast still rang in Deanna's ears as she trudged on into the night.

The couple realised they were beginning to head upwards by the change in the pain of their legs and the ragged catch of their breath. Stopping briefly, they surveyed their surroundings through the gloom of the night sky. It was also then that they heard the distinctive sound of trickling water.

Deanna held her breath, not daring to believe their fantastic luck. Gripping his arm tightly, Deanna whispered to the silence man beside her, "Do you hear it, Will?"

Even without his words, Deanna could read his body language; the way his body tensed up with expectant excitement, "Damn right I hear it Dee, come on."

Gripping her hand once more, Deanna barely had a chance to move before Will hurried away, pulling her forcibly behind him. It took less than two minutes to reach the rocky outcrop and stare at the scene below; A vast rock pool, created by the steady trickle of water surging through the moss laden rocks beneath them, captured by the moonlight, casting of sparking prisms of illumination that bounced off the rock faces surrounding the idyllic setting.

Will whistled, "There was a God after all. My faith has been renewed."

He felt Deanna's fingers crush his as she continued to stare into the inky depths below, "Do you think its safe, Will?"

Will furtively glanced around the waters edge looking for anything that might remotely give them any trouble, but was soon convinced that they were alone. Sounding decidedly more convincing than he felt, Will reassured the small apprehensive woman beside him, Throwing her a grin he told her, "Its safe...And besides, if it wasn't, you'd have me to save you."

She playfully slapped his arm, her words smoothing the sting of the attack on his tender skin, "Oh you, you would be ten times worse than anything I met in there."

Will chuckled knowingly, "Are you ready to test that theory out? I don't know about you, but I am determined to wallow in that damn pool even if I have to fend off every critter on the planet."

Within a minute, both Will and Deanna sank into the inky black depths of ice cool water, fully clothed, both floating on their backs with only the moonlight for company.

**\*\*Chapter four\*\***

The fatigue of the days travelling and the heat, and now the cold of the limpid pool, began to reduce Will to a lethargic log. He watched his companion beside him still floating peacefully, seemingly unaware of the fraught chill beginning to invade his loins, but even he couldn't take his eyes off her face for a long minute. The moonlight danced across her features, highlighting her high cheekbones and giving her now saturated jet black hair a purplish almost luminous hue.

Will silently let loose an oath when he dimly realised his body was responding to the tantalising scene before him. Feeling a need to remove himself from her close proximity, Will struck out for the rocky bank, muttering tight lipped, "I'm getting cold, Deanna, I'm getting out."

But Will didn't know whether the cold excuse was towards the temperature of the water or his need to throw ice to the sudden inner heat that bubbled up from a place that hadn't felt warmth for longer than he cared to remember.

Dragging himself up onto the large smooth boulder, Will huddled his body close to himself, hugging his knees to his chest to ward off the chill that swept over him as he hit the night air, along side the chill within as he tried to valiantly switch off to the woman that continued to float in the in gloomy water.

Will watched Deanna through half-lidded eyes as she gently turned on her stomach and began taking long leisurely strokes, making her slender body move with the elegant grace of a dolphin. Will couldn't drag his eyes away from her as with each stroke revealed a part of her body for the fraction of a moment, but that moment gave him more trouble than he cared to admit to himself.

Will wondered why a long buried memory had chosen to erupt at this point in his life for no apparent reason. Surely it couldn't be the tantalizing image that continued to innocently perform a highly erotic dance before his eyes. He'd seen Deanna swim before in a darned sight lot less clothing. Maybe the desert had fried his brains enough to consider himself insane.

And thats how he exactly felt; Insane. Insane with desire for the woman that was now making her way toward the edge of the pool - and him. Will's whole body and his heart came to a halt with what he was about to see. What he couldn't help but see.

What he wanted to see.

He heard the rush of adrenalin surge through his body, the pounding echoing in his ears along with his heartbeat that seemed to trying its hardest to break its way out of his chest. As Deanna began to push her saturated limbs to a stand on the pool's edge, her eyes rose to meet his. He saw several emotions, each of them holding him captivated with their spell. Passion, want, love and defiance.

It was the defiance that captivated him most of all. All the others he'd seen over the years in one guise or another. Whether it had been when he'd battled for his life in sickbay, or when he'd played a song for her on his trombone. Or when they had simply been reminded of their past; A past that reminded them of who they were and what they were together.

Will held his breath as Deanna slowly surged out of the ebony water like a apparition of his wildest fantasies. Her clothes, darkened by the water, moulded against her sylphlike form, clinging to breasts that were ridged with cold, making them look hot, perky and enticing. Will groaned as she rose her arms to push the sodden mass of hair away from her face, highlighting her sensuous curves, the moonlight creating a shimmering halo around her.

Will crossed his legs, aware that his own sodden clothes clung to his intimate betrayal , but his eyes couldn't leave the vision that continued to make its way towards him, so close that Will could now make out the different shades of her skin; the darkened nipples, tight with the cold. The outline of her panties hiding her away from him. But Will didn't need to see her to know what lay beneath, he had a memory to linger on and savour.

At last, Deanna came to a stop barely a few feet away from him. Will leaned back upon his

arms as he studied her face. His blue eyes glittered in the moon's glow. If Deanna ever wanted evidence of Will's desire, she saw it there, felt it in his heart, let it caress her soul.

All around them, the sounds of the desert invaded the question's that were running amok between them. The dripping water that still drained from her clothes, splashing onto the smooth boulder beneath them both.

Will swallowed painfully and noisily as Deanna's mouth broke into a sensual half smile, her eyes darkening even further to match the pool behind them. Deanna's chest heaved with the awareness of what was about to happen between them. Will watched the movement unable to stop his own excitement creating the same motion.

Her sultry voice broke the silence, "Will...?"

She stepped back surprised when Will suddenly pushed himself to his feet and reached for her hand, his eyes beseeching hers, his voice low and demanding, "Deanna...Think about what you're doing, if this is what you really want. Because in a few seconds from now, there will be no going back, for either of us."

She answered him by stepping into his waiting arms, circling her own around his neck, lifting her face to his. The mutual sigh slipped from between their lips as they met and forged into one desperate, long-awaited union. God had given them another instant in time to rejoice their bond, only this time it was going to be forever.

**\*\*Chapter five\*\***

Deanna began to lower her sex infused body down to the ground, but Will tightened his hold on her, halting her descent with a gentle whisper against her mouth, "No, Imzadi."

Deanna's legs trembled as she quickly realised Will's intent, relinquishing her hold around the tall man's neck. Quickly stripping her cooled body of its sodden clothes, he took barely a moment to divest himself of his own. It had all been done so rapidly, Deanna's heart hardly lost its erotic pace as she welcomed his now cool naked body against hers, the evidence of his desire glistened in the moonlight along with the barely concealed hunger in his eyes.

Fixing a powerful hand amongst Deanna's matted curls, Will devoured her mouth with a drugging kiss that would have subdued a raging tiger. Deanna opened her mouth wide as Will's tongue consistently plunged and swirled, leaving her gasping not only for breath, but for more, much, much more.

She couldn't stop the whimper from rising deep within her, or her creamy thigh from grinding against him, wanting him closer, aching to have him inside her. Will needed no more encouragement.

His hands slid down to span her buttocks, lifting her with ease, her inner thighs falling either side of his hips as naturally as if they had only done it yesterday. Both hesitated their ultimate joining, seeking each others hearts and minds out once more before they become totally lost.

Deanna thread her fingers through his spiky damp hair, leaning back to allow Will the luxury

of caressing her breasts, breathing renewed fire into the taut, still chilled mounds, the rigid nipples begging to be suckled with his hot breath. Will didn't need the silent blatant request, he would have gladly followed her into oblivion for just one moment of loving her body the way that he had dreamed of some many times.

Will felt her liquid feminine heat moistening the firm muscles of his waist, his own throbbing desire reaching for her blossoming inner softness.

With a mutual understanding, they both pulled away from their clinging upper bodies needing to see each others faces. Needing to see the desperate desire in each other's eyes. Everything came to a grinding, silent standstill as they adjusted to what was about to happen between them and the changes it meant for the rest of their lives.

Their breaths, tiny, expectant and laden with want joined in harmony, until at last, unable to stand the wait any longer, with their eyes still locked, Will moved her barely an inch allowing his straining rigid hardness slide into her, in one, slow, tantalizingly, agonising movement, the motion unwillingly forcing their eyes to drift shut with the sheer force of each others emotions.

Clinging onto each other in an extreme need for support, Will wasn't prepared for the feeling when he gently moved Deanna's body away from him, bringing her back against him in one powerful action, filling her to capacity, taking not only her breath away, but his too as he fell to his knees in awe of the sensations that rocked through him, leaving him gasping.

Hugging Will's body close to her, Deanna rasped breathlessly against his ear, "Oh my God, Imzadi, I never knew...I never knew it could be that way for us again."

Will searched for her lips, muttering, "I know, I know..." before kissing her so deeply, Deanna couldn't stop her still locked body from moving of its own violation, until too quickly, so, so quickly, they both shook with the violent culmination that went on and on until they collapsed against the cold stone beneath them, their own searing heat counteracting its frigidity.

It was twice more that night that the moonlight had the pleasure of shining down onto the shadowy forms of the intimately entwined couple, giving them its blessing, as they loved and laughed together, united again.

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It was a different couple that arrived at the rendezvous point a few hours later, hand in hand, their secretive smiles giving away only a hint of what really happened out there, in the desert with only the moon as their witness.

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