

Destiny's Rose  
by Carol Sandford

Will watched her from across the room; her head hung low, her face half obscured by the fall of her hair and only the velvet clip stopped it from covering her face completely. But he didn't have to see her face to know that that she was close to tears.

From the moment he had handed her what he thought to be a romantic gesture, her mood had changed, there and then. Will thought maybe she had been touched by the simple gift, but he knew her well enough to know that even if she had cried, Deanna would have grinned with pleasure and launched herself into his arms.

But she didn't. Her black fathomless eyes had fallen to shield whatever traitorous thought had rocked her to the very core, her mental shields slamming into place before Will could even blink. This was not good; here they were, on their way to a party and the guest of honour was sitting in her quarters, in a dress that dared to defy gravity as it clung to her shapely curves by what, Will had yet to discover, a pleasure he had been looking forward to after a night of wining and dining. Maybe some dancing, and maybe a little quality time together...alone.

Will heard Deanna's sigh from across the room he turned to watch her push herself up from her chair and come to a stand in front of the portal and stare out unseeing into the blackness beyond the ship's hull. But Will knew that she stared at nothing. Glancing at his chronometer, he knew that he had only a few minutes to find out what was troubling Deanna, and as much as he wanted to know, he equally as much didn't.

Taking a deep breath Will took a tentative step towards her, her name falling huskily from his mouth, "Deanna..."

He saw her head drop forward again, the tell tale thrust of her shoulders telling him that she was ready.

"Deanna...what's wrong sweetheart?"

Will's heart thumped painfully in his chest as he watched her turn. Lord, she was beautiful, her face already made up for the night ahead, blood red lipstick almost mirrored the red rose that hovered before her, held by two slightly unsteady hands. Huge eyes shimmered with unshed tears, except one that clung desperately to her long sooty eyelashes.

He tried again, "Deanna..."

The teardrop fell. Will watched it trickle down her face to the corner of her lip. The room was silent, except for the pounding of his heart. He wanted to go to her, but somehow, he knew that she didn't want him to, so he waited.

Deanna's voice was low with anguish when she finally broke the heavy silence. "I know what this rose symbolises Will...I know it is a token of love."

Will's voice was heavy with dread, "You know how much I love you Deanna, you've always known."

Deanna nodded, releasing another tear, Will watched it slide down her cheek and slip off her delicate jawline, landing on the creamy mound of her half exposed breast.

"Yes...I know, but this symbol means you want more."

Will didn't know whether to laugh or frown. He ended up doing both. "Of course Deanna, I've always wanted you, I've made no secret of that fact."

Deanna lifted her face to his again, Will felt and saw her misery. "Why Will, why now, why are you going to spoil it?"

Will stared at her amazed. "Deanna! how can I possibly spoil the one thing that is our destiny, we both know that this moment was going to come, maybe not today, or tomorrow, but it will come Imzadi...Count on it."

It was then Will knew she was deadly serious, that maybe he had taken their future for granted.

"I'm done running Deanna, my head has finally caught up with my heart and I want us to be what our destiny wants us to be...together."

For many moments, Will and Deanna stared at each other, neither took one breath, neither spoke. Neither dared to.

Then at last, Deanna took one step towards him, but instead of stepping into his arms like he expected her to, like he desperately wanted her to, Deanna placed the solitary beautiful rose back into his own hand and walked out of the room and out of Will's life.

The only woman of his life, his dreams, his future, the owner of his soul, had broken his heart and all it had taken was a rose, one single blood red rose.