

Diamond Destiny
by Carol Sandford

My fingers brushed across the almost translucent petals, releasing the scent. I closed my eyes and let it wash over me, letting it remind me of her. Reminding me of the last time we had strolled along this very path through the ornate gardens in the college grounds.

I had to smile, I couldn't help it. It had been the happiest day of my life. It had been the day I had proposed and she had accepted. My Imzadi had at last agreed to marry me. As we had soaked up the hot Betazed sun in this very place, amongst the flowers, the restful sound of the river going on its way. The birds singing their songs, and us, laying on the soft grass, along with the remnants of our picnic.

As Deanna had laid on her back with her eyes closed and a peaceful, serene half smile on her face, I had fumbled for the tiny ring, tucked deep into the corner of my pocket. I had pulled it out and twisted it between my fingers, watching the sunlight glint off the diamond.

I had kissed her lightly, but she'd had other ideas, clasp my head as though she never wanted to let go, kissing me so deeply, my heart pumped harder just from the eroticism from it. I heard her groan. Or was it me? I know that my heart had whispered 'Marry me' before my head had cleared from the drugging effect that she had on me. That she always had on me.

Deanna was a drug, and whenever I thought of her, touched her, sensed her, made love to her, I was in another universe, and I was blissfully happy.

She had pulled my head away from hers to look into my eyes, but she hadn't needed to, she knew I loved her, and I did, with all my heart. And it must have shown because barely a heartbeat later she had whispered 'Yes.' Her tears showed me just how much it had meant, along with the kiss that scorched a path all the way to my soul. More tears fell when I placed the diamond on her finger. It had been a perfect day.

We began to make plans. We wanted to marry right away, but her mother, bless her soul wanted to wait a while. Long enough to prepare the wedding of the century. We had no choice but to sit back and let her indulge herself. We didn't care, we had each other, what was another few months on top of the lifetime that we had already waited?

That was until 'he' came along. That was until 'he' proceeded to show her just how much I had mellowed over the years and he hadn't. That was until 'he' had stormed into our lives and took her away from me.

It had been so subtle at first. I'd discovered I'd got a brother; a twin...a duplicate. What chance did I have against someone who had been desperate to get back to the woman he...we loved? Before she'd known what had hit her, Tom had wined, dined and bedded her within two days. And on the second day she had handed back my ring.

I had been torn apart, ripped from the soul right up to my heart, and yet I couldn't blame her, not for a minute. I could see why she wanted him, he still had that zest, that vigour, that

excitement. Whereas I had become the stalwart of the ship, even if it had been for her benefit.

I could have moved on, and I could have pursued our relationship years ago, but I hadn't, I hadn't needed to. She was right here, with me, working with me, being there for me, as I her, but it hadn't been enough in the end. I thought we'd just eventually drift together, it had seemed to be our destiny, one way or the other.

It had been destiny, but I had lost her to my younger self, the one she fell in love with all those years ago in the Jalara. The man that should have swept her off her feet when we'd first come aboard the Enterprise...like he had done.

And today...the day that was to have been our wedding day, I'm wandering through the garden, remembering. My eyes take in the special places, the special moments. The patch of grass with another couple laying in almost the same fashion, a picnic basket already emptied of its goodies. The flowers, their scent drifting on the feint summer breeze, tempting my nostrils, tormenting me with visions of her, beneath me, within me, around me. Will it ever pass? I know it won't, I don't even want it to.

I dug deep into my pocket and pulled out her ring. It was still so new, barely worn, it still twinkled. I held it up to the sunlight and watched it glisten until it became blurred as my own tears flowed, and I knew it was time to let go. I threw it high and watched the sun's rays capture its descent sending out a rainbow of blinding brilliance, before disappearing into the depth's of the flowing river.

In a few days I will smile along with the other guests at her wedding. I'm determined not to cry, even though I know she will. Only I know along with her tears of happiness, there will be a few for me. I know its going to be the hardest day of my life, but I also know she is happy, and it'll be that thought that will get me through.

I am my brother, so I know how much he loves her. I know that whenever she looks at him, she will see me. Their children will be my children. Deanna will always be a part of me, one way or the other, and my brother knows that too. When he's laying in bed making love to her, he will know that what he's thinking, how he's feeling, what he's doing would be exactly what I would be thinking, feeling, doing. Kind of strange really don't you think?

I walked away from the park with a smile on my face and a bounce in my step. Our life with Deanna has just begun...