

Forgotten Words  
by Carol Sandford

What was wrong with her!? Deanna Troi had been sitting in her quarters with tears streaming down her face, staring at the one and only photograph of herself and Will. A photograph from long ago. A photograph that told a whole story. A photograph that she treasured.

A photograph that had finally broken through her very carefully placed blockade. The one that held her true feelings away. Feelings that she hated. She cried harder, unable to hold back the choking sobs, her trembling voice bouncing around the silent room.

Locking herself in her quarters, she had let her mind take her back to times past; to Betazed. To the jungle. To the moment she had walked into Will's room and caught him with Wendy Roper.

To the moments that they had shared on board the Enterprise, too many to remember, but every one tucked away and cherished. And now the latest incident on his home planet. An incident that should have been wiped out and forgotten about.

But it hadn't, Will hadn't let it be forgotten, and that was the problem.

As tears still cascaded down her face, Deanna couldn't stop the chuckle that bubbled up, or the blush that rose with it. Lord, did she get drunk in that bar. So drunk that she didn't even remember Will carrying her out, much to Cochran's chagrin.

But a day later, Will had taken great delight in relaying the minutes that she'd been in his arms. The tongue that had trailed a path along his earlobe. The kiss that she had placed tenderly upon his bearded cheek. The hushed word that had slipped past her lips. A word that had also been tucked away and cherished.

A word that had been spoken numerous times in concern as he'd struggled for life. Or in her dreams when she had been carried away by the vividness that the dream gave her, forcing her to acknowledge that Will was more than the friend that she steadfastly only acknowledged. Her dreams allowed him to be more than that. Her dreams allowed her silent yearnings to be fulfilled.

That was until she'd gotten drunk.

And then, in that drunken moment of madness, she had let her guard down and allowed Will to see the real her. She had told Will, with her mind, and her heart that she had loved him, and the 'Imzadi' word had fatefully sealed it.

After Will had left her on the bed, she had slept the sleep of the dead, waking in the morning more than worse for the wear. And then she had showered and eaten, somewhat gingerly, and had been surprised when her door chime had sounded.

She assumed it was Will, coming to tease her about her conduct, coming to offer his sympathy at the headache that he'd know she'd have. But when she admitted him and saw his face, it became painfully clear that it was neither.

Deanna felt his fear, saw it in his eyes, and the way he held her gaze as he tried to voice what was on his mind. She watched him struggle for a while, until her own suspense got the better of her and she blurted, "What?"

She saw the dismay her single word created, and it registered that whatever Will was about to ask was important. Important enough for him to block her out to hide how her one word had affected him.

She watched him swallow as he continued to stand and watch her. It scared Deanna enough to make her come to a stand, the question in her eyes, the pleading to understand what was wrong. Until at last he murmured, "You don't remember, do you?"

Deanna hated saying 'no' to him when it was painfully obvious that whatever had happened was vitally important, not only to him, but to 'them'. Her eyes pleaded with him to understand as she whispered, "Tell me, Will. Tell me what happened down there...please."

He had stepped slowly towards her, his eyes never leaving hers until he stopped close enough to her for her to smell his aftershave. Close enough to reach up and kiss him, if she'd chosen to. Close enough to see how her response would affect him.

His voice was low when he spoke, "You said you loved me, Deanna. You kissed me, and nuzzled my ear. You called me Imzadi, Deanna." Slowly lifting his arm he placed one hand tenderly upon her chest, feeling her pounding heart beneath his fingertips.

Looking deep into her very soul, he brokenly whispered, "You let me in here, Imzadi, and I saw."

His eyes shone with joy at what she her moment of madness had revealed. He touched his lips lightly to hers, his wondrous newly found knowledge fluttering between them like a precious secret unveiled

"I saw."

Her hushed, "Oh my God..." resounded around them both, locking them in a whirlwind of emotions that climbed and soared. Tumbled and screamed. Tore each others hearts out as the impact of not only his admission, but hers, sent them both into an instant that they both wished they could replay with different words.

What could she say? Could she say, 'Yes, yes, its true, I love you, Will.'? Or, 'Do you feel the same way. Can we become Imzadi again?' ?

She said, "I...I was drunk, Will..."

Stupid! stupid! STUPID!

It was stupid because the moment the words had left her lips, Will had dropped his arm like he'd been burnt, and then had turned and left her standing in the centre of her quarters, both totally lost, both utterly devastated.

And now as she'd wallowed in her own hand-made agony she knew the man in the next room was hurting even more.

Deanna begged and prayed for God, or Q, or anyone! to whizz back time and let her put things right, just for a moment; That moment when she'd said 'I was drunk'.

Just one moment.

She began to cry again, letting the tears fall free and unfettered. It felt good to cry, feeling the weeks of misery pour from her aching soul, not knowing if this was the end. Not even knowing if it was the beginning, and when the door had chimed, she didn't care who was on the other side, nor did she care if they saw her at her worst.

And she was at her worst. She knew it, and so did Beverly Crusher when the vibrant red-head had admitted herself moments later. But her friend hadn't spoken, nor hadn't called her the worst of cowards. Or said, 'There, there, tell me all about it'. Beverly did nothing more than sit beside her, pull her into her arms and hold her.

It was all Deanna had needed; the comfort of someone who cared. Someone who truly didn't understand the bond or the power of their love. A power that had shone through enough for Will to catch a glimpse of it and cling to it for dear life, hoping above all hopes that it had opened up the doorway to her heart long enough for him to slip inside and remind her that he was there, waiting for her.

Waiting for her.

Waiting for her.

And she had been waiting for him.

She had been waiting for him and it had taken a drunken moment to finally open her heart and let him take a peek inside.

It was a long time before Beverly released her friend long enough to move away and look into Deanna's puffy, red eyes, tenderness making her own blue eyes shine with compassion, "You okay?"

Immediately Deanna's eyes watered again, but this time she managed a smile, forcing a lone teardrop to slide down her cheek "No, I'm not, but I will be, soon."

Beverly's brow creased with puzzlement, but with that puzzlement there was a hint of hope, "Are you going to see Will?"

Deanna nodded vigorously, another teardrop that had formed, fell free, its path rapidly making a trail to her chin. Deanna swiped it away with a trembling hand, her eyes tenderly falling to the photograph still tightly clutched in her hand, "Yes, I am. Its time to let him see and feel the real me, only this time, Beverly, I'll be stone cold sober."

## Chapter two

"I demand another chance, Will"

Will stared at the tiny tornado who stood before him with her hands on her hips, fire in her heart and passion in her eyes, with nothing less than shock across his handsome features.

Desire sparked between the pair, the air static with barely curbed anger, hunger, hope and love, but Will wasn't ready to let Deanna get away with her earlier heart-stopping confession quite so easily.

Not yet.

His eyes glinted as he took the same stance as she, towering over her like a sentinel about to devour her whole, "Give me one good reason why I should, Deanna."

Her surprise clogged her throat with pain, her arms slipping straight, hanging limply at her sides, defeated, dismayed as she gurgled, "What!?"

The only time Deanna had seen Will's face turn sinister was when he was faced with someone, or something he didn't like. He was looking at her in the same way as he began to prowl around her, his body rigid with suppressed tension, his words laced with mockery,

"What did you expect, Deanna? That I would be grateful that you've come to me? That I would say all is forgiven and forgotten? Well I'm sorry, Deanna, I don't forget that easily, not when it comes to us."

Deanna's heart hurt as it thumped against her rib cage. She wanted to cry. God, she wanted to cry, but not now, not when her future depended on making Will see reason.

Surely he must have understood her dilemma. He'd been drunk before, he had to know how she was feeling. How easy it was to forget. She was damned if she was going to apologise for something that she had no recall of.

Will watched the play of emotions flicker across Deanna's beautiful face, and he was silently sorry for doing what he was doing to her more than she'd ever know. Pride was standing in the way of reaching out and pulling her into his empty arms. Pride and a perverse longing to hear her utter the words and open her heart like she had when he'd carried her in his arms.

The intimate memory twisted his loins and he quietly groaned. But the groan was loud enough for Deanna to pick up the carnality within it. Her tongue snaked out and she licked her suddenly parched lips, watching Will's eyes suffuse with desire at the innocent action.

Stepping towards him, Deanna put herself close enough to him to reach out and touch her, if he wanted. Turning her face up towards his she pleaded, "I can't apologise for what I don't remember, Will, but please give me a chance to put things right. I want a second chance, and I'm going to take it."

Will drowned in her molten gaze, not helping himself as he drew himself flush against her small frame. He wanted her to see how important the next few minutes would affect him, and he wanted to be close enough to reap the euphoria he knew he was about to feel.

A few more minutes and Deanna was going to be in his arms.

A few more minutes and his life was going to change forever.

A few more minutes and his soul was going to be reunited with hers.

Reaching up Will tenderly took hold her forearms and whispered, "Okay, Imzadi, you have your chance."

Without breaking her gaze, Deanna removed one large hand, capturing it within her own and placed it upon her chest. Her heartbeat was steady, strong and true and Will felt it pounding against his palm, feeling its power, feeling its love.

Her other hand meandered up to his thick corded neck, pulling his head down to hers, reaching her lips to meet his in a kiss that reflected her heart's ache for him. Reflected the love that poured up from her soul and into his, refilling it, reawakening their bond.

Breathlessly breaking away but not releasing her hold, Deanna searched his sex infused eyes, needing him to see, needing him to feel the honesty in her words,

"I love you, Imzadi." she whispered.

Will lovingly touched her mouth with a feather-light kiss, pulling her body closer to his, letting her feel how much her words, her kisses, her love meant to him, silently needing, and begging for more.

Somehow his hand moved from her heart to the soft mound of her breast, and she strained against the pressure, her own body crying out for him to accept and take what she was offering him.

Will nuzzled against her throat, trailing his tongue up its slender length, continuing over her chin until meeting her open mouth again. But before the urgency to kiss her took over, he

moaned, "Let me in, Deanna. Let me see what I saw again."

Their tongues met in a collision that left them gasping for air and whimpering. But Deanna tore her mouth away and Will, panting with exertion searched her eyes questioningly, the question dying on his lips when he saw the look upon her elfin face.

Reaching both hands into Will's hair, Deanna tightened her grip on the silky mass, holding his head firm. Time came to a standstill as Deanna's eyes locked with his. Blue against black. Woman against man.

Will felt his entire body and mind taken over by the woman in his arms. An invisible force seemingly appeared and surrounded the lovers, imprisoning them within its arms, holding them close, letting its power transcend them to another time, another place, another existence. One they both knew. One they both remembered.

Even though the room disappeared and a steamy place in the jungle filled their minds the silence engulfed them like a blanket, pulling them together. Holding them close. Fusing them into a oneness once more.

It was the spot where they had both become reborn. The place when their hearts, body's and soul had intertwined and locked for eternity. The place where they had made love and become more, much more.

More than life itself. More than what their hearts could deal with.

Until now.

Over the years, they had grown stronger, and wiser. The desire to be lovers had slipped to the back of their minds, along with the desire to control their destiny's. For the moment that Deanna had opened her heart to Will again, destiny itself had taken its own control.

Will gasped against Deanna's lips as his entire being became suffused with her, her own gasp was swallowed with his as they clung to one another, drenched in the union's intensity and their own passion, forcing them both to their knees with the power within the two forces.

Deanna's head fell against Will's chest as they both struggled to reign in what had happened between them. Will cradled her small head against his pounding heart, knowing that her own was thumping in unison with his and equally erratic.

Deanna pulled away from his sweat-laden body far enough to look into Will's face, seeing the tiny beads of perspiration trailing down his face knowing that hers mirrored his, along with the thoughts and desires. The acceptance and the honour of being Imzadi again.

Trailing a long nail down Will's chest, catching a tiny nipple on its descent, Deanna smiled seductively into Will's smouldering eyes, "So, Imzadi, are we going to complete this union on my carpet or are you going to take me to bed like a proper gentleman?"

And as Will took her shoulder and pushed her into the plush, soft fibre's of the maroon carpet, laying prone along her body, he growled possessively as his mouth descended towards hers once more, "Whoever told you I was a gentleman has obviously never seen a Riker in love."

"You're in love with me!?"

Will grinned, his hand already reaching for the hem of her dress, "You want proof?"

Deanna gurgled with delight, relishing the happiness that surrounded them both now that things were in the open. Now that things were as they should be, "Yes, please."

Finally, at last, Will's mouth touched hers as his hand found her silken thigh, and their heartbeats became one again, this time for good. This time for eternity.